

THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,
ON TUESDAY 5th NOVEMBER 2019, STARTING AT 2.00 P.M.

Present: The Mayor, Councillor B J Canham

Councillors

M P Brindle
D M Crawford
M S Robinson (Chair)

J Butler
C Harvey

Officer present:
Tina Cunnell

Town Clerk

MINUTES

526/19 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.

527/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Councillor J Hollis.

528/19 MINUTES
RESOLVED: To confirm the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 1st October 2019, received by Council on 29th October 2019 confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.

529/19 TRAINING & STAFF UPDATE
Clerk presented the updated training list and asked for specific training requests. The following were received:

- Allotments
- Practitioners Annual conference for Clerk
- Specific training for chairs and vice chairs for their committees

Clerk was asked to look at a training path for chairs and vice chairs, however this would not be compulsory.

Training Programme 2019/20

Date of Course	Course	Attendees
13 th & 20 th May	Councillor Training	B. Canham, C Barreto, J Butler, D Hodgkinson
27 th June	How to be an effective councillor	D Hodgkinson C Barreto
Online	SAGE 1,2 &3	C Ashmore
4 th September	Finance for Councillors	C Barreto, D Hodgkinson C Burnett.
5th September	VAT for local councils	T Cunnell A Yorke C Ashmore M Brindle C Barreto
17 th October	Preparing a budget and setting the	J James A Yorke C Ashmore J Butler

	precept	B Canham
31 st October/ 5 November	Mental Health Talk	All Staff D Crawford, C Harvey
6 November	Writing Professional Minutes & Agendas	C Crimmen
13 th November	HR disciplinary & Grievance process	T Cunnell M Robinson
6 th February	Data Protection	T Cunnell
11 th February	Law and Good Practice Council Meetings	T Cunnell

530/19

PERSONNEL BUDGET REVIEW

The budget and spend for October 19 were reviewed and noted. There is no change to the budget proposed for 20/21 in previous meeting.

531/19

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The policy was reviewed with the following aspects discussed:

- Training
- Regular contact or irregular contact
- Raising awareness
- HR consultants currently reviewing whole of staff handbook and policies therein.

Cllr Butler proposed and Cllr Brindle seconded the recommendation that this policy goes to Full Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council adopt the Safeguarding Policy (see Appendix A).

532/19

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The policy was reviewed and the following discussed.

- Diversity of staff
- Diversity awareness should be actively encouraged
- Training for councillors
- E&Q must be reviewed annually
- Monitoring
- Removal of first line on page 3 of 8 of the diversity policy statement

Councillor Mike Brindle proposed, and Councillor Butler seconded that following the amendment above that the policy be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy (see Appendix B).

533/19

COUNCILLOR EXPENSES

Cllr Burnett presented that he wished it be considered that disabled councillors get expenses to attend meetings.

The following was discussed:

- Process for setting up councillor expenses at town level
- Who would decide who was disabled?
- What was the criteria for entitlement?

Committee agreed that the process required further investigation and item to be brought back to Personnel Committee.

534/19

REPLACEMENT OF END OF LIFE IT EQUIPMENT AND PURCHASE OF COUNCILLOR TABLETS.

Under the minute 411/19 from Personnel October 2019.

“Concerns were raised that items should only be purchased from companies that we could easily send any faulty equipment back to and therefore cheaper online businesses were not always the safest choice.

The committee agreed that they would like to pursue the quote with company A and wished the finance committee to consider releasing up to £9000 from the Office Equipment reserve before doing this.

Cllr Harvey proposed, and Cllr Brindle seconded the recommendation that the committee send a request to finance committee for the use of office equipment reserve up to the value of £9000 for the replacement of windows 7 end of life equipment and initial purchase of tablets”.

Since the October meeting

Company A have revised the costs including the 3 extra tablets and cases is £7592.36 plus VAT as capital this will come from reserve (3122 as agreed by Full Council October 19)

The set up and licensing is £2573.91 plus VAT so with the additional tablets the total project is over £10k

Councillor Crawford Proposed and Councillor Canham seconded to suspend standing orders and to authorise spend to company A (Capital from reserve as they are also our support provider and splitting the contract may not realise additional savings and could result in hardware not being updated by end of life date.

