



GRAYSHOTT PARISH COUNCIL

STAFF HANDBOOK

Document History

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Notes:	

Change History

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Version 2	Rewrite of Staff Handbook to remove duplication of wording and to ensure that references were added for standalone GPC policies.	Oct 2022
Version 3	Change to Staff Handbook to cover situation where Chairman and Clerk/RFO are related.	June 2023
Version 4	Significant rewrite of the GPC Staff Handbook. Updated for current legislation and to ensure clarity on policies and procedures which previously were only contained in staff contract or not included at all.	Nov 2024
Version 4.1	Minor changes to include Neonatal Care Leave, Statement on support for Perimenopause and menopause, clarifying that employees may dispute dismissal during probationary period if there is a statutory right for that dispute, minor edit to staffing committee make-up, change from a regular pension scheme to a salary sacrifice pension scheme,	Oct 2025
Version 4.2	Added EDI and Training to this document. Updated the Flexible Working to meet legislation and adjusted SSP explanation.	April 2026

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1. Use of the Staff Handbook

Welcome to Grayshott Parish Council.

The Council has two members of staff, the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk. The role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is normally carried out by the Clerk.

The Staff Handbook is designed to provide you with information about Grayshott Parish Council (GPC) and the details of your employment. The Staff Handbook also contains the policies, procedures and rules which the Council has adopted, and you are expected to follow as a member of the GPC team.

A number of the policies, procedures and rules included in the Staff Handbook are referred to in your contract of employment. It is important to read the Staff Handbook carefully. If you have any questions about its contents, please raise them with your supervisor and/or the Staffing Committee.

The Staff Handbook will be updated as and when changes occur by the Staffing Committee and agreed by the Full Council. You will be notified of these changes.

The GPC Staffing Committee, in accordance with its terms of reference, shall be responsible for ensuring proper practices and procedures are followed in all matters relating to staffing, including any grievance or disciplinary action that may be deemed necessary.

Throughout this handbook, where a decision is to be made by the Staffing Committee, the following is the process that will be followed:

- Where possible, the Staffing Committee will meet to make a decision. That decision will then be presented for ratification at the next Council meeting.
- If an immediate decision is to be made, the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Staffing Committee will make the decision. The Staffing Committee will then meet as soon as possible to ratify the decision. The decision will then be presented for ratification at the next Council meeting. It is anticipated that this will only need to occur in time sensitive decisions such as approval for Compassionate Leave or Family Emergency Leave.

2. Enjoy your work

Grayshott Parish Council believes passionately that its employees should enjoy their work whilst also being as productive as possible. A happy workforce means good productivity which results in excellent service for the residents of Grayshott, which is why we are here.

It is important therefore that the Council ensures staff are happy in their work. We strive to achieve this by providing all staff with the best possible working conditions as well as a number of employee benefits, listed below. The Council also looks to empower our staff to do the best possible job and always listen to suggestions as to how the workplace can be improved for our staff. It is important to the Council that staff enjoy coming to work.

3. Employee Benefits

The Council offers its employees a number of benefits. These include:

- A pension scheme;
- Excellent work environment and conditions;
- Flexible working where possible;
- Holiday entitlement;
- Access to training paid for by the Council;
- Availability of vocational qualifications where appropriate.

4. Joining Grayshott Parish Council

a. Probationary period

On joining the Council staff will serve a three-month probationary period. In instances where this is not the case, this will be clearly identified in their contract of employment. Staff will have the opportunity to review their performance with their supervisor during their probationary period. Where appropriate, should further training or development be identified, GPC reserves the right to extend the probationary period for a further three months.

If staff do not reach the standards required by the Council their employment may be terminated at any time during the probationary period with one week's notice. Staff do not have the right to dispute their dismissal, unless there is a statutory right for the dispute.

b. Induction

The Council is keen that staff have every assistance to help them settle into their role quickly.

The Council will ensure that staff know what to expect on their first day and first few weeks and months of their employment. Staff will meet their colleagues, including councillors and will receive information on the Council, terms and conditions of employment, policies and procedures, and health and safety.

If there is anything an employee needs to know about the Council or what is required of them in their role, they should ask their supervisor or a member of the Staffing Committee.

c. Personal Details

To help the Council to assist staff, especially in cases of emergency, it is essential that all information on personnel records is complete, correct and up to date.

Staff personal information is confidential and will not be released to any third parties without the individual's prior authorisation.

The Clerk maintains personnel files for all employees that are held securely and will be kept in accordance with the Council's Data Retention & Erasure Policy.

d. Supervisor: Line Management and Responsible Contact

The Assistant Clerk is to be line managed by the Clerk.

The Clerk is responsible to the whole Council and does not have an individual line manager. For practical purposes, the GPC has the following reporting procedure for day-to-day issues, such as leave requests and sickness reporting. The Chair of the Council, in the first instance and the Chair of the Staffing Committee, should the Chair of the Council not be available, are the responsible contact for the Clerk.

Throughout this handbook, references to supervisor refers to the line manager for the Assistant Clerk and the responsible contact for the Clerk.

5. Dignity at Work

a. Statement

The GPC believes that the working environment should, at all times, be supportive of the dignity and respect of all individuals. This Dignity at Work policy is specifically written for staff. The GPC Complaints policy is designed to address all other complaints. If a complaint of harassment is brought to the attention of the Council, it will be investigated promptly, and appropriate action will be taken.

b. What and How of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as conduct which is unwanted and offensive and affects the dignity of an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work”. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.

People can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour;
- sex, gender or sexual orientation;
- religious or political convictions;
- willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation;
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties;
- status as ex-offenders;
- age;
- real or suspected infection with a blood borne virus (e.g. AIDS/HIV);
- membership of a trade union or activities associated with membership.

Forms of harassment may include:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault;
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letters and so on;
- visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags and emblems;
- isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities;
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups;
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following someone;
- bullying.

c. What to do if you are harassed

Any staff member who feels they are being harassed, is strongly encouraged to seek early advice/support from the Clerk or the Chair of the Staffing Committee. If the staff member feels the Clerk or the Chair of the Staffing Committee is harassing them, then they should contact the Chair of the Council.

A written record detailing the incidents of harassment, and any requests made to the harasser to stop, should be made as soon as possible after the events giving rise to concern and should include dates, times, places and the circumstances of what happened.

The staff member who feels they are being harassed should follow the grievance procedure in section 14.

6. Pay

a. Salary Scales

The starting salary of a member of staff will be stated in their contract of employment. Staff salaries are normally reviewed annually with any increases becoming effective on 1 April. When setting future salaries, the Council considers both a cost-of-living allowance and a performance related increase linked to qualifications and experience. The Council will let staff know in writing of any changes to their salary.

b. Payment of salaries

Salaries are paid on or by the last Friday of each calendar month by BACS transfer. An individual payslip showing gross pay, fixed and variable deductions and net pay will be provided to staff each month.

c. Deductions from salaries

GPC will make any deductions from staff pay as required by law or as authorised by staff in writing. In addition, the Council reserves the right to make salary adjustments to staff pay where an overpayment has been made or in cases of malicious damage which could result in dismissal.

d. Pension Scheme

The Council offers a pension scheme to all its employees through “The People’s Pension.” Staff are automatically enrolled unless they choose to ‘opt-out’. Further information on the scheme, opting out or increasing contributions, can be requested from the Clerk.

