



KNUTSFORD TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF HANDBOOK

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VERSION 2022

OWNER Personnel Committee

APPROVED DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

We recognise that you are our most important asset and your qualities and attitude are fundamental to ~~our~~ [the Town Council's](#) continued success. Central to this belief is our commitment to get the best from you, provide opportunity for continuous professional development and provide an environment where you feel trusted and valued.

This handbook is part of our suite of HR policies which complement your contract of employment. Where there is any difference between this handbook and your contract, the contract will take precedence.

[In addition to this handbook, you should be aware of the provisions in the following policies and, more widely, the provisions in other policies, procedures and protocols set by the council.](#)

- [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- [Grievance Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [IT Policy](#)
- [Member Officer Protocol](#)
- [Officer Code of Conduct](#)
- [Performance Improvement Policy](#)
- [Sickness Absence Policy](#)
- [Training Policy](#)

The aim of this handbook is to provide clear and consistent policy for how we will manage you, our expectations from you and what you can expect from your manager.

Should you have any queries about the application of any aspect of this handbook, or believe that something is not covered, please speak with your line manager.

For the Town Clerk, where this handbook requires an employee to report to their line manager or the Town Clerk, the Town Clerk shall report to the Town Mayor.

ABSENCES

Absence rates will be monitored by line managers and the Town Clerk who will discuss absences with you and explore options to find solutions to help you attend work regularly. You must inform your line manager of unexpected absence as soon as possible and in any instance by 9:30am.

In the case of absence because of an emergency situation, you will normally be required to take annual holiday entitlement to cover the period of absence or utilise Flex Credit under the Flexible Working policy.

In cases of sickness of 7 calendar days or less, you must complete a Self-Certification Form upon your return to work. Where absence is expected to/lasts for a period in excess of 7 days, Statement of Fitness for Work certificate(s) will be required from a doctor to cover the duration of the absence. Where you have presented a certificate stating you are unfit for work you will not be allowed to work until either that certificate has expired or until a certificate stating the you are fit for work has been presented.

Unauthorised absence will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

Should you be taken ill at work and need to go home, the absence will be counted as sick leave. If you leave before 12pm a full day's absence must be shown, if leaving after 12pm a half day.

ABSENCE REVIEW

Your absence shall be assessed and reviewed after every period of absence. The form of the review will vary according to your absence record and shall be recorded and signed by you and your line manager. It shall be focused on reviewing your absence record, ensuring you are updated on developments during absence and seeking to provide support to minimise any future absences.

Long term sick leave will be reviewed at regular intervals. If after a reasonable period, you remain unable to work the Sickness Absence Procedure may be invoked.

PAYMENT DURING ABSENCE

~~Entitlement to pay during absences is set out in your contract.~~

You will receive sick pay for the following periods:

During 1st year of service 1 month's full pay and, after
completing 4 months' service, 2 months' half pay

During 2nd year of service 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay

During 3rd year of service 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay

During 4th and 5th year of service 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay

After 5 years' service 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

The council has discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.

If you are prevented from attending work due to contact with an infectious disease you will receive normal pay and this will not be reckoned against the entitlements above. If you

If you abuse the sickness scheme or are absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the your own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in your own time on your own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended.

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS, AWARDS AND HOSPITALITY

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality are particularly sensitive areas and 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. You should always bear in mind the following points:

- 1) 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.
- 2) Your actions should never give the impression to the public, a third party organisation or your colleagues that a gift or reward could influence the way in which you deal with any person or organisation.

You must inform the Town Clerk of gifts/hospitality invitations/rewards made to them which will be logged on a gifts register. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

The Officer Code of Conduct contains additional guidance on accepting gifts and hospitality.

ACCOMPANIMENT POLICY

You are entitled to be accompanied at formal meetings held under the councils Performance Improvement, Sickness Absence, Grievance and Disciplinary policies.

The right to accompaniment is by a fellow employee or trade union official of your choice.

The Council will provide any chosen companions with appropriate paid time off to allow them to attend the meeting. However, it is up to you to arrange for a companion to attend the meeting.

If your chosen companion cannot attend on the day scheduled for the meeting, then the Council will agree a new date which will usually be within 5 working days of the date originally scheduled. You may need to find someone else if your chosen companion is not available within that timescale.