RESOLVED: To suspend standing orders (18 a v) and to authorise spend to company A (Capital costs from reserve 3132) they are also our support provider and splitting the contract may not realise additional savings and could result in hardware not being updated by end of life date.

535/19

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider resolving that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for any remaining items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

536/19

STAFF MATTERS

- Disciplinary outcome
- Staff welfare

Chairman.

Appendix A - Policy

Safeguarding



Introduction

This policy reflects the commitment of Thetford Town Council to safeguard children and adults at risk. The policy sets out the Council's responsibility to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

Thetford Town Council expects agencies, organisations and other stakeholders that we work with or who hire or manage our facilities, to adhere to our procedures as a minimum standard and operate their own effective safeguarding policy.

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to protect and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk using or receiving services provided or commissioned by Thetford Town Council, and to support the council officers, elected members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

Whilst it is not Thetford Town Council's responsibility to establish whether abuse has or is taking place it is everybody's responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of children or adults at risk.

This extends to the identification of abuse or poor practice by any council representative or person acting on behalf of the council as well as any allegations brought to the attention of Thetford Town Council by a member of the public. It is the primary concern that any such information is recorded and passed on to the designated Safeguarding Advisor without delay so that it can be actioned and referred to the appropriate agency.

Scope

Thetford Town Council recognised that Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Police are the lead agencies in the county with regard to safeguarding. However the council also recognises that everyone has a responsibility for protecting children and adults at risk including all employees and elected members.

This policy relates to all children under the age of 18 and adults at risk regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or cultural background. This policy outlines how the council meets its statutory obligations and gives guidelines for protecting and safeguarding children and adults at risk as well as the process for reporting concerns or incidents of abuse. This policy applies to all council representatives, agencies, organisations and other stakeholders that we work with or who hire or manage our facilities.

Principles

- The welfare of children and adults at risk is the primary concern
- All children and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everybody's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Employees are expected to adopt and abide by the Council's Employee Code of Conduct and the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- The Council will recruit, train and supervise its employees and others working on behalf of the Council to follow the safeguarding procedures to reduce the risk of allegations being made against employees.
- Thetford Town council will work in cooperation with other local authorities and bodies in order to provide the most effective means of safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Definitions

- The term **child, or young person**, is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years
- The term **parent** is used as a generic term to represent parent, carers and guardians
- The term **employee** refers to staff, elected Members, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing Thetford Town Council.
- The term **adult(s) at risk** replaces the term vulnerable adult and refers to a person aged 18 or over who is in receipt or who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
- An **alert** is a concern that an adult at risk or child is or may be a victim of abuse or neglect. An alert may be a result of disclosure, an incident or other signs or indicators.
- The term **carer** refers to unpaid carers – for example; relatives or friends of the adult at risk. Paid workers, including personal assistants whose job title may be 'carer' are called 'staff'.
- **Council services** – this includes anyone working on behalf of, delivering a service for or representing the Council for example; contracted service providers, shared services etc.
- The term **DBS** (Disclosure Barring Service) refers to merge of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. A DBS check may be needed for certain jobs or voluntary work when working with children or adults at risk.

Definition of Child Abuse

There are four broad **types of abuse**: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

The following definitions are drawn from the Department of Health and Social Services document entitled 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children' (2003):

"Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those who know them, or more rarely, by a stranger. There are different types of abuse and a child may suffer more than one of them. These types of abuse include:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance abuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways.

Bullying

In addition to the definitions given above it is important to recognise the impact and extent of bullying in the lives of children. Some people may not regard bullying and discrimination as child abuse because of the settings in which this often takes place and also because it is often children who are responsible for the behaviour. But this Council would wish to make clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

Identifying Abuse

The following list outlines ways in which abuse may be identified. A more comprehensive table is attached at Appendix B. It is important to remember that it is not the Council's staff member or volunteer's responsibility to determine if abuse is occurring but to report their concerns:

Possible signs

- Changes in behaviour; immediate or over a length of time;
- Bruises and injuries that do not reflect the activity the child is involved in and where the explanation does not conform with the injuries;
- Fear of certain adults
- Use of sexually explicit language and actions;
- The child is reluctant to take part (including changing and showering) or to go home;
- The child tells you that they are being abused;
- A third party tells you that they are being abused;
- A child who seems to be a 'loner' and does not integrate with the group;
- A child whose appearance deteriorates hygienically and/or physically

Some disabled and young children may feel more vulnerable in making others aware of abuse due to them relying on the abuser.

