



## **RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY 2026-2029**

1 This policy covers all employees of the Council. It is intended to provide guidance in areas where personal relationships overlap with working relationships and is intended to ensure that individual members of staff are not open to allegations of impropriety, bias, abuse of authority or conflict of interest. It is also intended to set out employees' rights and responsibilities to one another.

2 The Council values the integrity of professional relationships between its employees and in order that the Council's business is conducted in a professional manner and perceived to be conducted in a professional manner it is necessary to distinguish between, and take account of, personal relationships which overlap with professional ones.

3 In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as:

3.1 a family relationship; or

3.2 a sexual/romantic relationship.

4 Both the Council and any employees who are in personal relationships with any other Employee shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that personal relationships neither advantage nor unfairly disadvantage those involved.

5 If you become involved in a personal relationship with a fellow employee, it is the responsibility of you and the fellow employee to deal appropriately with any potential conflicts of interest. Such relationships should be reported, in confidence, to the town clerk.

6 You should take care that financial, familial or personal relationships entered into on a consensual basis do not advantage or unfairly disadvantage any member of staff or other individuals.

7 Employees involved in personal relationships should exercise due regard for the professional nature of the workplace and behave in a professional manner at all times paying due consideration to colleagues, customers and clients.

8 Where a personal relationship exists between employees who are in a line management or supervisory relationship at work they must not be involved in recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion or in any other management activity or process involving the other party whereby there may be a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest as a result of the personal relationship. In such



## **RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY 2026-2029**

circumstances the town clerk must be informed and will, where appropriate, make alternative arrangements and confirm them in writing.

9 If there is any inequality or perceived inequality in the relationship, extra care should be taken and your attention is drawn to the sexual harassment policy. Sexual harassment is defined as “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment”. If you are involved in a personal relationship at work should ensure that any such relationships are fully consensual and are not and cannot be perceived as an exploitation of one party’s position in relation to another.

10 Any employee who is, or who has been, involved in a sexual/romantic relationship with another member of staff, and who does not consider their involvement to be truly consensual, will have the right to complain under the Council’s harassment policy / grievance procedure.

11 Applicants for employment within the Council will be asked to declare whether they are in a personal relationship with any existing employee of the Council. The existence of a relationship between an applicant and an employee will not bar anyone from applying to the Council for employment, but relationships must be declared at the outset.

12 External and internal applicants for posts will be asked to declare relevant personal relationships when applying for the post to ensure that the member of staff/ Councillor they are related to / in a relationship with, has no involvement in the application process.

13 Staff who are uncertain about whether they should take action regarding a personal relationship (whether their own or someone else’s relationship that is affecting them) are invited to seek guidance in confidence from the town clerk.

14 You should be aware that a breach of this policy would be investigated.

Date considered by Personnel Committee: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Date approved by Council: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Review date: March 2029