

Agenda item 6

For decision – approval of the Staff Handbook

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The staff handbook contains all policies relevant to staff, from absence management to shared parental leave.

It is important that Frome Town Council as an employer is confident that this document is up-to-date and complies with UK employment law. Therefore, we asked our previous HR advisors, Ellis Whitham, to audit our current version of the handbook to ensure it was compliant. I am pleased to say that on the whole it was deemed up to date and only minor changes have been suggested to comply with employment law. All future reviews of the handbook will now be completed by South West Councils.

We have also done our own internal review of the document. Previously there was mention of the Council Matters Committee which has been updated to Oversight Committee.

We have also had a couple of recent examples where policy procedures were not fit for purpose. As head of staff the Town Clerk is the named person all staff HR queries have gone to. However we know this to be impractical from a day to day basis, Paul does not have the capacity to keep a detailed overview of 40 members of staff. Sarah Williams, Business Manager, as head of HR is much better placed to oversee requests for flexible working, capability assessments, occupational health referral and absence management. It is also important to note the involvement of line managers in these processes as well.

In cases relating to the Town Clerk, in previous versions of the handbook, these matters were delegated to the Chair of Council Matters. However as the Leader of Council authorises the Town Clerk's holiday and works more closely with them, it felt more appropriate to the Leader to oversee some HR matters relating to the Town Clerk. Anything about the Town Clerk's terms and conditions have to fall within the remit of Council.

Any suggested changes can be seen in a track changed version of the handbook. The staff handbook is a very large document of over 100 pages, if you would like a copy please let me know [lflaherty@frometowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:lflaherty@frometowncouncil.gov.uk)

Recommendation

Approve the reviewed staff handbook for 2023/24