Thetford Town Councils procedures have been carefully constructed to ensure that all disclosures are dealt with confidentiality.

Safeguarding Code of Conduct

Good Practice

Council staff and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from allegations of abuse.

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment i.e. no secrets)
- Treating all young people and adults at risk equally and with respect and dignity;
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from the young people and adults at risk;
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people and adults at risk to share in the decisions- making process;
- Involve teachers, parents/carers and other key influences wherever possible;
- Be an excellent role model- this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people or using inappropriate language;
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;

Poor Practice

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others;

- Taking children or vulnerable adults to your home where they will be alone with you;
- Allowing children or vulnerable adults to travel on their own with you in a vehicle;
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- Entering a toilet with children or vulnerable adults unless another adult is present (this may include parent, teacher or group leader).
- Allowing or encouraging abusive peer activities (e.g. any game/activity where an individual may be held up to ridicule)
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Making sexually suggestive comments to, or within the hearing of a child or vulnerable adults.
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control;
- Allowing allegations made by a child or vulnerable adults to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Doing things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.

Training

All employees working with children or adults at risk must complete safeguarding training as appropriate to their role.

The relevant level of training will be determined in accordance with the employee's role. Employees which have infrequent or indirect contact with children or adults at risk in the course of their work will be required to complete the staff induction programme.

Those who have direct and frequent contact with children may be required to undertake further training.

Arrangements will be made for employees to undergo refresher training at appropriate intervals or at their annual training with any other relevant training.

Safeguarding advisor will receive all relevant training and subsequent refresher training to enable them to carry out their role.

Induction

All employees will receive an informal induction on starting work during which the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is explained and requirements in relation to Thetford Town Council's Code of Conduct drawn to their attention.

All Members will be invited to safeguarding training which will be included in the Member training programme.

Line managers may identify additional training needs for their employees through the Council's appraisal system. The level to which training is needed will be decided between the employee and their line manager.

Safeguarding Procedures

Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers should be vigilant at all times and comply with the procedures set out below.

Photography/Filming

The credentials of any photographers used should be checked prior to employment. The photographer must wear identification at all times during an event. No unsupervised access to children and adults at risk or one to one photo sessions at events should be allowed.

The names and photographs of children or adults at risk must not be used, unless with the express permission (written or verbal) of the parent, guardian, or carer of the child.

Written or verbal permission must be granted from a child's parent, guardian, carer or school before any picture of the child can be published in a council publication, website or social media feed or passed on for publication to any external media.

Any joint events with partners where photographs or film footage is taken must be made the responsibility of one of those partners and the policy & procedures of that body adhered to. It is the responsibility of the body taking responsibility for the photographs or film footage to confirm permissions and whether partners can use the images. When the Council commissions professional photographers or invites the press to cover Council services, events and activities, the Council's expectations must be made clear in relation to safeguarding.

Unofficial photographic and filming opportunities taken by hirers and users of council venues and services

Parks, open spaces

It is not practical to control unofficial filming and photography in parks and open spaces that are owned by the Council, if a member of the public has concerns they should be reported to the event organiser or directly to the police.

Community Centres and Civic Halls

These facilities may be visited by members of the public or hired for private functions. All hirers will be made aware of the Council's Safeguarding Policy; however it is the responsibility of the hirer to communicate their own safeguarding policy and arrangements to parents/carers.

Internet and Social Media

- All employees are expected to comply with the guidelines set out in the Thetford Town Council's Social Media Policy. In summary;

- Users must not create, download, upload, display or access knowingly, sites that contain pornography or other 'unsuitable' material that might be deemed illegal, obscene or offensive
- Employees should take due care when emailing confidential information (such as the incident referral form) to an email address.
- Any emails containing confidential information must be sent from a Council email account and only to an email account of the same i.e. "@thetfordtowncouncil.gov.uk"
- The use of social media sites is monitored, must be carried out with care and must not bring the council into disrepute.
- Websites are filtered and blocked dependent on the content of that site. The PPPCO also monitors the council website and Facebook page for unsuitable content.