The companion's role is to advise you during the meeting and make representations on your behalf. Both you and your companion are required to cooperate in ensuring a fair and efficient meeting. The companion is not entitled to answer questions on your behalf.

ADOPTION LEAVE

Within seven days of being matched with a child, you must inform your line manager in writing how much leave you wish to take, the leave start date and the date of placement. You should provide evidence of the placement.

In the case of surrogacy arrangements, you should inform your line manager in writing 15 weeks prior to the due date of when the child is due and when you wish to start you leave.

Leave shall commence no earlier than two weeks before the placement or, in the case of adoption from outside the UK, when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this or in the case of surrogacy the day or day after the child is born.

You will be entitled to Adoption Leave in accordance with statute. If you are entitled to adoption leave, you shall be entitled to five days paid leave to attend adoption appointments after being matched with a child.

[The partner/nominated carer of the primary adopter shall be entitled to five days of paid Adoption Support Leave.](#)

ADOPTION PAY

You must give 28 days' notice before being paid Statutory Adoption Pay; unless the time between being matched with a child is less than this.

You will be paid Adoption Pay in accordance with your contract of employment.

APPEALS POLICY

The council's Performance Improvement, Sickness Absence, Grievance and Disciplinary policies set out a right to appeal decisions.

An appeal must be submitted within one calendar week of you being informed of the decision. The appeal should set out the grounds for the appeal which will usually fall into one of the following:

- Challenge the process followed in reaching a decision
- Challenge the evidence relied on in making the decision

- Challenge the decision reached
- Present new evidence or reasons why the action should not be taken

An appeal hearing will be convened to consider the matter. You have the right to be accompanied to this meeting as per the council's accompaniment policy.

Appeals will be considered by a sub-committee of the Personnel Committee. Where the decision being appealed was taken by a sub-committee of the Personnel Committee the appeal will be heard by a sub-committee comprising wholly different and unconnected members.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to you in writing explaining the grounds of which the decision was reached.

The outcome of the appeal will be final.

APPRAISAL (EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS)

The Town Council is committed to your development and recognises the importance of regular formal reviews to achieve this.

The Town Clerk shall maintain procedures to ensure that you receive development reviews with your line manager throughout the year and as a minimum you must receive two reviews approximately six months apart.

The focus of reviews shall be to ensure that you understand your job responsibilities, identify and review progress against performance targets and providing actionable and timely feedback. A record of all reviews shall be agreed by the line manager and you and retained on your personnel file.

Reviews should not be used to raise serious issues of under-performance for the first time.

APPOINTMENTS

You should endeavour to make any appointments (such as doctors, dentists etc) in your own time. With the approval of your line manager you may utilise the council's flexible working policy to facilitate appointments. For appointments during working time, you may be required to provide evidence of the appointment.

BEREAVEMENT

If you suffer a bereavement in your immediate family, you are entitled to paid leave to attend the funeral. Additional paid leave may be allowed for immediate family bereavement at the discretion of your Line Manager.

Time off (using annual leave) for funerals will also be allowed for more distant relatives and close friends at the discretion of your Line Manager.

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. If you feel you are being bullied you should consult with your Line Manager or the Town Clerk.

CALL OUT WORKING

There may be instances where you are required to attend work out of hours for urgent business, for example to attend a facility when an alarm has been triggered. The Town Clerk shall establish call-out tree(s) as appropriate and ensure these are communicated to you. If you are called-out you shall be paid for your time (including any necessary travelling time) at your usual hourly rate with a minimum payment of two-hours and multiples of one hour. If you are called-out on any day which is a public holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday, you shall be paid at twice your hourly rate. Staff on the call-out tree are not on-call and may not always be available.

CAR PARKING

Some parking facilities are provided for your car. 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 you 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 fundraising must receive prior authorisation from the Town Clerk. Organisers should ensure that no pressure is placed on you to contribute.

COUNCIL CAR POLICY

USE OF OWN CAR

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

If you are travelling to the same function/meeting as your colleagues, every effort should be made to travel together.

USE OF COUNCIL VEHICLES

Use of council vehicles must be authorised by the Town Clerk, the vehicle is uninsured without this consent. Use of the vehicle will only be approved where there is a business need for it to be used.