The Council operates a salary exchange or ‘salary sacrifice’ arrangement. Salary sacrifice is a contractual arrangement where employees agree to reduce their gross salary by the value of their pension contributions. The Council then pays this amount directly into the pension scheme. This model creates National Insurance (NI) savings for both the Council and employee, without reducing take-home pay or increasing council costs. The salary sacrifice arrangements are subject to a Government defined cap.

Pension contributions made by the Council are calculated at 8% of the employee’s gross earnings. This is based on legal requirements for contributions. If the employee wishes to add, from their salary to the amount contributed, they must inform the Clerk, in writing, at least two weeks before the next pay date.

e. Hours of work including overtime and time off in lieu

Full-time equivalent (FTE) hours for GPC are 37 per week or 7.4 per day. Staff hours are set out in their contract. Because of the variability of the work of the Council, particularly around significant projects or events, and training commitments, the Council understands that there may be times where staff will exceed their contracted hours.

Where staff know in advance that they will be working an excessive number of extra hours (more than two hours per week), they should discuss with their supervisor the amount of extra time they anticipate working. Staff are encouraged to take time off in lieu (TOIL) for any extra time they have worked. All reasonable efforts should be made for TOIL to be taken within two months of accruing it and it must be approved following the same process as annual leave.

The Council recognises that it may not be feasible for staff to take TOIL in which case, Staff shall be eligible for overtime payments.

7. Holidays

a. Holiday entitlement

GPC offers staff an annual leave allowance of 24 paid holiday days for a full-time employee who has worked at the council from 0 to 5 years. After five years of continuous service the entitlement increases to 27 days per year. In addition, employees will receive public and bank holidays as part of their annual leave allowance.

For part-time employees, annual leave (including public and bank holidays) will be calculated in hours based on contractual hours. This calculation is:

Part-time contractual hours / FTE contractual hours X FTE contractual hours per day X (Annual leave allowance + Bank Holidays) = Annual Leave Allowance per year.

A worked example for a staff member who is contracted to work 20 hours per week in a year when there are 8 bank holidays is below:

$$20 / 37 \times 7.4 \times (24 + 8) = 128 \text{ hours}$$

If you join the Council part way through a holiday year you are entitled to the appropriate portion of leave based

on the number of completed weeks of service.

b. Holiday year

The holiday year runs between 1st April and 31st March.

Up to 5 days of leave (pro rata for part time employees) may be carried forward each year.

c. Public and Bank Holidays

Council staff who are part-time are required to take a minimum of 4 hours off on Bank Holiday from their Annual Allowance. Any variation to this policy must be agreed in advance and in writing by the staff member's supervisor.

d. Holiday booking

Staff must agree the timing of all annual leave in advance with their supervisor. Staff must consider the consequences to the organisation of their absence, and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk should endeavour to not take annual leave at the same time except over the Christmas/New Year period.

In the event that a holiday request is refused, the supervisor will give as much notice of refusal as possible and the reasons for refusal.

On termination of employment all outstanding annual leave should have been taken prior to the effective date of departure. At the discretion of the supervisor, payment may be made in lieu of holiday entitlement. Such payments shall meet the requirements of Regulation 14 of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Should staff leave part way through a holiday year and holiday has been taken in excess of any entitlement accrued up to the date of departure, then a financial adjustment will be made to staff's final salary payment based on the proportion of the year worked.

Holiday taken without our prior approval will be treated as unauthorised absence and may lead to disciplinary action.

e. Religious holidays

GPC will not ask about staff's religion and will not discriminate against anyone wishing to celebrate their festivals. Staff are required to use part of their normal holiday entitlement to cover time off for these festivals.

8. Sickness Absence

a. Sickness Absence Policy

GPC is committed to maintaining the health, well-being and attendance of all its employees.

The Council's absence policy is based on the following principles:

- It undertakes to provide reasonable payments to employees who are unable to work due to sickness.
- It will support employees who have genuine grounds for absence for whatever reason. This support includes a flexible approach to the taking of annual leave and returning to work after long term sickness.
- It will respect the confidentiality of all information relating to an employee's sickness and information will be held in line with all data protection legislation.

Regular, punctual attendance is an implied condition of every employee's contract of employment, and we ask each employee to take responsibility for maintaining good attendance and reporting absence according to the procedures set out in this handbook.

The disciplinary procedures may be used if an explanation for absence is not forthcoming or is not thought to be

satisfactory.

b. Authorised sickness absence from work

The following sets out the situations which are considered authorised sickness absences:

- Absence due to genuine personal sickness or injury and you have complied with notification and evidence rules set out below; or
- You have received written prior permission to be absent from work.

The Council may withhold pay for all or part of any unauthorised sickness absence.

c. Absence reporting

Staff must report their absence from work owing to illness to their supervisor contact by telephone or text message (which includes WhatsApp, iMessage or other text message apps) as early as possible and no later than one hour after they are due to commence their working day on which the absence first occurs.

When reporting their absence, staff should give a clear indication of the nature of their illness and the likely date of their return to work.

d. Certification

Sickness certificates are required for all absences and should cover all calendar days, including workdays, weekends, public holidays and any days not normally worked.

A [self-certification](#) may be made for the first seven calendar days of absence. From the 8th day onwards, a medical certificate is required.

A final Doctor's statement giving the date on which the staff member will be fit to resume work must be given to their supervisor prior to their return to work of absences where a medical certificate has been obtained.

If staff member's absence is not continuously covered by a self-certificate, Doctor's statement or in-patient certificate, it may be treated as unauthorised absence and dealt with using the disciplinary procedures.

e. Conduct during absence due to sickness or injury

Staff are expected to return to fitness and work as soon as possible. The Council does not expect anyone absent from work due to sickness or injury to participate in activities that are inconsistent with the stated illness or injury, or which could aggravate it and delay recovery.

f. Holidays during sickness

Going away on a holiday (whether pre-booked or not) or taking part in other outside activities or attending, conferences, meetings, sports or leisure activities during sick leave may be deemed to be a breach of the Council's rules if it is inconsistent with the stated illness or injury, and you may be subject to disciplinary action. Staff should request annual leave while on sick leave through the normal annual leave request process, which may be granted if it is not inconsistent with the stated illness or injury. The fact that staff are on sick leave does not affect their entitlement to be paid annual leave under the Working Time Regulations.

g. Medical examination

Staff may be required to come to work to discuss their absences whilst they are off sick or, at their request, a representative from the Council will visit them at home. Staff may also be required to submit to a medical examination during or after any absence from work due to sickness or injury. Should a doctor appointed by the Council require details of staff member's medical history, they will be required to furnish the Council with written permission to contact their own doctor (either GP or Consultant) for access to their medical records or for a medical report subject to their rights under the Access To Medical Records Act 1988 and Access To Health

Records Act 1990.

Staff may be required to submit to a medical examination by an independent consultant at the Council's expense and will be required to give their written consent to a report being written by the doctor who will disclose to the Council any relevant details regarding the staff member's fitness to work. Staff must give their GP consent to liaise with the Council's doctor regarding their case. All medical information will be kept confidential.

h. Infectious/Contagious Diseases

If a staff member believes that they have come into contact with or have developed a serious infectious or contagious disease for which there is no population immunity (such as in a pandemic), they should immediately contact their supervisor. The decision on whether the staff member should come into the office, work from home or take paid sick time will be based on the most current medical advice.

i. Return to Work

On return to work after an absence of 7 days or less, staff should complete and give to their supervisor a Self-Certification Form. GPC uses the government supplied self-certification form which can be found at [SC2 form](#).

A 'fit for work' certificate is required should staff wish to return to work before their medical certificate runs out.

