

SOUTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

POLICIES



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TOWN COUNCILLOR ROLE AND DUTIES

1. Aim

1.1 To guide Councillors in their role and duties.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Responsible to The Town Council and its electors.

2.2 Responsible for effective leadership to foster the interests of their electors

3. Main Duties and Responsibilities that are strongly recommended

1. Should participate constructively in the government of Southam Town Council and to work with other councillors towards the Council's aims
2. Should participate fully in the formation and scrutiny of the Town Council's policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery including the 'Town Plan'.
3. Should ensure, with other councillors, that the Town Council is properly managed.
4. Should promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Town
5. Should represent effectively the interests of the ward for which the Councillor is elected and deal with residents' enquiries, representations and complaints.
6. Should represent the whole electorate; listen, and then represent the views of the whole community when discussing council business and working with outside bodies
7. Should take an active part in the Town Council's arrangements to build community capacity and promote measures that contribute to the Town Council's Vision.
8. Should prepare for meetings and be properly informed about the issues to be discussed.
9. Should take part responsibly in meetings and form decisions based on what is best for the community and should abide by majority decisions resolved by the Council.
10. Should represent the Town Council on outside bodies to which the Councillor is appointed.
11. Should maintain proper standards of behaviour as an elected representative of the people and to uphold the reputation of Southam Town Council.
12. Should participate effectively as a member of any committee or working party to which the Councillor is appointed.
13. Should uphold the Town Council's Standing Orders and ethical standards (ensuring that the impartiality of council staff is not compromised).
14. In order to function effectively as a Town Councillor it is strongly recommended that a councillor should attend induction training and further training as suggested by council.

4 Related Documents

4.1 Standing Orders

4.2 Induction pack

4.3 Code of Conduct

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1. Aims

Southam Town Council values people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances and aims to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities and access to its services.

This policy will be implemented within the framework of current legislation and applies to job applicants, employees and contractors, residents, councillors, volunteers and users of Southam Town Council's services.

Southam Town Council is committed to actions to make this Equality and Diversity Policy effective. Our policy aims to ensure that no individual or group: -

- Receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or membership of any minority group
- Is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 As **Community representatives** Southam Town Council will

- I. Promote mutual understanding and respect between all sections of the community
- II. Build community cohesion
- III. Promote equality of opportunity through our work with other organisations
- IV. Promote diversity
- V. Encourage participation
- VI. Challenge all forms of discrimination within the Town and influence others to promote equality of opportunity

2.2 As a **Service Provider** the Town Council aims to provide services to which all residents are entitled regardless of race, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, offending past, caring responsibilities, social class or age.

However, two exceptions apply: -

1. *Where there is a legally recognised Genuine Occupational Requirement*
2. *Where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults.*

In planning and providing services, the Town Council will: -

- I. regularly consult with residents about their needs and priorities;

- II. allocate resources and services equitably within the criteria set by the Council's priorities and aims, paying particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable members of our community;
- III. take all reasonable, legal steps to ensure that services are accessible to all residents;
- IV. regularly provide information for residents about services and opportunities to encourage the widest participation possible;
- V. treat all community members with respect
- VI. treat all suppliers and contractors fairly

2.3 As an **employer**, Southam Town Council is opposed to unfair discrimination in recruitment, employment and pay. Southam Town Council will:

- I. Ensure that the selection, training and promotion of employees is based on the criteria of merit and ability
- II. Promote equality and diversity in recruiting, retaining and training staff through recruitment and operational procedures to ensure that the Town Council's workforce is representative of the community it serves
- III. In so far as office opening hours permit, the council will offer flexible, family friendly working hours consistent with current legislation

3. Procedures

3.1 The Town Clerk will ensure that this policy is provided to all staff and councillors and available on request to residents of Southam

3.2 The Town Clerk will ensure that employment practices meet the requirements of this policy

3.3 All employees and councilors will uphold this policy

3.4 The policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk taking into account any new relevant legislation and Town Council will be advised of any necessary changes to the policy

3.5 Complaints from residents or staff grievances will be a measure of the effectiveness of this policy and its implementation. Separate policies deal with these issues.

Related Documents

- 4.1 Complaints policy and procedure
- 4.2 Staff grievance procedure
- 4.3 Southam Town Aims and Action Plan
- 4.4 20:20 Vision Action Plan

COMMUNICATION

1. Aim

- 1.1 To have effective communication with residents of Southam
- 1.2 To ensure that Southam Town Council adheres to the criteria required of it through the Quality Status Award

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 Internal Communication

- i) Emails should not be used for debate unless authorized by the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor; councillors should submit a 'Members Item'.
- ii) Town Council staff will communicate with Councillors via email, if a Councillor is not on email then that Councillor should agree an appropriate communication procedure with the Town Clerk

4. External Communication

- i) The Town Council Newsletter is published between 4 - 6 times per year (one being the Annual Report) and distributed to every household in the town. It is also available in large print on request.
- ii) A brief Annual report is included in the June edition of the Newsletter and at the Annual Town Meeting
- iii) Opportunity is given at the start of each Town Council meeting for the Southam residents to bring their representations to the Town Council.
- iv) Contact details for the Town Council are widely distributed via the Newsletter, the website and the Town Councillors' poster on town notice boards to enable people to contact their Town Councillors.
- v) The public can examine the Town Council's financial statement and books after they have been audited and by prior arrangement with the Town Clerk
- vi) Minutes of Town Council meetings are available from the Town Council offices, in the Library and are published on the Town Council Website.
- vii) Relevant principle authorities are informed of Town Council activities – Ward Councillors are invited to all Town Council meetings and are sent agendas, minutes, newsletters, etc.
- viii) Consultations, public meetings and surveys are undertaken with the electorate on local issues
- viii) The Town Council has a procedure for alerting residents of significant planning applications.

