



Knutsford Town Council

Employee Handbook

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Where there is any difference between this document and the contract of employment, the contract takes precedence.

INTRODUCTION

This Handbook covers important aspects of employment and we ask that you read it carefully in conjunction with the Contract of Employment given to you when you commence employment. It also sets out the Council's approved Personnel Policies and Rules of Employment.

This document is written to inform employees of their rights and conditions of employment but does not form part of your contract. It complements the Council's Personnel Procedures which are written from a management perspective.

Knutsford Town Council has adopted the collective agreement known as the "Green Book" issued by the NJC for Local government Services (comprising representatives of employers & employees). The Green book contains four parts. Part 1 is Principles and Part 4 joint advice. It divides terms and conditions into key national conditions (Part 2) and national provisions which may be modified locally (Part 3).

The Council's Employee conditions of service as set out in this handbook, build on the Green Book.

The Council sets out to reward the commitment of its staff, consistent with its financial resources and to provide a satisfying and flexible working environment in which staff are given the opportunity to develop.

People are our most important asset and the quality and attitude of individuals is therefore the key to our continued success. Because of this, we will always treat each employee as an individual, and respect their rights and sensitivities.

NB References to notifications to be made to the Town Clerk should be read as Chairman of Personnel Committee when the employee concerned is the Town Clerk.

ABSENCES

See Absence and Leave Policy

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, AWARDS AND HOSPITALITY

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality are particularly sensitive areas.

The way in which you receive a gift/hospitality depends on the type of relationship involved and the context in which the gifts/hospitality are offered. Staff should always bear in mind the following points:

There must be nothing in your behaviour, which might give rise to a suspicion that you are acting in your own private interest, which might lead to a conflict of interest.

Your actions should never give the impression to the public, any organisation with which you deal and your colleagues that a gift or reward could influence the way in which you deal with any person or organisation.

Staff should always inform the Town Clerk of gifts/hospitality invitations/rewards made to them and the Town Clerk should advise the Mayor. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary action.

You must comply with the Officer Code of Conduct.

ACCOMPANIMENT

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

ADOPTION LEAVE

See Absence & Leave Policy

APPRAISAL

See Appraisal Policy

BEREAVEMENT

See Absence and Leave Policy.

BULLYING

Workplace bullying is a separate issue from sexual and racial harassment but the effects can be the same. Within the working environment bullying can be described as the use of a position or power to coerce others by fear, oppression or threat.

The Council will not tolerate bullying behaviour at any level and it is the responsibility of all managers to eliminate any form of bullying which they become aware of.

Allegations of bullying will be dealt with under the Dignity at Work Policy and if appropriate the grievance or disciplinary procedure. Any employee who feels they are being bullied should consult any manager or the Town Clerk.

CAR PARKING

Some parking facilities are provided for employees' cars. However, the Council disclaims all liability, whether in negligence or otherwise, for loss of or damage to any vehicle and/or its contents, howsoever caused, whilst left on the premises. It is not permitted to park in spaces allocated to other organisations.

The Council encourages employees to use a more sustainable form of transport where possible, and where a vehicle is not required for business purposes.

COLLECTIONS FOR CHARITIES AND FUNDRAISING

We are keen to assist legitimate charitable and community activities, provided they do not interfere with the business of the Council. To ensure this does not happen and that the cause or activity concerned is genuine, all such collections and fund-raising must receive prior authorisation from the Town Clerk. Organisers should ensure that no pressure is placed on staff to contribute.

COUNCIL CAR POLICY

The Council currently does not have a policy which entitles employees to the provision of a car as part of their contract of employment or the equivalent of an annual cash payment. Individual contracts of employment may allow for part of salary to be commuted for this purpose.

USE OF OWN CAR

Where the Council authorises an employee to use a private car on official business, the employee will receive a casual user allowance in accordance with the approved Green Book rate.

Business mileage is usually the distance travelled between your normal office and the place you are visiting. Where you are commencing travel from home for business purposes i.e. not

to your normal office, then the business mileage to be claimed is from your home to the place you are visiting or your normal office to the place you are visiting, whichever is the lesser.