On return to work, if a staff member has been off for more than 7 days, their supervisor will hold a return-to-work meeting with them in order to establish: the reason for and cause of their absence, their fitness to return to work and whether they need any support to return to work, including phasing in work duties. Staff members who have been off for less than 7 days may be asked to attend a return-to-work meeting.

j. Sent Home

If while staff are at work, they decide that they are unwell and need to go home, for health and safety purposes they must inform their supervisor before they leave the Council Office.

k. Medical, Dental or Optician Appointments

Where possible medical appointments should be made outside of working hours. Exceptionally where this cannot be arranged, they should disrupt a staff member's working schedule as little as possible, e.g. made early or late in the day. Staff will be required to use TOIL to cover such absences.

Where attendance for a medical or hospital appointment necessitates a complete day's absence from work, this will be treated as sick leave and the procedure for self-certification should be followed.

l. Loans during periods of absence

If staff are absent from work through injuries caused by the actionable negligence, nuisance or breach of statutory duty of any third party in respect of which damages are recoverable, they must inform their supervisor, who must send an email to all Staffing Committee members immediately. Any payment made for all or part of any absence under the sick pay scheme by the Council (other than SSP) shall be by way of a loan that must be repaid in full, from monies recovered from the third party. If damages are settled on a proportionate basis, the Council will require full details. The amount of any repayment required will be determined by the Council but will not exceed the actual damages recovered.

m. Absence during pregnancy

Pregnancy related absence will be dealt with separately from sickness absence in accordance with the Statutory Maternity Pay regulations.

9. Sick Pay

The Council operates the Statutory Sick Pay scheme, and staff are required to co-operate in the maintenance of

necessary records. For the purposes of calculating entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay 'qualifying days' are those days on which they are normally required to work. Payments made to them by the Council under its sick pay provisions in satisfaction of any other contractual entitlement will go towards discharging the Council's liability to make payment to you under the Statutory Sick Pay scheme.

GPC employees have a sick pay scale, which is provided on a pro-rata basis for part-time staff. An employee must comply with the Council's absence policy to receive sick pay.

- During 1st year of service, a full-time staff member receives 20 days full pay and thereafter Statutory Sick Pay;
- During 2nd to 5th year of service, a full-time staff member receives 60 days full pay and thereafter Statutory Sick Pay;
- After 5 years of service, a full-time staff member receives 120 days full pay and thereafter Statutory Sick Pay.

For part-time employees, paid sick leave will be calculated in hours based on contractual hours. This calculation is:

Part-time contractual hours / FTE contractual hours X FTE contractual hours per day X (Paid Sick Leave) = Paid Sick Leave Allowance per year.

Staff sick pay is based on their pay as set by the Council. Entitlement to payment is subject to notification of absence and production of medical certificates as required.

10. Other types of time off

The GPC understands the importance of being able to accommodate other types of time off. This chapter outlines a number of different family-friendly and flexible policies.

a. Compassionate Leave

Sympathetic consideration will be given to any hardship, difficulty or special circumstances which might necessitate a request for absence from work on compassionate grounds. Such circumstances might include bereavement or severe illness of a close relative or family member. Please note that this policy is to cover instances that are not covered under the 'Time off to deal with a family emergency policy'.

Staff will be given three paid compassionate leave days. When requesting compassionate leave, staff may also request additional time off without pay. This request should be made to their supervisor. A decision about the request will be made based on its merits, in discussion with the staff member and their supervisor. This decision will be made through the Staffing Committee procedures. The Council will be informed by the Chair at the next Council meeting for ratification of the decision.

b. Jury service

The Council will, in accordance with the law, release staff for jury service when required to do so. However, staff have no right to be paid during jury service. Any payment made during jury service shall be at the Council's discretion and shall be by way of a loan which staff shall repay by payment to the Council of such sums if any which they recover by way of financial loss allowance, and subsistence allowance, from the court. This decision will be made through Staffing Committee procedures.

c. Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave shall be discretionary and shall not be considered until an employee has been in the employ of the Council for a minimum of five years. Requests for such leave shall be considered by the Staffing Committee, and their recommendation shall go to Full Council, who shall vote on the proposal. Sabbatical leave shall be unpaid, and no pension contributions or other benefits shall be paid by the Council during Sabbatical leave. The period of Sabbatical leave shall not be eligible for holiday calculation and holidays will be pro rata during the holiday year(s) in which the Sabbatical leave is taken. It shall be granted for no more than six months, and the

employee shall give the Council six month's advance notice of date on which leave is intended to be taken. No more than one Sabbatical Leave shall be considered in any five-year period of service. Approval for Sabbatical leave shall be refused should formal disciplinary procedures have commenced.

d. Statutory absence

The Council will authorise absence where required to do so by law for statutory purposes. Such absence will be paid, or unpaid, according to the relevant statutory provision.

e. Time off to deal with a family emergency

In addition to Compassionate Leave or Paternity Leave, an employee has the right to take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. In most cases, the amount of leave allowed will be one or two days at the most, but this will depend on individual circumstances. It may be possible to take a longer period of leave.

A dependant is defined as a partner/spouse, child or parent, or someone who lives in as part of the family. For example, this could be a grandparent who lives in the household. It does not include tenants or boarders living in the family home, or somebody who lives in the household as an employee, for example, a live-in housekeeper. A dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the staff member for assistance. This may be where the staff member is the primary carer or the only person who can help in an emergency.

This right is to enable an employee to deal with an unexpected or sudden problem and make any necessary longer-term arrangements. the following are examples of unexpected or sudden problems:

- If a dependent falls ill or has been involved in an accident, including where the person is distressed, rather than injured physically. To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured. To deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements for a dependant; for example, when the childminder or nurse fails to turn up.
- To deal with an incident involving the employee's child during school hours; for example, if the child has been involved in a fight or is being suspended from school.

The supervisor must be informed as soon as possible about absences, the reasons for them and how long they are expected to last. If someone is prevented from informing their supervisor due to the nature of the emergency, then the reason for the absence must be explained immediately on return to work. The supervisor is responsible for notifying the Staffing Committee as soon as possible via email about absences. The decision regarding time off under this policy will be made through Staffing Committee procedures.

This right is intended to cover unforeseen matters. If someone knows in advance that they are going to need time off, then they may reasonably be expected to arrange to take this time as part of their annual holiday entitlement.

The right to time off for dependents does not include a right to be paid during such time off.

f. Antenatal care

A pregnant employee is entitled to time off with pay to keep appointments for antenatal care. Antenatal care may include relaxation classes and parent-craft classes made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor.

An employee must provide to their supervisor their MATB1 certificate from a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor as soon as possible. The Council also grants the above entitlement to time off to partners or guardians wishing to attend such antenatal care appointments, upon producing documentation to evidence the appointment as mentioned above.

g. Neonatal Care Leave

Employees have the right to up to 12 weeks of neonatal care leave from their first day starting their job. Eligibility

for this leave is set out in the Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023. Qualifying employees must request and take leave according to the statutory procedure.

h. Maternity, Paternity and Adoption

All qualifying employees are entitled to statutory maternity, statutory paternity and statutory adoption leave and pay. A qualifying employee must request and take leave according to the statutory procedure.

i. Parental Leave

Employees who have completed one year's service are entitled to a total of 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child and adopted child, to be taken before their 18th birthday. The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the Council agrees otherwise).

Parental Leave must be taken as whole weeks (for example 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless the Council agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You do not have to take all the leave at once.