Reporting Procedures

If any concerns are raised about abuse of a child or adult it is the employee's, Member's, volunteer's or contractor's responsibility to respond and report their concerns on the same working day according to the process set out below. It is **not** the responsibility of any council employee, Member, volunteer or contractor to decide if abuse is taking or has taken place.

There are four main situations when Members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers may need to respond and report a concern or case of alleged or suspected abuse. These are set out below.

A child or adult at risk is identified as possibly experiencing abuse or neglect.

- If the child or adult is at risk of immediate significant harm, contact emergency services or seek relevant professional advice
- Complete safeguarding concern report form (see Appendix A)
- Immediately contact a safeguarding advisor
- Concern investigated and result added to incident form and logged

A child or adult at risk makes an allegation of abuse or bullying

- If the child or adult is at risk of immediate significant harm contact emergency services or seek relevant professional advice
- Complete safeguarding concern report form (see Appendix A)
- Immediately contact a safeguarding advisor
- Concern investigated and result added to incident form and logged

Allegations or concerns are expressed about any other person i.e. parent, carer, other service user

- If the child or adult is at risk of immediate significant harm contact emergency services or seek relevant professional advice
- Report immediately to safeguarding advisor

- Record details on the safeguarding concern report form(See Appendix A)
- Concern investigated and result added to incident form and logged

Allegations or concerns are expressed about a Member, employee, volunteer or contracted service provider

- If the child or adult is at risk of immediate significant harm contact emergency services or relevant professional advice
- Report immediately to safeguarding advisor
- Complete concern report form (See Appendix A)
- Incident form referred to Norfolk County Council Adult/Children Services
- A Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) from Norfolk County Council Adult/Children Services is appointed to the case
- The LADO can be consulted for advice
- Dependent on the advice given by the LADO, a strategy meeting will be convened, chaired by the LADO
- A formal recommendation is made about whether the employee should be referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority(ISA)
- The employee may be subject to the Council’s own investigations and disciplinary procedure
- Result added to incident form and logged and appropriate action taken.

Safeguarding Contacts

Contact	Phone No
Thetford Town Council Safeguarding Adviser	07553 388552
NCC Adult/Children Services	0344 800020
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01603 223473
Breckland Police	101
Childline UK	0800 1111
Victim Support	0845 3030900
NSPCC 24Hr Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of Members, officers, volunteers and contractors are outlined below:

Safeguarding Advisor is responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children and adults at risk appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that are set out within the policy.

Town Clerk must ensure that vacancies are assessed to determine whether a DBS is required and ensure that appropriate employees are subject to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks and that their staff comply with this policy and the related procedures.

Managers (and managers responsible for contracted service providers) are responsible for ensuring that employees follow this policy and its related procedures and receive safeguarding training and the support they need in line with their responsibilities and level of contact with children and adults at risk.

All Members, employees and volunteers are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and adults at risk. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of safeguarding advisors.

Contractors, sub-contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of the Council are responsible for applying the appropriate DBS checks, delivering safeguarding training reflective of their level of contact with children and adults at risk, and ensuring that their employees comply with their own safeguarding policy and procedures. The Council has a responsibility to monitor these requirements and ensure they are carried out

Legal Framework

The Council, although not primarily responsible for children's social care or education or adult social care, has a legal duty to report and refer information regarding concerns about children or adults at risk to the Norfolk County Council Safeguarding Adults/Children's Board and Independent Safeguarding Authority as appropriate.

This duty is found in section 11 of the Children Act 2004, which places a duty on organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 also requires each local authority to cooperate with all relevant partners to improve the wellbeing of children in the authority's area, which includes protection from harm or neglect.

The Children Act 1989 gives local authorities a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Children's Social Care is the lead agency for making these enquiries, in conjunction with the Police where it is suspected that a criminal offence may have been committed.

Recruitment

- All potential candidates will have to fill in the Council's Application Form
- Personal identification and academic/vocational qualifications will need to be verified
- References will be obtained on the applicant
- All prospective employees are required to undergo a suitability interview.