The Council reserves the right to request copies of the individual's insurance certificate, to ensure adequate cover is in place for the business use of the vehicle.

Where staff are travelling to the same function/meeting every effort should be made to travel together.

COMPETENCE PROCEDURE

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

COMPUTER NETWORK

See IT Policy

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

In the course of your employment with us, you may come into possession of confidential information.

Confidential information is any information of a confidential nature relating to our business and may include:

- our business plans, business strategy and marketing plans;
- financial information relating to us, our financial results and financial forecasts;
- details regarding our employees and officers including the remuneration and other benefits paid to them;
- incidents and investigations relating to our operations or business;
- information relating to any pitches and tenders contemplated, offered or undertaken by us or on our behalf;
- confidential reports or research commissioned by or provided to us;
- any of our trade secrets including know-how and confidential transactions;
- details of any project on software development or any information relating to any type of replicated digital data medium including magnetic media tape, CD ROM or data designed to be circulated on the internet or any information relating to the methods, tools and techniques used by us in the course of our business;
- information relating to research activities, inventions, secret processes, designs, formulae undertaken by us or on our behalf;
- details of any transaction, contract or dealings with any person or body in respect of which we owe an obligation of confidence to a third party;
- any information which you have been told is confidential and any information which has been given to you in confidence by clients, suppliers or other persons.

This list is not exhaustive.

Unless acting in the proper performance of your duties, or required by law, you must not disclose to any person or body, or use, any confidential information that you obtain during the course of your employment. These restrictions apply to disclosure of confidential information to work colleagues apart from certain named individuals. These restrictions shall continue after your employment has been terminated but shall cease to apply to any information or knowledge that subsequently comes into the public domain, other than as a result of unauthorised disclosure by you.

Confidential information, in whatever format made or received by you during the course of your employment is our property.

You must return to us, on our request or upon termination of your employment, any confidential information which belongs to us and is in your possession or under your control. You must delete, on our request, all confidential information in your possession and destroy any other documents and/or items which are in your possession or under your control and which contain or refer to any confidential information.

You must not retain any copy/copies of any confidential information belonging to us. At any time during your employment, or following termination of your employment, we may require you to provide a written undertaking that you have returned all property belonging to us including confidential information and that you have not retained any copy/copies of confidential information belonging to us

CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

A Contract of Employment will be given to each employee within 8 weeks of commencement of employment. It will contain the statutory written Statement of Employment Particulars and other main terms of Employment.

Two copies will be issued, one to be signed and returned by the employee, the other for his/her retention.

Minor amendments to the Contract, e.g. a change in salary, will be amended by letter. More substantial changes, e.g. a promotion, may require the issue of a replacement Contract.

Please keep your Contract, any amendments, your job description and person specification safe for future reference.

PERSONNEL FILE

On the commencement of your employment, we shall create a personnel file containing documents, letters, etc. relating to your employment with us.

We hold personal data to ensure compliance with our record keeping obligations and for the purpose of personnel administration. All personal data will be retained by us in a manual or computerised form and will be processed by us and or/our representatives in accordance with the current statutory requirements.

We may use the information we hold to contact you when required. Such contact may require to be made outside your normal working hours.

In accordance with data protection legislation, we shall maintain our records as accurately as possible. We require to be advised of any change in your personal circumstances or details, e.g. telephone number, change of address, change of next of kin.

You have the right to access, on request, certain information held by us on file about you. Your request must be submitted in writing (e-mail is acceptable) (and accompanied by payment of any administration fee we choose to impose, up to a maximum of £10.)

In the event of a valid request, we shall provide you with a copy of the requested information within 40 calendar days.

IDENTITY DOCUMENTATION

Before starting work with us, we shall have requested documentation from you proving your entitlement to work in the UK.