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days. You must give 21 days' notice before the intended start date of parental leave.

j. Perimenopause and Menopause

GPC recognises that employees who are experiencing symptoms during perimenopause and menopause may need additional support, time off or flexible working arrangements to assist them with menopause-related health problems that impact on their work. Employees should feel confident in being able to speak to their supervisor to ask for support and reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles.

k. Time Off for Public Duties

Requests for time off for Public Duties will be considered with or without pay.

If an employee is a magistrate, local councillor, school governor, or carry out one of the other public duties listed below, they are entitled to time off from work to carry out their role. Such public positions held should be notified to their supervisor, who will notify, by email, the Staffing Committee when accepting an offer of employment or as soon as the position is taken on, whichever is sooner.

Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 requires employers to permit employees who hold certain public positions reasonable time off to perform the duties associated with them.

It is important for an employee who is thinking of taking on public duties consider if time off that will be required based on the nature of the role and any minimum requirements. An employee should then discuss with their supervisor how the time off can best be accommodated. As part of this discussion, the employee should be prepared to discuss whether a formal request for flexible working changes should be made in order to adopt a different working pattern. The Council must provide reasonable time off but will also consider the additional benefits to the Council from having staff engaging with the wider community and the additional skills and experience that they will gain as a result.

The public duties/positions covered by this policy are:

- justice of the peace;
- member of a local authority;
- member of a police authority;
- member of any statutory tribunal;
- member of a relevant health body;
- member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment;
- member of the governing body of a further or higher education corporation;
- member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales;
- member of the Environment Agency;

- in England and Wales, prison independent monitoring boards;
- Uniformed Voluntary Public Service, namely retained fire service, special constable and reserve forces.

The amount of time which an employee is permitted to take off to perform these public duties is defined as that which is reasonable in all the circumstances, having particular regard to:

- how much time off is required overall to perform the duties and how much time off is required to perform the particular duty in question;
- how much time off the employee has already been permitted for this purpose;
- the circumstances of the Council's business and the effect of the employee's absence upon it.

As a general rule, the Council will grant the employee up to an additional two weeks of time off per year to perform their duties, one week of which may be paid and one week unpaid. This time off for public duties will also include any necessary training.

If an employee wishes to have time off for public duties, then this should be discussed with their supervisor as far in advance as is practicable to allow the Council to plan workloads and commitments. The discussion with the supervisor should also confirm whether the proposed public duties commitment is to be paid or unpaid.

I. Statutory Leave Advice – Useful Links

For further guidance on statutory leave, employee rights to leave and the benefits as mentioned above. Please visit [Holidays, time off, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/holidays-time-off-sick-leave-maternity-and-paternity-leave)

11. Flexible working

The Council is committed to supporting flexible working arrangements wherever practicable and to ensuring all staff have fair access to such options. Flexible working can benefit staff wellbeing, support work-life balance and improve service delivery by enabling staff to work at their best.

Under current legislation, all employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from their first day of employment, and GPC will handle all requests reasonably, fairly and in accordance with the law.

Flexible working may involve a change to:

- the number of hours worked;
- the times at which work is undertaken;
- the days worked;
- the place of work (e.g., home or office);
- any combination of the above.

Flexible working can be temporary or permanent, depending on the request and what is agreed.

a. Eligibility

All employees may request flexible working from day one of their employment with the Council.

Employees may make up to two statutory flexible working requests within a 12-month period. Any request must not duplicate a previous request that is still under consideration.

b. Submitting a Request

Requests must be made in writing to the employee's supervisor and include:

- The specific change(s) requested, including if the requested change(s) are temporary or permanent;
- The date on which the employee wishes the change to take effect;
- The date of any previous flexible working requests made in the last 12 months.

Employees do not need to explain how the request may affect the organisation; however, they should provide any information they feel would support their application.

c. The Procedure

Acknowledgement and Meeting

GPC will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the request. This will normally occur promptly and within the statutory decision period. Employees may bring a companion to this meeting if they wish.

Statutory Decision Period

The Council must make a decision within 2 months of receiving the request, unless an extension is agreed with the employee.

Consultation

Before reaching a decision, GPC will consult with the employee about:

- the practical implications of the request;
- alternative options if the original request cannot be accepted in full;
- any temporary arrangements or trial periods, where appropriate.

This consultation stage is required before a request can be refused.

Decision

GPC will confirm the decision in writing.

If approved, the letter will:

- confirm the change to the employee's terms and conditions, including any salary changes;
- state when the new arrangement will begin;
- clarify whether the arrangement is temporary or permanent.

If the request is refused, the written response will:

- state the statutory business grounds for refusal (see below);
- explain why these grounds apply;
- set out the employee's right of appeal.

d. Grounds for Refusal

GPC may refuse a request only for one or more of the following statutory reasons:

- the burden of additional costs;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- inability to recruit additional staff;
- detrimental impact on quality;
- detrimental impact on performance;
- insufficiency of work during the periods proposed;
- planned structural changes.

Where appropriate, GPC will explore alternatives before refusing a request.

e. Appeals Procedure

If an employee wishes to appeal, they must submit their appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving the decision.

An appeal meeting will be held as soon as reasonably practicable and heard by Councillors not previously involved. Employees have the right to be accompanied. The outcome will be confirmed in writing.

The appeal decision is final.

f. Temporary or Informal Flexible Working

The Council recognises that flexibility is required from employees due to the nature of the job. In line with sector-standard practice, informal or short-term adjustments to working patterns—such as temporary changes to hours for personal reasons—may be agreed directly between an employee and their supervisor. Such arrangements are considered on a case-by-case basis and do not count towards statutory flexible working requests.

g. Interaction with Other Policies

Where flexible working relates to health, disability, menopause, caring responsibilities or other protected issues, the Council will also consider its duties under:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- Health & Safety obligations;
- Reasonable adjustments guidance.

12. Supervision and Appraisal

a. Supervision

It is a normal managerial function to monitor and evaluate an individual's performance of their job. The role of management necessarily includes taking appropriate action to ensure that employees are performing the duties that they are employed to do to the best of their abilities and to understand the prioritisation of their duties. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees have help and support when they need it. If employees feel they need additional support, they are encouraged to talk to a Councillor of their choosing to ask for the help they feel they need.

Assistant Clerk: The primary source of information for the Assistant Clerk about their role or the organisation is their supervisor. It is part of their supervisor's job to inform, answer questions and listen to opinions, comments or suggestions.

The responsibility to ensure regular one to one meetings and reviews are undertaken lies with both the employee and supervisor; this is an important, two-way communication and performance management process.

Clerk: The primary source of information for the Clerk about their role and Council functions are the Chairs of the standing committees, the Chair of the Council and other Councillors. It is part of the responsibility of the Council members to inform, answer questions and listen to opinions, comments or suggestions.

Periodically, the supervisor should meet with the Clerk for one-to-one meetings and reviews. The frequency of these meetings should be agreed between the Clerk and the Staffing Committee, with a minimum of two formal meetings per year. These meetings are important to ensure clear lines of communication around supervision, support, training, development and performance related matters for the Full Council.

b. Appraisal Scheme

All employees take part in the annual appraisal process. These are positive exercises designed to encourage and assist staff in their professional and personal development.

A record of the supervision or appraisal will be kept on individual personnel files. These files will be kept in accordance with the Council's Information Policy.

c. Poor Performance or Misconduct

The Council recognises that there can be reasons for poor job performance other than misconduct. To deal with such problems it has established this procedure. It will usually be initiated in the interest of fairness but it is not contractually binding, and an employee may be dismissed without the procedure being followed precisely or completely.