Smoking is strictly prohibited in council vehicles.

COMPUTER NETWORK

In accordance with the council's IT policy, personal use of council IT equipment is permitted but should be kept to a minimum during working hours. Reasonable use of the internet during working hours is permitted. No software should be installed without the authorisation of the Town Clerk.

Misuse of the network is defined in the council's IT policy but includes creation or transmission of offensive, obscene or indecent content, transmission of SPAM and deliberate violation of privacy or accessing others' data.

CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

Contracts of Employment will be issued to you on your first day of employment; two copies will be provided, one for the council and one for you.

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.

You should ensure you keep your contract and any side letters safe for future reference.

CAMERAS, TELEPHONES AND RECORDING EQUIPMENT

You may work with confidential information or have access to it. Unless permission has been obtained from the Town Clerk you may not use devices to capture audio/video/pictures whilst on council premises, except where there is a common sense need to do so e.g. to take a photo for council business.

This rule does not restrict any confidentiality obligations in contracts of employment.

CONDUCT OUTSIDE NORMAL WORK HOURS

If you are attending any work-related social events (that being any event you are invited to through your employment at the council and any events organised by the council) you must ensure that:

- a) Alcohol should be consumed in moderation
- b) The use of illegal drugs is forbidden
- c) The Dignity at Work policy must be observed
- d) Behaviour does not and could not offend, intimidate, embarrass or upset any person, intentionally or as a joke.

You must not behave in a way which could bring the council into disrepute. You should not become engaged in activities which prevent you from fulfilling your duties or result in adverse publicity to the council.

DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

Criminal charges or convictions for offences committed during the period of your employment with the council, whether committed during or outside normal working hours must be reported to the Town Clerk immediately.

Such charges/convictions may result in disciplinary action, including summary dismissal, where the council believes it affects your suitability for the role, impairs the council's reputation or seriously undermines the trust and confidence the council has in the employee.

Failure to disclose such charges/convictions may also result in disciplinary action.

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 religious holidays.

MEDIA STATEMENTS

You should not make statements to the media without the authorisation of the Town Clerk.

RANDOM AND SPECIFIC CHECKS

The council may require you to submit to a non-invasive personal search (e.g. requiring pockets to be emptied) 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. Where possible this will be done in the presence of another employee.

Searches may be required to protect both you and the business 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 LICENCE

If as a condition of employment you must hold and continue to hold a current valid driving licence and during the period of employment has your licence revoked, the council reserves the right to terminate employment.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

You are required to declare any interest you or a member of your family may have in accordance with the Officers' Code of Conduct.

DEPENDENTS

You may take a reasonable amount of unpaid leave to deal with an emergency involving a dependent, this shall be discussed with your line manager.

DISABLED PERSONS

You should ensure the council has a record of any disability you may have. The council seeks to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of disability and will consider any request to carry out reasonable adjustments to make it easier for you to undertake your work.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

The council has a detailed disciplinary policy which will be followed where managers suspect misconduct has occurred.

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

The Council will undertake an assessment of your workstation on your first day and at least annually. The council will reimburse DSE users the cost of an eye examination at least every two years (or more frequently if recommended by an optometrist, or you are experiencing a specific problem).

The council will cover the cost of glasses if the examination shows you need special glasses prescribed for the distance the screen is viewed at, this must be discussed with your Line Manager as the Council will only cover the cost of a basic appliance. If an ordinary prescription is suitable, the council will not cover this cost.

DRESS CODE

You are responsible for your own presentation, appearance and personal hygiene and consideration must be given as to how others may consider your appearance. You should present a professional appearance to your colleagues, the public and visitors. This will include:

- Any make up being light and natural
- Offensive tattoos being covered
- All articles of clothing being clean and tidy
- Hair being neat and tidy
- Jewellery being appropriate and kept to a minimum
- Clothing maintaining an appropriate neckline

Particular consideration should be given to situations where you are representing the council, for example at meetings or in public. When in doubt, guidance should be sought from managers. Managers will provide guidance on appropriate dress and their reasonable instruction must be followed.

Any clothing required for health and safety purposes overrides the general requirements and managers will consider variations to policy to meet specific requirements (including religious, cultural or special needs).