We are required to check and to satisfy ourselves that you are the rightful holder of any document/s that you provide to us. All documents will be checked for the likeness of photographs, dates of birth being consistent with your appearance, expiry dates, stamps, endorsements and names. Photocopies of the document/relevant parts of the document will be kept on your personnel file.

Depending on the particular documentation with which you have provided us prior to commencing your employment, we may require to undertake follow-up checks of your documentation on an annual basis. If in such circumstances you are unable to provide us with original copies of the documentation required in terms of the relevant legislation, your employment will be terminated.

CAMERAS, TELEPHONES / EQUIPMENT

You may work with confidential information or have access to it. Accordingly, unless you have obtained the permission of the Town Clerk, you may not use, whether on our premises or elsewhere, any one of the following:

- a. the camera function of a mobile phone
- b. a digital or other camera;
- c. a camcorder or similar device; or
- d. a tape or other recording device for sound or pictures.

You should note these rules do not restrict any confidentiality obligations in your in your Statement of Particulars of Employment, this handbook, any of our policies currently in force or any other confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement. These continue in full force and effect.

CONDUCT WORK OUTSIDE OF NORMAL HOURS

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Subject to the required notice of the holiday dates requested being given to us in the usual way you will normally be able to use your holiday entitlement to observe ~~special~~ religious holidays.

MEDIA STATEMENTS

All media statements must go through the Office of the Town Clerk.

RANDOM AND SPECIFIC CHECKS

We may require you to submit to a personal search and/or a search of all your baggage, personal items, lockers, car, etc. We may do so at any time while you are on our premises or engaged on our business.

Searches may be required to protect both the business and our employees from illegal activities such as:

- a. any theft of our property or property belonging to another employee or third party;
and
- b. the possession or supply of illegal substances.
- c. A request to carry out a search does not indicate any suspicion of wrongdoing; searches will normally be carried out at random. However, we also reserve the right to stop and search you when we reasonably suspect that you may have committed an illegal act.
- d. If you are found to be in unauthorised possession of our property, or property belonging to another employee or other third party you will be suspended on full pay and the matter will be the subject of further investigation. This may lead to serious disciplinary action including dismissal. You may also be reported to the police.
- e. If you unreasonably refuse to submit to a search in accordance with our rules you will be subject to disciplinary action.

LOSS OF DRIVING LICENSE

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Staff are required to declare any interest they or a member of their family may have in accordance with the Officers' Code of Conduct.

DEPENDANTS

See Absence & Leave Policy

DISABLED PERSONS

If you are disabled, please ensure that the Council has a record of this and, if you are registered disabled, of your disablement number. The Council's Equalities Policy seeks to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of disability.

The Council will consider any ~~reasonable~~ request to carry out reasonable adaptation to make it easier for you to carry out your work.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

EMPLOYEE'S PROPERTY

The Council accepts no responsibility whatsoever for damage or loss to employees' property left on the Council's premises. We will, of course, take every reasonable step to recover lost property, but you are advised not to leave articles of value on the premises.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY/PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY

The Council is insured against liability for personal injury and/or disease sustained by its employees arising out of or in the course of their employment.

Professional Indemnity cover provides protection against breach of professional duty. The policy is designed to protect you against claims made by third parties.

A comprehensive list of all insurances is held by the Council and can be inspected by any member of staff on request.

ENVIRONMENT

See Environmental Policy

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

See Equal Opportunities Policy

FLEXIBLE WORKING

Employees with at least 6 months continuous service are entitled to request a flexible working arrangement, on a permanent basis, in terms of hours, location and pattern of work, in order to enable them to care for a child under 17 years.

Employees are requested to submit a written application at which time the Council will convene a meeting to discuss the circumstances and effect on the Council.

In addition to this statutory condition, the Council has adopted a Flexible Working Policy.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

You have a responsibility to contribute to 'good housekeeping' and to help to maintain the tidiness and cleanliness of the workplace. In particular you are responsible for tidying up after completing work and leaving your workstation in a clean condition and for the safe collection and storage of materials delivered to your order. Staff should always seek to optimise the use of resources and minimise waste in line with the Council's Environmental Policy

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

See Discipline, Grievance & Competence Policy

HARASSMENT

The Council recognises the right of every employee to work in an atmosphere free of harassment and to complain about it should it occur. The Council agrees to take appropriate steps to promote such a workplace.