If poor performance is identified, either during the annual appraisal or at any other time, and an informal procedure with the employee has proven unsuccessful, then a formal procedure will be initiated. The formal procedure will be managed by two Councillors appointed by the Staffing Committee, neither of whom shall be those that conducted the annual appraisal (or appraisal at any other time), nor the adjudicator at any Appeal.

d. General Procedures for addressing poor performance

The first stage in dealing with poor job performance is to investigate whether the matter is a disciplinary matter, or a capacity, capability, competence, performance or training matter. Incompetence/poor performance will arise where the employee has been set realistic targets and objectives but has not achieved them.

If targets and objectives are highlighted, but the employee fails to take action of which the employee is capable, it may be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

Step 1: Performance Review meeting

The cause of poor performance will be investigated and established. The member of staff will be asked for an explanation. Where the reason is lack of required skills, where practicable, the employee will be assisted with training and given a reasonable time to reach the required standard of performance. As at a disciplinary meeting, the employee has the right to be accompanied (see Section 16, Disciplinary Procedure for further information) at a performance review meeting where their employment is at risk.

Step 2: Formal Warnings

Where, despite assistance, an employee cannot reach the required standard the consequence of any failure to meet the required standard will be explained in writing as follows:

First Written Warning

An employee will be told the precise nature of the poor performance in writing, the level of performance and improvement required and a realistic timeframe for achieving that improvement and warned of the consequence of failure to achieve or maintain the improvement.

Final Written Warning

If there is no improvement, or insufficient improvement, or it is not maintained for the period stated, the employee will be given a final written warning setting out the details as in a first written warning, but with final warning that failure to improve this time may result in their dismissal.

First written warnings will have a timeframe of one month and a final written warning will have a timeframe of two months. In each case the Council will specify the length of the warning but reserve the right to extend the length of it in appropriate circumstances.

Step 3: Dismissal

If there is still no improvement, or insufficient improvement, or it has not been maintained for the period stated above, then the employee may be dismissed with notice. However, there will be another Performance Review meeting to which the employee will be requested to attend, in writing, and the employee will be entitled to be accompanied before a decision is made to dismiss them.

Step 4: Appeals Procedure

An employee has the right to appeal against a decision arising from the procedure, in exactly the same way as they can appeal against a disciplinary decision.

13. Training and Development

GPC places the highest value on training and development for its staff. The Council is committed to invest in the training of its staff in order to achieve its business objectives by providing all possible support and refunding necessary expenses. The Council promotes the use of industry bodies such as Hampshire ALC, National ALC and SLCC who all provide training in line with our own EDI Policy. Any training or development provided by the Council directly, will be accessible and inclusive with reasonable adjustments where required.

Training and development will be delivered through:

- on the job learning;
- performance review and management;
- attendance at meetings, forums, workshops and conferences;
- classroom training.

The Council recognises that on the job learning can be just as valuable as more formal learning settings. The below time guidance has been set to drive employee's development forward whilst also being achievable and realistic.

Staff are expected to ensure they keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and to take ownership of their training needs. Training needs will be identified through the recruitment process for new staff and by the annual appraisal for existing staff.

Commitment	Target timescale	Responsibility
That the Clerk is actively undertaking ILCA qualification, if not already qualified.	Within 6 months of appointment	Clerk/Staffing Committee/Chairman
That the Clerk is actively undertaking CiLCA qualification, if not already qualified.	Within 2 years of appointment	Clerk/Staffing Committee/Chairman
That the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) has attended at least the 'Local Council Finance for Officers' course, or similar.	Within 6 months of appointment	RFO/Staffing Committee/Chairman
That the Clerk, RFO and Assistant Clerk are expected to engage in regular continuous professional development roughly equivalent to 15 – 20 hours per year. This can include training courses, HALC Officers updates and briefings, local clerks' meetings, EHDC training and workshops, conferences. These should be documented in the Training Tracker.	Each Year	Clerk/RFO/Assistant Clerk

Initial and longer-term training needs will be agreed with their supervisor to enable staff to perform their job as effectively as possible. This process will continue as part of regular performance reviews. Council will grant paid time off for training courses arranged through the Council.

Where qualifications (such as CiLCA) are paid for by the Council and undertaken during paid Council time, an agreement will be put in place to ensure the Council receive the benefit from investing in its staff. The member of staff will be required to continue their employment with the Council for a minimum of one year after

qualification. This will be agreed in consultation with the employee and result in a contractual change to their contract of employment. Should the member of staff end their employment during this period, they will be required to refund the Council a percentage of the costs incurred.

If a staff member wishes to engage in studies not related to their role that may impact on their working hours, they should make a request for flexible working through the procedures described.

14. Grievance Procedure

There may be circumstances due to pressure of work or otherwise in which misunderstandings or grievances may arise. Redress of these grievances may be sought in accordance with the following procedure that will usually be initiated in the interest of fairness but is not contractually binding. This procedure should be used to settle all disputes or grievances which an employee may wish to raise concerning other staff, Councillors, volunteers, Council work, the organisation or other matters relating to employment. The aim is to settle any grievance fairly, simply and quickly.

a. Informal Resolution

If an employee has any questions or grievances relating to any Council work that impacts them personally and directly and requires resolution they should, where possible, informally discuss it with the appropriate person in the first instance.

If it relates to another member of staff, they should, where possible, discuss the matter informally with their supervisor the Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Chair of the Council.

If an employee has a grievance with a Councillor, appropriate steps should be taken through the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

There are some situations where an informal resolution is not appropriate, and a formal grievance should be raised.

b. Formal Procedure

If a matter cannot be resolved informally or an informal resolution is not appropriate, then the grievance should be put in writing to the Chair of the Council or Chair of the Staffing Committee who will arrange a meeting with the employee as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The letter must contain a clear explanation of the grievance and why the employee believes this requires a formal resolution. Where the grievance is one that involves the Council's duties to the individual, the employee has a same legal right to be accompanied at a grievance hearing as they have at a disciplinary hearing as set out in Section 18. For example, this would be the case where the grievance alleges a breach of contractual duties towards the individual or a failure to safeguard rights under the GPC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and associated section of the Staff Handbook.

A decision will be made by the Grievance Committee. This committee will be set up on an ad hoc basis and will consist of three councillors appointed by the Staffing Committee. That decision will be given in writing within 14 working days or otherwise as soon as is reasonably practicable. The letter will include details of the right to appeal. This decision will be recorded in personnel files.

c. Appeals Procedure

The individual will have the right to appeal against a grievance decision, arising from the procedures set out above whether formal or informal.

The appeal must be made in writing, setting out the basis for the appeal including what the individual specifically disagrees with in the original decision. The letter should be sent to the Council Office, addressed to the Chair of the Council or the Chair of the Staffing Committee. The letter must be received in the Council Office within five full working days after the formal written confirmation has been received. For example, if the decision letter is

received on a Monday, the appeal must be received by the end of the day on the Tuesday of the following week.

The appeal hearing will be conducted within a reasonable period of the appeal being lodged and will be heard by the Appeals Committee. The Committee will consist of three different Councillors from those on the Grievance Committee. The Council may co-opt a Council Member from a neighbouring Council as an independent member as needed. As at the disciplinary meeting, the individual has the right to be accompanied and to have the hearing postponed.

The outcome will either be:

- to reject the appeal and confirm the original decision; or
- to uphold the appeal and make a different decision.

The result of the appeal will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days of the hearing.

The decision at the appeal stage is final.