If you work in a manual role you will be provided with a uniform which will usually comprise of a branded polo t-shirt, branded hi-visibility clothing (if applicable), PPE as required (branded where possible) and an optional branded fleece jacket. You may purchase additional items of uniform and the council will replace items due to reasonable wear and tear or where damaged/soiled during work time if not caused by negligence.

You must be conscious that you are representing the council at all times when wearing council branded clothing and your behaviour must reflect this.

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 you arising out of or in the course of your 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 employee on request.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The council is committed to ensuring you have a working environment which promotes dignity and respect. The council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010.

You should familiarise yourself with the council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

EXPENSES POLICY

You should not have to incur costs on behalf of the council themselves. The council has a corporate credit card for making purchases where card payments are the only option. The council will reimburse genuine expenses subject to receipts being submitted and the expenditure having been approved in advance.

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.

MILEAGE EXPENSES

Where the Council authorises you to use a private car on official business, you will be reimbursed at HMRC mileage rates (currently 45p per mile).

Business mileage is usually the distance travelled between your normal place of work and the place you are visiting. Where you commence travel from home for business purposes (i.e. not to your normal place of work) 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.

OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

Where possible the council will book trains directly for you and travel will be standard class with reserved seats. At the discretion of the Town Clerk 1st class travel may be approved where there are substantial amounts of work to be undertaken on the journey or if it proves cheaper to do so.

Where you are required to stay overnight on council business the recommended benchmark for all employees is an AA 2- or 3-star hotel. Bookings should be made in advance and must be approved by the Town Clerk.

Any air travel must be approved by the Town Clerk. The council may, at the discretion of the Town Clerk, cover the cost of alternative transport (e.g. taxis).

If you are unable to safely get home from work the council may, at the discretion of the Town Clerk, cover alternative transportation or a hotel room (whichever is the safest and most cost effective).

SUBSISTENCE

If you are working at events away from the office you may claim the reasonable cost of a meal and non-alcoholic drink for dinner, this should usually be no more than £10. Where you can make use of the staff room for lunch this should be done, but otherwise may claim up to £5. Receipts must be provided for all reimbursements.

The council will cover the cost of a meal where this forms part of your requirement to work the event, for example where you are working the duration of a civic event which includes a meal.

FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS

The council will try, subject to the needs of the business, to accommodate requests from you if you wish to make changes to your working hours or place of work.

Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by you with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the council at the time the request is made. Further, you should only make one request in any 12-month period. The request should:

1. be made in writing and state this is a flexible working request;
2. set out the change requested; and
3. describe the impact that the change will have on the operation of the business and how any difficulties caused by the change may be addressed.

When a request is received, you will be invited to a meeting with your line manager to discuss the potential change. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee to assist in making any representations that may be appropriate.

The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

- a burden of additional cost;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- an inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental effect on quality;
- a detrimental effect on performance;
- an insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work;
- a planned structural change; and
- any other ground allowed by regulations.

In refusing any request the council will explain the reasons for the refusal in writing and may make an offer of an alternative arrangement. Discussions may then take place to try to agree a way forward. If no agreement is reached then your terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to your right to appeal the decision.

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent managers agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The council may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the council can tolerate without detriment to its interests, you must accept that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the council to grant it to another.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

In addition to the statutory right to request a flexible working arrangement, the council has adopted the following policy.

You are expected to work your contracted weekly hours (CWH) as specified in your contract of employment, any variations must be sanctioned by your Line Manager. You are to work no more or less than your CWH unless sanctioned by your Line Manager.

Excess hours worked without the sanction of your Line Manager cannot be claimed.

Your general work pattern (days and hours) will be agreed with your Line Manager at the commencement of your employment.

You may carry a credit or debit of 2 working days as flex over from one calendar month to another. Any credit hours in excess will be lost and any debit hours will be deducted from the employee's salary. In exceptional circumstances only a Line Manager may permit the carryover of additional hours.

FLU JABS

The Town Clerk may at his discretion authorise the reimbursement of a seasonal influenza jab (and similar vaccinations, e.g. pneumonia) for staff.

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 will be 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. You should always seek to optimise the use of resources and minimise waste in line with the Council's Environmental Policy

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The council has a detailed grievance procedure which is covered by a standalone policy.