It is against the policies of this Council for any employee to harass another employee in any way. Such conduct will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the Council's Discipline and Grievance Policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

See Health and Safety Policy and the Council's Health and Safety Handbook

ANNUAL HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT

See Absence and Leave Policy

PUBLIC & BANK HOLIDAYS

See Absence and Leave Policy

SICKNESS DURING HOLIDAY

See Absence and Leave Policy

HOURS OF WORK

Your normal hours of work are stated in your Contract of Employment and based on a standard week of 37 hours. The Council has adopted a Flexible Working Policy and your general work pattern will be agreed with your line manager at the commencement of employment.

The Council reserves the right to change working hours after the usual consultation process with staff. The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring adequate cover is maintained for the Council's services during working hours.

The Council will determine the need for overtime, when it is to be worked and the employees required, taking into account the circumstances appertaining at the time. Except in the case of an emergency, you will be consulted on any overtime requirements by the Town Clerk and as much notice as is possible will be given within the demands of business.

Overtime must be authorised in advance by the Town Clerk or relevant manager. Eligible staff will normally be given time off in lieu, for overtime, but may, at the discretion of the Town Clerk, be paid at overtime rates. The first half hour worked on any day will not be classed as overtime, but as "flexible working", and will not attract time off in lieu or overtime payment. No payment is made for travelling time where overtime is worked.

Employees who earn in excess of Scale Point 28 are not eligible for overtime payments.

Overtime payments are made at the following rates:

Weekdays	-	Time and a half
Saturdays	-	Time and a half
Sundays & public holidays	-	Double time

Part-time employees are entitled to these enhancements for weekdays only after 37 hours

The Working Time Regulations determine entitlements for working hours, breaks, rest and holidays. The following is a guide only to the provisions relevant to the Council.

Weekly working time will be limited to an average of forty-eight hours calculated over a reference period of seventeen weeks.

The reference period may be amended by a *relevant agreement* (for the definition, see below).

Absences through sickness, holiday or maternity leave are excluded from the calculation, but absences for other reasons will serve to reduce the average working time.

Workers may opt out of the weekly working time limit by individual written agreement, but they retain the right to opt back in by giving seven days' notice or up to three months' notice if so specified in the opt out agreement. In the event of any individual opting-out, the employer will have to maintain a list of those who have opted-out.

Adult workers will be entitled to a rest period of not less than eleven consecutive hours and workers under the age of eighteen to a rest period of not less than twelve consecutive hours in each period of twenty-four hours during which they work.

Adult workers will be entitled to a rest period of not less than twenty-four hours in each seven day period or a rest period of not less than forty eight hours in each fourteen day period.

Workers under the age of eighteen will be entitled to a rest period of two days (i.e. each day starting at midnight) in each seven day period.

Adult workers will be entitled to a rest break when daily working time is more than six hours. The rest break may be fixed by a *relevant agreement*, but, if not, it shall be an uninterrupted break of at least twenty minutes.

Workers under the age of eighteen will be entitled to a rest break of thirty minutes when daily working time is more than four and a half hours.

There are no relevant agreements currently in force at the Council.

A significant exclusion from application of the Regulations is for those who regulate their own working time, particularly managers. If a person's working time is genuinely determined by him/ herself, then there is only a statutory entitlement to paid holidays and health assessment.

Holidays, daily rest, weekly rest and daily breaks are only entitlements and not obligations. If a worker chooses not to take up any entitlement, there is no obligation on the employer to provide it.

INDUCTION

For new employees, induction training is carried out as soon as possible after a new employee commences employment, to accelerate their ability to do the job.