- When drawing up a job description for a post, managers will ensure that roles and duties relating to working with children or vulnerable adults are clearly described in the job description, and that the requirement to undergo DBS checks is stated.
- All applicants for work that involves direct contact or substantial unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk will be subject to DBS checking procedures, prior to any work being offered in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Existing employees that are moving into jobs which require direct contact with children or adults at risk will be required to undergo checks under the DBS checking procedure to which a satisfactory response must be received.
- The council reserves the right to request a re-check at any time during this period
- Where a DBS check reveals any issues of concern (e.g. previous offences, warnings, cautions or Police concerns) a decision on appointment of an applicant must be taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Councillors. Where such concerns are raised in respect of an employee currently working for the Council, the Town Clerk must consult the Councillors in deciding what action to take.
- Councillors who have not already undergone DBS checks may complete the Self-declaration forms (see Appendix C) and forward to the Safeguarding Advisor

The Council's scope for working directly with children or adults at risk is limited. DBS checks should only be sought where a Member, employee or volunteer has substantial, regular or unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk as part of their duties or responsibilities for, or on behalf of, the Council.

Roles and Responsibilities of Safeguarding Adviser

- Be available to any employee or child/vulnerable adult to discuss any Safeguarding concerns.
- Receive referrals or reports of possible abuse or poor practice
- Have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the statutory agencies within the field of protection.
- Responsible for notifying appropriate agencies of any issues regarding safeguarding
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding within the organisation and act as a local source of advice on safeguarding matters
- Ensure that the Thetford Town Council Safeguarding Policy is adhered to and support the interest of children/vulnerable adults on Thetford Town Council activities and events
- To establish contact with the Norfolk County Council Safeguarding Children/Adult Board, and to be aware of the local procedures.
- Manage the administration/organisation of paperwork and record the information received
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, and follows the correct procedures
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed about any action taken, along with any further action required

- To uphold confidentiality as appropriate, in all safeguarding matters
- Advise the organisation of safeguarding training needs
- Monitor safeguarding information/referrals to check for patterns and ensure that the process is being adhered to and ensure that the procedures are followed appropriately in consultation with Children/Adult Services and where necessary the Police
- Ensure that the appropriate agencies are informed
- Ensure that information is recorded and stored appropriately
- Provide information to staff reporting concerns about support available to them
- Ensure data protection legislation is followed and personal details not shared with third parties
- Make decisions regarding disclosure to parents, carers, partners and pursuance of concern based upon the level of risk to the individual and/or their capacity to make

Appendix A - Concern Reporting Form

Please give as much information as possible, using extra sheets if necessary.

Once completed please pass this form to the Safeguarding Advisor.

<i>Your Details</i>		
Name:	Contact Number:	
Position:		
<i>Details of the individual at risk</i>		
Name:	Age:	Gender:
Home address:	Home phone number:	
	Name of parent(s) / carer(s):	
Are there any special factors relating to this individual (e.g. ethnicity, religion, language difficulties, disability)? Please give details:		

Details of your concern

What is your concern? If you are reporting the concerns of someone else please include their details.

Please describe what has prompted your concern. Include times, dates, and details of any specific incidents, and names of any people involved.

Please give details of the person(s) allegedly responsible for abuse/poor practice:

Have you spoken to the individual at risk? If so, what was said?

Have you spoken to anybody else about your concern? If so, please give details, including any further actions agreed:

Is there any other information you feel is relevant to this incident?

Your signature:

Date:

Thank you. Please now pass this form to the Safeguarding Advisor.

Appendix B - Signs of Abuse

Please note: These lists are a guide and are not exhaustive or definitive.

The presence of one or more of these signs is not confirmation that abuse is taking place. There may be other, more innocuous reason behind them. However, if you have any doubts or concerns then you have the responsibility to report them.

Type	Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.• Bruises that reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching).• Cigarette burns.• Bite marks.• Broken bones.• An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fear of parent being approached for an explanation.• Shows aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.• Flinching when approached or touched.• A reluctance to get changed or covering up (e.g. wearing long sleeves in hot weather).• Depression.• Withdrawn behaviour.• Running away from home.• Distrust of adults, particularly those where a close relationship would normally be expected.
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A failure to thrive.• Sudden speech disorders.• Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.• Self harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neurotic behaviour, such as hair twisting or rocking.• Prevented from socialising with other children.• Fear of making mistakes.• Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour.
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pain or itching in private areas of the body.• Bruising or bleeding in private areas of the body.• Sexually transmitted disease.• Vaginal discharge or infection.• Stomach pains.• Discomfort when walking or sitting down.• Pregnancy.• Bedwetting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn.• Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people.• Having nightmares.• Running away from home.• Sexual knowledge beyond their age or their natural development.• Sexual drawings or language.• Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about.• Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts.• Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia.
Neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others.• Constantly dirty or smelly.• Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight.• Inappropriate dress for the conditions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaining of being tired all the time.• Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.• Having few friends.• Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised.