HARASSMENT

The Council recognises the right of everyone to work in an atmosphere free of harassment and to complain about it should it occur. The council will take appropriate steps to create a harassment free workplace.

You must not harass another employee or councillor in any way and harassment will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

You have a responsibility to contribute towards a safe working environment. You must familiarise yourself with all relevant health and safety practices and should seek guidance from your line manager on any issue you are uncertain of.

The council supports you reporting to your manager any issues you believe put the health or safety of you and your colleagues or the general public, at risk.

HOME WORKING

The council is keen to develop a strong team within its office and considers that regular team contact is central to this, it believes that officers should primarily work from the Council Offices. However, the council also recognises that homeworking can support a healthy work/life balance and enable more focused working.

The Town Clerk may designate roles as suitable for homeworking arrangements. If your role is suitable for homeworking you may:

If contracted for 4/5 days per week work from home for up to two days per week

If contracted for 2/3 days per week work from home one day per week

An application for a home working arrangement must be made to the Town Clerk. Any arrangement must be agreed with the Town Clerk and such agreements must ensure sufficient staffing in the office where at least three officers are expected to be in on any one day. The Town Clerk may designate a day where all officers are required to be in the office. When working from home you must:

- Use council provided equipment
- Undertake a DSE assessment for your workstation
- Work in an appropriate location for the work being undertaken
- Work your normal working hours (unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed)
- Be communicable with the rest of the team via IM and telephone

Such arrangements are expected to have flexibility and within reason you are expected to alter working from home days to ensure there is no detrimental effect on staffing cover, council operations or service delivery. Home working arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if circumstances change.

A home working arrangement may not be used as an alternative method of meeting carer requirements or as an alternative to sickness absence.

The provisions of this section do not overrule your entitlements to request a flexible working arrangement. You may appeal any refusal of a home working arrangement via the council's Grievance Procedure. Any home working arrangement for the Town Clerk shall be approved by the Personnel Committee.

HOLIDAY (ANNUAL LEAVE)

GENERALLY

The council's holiday year runs from 1st April to the following 31st March. Entitlement to holiday for the year in which you join the council is calculated on a pro-rata basis rounded up to the nearest whole day. ~~Your entitlement to holiday is set out in your employment contract.~~

You must agree the dates of holidays with your line manager in advance, holiday may only be taken in whole or half days. You will not usually be permitted to take more than two weeks leave consecutively.

At its discretion, the Personnel Committee may allow the carryover of up to five days of leave from one holiday year to the next.

On leaving the council you will receive payment for any part of the accrued annual holiday entitlement not taken. If you have taken more than your accrued entitlement at the date of leaving the council reserves the right to deduct the excess from your final salary.

ENTITLEMENTS

You are entitled to the following paid holiday:

- 22 days annual leave per year
- a further three days after five years of continuous service
- a day for each of the statutory, general and public holidays as they occur
- two extra statutory days

(pro rata for part time employees)

SICKNESS DURING HOLIDAY

If you are ill while on holiday the absence will only be treated as sick leave rather than holiday if medical certificates are produced as evidence.

HOURS OF WORK

Your normal working hours are stated in your contract of employment and based on a standard week of 37 hours. The council has adopted a Flexible Working Policy.

The Council reserves the right to change working hours after the usual consultation process with you. The Town Clerk is 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 who is 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 the relevant manager. You will normally be expected to work overtime through the flexible working policy. If you are eligible you will normally be given time off in lieu, for overtime, but may, at the discretion of the Town Clerk, be paid overtime. No payment is made for travelling time where overtime is worked.

You are entitled to:

- a) A rest period of at least 11 consecutive hours in each 24 hour period
- b) A rest period of at least 24 consecutive hours in each 7 day period or a period of at least 48 consecutive hours in each 14 day period
- c) A rest break of at least twenty minutes for every six hours worked

If you are under the age of eighteen are entitled to:

- a) A rest period of at least 12 consecutive hours in each 24 hour period
- b) A rest period of at least two calendar days in each 7 day period or a period
- c) A rest break of at least thirty minutes for every four and a half hours worked

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

INDUCTION

If you are new, induction training is carried out as soon as possible after you commence employment, to accelerate your ability to do the job.