The objectives of this training are to ensure that the new employee is:-

- able to understand the Council's philosophy, hierarchy, organisation and geography.
- introduced to immediate colleagues and other relevant employees.
- familiar with all the conditions which relate to his/her employment.

INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

The Council is exempt from the provisions of the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004, but never the less will provide employees with a level of Information and consultation. This will include all statutory notifications and the right to comment on changes to working conditions.

JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description has been prepared for each post, to give an accurate description of the main duties, responsibilities and relationship involved. It does not include every activity that might have to be done, but whatever is necessary to show the nature and purpose of the job.

A copy will be issued with the Contract of Employment.

JURY SERVICE

See Absences and Leave Policy

LITERATURE

You may display, with the permission of the Town Clerk, relevant literature on the premises.

MAKING A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE (WHISTLE-BLOWING)

Employees are entitled to specific rights relating to the disclosure of certain types of information (or whistle-blowing). This protection applies in the following circumstances where the employee has reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed;
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject;
- a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
- the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged; or
- information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

However, there will not be protection for the disclosure if the employee commits an offence by making the disclosure, or it is a disclosure in respect of which legal professional privilege would apply.

QUALIFYING PROCEDURES

In order for the disclosure to be protected, the employee must make it by one of the following methods or procedures:

- to the employer, or legally responsible person or appropriate person authorised by the employee to receive disclosures;
- to a legal advisor;
- to a prescribed person (i.e. to a listed regulatory body, such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission or the Environmental Agency).

In addition, disclosure is protected if it is to an individual unconnected with the organisation, such as the police or the media. In this case an employee will only be protected if;

- the matter has previously been raised with the employer or prescribed person, or it has not been so raised because the employee reasonably believes that he or she will be victimised;
- if there is no prescribed person, the employee has a reasonable belief that a complaint to the employer would result in evidence being concealed or destroyed;
- the information has already been disclosed to the employer or prescribed person;
- the information is serious enough to justify bypassing one of the other specified procedures;
- the disclosure is made in good faith, in the reasonable belief that the claims are substantially true, not for the employee's personal gain; and
- it is "reasonable in all the circumstances" to make the disclosure.

MATERNITY & PREGNANCY

See Absences and Leave Policy

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

If you are, or have been unable to carry out your duties as a consequence of illness or injury, you may be required to have an examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the Council. Any expense incurred will be met by the Council and you will be required to provide a copy of the resulting medical report.

(ACCESS TO) MEDICAL REPORTS

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to obtain a Medical Report from an employee's Doctor/Specialist in order to establish:-

- Reason for absence.
- Duration of absence.
- When the employee will be able to return to work.
- What, if any, treatment is being prescribed.
- Whether the problem will recur.
- Whether the employee can do all the duties of the job.

The above will enable the Council to plan workloads. It is in the interests of both the employee and the Council to establish the employee's ability to work with the benefit of expert medical opinion.

Employees have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 which are as follows:

- Employees may withhold consent to the report being sought.
- Employees can request to see the report prior to it being forwarded to the Managing Director
- If employees indicate that they wish to see the report in advance the Council will inform the employee when the Doctor/Specialist is written to and he/she will be informed that he employee wishes to see the report. Employees then have 21 days to contact the Doctor/Specialist regarding arrangements to see the report.
- Should the employee indicate that he/she does not wish to see the report prior to the Council the employee has the right to write to the Doctor within 21 days of the report having been received. It is our policy to send employees a copy of the report in any event prior to a meeting being arranged to discuss the content.
- Employees have the right to ask the Doctor/Specialist for a copy of the report for up to 6 months after it has been supplied. There may be a charge for this. The Doctor/Specialist cannot submit the report to the Council without the employee's consent.
- Employees may ask the Doctor/Specialist to amend any part of the report which is considered by the employee to be incorrect or misleading. If the Doctor/Specialist is not in agreement the employee may attach a statement of his/her views with the report.
- If the Doctor/Specialist thinks the employee or others would be harmed by the report or any part of the report it can be withheld from the employee.