Appendix C - Self-Disclosure Form

CONFIDENTIAL

We ask you to complete this form so that we are confident of your suitability to work with and around children. For more information read our Child Protection Policy.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or Bound Over Order?

YES NO (please tick)

If YES, please state the nature and date(s) of this offence(s):

You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Amendment) 1986, you should declare all convictions, including spent convictions.

Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action or sanctions relating to child abuse?

YES NO (please tick)

If YES, please give details:

You are required to sign below to certify that:

- You are not known to any Social Services / Social Care department as being an actual or potential risk to children
- You have not been disqualified or prohibited from fostering children or had any rights or powers in respect of any child vested in you assumed by a local authority

- No child has been ordered to be removed from your care;
- You are happy to complete a DBS check
- You will inform Thetford Town Council Safe guarding adviser within 24 hours if you are arrested or investigated in connection with concerns about your behaviour towards children.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Any surname you were previously known by: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

We reserve the right to carry out checks to verify the information given on this form. You may be subject to disciplinary action if any information is found to be false.

Appendix B - Policy

Equality and Diversity



Introduction

Thetford Town Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, strives for high standards both as an employer and as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for the Council to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation.

Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary or other appropriate action.

The Council's aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. The Council is committed to reviewing this policy on a biennial basis. Through our training, publications, interaction with members and other activities, the Council will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.

The Council will regularly review the implementation of its Equality and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

The Council urges staff and members to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.

Definitions

Equal Opportunities ensure that policies, procedures and practice within the Council do not discriminate against its employees, volunteers and stakeholders. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of whom they are, their background or their lifestyle.

Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to the Council and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.

Direct Discrimination, as defined in law, occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably than other people on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, disability, sex, actual or perceived religion or belief or sexual orientation.

However in terms of this policy the definition is taken to be wider and includes, for example, colour, nationality, marital status or caring responsibility, age, mental health, political, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice puts people of a particular group at a disadvantage and is not justified in relation to the job, for example a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group cannot be justified.

Victimisation means that if a person has made or is making an accusation of discrimination in good faith, it is unlawful to discriminate against them for having done so, or because they intend to do so or it is suspected that they intend to do so. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.

Harassment means unwanted conduct based on race, sex or age etc. which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual. (See the Council's Bullying and Harassment Policy for guidance where harassment has occurred).

Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees, or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that are comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures could take the form of additional training or providing the job application form in other languages to encourage applicants from these communities. 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

Statutory Duties

Thetford town Council will comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998

Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) harmonises existing equality legislation and is being implemented in phases. The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This means that we must, in the exercise of our duties, have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. The Council is also required to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. To

achieve this it is vital that the council foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves removing or minimising disadvantages suffered due to their protected characteristics and taking steps to meet the needs of these people from protected groups. It is important to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Policy Statements

Diversity

The Council will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and communities.

The Council encourages all people it works with, and for, to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The way we work, train and learn within the Council reflects both the Mission and Objectives of the Council and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

The Council will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to members, staff and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in the Council's work.

The Council will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

Equal Opportunities

The Council is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, member or service user should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities. Nor will such person's sex, disability, race, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, religion, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, age, trade union membership or non-membership, be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

This principle applies to all aspects of the Council's activities as an employer and provider of services, including recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Policy are:

- To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- To ensure equal access to jobs, volunteer opportunities

- To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality including Equal Pay Act 1970, Employment Rights Act 1996, Employment Act 2002, and Equality Act 2010.
- To promote equal opportunities in other areas not currently covered by legislation.
- To create environments free from harassment and discrimination.
- To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and service users.
- To confront and challenge discrimination where and whenever it arises whether it is between colleagues, or in any other area relating to the Council's work.
- To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in the Council.
- To ensure, through positive action and so far as is practicable, that all the Council premises and services are accessible to all people.
- To ensure that employment and advancement within the Council is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

Policy Implementation: Expectations

The Council recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and encourage diversity in employment/training/services. The Council will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Members. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to the Clerk to the Council.