The objectives of this training are to ensure that you are:-

- 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 nevertheless will provide you 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 AND PUBLIC DUTIES

You must notify the Town Clerk immediately on receipt of a jury service summons providing details of dates they are required to attend. You must keep the Town Clerk informed should you be retained for a prolonged period and you must return to normal work immediately following release from duty.

Employees in certain public positions have the right to reasonable time off during working hours to perform duties associated with these positions.

You will receive paid leave when undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies/undertaking public duties. Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings you must claim this and pay it to the Council.

LITERATURE

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

LONE WORKING

A lone worker is defined as anyone who works in isolation from their colleagues and without close/direct supervision. This includes mobile workers working away from their usual base. This policy applies to all lone workers and managers of staff who undertake lone working.

Due to the nature of the council's operations it recognises that lone working is both required and common but recognises its obligations for the safety of all employees.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that a risk assessment is undertaken for all lone working activity and that this is reviewed at least annually. For the avoidance of doubt this includes an assessment of any health and safety risks arising from the lone working activity.

The Town Clerk shall take all reasonable steps to minimise risks identified and report any substantial risks to the Personnel Committee.

The Town Clerk shall develop procedures and safe working practices in relation to lone working

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Lone workers need to be sufficiently experienced to understand the risks and precautions of lone working fully. Line managers need to set limits on what can and cannot be done when working alone. Safe lone working practices are contained in Appendix [X]

If you have any concerns about the continuance of a lone activity being carried out, you should feel confident that you have your line manager's support to terminate the task and return to office at any time.

Where such incidents arise this must be reported to the Town Clerk.

On return to the office you should ask for a debrief with your line manager if you feel any issues need to be addressed following a lone working activity. The risk assessment may need to be modified and used as part of the planning process for subsequent activities.

The council shall provide any training necessary.

MAKING A PROTECTED DISCLOSURE (WHISTLE-BLOWING)

You 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 you have 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 you commit 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, you must make it by one of the following methods or procedures:

- to the employer, or legally responsible person or appropriate person authorised by us 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 you 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 you believe that you will be victimised;
- if there is no prescribed person, you have 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 your personal gain; and
- it is “reasonable in all the circumstances” to make the disclosure.

MATERNITY LEAVE

You shall notify the council at least 15 weeks prior to the expected week of childbirth or as soon as is reasonably practicable that you are pregnant, the expected week of childbirth and the date of the beginning of your absence. You shall give this notice in writing and produce the MAT-B1 form at the appropriate time.

A pregnant employee has the right to paid time off to attend for ante-natal care and you shall must provide evidence of appointments on request.

~~Maternity leave shall commence no earlier than 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth or from the time of childbirth if that is earlier.~~

All employees are entitled to 26 weeks’ ordinary maternity leave followed by 26 weeks’ additional maternity leave. It can commence no earlier than 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth or from the day following childbirth if that is earlier.

MATERNITY PAY

If you have less than 1 year’s continuous service at the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth you will receive statutory maternity pay (SMP) where eligible.

If you have completed 1 year’s continuous service at the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth you will receive pay as follows:

Weeks 1-6

% pay (offset against payments made by way of SMP / Maternity Allowance (if not eligible for SMP))

Weeks 7-18

Where you declare in writing that you intend to return to work you will receive 50% pay plus SMP for the next twelve weeks (except to the extent this exceeds full pay)

If you do not intend to return to work you will receive SMP where eligible

Weeks 19-39

You will receive your entitlement to SMP where eligible

You may be required to repay the additional maternity pay paid in weeks 7-18 if you do not return to work for at least three months at the end of your maternity leave.

~~If you have 26 weeks' service at the beginning of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, you will receive the entitlement to statutory maternity pay (SMP)~~

MATERNITY SUPPORT LEAVE

You are entitled to take **unpaid** leave to accompany a pregnant woman to two ante-natal appointments if you are the father, expectant mother's spouse or civil partner, in a long-term relationship with the expectant mother or the intended parent (if having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement or adoption). An appointment may last up to 6.5 hrs. **You may be required to provide evidence of appointments.**

~~Statutory Paternity Leave entitles relevant employees, subject to having held 26 weeks continuous service by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, to two week's paternity leave (paid in accordance with the statutory paternity pay rate) to be taken within 56 days from the birth of the child. This leave must be taken in one go (as either one week or two consecutive weeks) and 28 days' notice of the start must be provided to your line manager.~~

If you are the father/partner of an expectant mother with 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth you are entitled to two week's paternity/maternity support leave. The first week shall be paid at your normal rate of pay, **the second week shall be paid at the rate of statutory paternity pay.** This must be taken in one go as either one week/two consecutive weeks and 28 days' notice of the start should be given to your line manager.

