

# Briefing Note

---

## Policy reviews

### 1.0 Background

1.1 In 2016, as part of its application for assessment under the Local Councils Award Scheme, this parish council adopted a range of policies and procedures that would regulate the way in which it managed itself, and made itself accountable to the electorate.

1.2 As part of the adoption of those policies, councillors also agreed to make periodic reviews of them, and the council is now in a situation where it should begin to make a systematic appraisal of them.

1.3 The reviews are not made just to meet an agreed date. Other reasons to comply are:

- New legislation (for example, Data Protection Act 2018)
- Changes brought about by case law (The Ledbury Case<sup>1</sup> See 4.3.2 below)
- Impact of policies in practice (where using a policy highlights practical changes that will make it work better)
- Changes in the council's approach to engagement (making its work more understandable)
- Improving accessibility (already in process with our website)
- Timed to allow reapplication for our LCAS award in May 2022

### 2.0 Which policies?

2.1 There are six policies there need to be updated in total. Most require a few simple changes to update them, whilst others need substantial rewriting. They are:

Policy	Due	Scheduled
Complaints	2020	October 2020
Grievance	2019	October 2020
Disciplinary	2019	October 2020
Freedom of Information	2019	October 2020
Financial Regulations	2019	January 2021
Financial Risk Assessment	2019	January 2021

2.2 The first four documents are relatively simple and could be discussed and if in agreement, adopted at the October 2020 meeting. November has been left clear because it is the annual meeting where budget and precept are agreed, and the agenda may be full. The next available meeting for completion of the review would be January, and the Financial Regulations may be a substantial policy to review.

### 3.0 The documents

3.1 Each policy is attached to this briefing note in draft form. The header of each document explains what the proposed change is. Common to all documents now is that they comply with the requirements of the British Dyslexia Association (font, size of font, use of

---

<sup>1</sup> 2016 court case that now impacts on the council's Grievance Policy

colour, contrast, limited use of graphics, no words in capital letters ), and all sections have been numbered for easier reference and Speak Aloud (text to voice software) navigation.

#### **4.1 Complaints Procedure**

This procedure allows people to have a form of address to the Council if they feel they have a complaint or have been unfairly treated in their dealings with the Council staff, Councillors or the Council.

#### **4.2 Employee Grievance Procedure**

It is the policy of the council to give employees the opportunity to air and seek redress for any individual employment grievance which they may have. Grievances may be any concerns, problems or complaints employees wish to raise with the council. Since the last policy was introduced, the Clerk now manages another staff member. In the event of a dispute or performance complaint, councillors may wish to consider setting up a Staffing Committee that might adjudicate on disputes.

#### **4.3 Employee Disciplinary Procedure**

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all council employees to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct whilst at work or representing the council. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all.

#### **4.4 Freedom of Information**

S2 Explains how to obtain information

S3 Explains council's obligations

S4 Adds fee structure

S5 Explains what exemptions are

S7 Includes references to ICO for complaints

Author: John Hesketh Parish Clerk

Date: 7 October 2020