However, the Council believes that all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality. Therefore the Council requires individuals:

- To implement measures introduced by the Council to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non discrimination.
- Not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other employee or participant on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital or civil partnership status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.
- To inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place.

The Council requires its Line Managers:

- To ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out.
- To ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- To ensure that individuals within their area are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy.

- To promote actively the benefits of employee and participant diversity, in employment, services and training.
- Ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated documents are reviewed on an annual basis.
- Review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity practice.
- Co-ordinate the delivery of an equality and diversity strategy and action plan.

Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion

The Council strives to ensure that our Members, staff and volunteers reflect the wider community.

Clear and accurate information on vacant posts should be available through advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications and interview. Vacancies should be advertised sufficiently widely to reach the widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external.

All recruitment material should not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular group.

Applicants will be informed, through all recruitment material of the Council's commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity.

Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable. Care, and advice where necessary, is needed to ensure these are not discriminatory.

Staff and volunteers should be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals.

Job titles that are discriminatory must be avoided.

Policy Implementation: Interviews and Selection

In line with the intentions of this policy, efforts must be made to select a recruitment panel which is inclusive in terms of gender, disability and ethnicity.

The shortlisting panel will select candidates on the basis of an objective assessment of their match with the requirements as described in the job description and person specification; this will not take into account the gender, name, race, religion or belief, possible disability or age of the candidate.

The interview panel must take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions which do not comply with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statements, e.g. questions relating to race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; marital or civil partnership status or caring responsibility, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, political or religious beliefs, class, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal convictions, union activities.

Policy Implementation: Training

In line with the intentions of this policy, the Council will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities wherever possible.

Appropriate training will be provided to enable members, staff, volunteers and committee members to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people. Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for members, staff, volunteers and committee members with all staff to read the following ACAS guidance:

Enforcement

The Council recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

Policy Enforcement - Grievances

- Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through the Council's established Grievance Procedure.
- Any service user who feels he/she has been unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should make a complaint through the Council's Clerk, who must report any such complaint to the Personnel Committee. If the complaint is about the Clerk to the Council, this should be made through the Chair of the Council/Mayor.
- Any job applicant who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the Clerk to the Council the Chair of the Personnel Committee.
- Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Bullying and Harassment Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.
- The Council will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination.

Policy Enforcement - Disciplinary Procedure

- Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment.
- All incidents of **direct discrimination** are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Incidents of **indirect discrimination** will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Incidents of **victimisation** or **harassment** will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Bullying and Harassment Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.
- Any member of any Committee or working group of the Council found in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be asked to leave the Council.
- Any service user found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from the Council.

Monitoring

The Members will review annually equality of opportunity relating to the Council services. Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Clerk to the Council who will report to the Chair of Personnel. All aspects of personnel policies and procedures shall be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against the Equal and Diversity Policy.

In order to determine the impact of this policy it is important that a monitoring system be developed which will measure commitment, progress and effectiveness. The Diversity and Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed as follows:

- The Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed in line with other Town Council Policies and its approval at each review point will be an agenda item of the Personnel Committee.
- All review recommendations will be presented to the next Full Council meeting for comment and ratification.

Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the Clerk to the Council will investigate the circumstances and action will be taken to counter any proven breach of policy.

If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of Members, staff or volunteers or restricting service users, the Personnel Committee should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.

Good Practice

In all our activities we will:

- Give due regards to equality and diversity when reviewing existing and developing new strategies and policies to ensure that we, secure fair and flexible working practices, provide excellent services and fairly award contract and commission services.
- Engage and involve interested groups and individuals with our decision making processes.
- Facilitate opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations within and between our communities.

In the delivery of our services we will:

- Assess the needs of our existing and potential service users and ensure fair access to our services. This includes making reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to use our services.
- Ensure the availability of appropriate support services including translation of website for key information.

Communications

This equality and diversity policy is available on the Town Council Common Drive and on the external website.