A nominated (by the mother) carer of an expectant mother is also entitled to five days paid leave at or around the time of childbirth.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

If you have not 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.

The council will provide the necessary paid time off for the purpose of cancer screening, evidence of appointments may be requested.

(ACCESS TO) MEDICAL REPORTS

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

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

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

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

- You may withhold consent to the report being sought.
- You can request to see the report prior to it being forwarded to the Managing Director
- If you indicate that you wish to see the report in advance, the Council will inform you when the Doctor/Specialist has been written to and they will be informed that you wish to see the report. You then have 21 days to contact the Doctor/Specialist regarding arrangements to see the report.
- Should you indicate that you do not wish to see the report prior to the Council, you have the right to write to the Doctor within 21 days of the report having been received. It is our policy to send you a copy of the report in any event prior to a meeting being arranged to discuss the content.
- You 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 your consent.
- You may ask the Doctor/Specialist to amend any part of the report which is considered by you to be incorrect or misleading. If the Doctor/Specialist is not in agreement, you may attach a statement of your views with the report.

- If the Doctor/Specialist thinks you or others would be harmed by the report or any part of the report it can be withheld from you.

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

OFFICE OPENING HOURS

The Council Office should be open to the public 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday subject to exigencies.

ON CALL WORKING

Where there is a demonstrable need to ensure adequate out-of-hours cover for essential services, the Town Clerk shall ensure that appropriate staff are available on-call. As a minimum this shall ensure cover during normal (non-public holiday) working hours over a Christmas break whilst the Council Office may be closed. The Town Clerk may also place you on-call at other times when a business need arises.

You and those who possess the necessary levels of knowledge, skills and experience will be invited to join the rota. The Town Clerk shall determine the rota based on the business need which may factor in the proximity of where you live in relation to Knutsford and the potential on-call demand. Where possible, on-call rotas will be managed on an 'opt in' basis'.

On-call staff shall be paid an on-call payment of £25 per on-call period. An on-call period will be a maximum of eight hours. If you are on-call you must be available at short notice to undertake work (either at your usual working premises, or at home depending on the requirement) and must abide by normal working policies during this time (e.g. must not be under the influence of any substance/alcohol).

If you are activated whilst on-call then in addition to the on-call payment you shall be paid for your time (including any necessary travelling time) at your usual hourly rate with a minimum payment of two-hours and multiples of one hour. If you are activated on any day which is a public holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday, you shall be paid at twice your hourly rate.

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 the Personnel Committee before undertaking other employment.

PARENTAL LEAVE

You are entitled to 18 week's unpaid leave for each child or adopted child, up to their 18th birthday. This is limited to four weeks per child per annum. Parental leave must be taken as whole weeks. You must give 21 days' notice before your intended start date and must confirm the start and end dates in writing.

Your rights to Shared Parental Leave and Statutory Shared Parental Pay are set out in statute.

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 Maternity Support Leave.](#)

~~You are entitled to take unpaid leave to accompany a pregnant woman to two ante natal appointments if you are the father, expectant mother's spouse or civil partner, in a long term relationship with the expectant mother or the intended parent (if having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement or adoption). An appointment may last up to 6.5 hrs.~~

~~Statutory Paternity Leave entitles relevant employees, subject to having held 26 weeks continuous service by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, to two week's paternity leave (paid in accordance with the statutory paternity pay rate) to be taken within 56 days from the birth of the child. This leave must be taken in one go (as either one week or two consecutive weeks) and 28 days' notice of the start must be provided to your line manager.~~

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 Local Government Pension Scheme.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT POLICY

The council has a detailed performance improvement policy which will be followed where managers have concerns about your performance.

PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

The council works with other data controllers, such as local authorities, public authorities, central government and agencies such as HMRC and DVLA as well as the Cheshire Pension Fund, former and prospective employers, DBS service suppliers, payroll service suppliers, recruitment agencies and credit reference agencies. We may need to share personal data we hold with them so that they can carry out their responsibilities to the council and our community. The organisations referred to above will sometimes be “joint data controllers”. This means we are all responsible to you for how we process your data where for example two or more data controllers are working together for a joint purpose. If there is no joint purpose or collaboration then the data controllers will be independent and will be individually responsible to you.

At all times the council will comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and its own Data Protection Policy.

The council will process the following data for you: names, titles, aliases, photographs; start and leaving dates; contact information; information required for our legal obligations or where you provide it to us (e.g. gender, date of birth, marital status, education history, family composition, dependents etc); non-financial identifiers such as passport/driving licence numbers, national insurance numbers, tax reference codes and staff identification numbers; financial identifiers such as bank account numbers, claim numbers etc; financial information such as pay and pay records, tax codes, expense claims and benefits contributions; personal data obtained/created or otherwise processed in the course of carrying out our activities, including but not limited to CCTV footage, IP addresses, recordings of telephone conversations, website visit histories, visitor logs, accident logs, injuries and insurance claims; next of kin and emergency contact information; recruitment information; other staff data such as performance management information, licences/certifications, employment or immigration statuses, personal biographies and information about your use of our information and communications systems.

The council will process this data primarily to enable us to perform our contract with you and enable us to comply with legal obligations. Our processing may also include the use of CCTV systems for monitoring purposes.

We may also use your personal data in the following situations, which are likely to be rare: where we need to protect your interests (or someone else's interests) where it is needed in the public interest or for official purposes.

You should ensure you advise your line manager of any changes to your personal details e.g. telephone numbers, next of kin etc.

You may request a copy of your personal data.

PRIVATE TRADING

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

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

New employees 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.

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. The council will always make clear the qualities and experience it is looking for through the application pack which will include a job description and person specification. The council is committed to equal opportunities.

Where appropriate you will be encouraged to apply for other positions within the Council.

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.

On request from a new employer, the Council will provide a factual reference which will confirm the dates of your employment and final job title. No other reference shall be given.

RETIREMENT

The Council does not have a default retirement age and you 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, you retain the right to retire earlier if you so wish. The Council will be pleased to advise on any matter relating to retirement and help you make any adjustments.

SMOKE FREE POLICY

Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is not permitted in council premises, grounds or vehicles except in designated areas (if any).

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA

In accordance with the council's IT policy all social media messages must be non-political, uncontroversial and used to promote or highlight the town. Where you are uncertain about a post, you should discuss this with your line manager or the Town Clerk.

You must not create new social media accounts for the council without authorisation from the Town Clerk.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

If you use social media you must exercise caution and discretion, recognising that these are often open to public scrutiny and may reflect on the council.

Caution should be exercised when posting comments which could be construed as reflecting the council or the council's position.

You should not openly criticise decisions made by the council. Making derogatory or offensive comments about the council, its employees or councillors is considered gross misconduct.

TELEPHONE CALLS

You should restrict personal telephone calls to those which are essential and cannot be made outside working hours. You should not use the office telephone for personal calls but may have the office telephone number as an emergency contact e.g. for your child's school.

International and premium rate calls should not be made without 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 your employment contract. You will normally be expected to work your period of notice, but this may be waived or reduced at the discretion of the Council. The Council may require you to take (or not to take) any outstanding accrued holiday entitlement during your notice period.

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

TIMEKEEPING AND TIMESHEETS

You are responsible for attending punctually for work.

You may not leave work prior to your normal finishing time without permission from your manager. In the event of you requiring time away from work during the normal working period, you must report to your manager upon leaving and returning to work.

Persistent lateness which has not been agreed or authorised (including retrospectively) will be considered to be a breach of procedures and will result in disciplinary action and result in pay being reduced accordingly.

You are responsible for completing your timesheets daily. Timesheets will record the start and finish times as well as the total break time taken and any flexing in/out during the day. Timesheets will be submitted to the Town Clerk weekly and the data entered onto a master timesheet.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

The Council has not recognised any trade union for collective bargaining purposes.

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

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

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The council's commitment to the training and development of its staff is set out in a dedicated policy.

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.