The Council would stress that no decision will be made that could affect an individual's employment without full consultation with that individual and careful consideration of all the circumstances. Where the Council wishes to obtain a medical report, employees will be asked for their written consent.

MEDICAL SCREENING

Necessary paid time off will be granted for the purpose of cancer screening.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT

You must not become engaged or concerned in any other business in which your duties may conflict with the interests of the Council, without prior permission from the Town Clerk. You must not become engaged in any secondary occupation that may interfere with your work. Officers earning in excess of Scale Point 28 must not be otherwise employed without the authority of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk must obtain authority from ~~Council~~ the Personnel Committee before undertaking other employment.

PARENTAL LEAVE

See Absence and Leave Policy

PART TIME WORKERS

The Council will treat part time workers no less favourably than a full-time worker on the grounds that a worker is part-time.

A part-time worker is someone who is paid according to the time worked and is not identifiable as a full-time worker having regard to the Council's custom and practice or to the Contract of Employment. Any comparison is with someone who is a 'comparable full-time worker', working at the same establishment and doing work which is the same or at least similar, and who has broadly similar levels of qualifications, skills and experience; comparison is also with a person working under the same type of contract (i.e. a part-time casual worker may have a different type of contract to a full-time permanent worker).

In general, part-time workers are entitled to pay and benefits on a pro-rata basis which gives part-time workers the right to pay and benefits proportionate to those of full-time workers. This will normally mean the same (hourly) rate of pay as a comparable full-time worker, however, rates of pay for overtime will be payable at the same rate as comparable full-time workers only after the part-time worker has worked more than the normal full-time hours.

PATERNITY LEAVE

See Absence and Leave Policy

PAY

By adopting the Green Book, the Council will determine pay according to current pay scales. Actual scale points are based on job content, responsibility, qualifications and experience. Pay Scales are reviewed annually in April through national negotiation.

PAYMENT OF WAGES/SALARIES

Salaries are paid by credit transfer to the bank or building society of your choice normally by the 25th day of each calendar month

You will be given an itemised statement recording your gross salary, deductions and the net amount. Charity deductions will be made on request.

PENSION

The Council will provide access to the Cheshire Pension Scheme.

PERSONAL DETAILS

We need to keep up-to-date information on your home address and telephone number, together with the name, address and telephone number of your next of kin (or other such person) for emergency contact purposes. Please inform the Council in writing of any changes of the above to personal details.

The Council will respect the confidentiality of any personal information that it keeps.

PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

See Data Protection & Retention Policy

PERSON SPECIFICATION

A person specification has been prepared for each post, to set out the personal characteristics and experience likely to be required for a person to undertake the role.

A copy will be issued with the Contract of Employment and job description.

PRIVATE TRADING

Private trading on the Council's or customers premises is not allowed.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

If you are new to local government you are subject to a probationary period of up to six months during which time your performance and ability will be assessed. At the end of the period, and subject to a satisfactory report by your line manager, your probation period will have been fulfilled and your employment confirmed.

If your performance has not met expectations during the probationary period the Council may extend the probationary period with an action plan being agreed. If ultimately

performance remains unsatisfactory at the end of such extension your employment will not be confirmed and your employment terminated.

PUBLIC DUTIES

See Absence and Leave Policy

RECRUITMENT

The Council believes that it is important to recruit the right person to any vacancy, be it a new job or a replacement for an existing position. It will always make clear the qualities and experience it is looking for and will recruit in accordance with its Personnel Procedures.

The Council will rigidly apply its equal opportunity policies. Where appropriate existing employees will be encouraged to apply for other positions within the Council.

REDUNDANCY/REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

See Redundancy Policy

REFERENCES

The Council will always seek references from previous employers and any offer of employment is conditional upon satisfactory references being obtained. Should the Council be made aware that you have given inaccurate information, we may reconsider your employment

When you leave the Council or apply for another job, your line manager will normally give you a reference on behalf of the Council. This will be accurate and truthful as required by law. You will not be given an “open” reference.

