

REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT



Report Reference P-26-06
Meeting Date 14th September 2026
Agenda Item 7
Prepared by A Keppel-Green, Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

Currently, if an employee is harassed by another employee the employer can be held to be liable unless it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent it. From 30th October, the law is being widened such that employers must now take steps to prevent harassment from third parties. ACAS advises that a third party will include anyone a worker could come into contact with through work, this will include members of the public, service users and contractors etc. Concurrently, the duty to prevent sexual harassment is also being tightened to require employers to take 'all' reasonable steps to prevent it.

2.0 REVISIONS TO POLICY

The council's existing Dignity at Work Policy (last reviewed in September 2025) was developed to be a robust policy following changes to the law last year. It already contains provisions covering the eight points set out by the EHCR which is signposted to by the government.

A small number of minor amendments are suggested:

- a) Amending reference to taking reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment to "all reasonable steps"
- b) Amending 2.2 to give examples of action that could be taken following a complaint about harassment by the public/suppliers to add "This may include action such as warning the person about their behaviour, restricting their contact with the council / access to premises and/or reporting matters to the Police."

3.0 SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING

The Dignity at Work Policy sets out that all staff and members will undertake sexual harassment awareness training. It continues to be the case that only eight members have completed the training. One member has refused to undertake the training. Three members of the Personnel Committee have not undertaken the training and a further three members have ignored requests to undertake the training.

In light of the tightening of the duty to prevent sexual harassment, the committee should consider what can be done to get:

- a) Members of the council's committee with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the duty
- b) Wider members of the council who come into regular contact with staff

to undertake the training to ensure the council is best placed to demonstrate compliance with its

legal duty and prevent sexual harassment from occurring.

4.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

The committee should:

- a) Note the forthcoming legal changes
- b) Consider approval of the minor policy revisions
- c) Consider how it can promote completion of the sexual harassment training amongst members