



Ref: Agenda/Personnel – 19/08/2025

14th August 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Personnel Committee are hereby summoned to the Personnel Committee Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 19th August 2025** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Tarrant", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: All Town Councillors
Notice Boards
The Press

Committee Members:

Cllr M Russell (Chairman)
Cllr P Guilcher (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone (ex-officio voting Member)
Cllr M Foster
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M Knight
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead (ex-officio voting Member)

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.
- b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_U7r7ixw8RiqSuZgB0OCG8Q

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

5. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive the minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on **Tuesday 20th May 2025** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

7. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on **Tuesday 20th May 2025**.

8. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Whistleblowing Policy**

For Members to receive a Whistleblowing Policy from the Administration & HR Manager.

9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

10. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_U7r7ixw8RiqSuZgB0OCG8Q

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

11. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

a. (HR Updates)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

a. HR Updates

For Members to receive HR Updates from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and the Administration & HR Manager.



MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 20th MAY 2025
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr M Russell (Chairman)
Cllr P Guilcher (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone (ex-officio voting Member)
Cllr M Foster
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Jones
Cllr J Woodhead (ex-officio voting Member)

Mr P Tarrant - Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Miss H Calvert - Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public - 0

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Knight.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item - None.
- b. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item - None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

5. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 4th February 2025** were **APPROVED** as a correct and accurate record of the meeting.

7. MATTERS ARISING

None.

8. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. **Complaints Code & Vexatious Policy**

It was requested that the title be changed to 'Complaints Policy'.

Members requested that further information be included within the policy on the procedure for processing complaints. For example, the policy should include whether complaints should be logged within a complaints book and should state if there is a different approach for written and verbal complaints.

It was noted that the policy states that Officers will respond to complaints received within five working days, however the 'Contact us' form on the website states that Officers will respond to Members of the public within three working days.

Subject to the above alterations, Members **APPROVED** of this policy being presented at a future Council meeting for approval.

b. **Civility & Respect in the Workplace Pledge**

It was recognised that there could be further training for Members that would compliment the Code of Conduct that has recently been adopted.

Members **APPROVED** of the Council signing the Civility & Respect in the Workplace Pledge, subject to ensuring full compliancy.

9. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

10. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present.

11. EXEMPT ITEMS

a. **HR Updates**

The Administration & HR Manager & The Town Clerk & Chief Executive provided Members with a number of HR updates.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Personnel: 19th August 2025
Item 8a: Whistleblowing Policy

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: VALUES: Openness, responsiveness, innovation and constructive relationships to maximise effectiveness and the use of resources.

Finance: Not applicable.

Equality: Not applicable.

Environment: Not applicable.

Community Safety: Not applicable.

Background

The Town Council should adopt a Whistleblowing Policy to support transparency, accountability, and good governance.

A draft Whistleblowing Policy has been put together and can be viewed under Appendix A. This draft policy has been reviewed and approved by the Council's external HR advisor.

It is recognised that normal practice is to share policies with Members one month prior to them being presented at a Council or Committee meeting for approval. However, Members are asked to make an exception and review and approve this policy.

Recommendations:

For Members to review and approve the draft Whistleblowing Policy as shown under Appendix A.

Helen Calvert
Administration & HR Manager

Appendix A: Whistleblowing Policy

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY



1. Introduction

Biggleswade Town Council recognises the need to have a Whistleblowing Policy that sets out the process for staff who believe wrongdoing by the Council or its employees or workers is putting them, or others, in danger, or is illegal, or is unethical, whilst reassuring them that they will not face any repercussions for Whistleblowing in good faith.

2. Definition

Whistleblowing is the action someone takes to report wrongdoing at work, which is in the public interest, and affects others. For example, it could affect the general public.

3. Examples

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- Criminal offences (e.g. fraud, corruption, theft).
- Failure to comply with legal obligations.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

4. Legal Protection

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects whistleblowers who make a “protected disclosure” in the public interest. This means:

- The individual must share information, not just make a complaint or express an opinion. The information should explain what has happened or is happening, rather than simply say something is wrong.
- The individual must reasonably believe the information shows one of the six above-listed types of wrongdoing.
- The concern must be something the worker believes is in the public interest, not just a personal issue or disagreement.

If a disclosure meets these conditions, the person raising the concern is protected by law from dismissal, victimisation, or any other detriment as a result of raising a concern.

5. Principles

The Council will ensure that any genuine concerns raised about misconduct or malpractice are fully investigated and appropriate steps taken to deal with any issues. Feedback will be provided to the individual who has raised the concern.