15. Performance and Behaviour at Work

a. Conduct at Work

As with any employment, staff are expected to always conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in the workplace. This includes when representing the Council offsite or at external functions or meetings.

Many roles across the Council are of a customer service nature and it is of the upmost importance that Council staff are always regarded as professional and courteous. This includes when dealing with third parties such as members of the public, suppliers, contractors and even Parish Councillors and fellow members of staff.

If there are concerns regarding staff conduct at work these will be discussed with them by their supervisor. Similarly, if an employee has concerns regarding the conduct of another employee, they should raise these with their supervisor, the Chair of the Staffing Committee or the Chair of the Council.

In the case of a deterioration in conduct at work, after concerns have been raised with the employee, or a serious incident of staff misconduct, it may be deemed necessary to invoke the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

b. Appearance

The Council wish to portray a professional business image. The Council does not seek to inhibit individual choice in relation to an employee's appearance. However, staff are expected to always dress appropriately in relation to their role. Staff are required to be neat, clean, well-groomed and presentable whilst at work, whether working on the Council's premises or elsewhere on Council business.

If employees have any queries about what is appropriate, these should be directed to their supervisor.

c. Council Property

Staff will be given access to, and use of, various documents, manuals, hardware and software to do their job. These and any data, documents or intellectual property produced, maintained or stored on the Council's computer systems or other electronic equipment remain the property of the Council. Staff will also be issued with keys to access the Council Office, laptops/computers and login details for the website and social media accounts. These remain the property of the Council; loss of these items must be reported immediately to the staff member's supervisor. Any gross negligence or wilful misuse of the Council's property will be seen as misconduct and invoke the necessary disciplinary procedure.

Staff must not bring any unauthorised person or animal on to the Council property without prior agreement from their supervisor, unless they are authorised to do so as part of their job. In these circumstances they are responsible for ensuring that their visitors are appropriately monitored during their stay, and that they do not access areas or Council property inappropriately.

Staff must not remove GPC property from the Council's premises unless prior authority from their supervisor has been given.

d. Personal Property

Any personal property such as jewellery, cash, credit cards, clothes, cars, motorbikes or bicycles etc. left on the Council's premises is done so entirely at the staff member's own risk. Staff are strongly advised not to leave any valuables unattended, either on Council premises or in their own vehicle. GPC does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever.

e. Data Protection and Confidentiality, Privacy, E-mail and Internet Policy

Staff must comply with the Council's Information Policy. The Council recognises that it operates flexible working arrangements for its employees, and that councillors undertake their duties in their own time. However, the Council supports clear boundary setting and does not expect employees to work outside their agreed working hours, which includes responding to emails and other forms of contact via phone or social media.

f. Smoking Policy

In line with government legislation the Council operates a no-smoking policy, which includes e-cigarettes.

This policy is intended to:

- Protect everyone against the effects of second-hand smoke.
- Promote health in the workforce.

Smoking is not allowed within the Council's Office, nor the Sports Pavilion.

Smokers are requested not to smoke immediately outside any workplace. This applies to staff, visitors and contractors.

The Council will allow smokers to have reasonable breaks provided these do not prevent them from satisfactorily carrying out their responsibilities and work duties, and that there is no significant loss in productivity. Time taken on smoking breaks will have to be made up, for example at the beginning or the end of the day.

In the unlikely event of an employee not respecting the policy, breaches of the policy will result in disciplinary procedures.

g. Alcohol and Recreation Drugs Policy

No alcohol may be brought on to, or consumed on, the Council's premises during office opening hours. No recreational drugs may be brought on to, or consumed on, the Council's premises at any time.

Staff must not drink alcohol or take recreational drugs if they are required to drive private vehicles on Council business.

When staff are representing the Council at business functions, providing hospitality or attending any Council organised social event' inside or outside normal working hours, staff will be expected to be moderate if drinking alcohol and to take specific action to ensure they are well within the legal limits if they are driving. Staff are prohibited from taking recreational drugs on these occasions.

If an employee is known to be, or reasonably suspected of being, intoxicated by alcohol or having taken recreational drugs during working hours (including lunchtimes), arrangements will be made for the employee to be sent home for the rest of the day without pay.

Incapacity through an excess of alcohol, or being under the influence of recreational drugs, at work is a gross misconduct offence under the disciplinary procedure. During the investigation period an employee may be suspended from work as outlined in the gross misconduct policy. If, as a result of the investigation, the gross misconduct is proven, the employee is liable to be summarily dismissed.

h. Outside Activities

An employee must not engage in any activity which may prejudice the performance of their duties as an employee of GPC. If an employee finds themselves in a situation where there is a conflict or potential conflict of interest between their outside activities and their duties as an employee of the Council, they must immediately report the matter to their supervisor. The supervisor will then report the matter to the Staffing Committee. The Staffing Committee will decide if this activity merits being referred to the Full Council.

i. Conflict of Interest

An employee should not, directly or indirectly, engage in, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, in any other business enterprise which interferes or is likely to interfere with their independent exercise of judgement in GPC's best interest.

Generally, a conflict of interests exists when an employee is involved in an activity:

- which provides products or services directly to, or purchase products or services from the Council;
- which subjects the employee to unreasonable time demands that prevent the employee from devoting proper attention to their responsibilities to the Council; or
- which is so operated that the employee's involvement with the outside business activity will reflect adversely on the Council.

Should an employee be in doubt as to whether an activity involves a conflict, they should discuss the situation with their supervisor. The supervisor will then report the matter to the Staffing Committee. The Staffing Committee will decide if this conflict merits being referred to the Full Council.

j. Expenses

GPC recognises that no member of staff should be placed at financial disadvantage as a result of their work for the organisation.

Any travel, mileage (other than to and from the workplace), subsistence expenses incurred by staff and approved by their supervisor. Mileage will be paid at the [HMRC approved rates](#).

Where practical, the purchasing of equipment, sundries or either items required to carry out their job will be done through Council suppliers, or via the Parish Clerk's corporate credit card. In the event where it is not possible to do this and staff have had to purchase an item themselves, the Parish Clerk should have approved this in advance and will be able to approve an expense claim.

Claim forms will only be able to be processed with relevant receipts; reimbursement cannot be made where there is no receipt and proof for the payment having been made. Where at all possible, the claimant should provide a VAT receipt to support the claim; this will enable the Council to reclaim the VAT element from HMRC.

k. Expected Conduct

The Council is obliged by employment legislation to make clear to all staff exactly what is expected, and to make clear the boundaries of behaviour within which the Council expects everyone to remain.

It is a rule of the staff member's employment that they will not commit acts of misconduct or gross misconduct as set out below or acts of a similar nature.

Misconduct:

- Poor time-keeping.
- Unauthorised absence.
- Wilful damage to property.
- Breaches of Council's rules.
- Inadequate adherence to processes and procedures.

- Rudeness and/or Abusive behaviour.
- Unsatisfactory attendance.
- Unsatisfactory sickness record.
- Careless loss or damage of Council equipment.
- Unauthorised use of telephones.
- Failure to carry out lawful instructions.
- Unauthorised use of access to the Internet.
- Any form of unlawful discrimination.