RETIREMENT

The Council does not have a default retirement age and employees are welcome to remain with the Council beyond the state retirement age. Any termination of employment by the Council will not be related to age.

However, any employee retains the right to retire earlier if they so wish. The Council will be pleased to advise on any matter relating to retirement and help you make any adjustments.

SMOKE FREE POLICY

It is the policy of Knutsford Town Council that smoking is not permitted in any part of its premises, entrances or grounds, or in its vehicles.

This Policy applies to all employees, members, consultants, customers, visitors and contractors, whom it is intended to benefit.

The Council will not provide smoking areas on its premises and employees will not be given breaks for smoking during working hours.

The Council will help employees who wish to stop smoking through approved NHS services, and may give time off to attend such services by arrangement with management.

Overall responsibility for policy implementation rests with the Town Clerk, however all staff are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy.

Appropriate 'no-smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at the entrance to and within premises and in all vehicles.

Containers for smoking waste will be provided as appropriate outside Council premises to reduce litter.

STATUTORY SICK PAY

See Absence and Leave Policy

TELEPHONE CALLS

You are requested to restrict personal telephone call to those which are essential and cannot be made outside working hours. The use of the Council's telephone is restricted to cases of emergency and local calls. International calls and premier rate calls (0900, 118, 070) should not be made without the specific consent of the Town Clerk.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Should you wish to terminate your employment, you must give the appropriate written notice stating the date you wish to leave in line with the conditions of your Contract of Employment. You will normally be expected to work your period of notice, but this may be waived or reduced at the discretion of the Council.

You must ensure that any property issued to you by the Council is returned.

TIMEKEEPING

Employees are responsible for attending punctually for work in accordance with the hours defined within the Written Particulars of Main Terms of Employment.

Employees may not leave work prior to their normal finishing time without permission from their manager. In the event of an employee requiring time away from work during the

normal working period, he/she must report to his/her manager upon leaving and returning to work.

Persistent lateness will be considered to be a breach of procedures and may result in disciplinary action. Lateness for work may result in pay being reduced accordingly.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

The Council has not recognised any trade union for collective bargaining purposes but does subscribe to the National Joint Council for local government for national negotiations.

Employees have the right to belong to or take part in the activities of any independent trade union. They also have the right not to be a member of a trade union or a particular trade union.

The Council will not discriminate against any person because they choose/choose not to be a trade union member.

Employees only have the right to reasonable time off to take part in trade union activities or to carry out trade union duties, if that trade union is recognised by their employer for collective bargaining purposes.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

See Training Policy

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

TRAVEL ON COUNCIL BUSINESS

SUBSISTENCE

No flat rate payment for subsistence will be made i.e. no payment where staff are out of the office for more than 5 to 10 hours and no overnight allowance. Reasonable meal / entertainment expenses incurred on Council business will be reimbursed on production of receipts.

HOTELS

Where employees are required to stay overnight on Council business the recommended benchmark for all staff is an AA 2 or 3 star hotels. Guidance can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

Where employees incur additional reasonable incidental costs whilst staying overnight on Council business these will be reimbursed following submission of original receipts.

AIR TRAVEL

All reservations must be approved in advance by the Town Clerk.

RAIL TRAVEL

All staff will travel standard class with the option to reserve a seat. Staff may travel 1st class at the discretion of the Town Clerk where substantial amounts of work are to be undertaken during the journey or it proves cheaper to do so.

OTHER AD HOC ITEMS

Subjects such as relocation and lodging allowances crop up infrequently and will be dealt with on an individual basis.

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

Expenses and other payments will be paid by cheque or bank transfer as soon as possible after authorisation by Council.

To ensure accuracy and timely reclaim of costs, all expenses need to be claimed within 3 months of being incurred and original receipts should be provided.

Where claims are made outside this period the Council reserves the right to refuse payment.

UNOFFICIAL CLUBS, FUNDS AND SCHEMES.

The Council is not responsible for the way in which any unauthorised employee funds, holiday clubs and saving schemes are conducted, or for the safety of those funds.