Individuals are expected to use this Policy rather than share or publicise outside the Town Council any concerns which they may have. Any employee who chooses to make a disclosure outside the Town Council (including e.g. to the press) without applying this policy would only be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act if the disclosure meets the specific preconditions set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

6. Purpose

Biggleswade Town Council aims to provide a safe and effective working environment, which enables individuals to raise genuine concerns about malpractice or unlawful conduct in the workplace. This policy is intended to empower individuals to disclose serious wrongdoing or unlawful conduct without fear of victimisation.

This policy is intended to:

- promote a culture of openness in order to protect the reputation of the Council.
- provide safeguards to enable individuals to raise genuine concerns about malpractice in confidence and without fear of repercussions.
- ensure that all individuals working for the Council have a clear and effective means of raising concerns.
- ensure that individuals who raise concerns receive feedback on any action taken.

7. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, workers, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns of Biggleswade Town Council.

Concerns that relate only to an individual's own circumstances or employment — such as bullying, harassment, or dissatisfaction with a manager — are usually handled as personal grievances, not whistleblowing. However, if the concern involves a legal breach and is raised in the public interest (e.g. it affects others

too), it may qualify as whistleblowing and be protected by law. Personal grievances are not covered by this policy and should be raised through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

8. Confidentiality & Anonymity

Anonymous disclosures are very difficult to investigate and to establish whether allegations are credible without being able to ask the individual for more details or clarification, and this makes it hard to reach an informed decision.

Anyone who blows the whistle in good faith, will be protected, even if the allegations they raise are incorrect. Individuals should feel able to openly raise issues with us under this Policy. However, the subject matter covered by whistleblowing can be sensitive, any concerns about possible reprisals, whether from colleagues or others, should be reported to the Administration & HR Manager who will be able to provide you with appropriate support and reassurance.

The sensitive nature of whistleblowing investigations means that, aside from those involved in the whistleblowing process set out above, your personal involvement should remain confidential. There may be circumstances where this is not possible, and in those circumstances, a discussion will take place to explain the position.

9. Process

Staff should only make a disclosure/whistleblow under this policy after carefully considering whether the concern is so serious it cannot be raised through normal management arrangements, for example in a 1:1 session with their immediate manager.

Step 1

Concerns should be raised with:

- The Town Clerk & Chief Executive (or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel, if the concern involves the Town Clerk).

Concerns need to be in writing and should include:

- The reason for the concern.
- The background and history of the concern.
- Names, dates, and places where possible.

Employees who feel unable to put the concern in writing should arrange a meeting with the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel and may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

The discloser should receive a response acknowledging receipt of the disclosure and stating that this will be looked into as a matter of urgency.

Step 2

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel will consider information made available by the discloser and will decide how the disclosure will be investigated. If it is decided that there is no case to be investigated the discloser will be informed of this in writing.

Step 3

It is decided by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel if an investigation should be undertaken. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel may ask another Senior Manager or independent external investigator to undertake an investigation to establish all the relevant facts and to report his/her findings. The investigation will be conducted swiftly and thoroughly, ideally reporting within four weeks of receipt of the disclosure. You (and your companion, if appropriate) may be asked to keep the matter confidential whilst an investigation takes place.

We will investigate your concerns in full. We will keep you informed of our progress insofar as we can, but there may be elements which we decide should remain confidential.

In any investigation undertaken directly under this policy, or where the grievance or disciplinary policies are initiated, the discloser and the person against whom the disclosure (if applicable) has been made, will be entitled to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.

Based on the investigation findings, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or the Mayor and Chairman of Personnel will decide what action, if any, should be taken.

Step 4

Following the investigation, the discloser will be informed that an investigation has been completed and that appropriate action will be taken.

Step 5

A report to the next Town Council meeting will be presented under exempt, which will provide an overview of the disclosure, the information gathered through the investigation (if applicable), and what action, if any, has decided to be taken. The Council has a duty not to share personal information, such as people's names, within this report unless it is necessary.

Reporting of Disclosures

A record of all disclosures and any subsequent action will be maintained by the Council for a period of six years by the Administration & HR Manager. If the disclosure relates to the Administration & HR Manager, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive will keep a record of this disclosure.

Support and Protection of the Person making the Disclosure

Every effort will be made to ensure that the person making the disclosure is protected from suffering harassment, victimisation or any other detriment.

Staff (including managers) will not engage in retaliation, retribution, or any form of harassment or bullying directed at an individual who has reported or is considering making a disclosure. Those engaging in such behaviour may be subject to disciplinary action. For contractors, such actions may lead to the termination of the contract under which their services are provided.

10. Unfounded disclosures/ Untrue Allegations

A disclosure made in good faith which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation will not lead to any action against the person making the disclosure. Individuals making disclosures which are found by subsequent investigation to be malicious or vexatious may be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct.

11. Further Support

You can get further advice on whistleblowing, confidentiality, and protection from reprisals at <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>. Protect is an independent charity that also offers an advice line ([020 3117 2520](tel:02031172520)).