Gross misconduct:

- Theft or unauthorised possession of any Council property.
- Serious deliberate or reckless damage to Council property.
- Falsification of reports, accounts, expense claims or self-certification forms.
- Refusal to carry out duties or reasonable instructions.
- Intoxication during working hours by reason of alcohol or recreational drugs.
- Possession of illegal drugs at any time.
- Serious breach of Council's rules.
- Fighting or other violent, dangerous or intimidating conduct.
- Bullying, sexual, racial or other harassment of any person.
- Gross negligence or incompetence.
- Conviction on a criminal charge.
- Receiving any sentence of imprisonment.
- Bringing the Council into disrepute.
- Sending abusive, scandalous, obscene or defamatory communications of any kind including email within the office or on the Internet, in text messages or any other media.
- Accessing or downloading any rude or obscene images or other material from the Internet or by email or text message or otherwise being in possession of rude or obscene material or publications or images in any media at your place of work or during working hours.

16. Disciplinary Procedure

a. Introduction

The procedures outlined below are for the purpose of dealing with employees whose behaviour is not satisfactory. They will usually be initiated in the interest of fairness but are not contractually binding and GPC can dismiss an employee without following the procedures. In the absence of the Chair of the Staffing Committee, the Vice-Chair may undertake their responsibilities set down in this procedure.

Confidentiality: Where a discipline issue arises others will sometimes find out what is going on. However, as far as possible, it is the intention of the Council that all disciplinary action will be treated as confidential between the employee and the individuals directly involved in the process. Records, witness statements and decisions will be kept confidential and in accordance with the Council's Information Policy.

b. Informal procedure

The Council hopes to resolve conduct problems informally and a first stage verbal warning may be considered appropriate at this stage. The desired outcome is that the Council do not have to use formal procedures except when there is no alternative.

c. Trial Periods

During a trial period any misconduct may lead to dismissal. Where an employee is entitled to notice they may be paid in lieu of notice in accordance with their contract.

d. Formal procedures

The formal procedures are designed to enable problems of alleged misconduct to be dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently.

Formal disciplinary action will consist of:

- First written warning;
- Final written warning;
- Dismissal.

An employee will not usually be dismissed for their first breach of conduct unless it is for gross misconduct.

e. Authority to deal with disciplinary decisions

A formal decision about a disciplinary matter will only be made by the Staffing Committee.

f. Investigation

Before any disciplinary decision is made there will always be an investigation to establish the facts. It may be necessary to suspend the employee while the investigation takes place. Sometimes the employee will be asked to attend a meeting as part of the investigation, but this is only to try and find out what happened and not to make a decision or take disciplinary action.

g. Disciplinary meeting

If it is thought necessary to consider disciplinary action, the employee will be told the nature of the complaint against them. They will be sent or given a letter or statement saying what it is alleged that they have done wrong and why it is wrong. They will be given the opportunity to see any relevant information and statements. They will usually be asked to attend a disciplinary meeting so that they can respond to what it is said they have done wrong. They must attend the meeting if reasonably possible. After the meeting, the employee will be notified in writing telling them what the Staffing Committee has decided to do about the complaint. The letter will tell the employee how to appeal if they are unhappy about the procedure or the decision taken.

h. An Employee's legal right to be accompanied at a disciplinary meeting

At any disciplinary meeting an employee can, if they want, be accompanied. If an employee wishes to be accompanied, they must tell the Chair of the Staffing Committee before the meeting. The Staffing Committee do not have to let the employee be accompanied if they think the request is unreasonable. For example, if the employee asks to be accompanied by someone who is also involved in what happened and whose presence might prejudice the meeting the Staffing Committee would object to the employee's choice. If necessary, the Staffing Committee will postpone the meeting for up to five days for the employee to arrange for someone to accompany them.

At the meeting, the employee cannot ask their companion to answer questions for them although the Staffing Committee will listen to whatever the companion wishes to say on the employee's behalf. If the employee does not want to answer questions, they do not have to, but the Staffing Committee can still make their decision based on the written and verbal evidence that they have received.

i. Recording of formal procedures

Whatever formal disciplinary action the Staffing Committee take, it will make notes of what is said and done and the employee will be asked to sign them to confirm that they contain a true record of what took place. A copy will be retained in the employee's confidential personnel file.

j. Procedures for misconduct

After a disciplinary meeting, if it is the decision of the Staffing Committee that the employee has committed

misconduct, a decision will be made on next steps, and it will usually involve one of the following procedures:

First written warning

This will be given to the employee in writing. This will contain a summary of the incident or circumstances and the consequences of future repetition. The warning will set out improvements in conduct required to be achieved and maintained and the duration of the warning, and the consequences of failure to respond as required. If the employee's conduct afterwards is satisfactory, the warning will be treated as spent after a specified period starting with the day that the warning is issued, after which it will lapse and be disregarded in any future disciplinary procedures.

Final Written Warning

This will be given to the employee in writing. This warning will state that if the employee commits a further offence of misconduct their employment will be terminated. As with a first written warning, if their conduct afterwards is satisfactory the warning will be treated as spent after a specified period starting with the day that the warning is issued, after which it will lapse and be disregarded in any future disciplinary procedures.

Dismissal or other serious steps

This stage will normally result from the employee's failure to act upon the requirements of behaviour and conduct made in the previous stages of the warning procedure. But it may arise simply due to the seriousness of the incident or the behaviour that has occurred. Dismissal will usually take effect immediately so that the employee will not be required to work any notice period. However, in some circumstances, the Staffing Committee may decide not to dismiss the employee, but to apply another serious sanction such as demotion, or suspension without pay.

Length of Warnings

A warning will usually apply for a specified period taking into account the seriousness of the matter, after which it will lapse and be disregarded in any future disciplinary procedures. The period will usually be six months, but the Staffing Committee may specify a shorter or longer period depending upon the seriousness of the misconduct involved in giving rise to the warning being given to the employee.

Procedure for gross misconduct

As with other misconduct, there will be a full investigation in cases of alleged gross misconduct. Usually, an employee will be suspended while the investigation takes place because gross misconduct is so serious. The procedure followed will be exactly as for other misconduct. But if the Staffing Committee find that gross misconduct has occurred the Council will normally immediately dismiss the employee without notice or pay in lieu of notice. Exceptionally other disciplinary action may be taken instead.

Appeals Procedure

An employee has the right to appeal against a disciplinary decision, arising from the procedures set out above, whether formal or informal. The letter telling the employee the outcome of a disciplinary meeting will remind the employee of their right of appeal.

An employee must put their appeal in writing, setting out why they want to appeal and what they disagree with in the original decision, and send it or deliver it to the Chair of the Staffing Committee at the Council Office, so that it is received within five working days of the next working day after they receive written confirmation of the decision.

The Appeals Committee, consisting of three different Councillors, will meet with the employee. As at the disciplinary meeting, the employee has the right to be accompanied and to have the hearing postponed.

The outcome will either be:

- to reject the appeal and confirm the original disciplinary action; or to
- uphold the appeal and reduce or revoke the original disciplinary action.

The result of the appeal will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days of the appeal meeting. The decision at the appeal stage is final.

17. Resignation, Termination, Redundancy and Retirement

a. Resignation and Termination of Employment

If an employee wishes to resign, they must give the required written notice. The Clerk must give three months' notice, unless they are in their probationary period, during which their notice period is one week. The Assistant Clerk must give two months' notice, unless they are in their probationary period during which their notice period is one week. The Assistant Clerk should submit their resignation in writing to the Clerk. The Clerk should submit their resignation in writing to the Full Council.

If the Council decides to terminate an employee's contract of employment, they will be notified in writing. The notice period is as per their employment contract, unless the employee is in their probationary period in which the notice period is one week. The Council may give the equivalent pay in lieu of notice.

On leaving the Council, the employee must return all items of GPC's property e.g. mobile phone, laptop, documentation and any company issued photo ID. Failure to do so may incur a deduction from their final salary payment or if necessary, a requirement to repay the Council to replace the property.

The Council may require an employee to take gardening leave, and the Council has no obligation to provide work during this time, but all contractual benefits will continue to apply.

b. Redundancy

An employee may be made redundant if the Council closes down or closes down the location where the employee works or if there is no longer a need for the Council employ someone to do the duties in the role for which they are employed.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 Section 139(1) states: "For the purposes of this Act an employee who is dismissed should be taken to be dismissed by reason of redundancy if the dismissal is wholly or mainly attributable to:

The fact that his employer ceased or intends to cease:

- to carry on the business for the purposes of which the employee was employed by him, or
- to carry on that business in the place where the employee was so employed,

or:

The fact that the requirements of that business:

- for employees to carry out work of a particular kind, or
- for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where the employee was employed by the employer, have ceased or diminished,
- or are expected to cease or diminish."

In order for a staff member to be made redundant it follows that the Council must make a decision to dismiss them.

A decision to dismiss someone for redundancy will only arise either due to a change in the work of the Council or technology that means that the Council has to reduce staff or that a particular job that the Council employs someone to do is no longer necessary.

When it becomes apparent that the Council must consider making anyone redundant, all possible alternatives will be explored first.

If redundancy is unavoidable the Council will objectively select from the employees whose jobs are at risk. Those that are at risk will be warned as soon as possible that they are being considered for redundancy, and there will then be a period of consultation. If a decision is then made to dismiss on the grounds of redundancy, the Council will inform the employee(s) concerned and give formal notice of the intended leaving date. During the period before that date the Council will allow time off work for the employee to look for a new job and attend interviews.

Any grievances or appeals that are raised about redundancy decisions during the period that the staff member is still employed by the Council will be considered through the grievance policy (section 14).

Subject to a qualifying period of two years' continuous employment (and certain other exceptions) any staff being made redundant are entitled to a statutory redundancy payment paid free of tax and deductions by the Council. This will be calculated in line with current legislation.

c. Retirement

In line with current legislation the Council does not have an age where it expects employees to retire. It is, however, the Council's policy to have regular workplace/appraisal discussions with all its staff where they can discuss performance and any development needs, they may have, as well as their future aims and aspirations. Staff can also use this opportunity to discuss retirement planning should the employee wish to do so.

Staff should endeavour to inform their supervisor at least six months before they plan to retire to ensure all appropriate arrangements are made (e.g. sourcing a replacement, mobilising their pension etc).

18. Whistleblowing Policy

a. What Is Whistleblowing?

A whistle-blower is someone who discovers something that is wrong and alerts their employer, or the relevant authorities, to what is going on. The law recognises that whistleblowing occurs and protects employees who are whistle-blowers from detrimental treatment such as dismissal. To be protected by the law a whistle-blower must fall within the stringent legal rules. Anyone who does not act in good faith, or is motivated by personal gain, will not be protected.

b. Council Policy

The Council's business is run in accordance with the law. It is Council policy as an employer to ensure that Council business is conducted in such a way as to comply with all legal requirements that govern its activities. This policy applies to the way that the Council employs and manages its staff. Councillors and staff operate as a team and everyone is expected to play their part as members of the team for the good of the business as a whole. There is no reason for any employee to believe that they will suffer detriment for speaking up if they believe that something is wrong, or that if the Council is alerted to it, it will be concealed, or that evidence will be destroyed. However, the Council is fully aware of its responsibility under the law and will respect the legal protection afforded to a whistle-blower.

c. Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

The Council will act in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and any subsequent legislation.

19. Equal Opportunities

Further information about the Council's definitions and approach to EDI can be found in the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy](#).

a. Staff Conduct

The policy of the Council is to promote equality, harmony and respect amongst individuals and to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of all kinds. Every staff member must ensure that their conduct conforms to the standards set out in this policy statement.

b. Our Commitment as an Employer

- a. We are an equal opportunities employer. All employees, whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Council.
- b. We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles, and circumstances. We provide an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued.
- c. Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- d. Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- e. Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- f. We review all our employment practices and policies to ensure they are fair and lawful.

20. Health and Safety

GPC has a legal duty to protect the health and safety of its employees and others. The Council takes this responsibility seriously and has made health and safety a management priority. The Council expects its staff to take care to avoid injury to themselves and others and to co-operate with the implementation of the Council's health and safety arrangements.

The Council has adopted a Health & Safety Policy which contains details of these responsibilities and arrangements. All staff are required to be proactive and familiarise themselves with the Health & Safety Policy Statement.

APPENDIX 1: An Explanation of Statutory Sick Pay

This chapter DOES NOT form part of a staff member's contract of employment.

a. Introduction to Statutory sick pay

Statutory sick pay (SSP) is paid by the Council, as an employer, through the normal payroll for up to 28 weeks in any period of incapacity for work or linked periods.

b. Amount of SSP

There is one rate of SSP payable for employees earning over the lower earnings limit set by the Government. SSP is subject to deduction of Income Tax and Class 1 National Insurance contributions and any other lawful deductions.

c. Eligibility for SSP

All employees are eligible provided:

- Their average weekly earnings are at or above the lower earnings limit.
- They are incapable of work for four or more consecutive days including Saturdays and Sundays and public and Bank holidays. Sickness on these days must be reported whether or not they would normally work. Periods of incapacity for work (PIWs) separated by less than eight weeks count as one single period of incapacity. Spells of sickness lasting less than four days do not count and cannot be linked with earlier spells.
- They are sick on "qualifying days". Qualifying days will be those normally worked under the contract of employment. The first three qualifying days in any PIW or linked PIWs count as waiting days and no SSP is payable. On the fourth qualifying day SSP becomes payable. If the employer pays sick pay, then SSP is not paid as well.

Employees will be ineligible if they fall into any of the following categories on the first day of a PIW:

- average weekly earnings over the last eight weeks were less than the lower earnings limit set by the Government;
- the PIW links with a claim for certain Social Security benefits;
- they have just started work and have done no work for the Council when they fall sick;
- they fall sick when away from work due to a trade dispute;
- they are pregnant and fall sick within the disqualifying period;
- they have already received 28 weeks SSP in a single PIW or linked PIWs;
- they are in prison or being held by the police or other lawful authorities.

d. Purpose of SSP

It can only be paid when staff are genuinely ill and incapable of coming to work. The Council may be entitled to investigate reasons for absence before making payments of SSP.

e. Incapacity benefit

Employees may be eligible to receive state incapacity benefit. The rates differ from SSP, are not paid at a flat rate and are subject to tax after they have been in payment for six months. If any state benefits are received, the Council must be informed as they will normally be deducted from the sick pay of the individual concerned.

f. Authorisation of SSP

SSP may be withheld if there is any reason to believe an individual is not ill, or the injury or illness is not sufficient to prevent normal attendance at work. Failure to comply with any rules may result in SSP not being paid. Government regulations contain a Right of Appeal to an Adjudication Officer at the DWP if it is believed that SSP

has been withheld incorrectly.

g. Leavers

Those who are sick when leaving the Council's employment may request a statement relating to the payment of SSP, which should be given to any new employer should new employment be gained within eight weeks of receiving it.

h. Records

The Council is obliged to keep records for three years from the end of each tax year, showing the dates of each reported PIW and details of SSP paid to each employee.

i. DWP inspections

DWP inspectors are empowered to make spot checks to ensure the Council is correctly applying SSP rules and to investigate the circumstances of individual cases.