4. Related documents

- 4. 1 Contact list of outside bodies
- 4.2 Press procedure (To be produced)
- 4.3 Town Council Website

5. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

COMPLAINTS/COMMENTS/COMPLIMENTS

1. Aim

1.1 To ensure that complaints, comments and compliments from members of the public regarding Town Council services are handled swiftly and courteously.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Town Clerk is responsible for bringing any complaints received at the Town Council office to the attention of Council, recording receipt of the complaint and investigating/resolving where possible

2.2 All Councillors are responsible for bringing received complaints to the attention of Council

2.3 The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and immediate past Mayor will carry out further investigation if any complaint cannot be easily resolved by Council or a delegated working party or individual Councillor

3. Procedure

3.1 Internal staff complaints are covered by the separate Employee Grievance Policy.

3.2 Complaints about Councillors, if they cannot be swiftly resolved through discussion, are covered by the separate Councillor's Code of Conduct procedures via Stratford District Council.

3.3 Complaints about the service of Southam Town Council may arrive through a variety of mechanisms, including via e-mail, via letter, via verbal report to a Councillor or Officer, via a question raised at a Council meeting. In order for the Town Council to formally consider a complaint, the complainant must be asked to put the complaint in writing, either by letter, email or completion of the complaint/comments/compliments form (unless the complaint is raised at a Town Council meeting).

3.4 Depending on source, and content, each complaint is passed to the Town Clerk who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days

3.5 The Town Clerk will establish further detail as required from all relevant sources by all relevant means and report back findings, within 7 working days of the Town Council meeting, to the complainant and seek the complainant's assurance that their complaint has been dealt with.

3.6 The complaint and means of resolving it will be included in the Town Clerk's report at the next Town Council meeting

3.7 Discretion must be used in complaints aired in public

3.8 Records of all complaints are to be kept – which in most cases will be automatic as part of the correspondence entered into.

3.9 Anonymous complaints will be filed but not responded to.

3.10 Complaints will be evaluated annually and reported by the Town Clerk as a measure of Town Council performance

4. Related documents

Records of correspondence

Minutes of Town Council meetings

Comments/Comments/Compliments form

Standards and Ethics Committee Procedure for the Local Assessment of Complaints against Councillors

5. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

HANDLING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

1. Aim

1.1 Southam Town Council has produced and publicised a Publication Scheme which makes it clear what information can already be accessed. The Publication Scheme outlines any charges which may be made in supplying any information.

Any additional information, which is not part of the Publication Scheme, can be requested under the freedom of Information Act 2000

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 A request for information must be made by letter or email and should be sent to the Clerk of the Council. The request must include a contact name, and address for correspondence, and state clearly what information is required

3.2 Information requested will be considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

3.3 Southam Town Council will supply the information requested within 20 working days of receipt of a written request; confirm whether or not it holds the information; advise whether a fee will be charged and provide the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies.

3.4 The Town Council does not have to confirm or deny the existence of the information or provide it if: an exemption applies; the request is vexatious; or similar to a previous request. If the Town Council decides not to disclose the information requested it will give reasons for its decision and explain how the exemption applies.

3.5 If an applicant is unhappy with a refusal to disclose information, they can request a formal review of the decision by a person not directly involved with the refusal (normally the Personnel Working Party). If the review concurs with the decision not to disclose the information the application can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO will investigate the case and either uphold the Council's use of an exemption or decide that the information must be disclosed.

4. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed annually

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Aim

1.1 Southam Town Council wishes to be as open as possible and supply the information requested under its Publication Scheme

1.2 The Town Council may withhold any information if it considers its release not to be in the public interest and could cause significant harm. Any sensitive and confidential information is exempt from public information. Any exclusion as prescribed by law is contained in the Publication Scheme.

1.3 To safeguard confidentiality of sensitive or personal nature during Town Council meetings

1.4 To ensure that Councillors and staff respect the need for confidentiality

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council councillors and staff are collectively responsible for ensuring confidentiality is maintained where it is agreed that this is necessary.

3. Procedure

3.1 The following issues are deemed to be of a confidential nature and will only be discussed at Town Council meetings following the withdrawal of the public from the meeting.

- Personal details and information (staff & councillors – except for members interests and essential contact details)
- Staff salaries
- Staff matters including grievance, disciplinary, investigations and appraisals
- Commercially sensitive information including contracts and contractors
- Sensitive information as advised by the police or other responsible authority
- Matters which have been raised anonymously or where the sender has requested anonymity

3.2 All papers deemed confidential will be printed on blue paper. It is the responsibility of councillors to ensure their secure and safe disposal

4. Related Documents

4.1 Publication scheme

DATA PROTECTION

1. Aim

1.1 To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. The act regulates the use of personal data. This does not have to be sensitive data; it can be as little as a name and address.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk

2.2 Southam Town Council is the Data Controller under the Act, which means that it determines what purposes personal information is held, will be used for. It is also responsible for notifying the Information Commissioner of the data it holds or is likely to hold, and the general purposes that this data will be used for.

3. Procedure

The Data Protection Act 1998

3.1 The Act sets out high standards for the handling of personal information and protecting individuals' rights for privacy. It also regulates how information can be collected, handled and used. The Act applies to anyone holding information about people electronically or on paper. As a local authority the council has a number of procedures in place to ensure that it complies with the Act when holding personal information. The council has also notified the Information Commissioner that it holds personal data about individuals.

3.2 When dealing with personal data, council staff and councillors must ensure that:

Data is processed fairly and lawfully

This means that information should only be collected from individuals if staff and councillors have been open and honest about why they want the information.

Data is processed for specified purposes only

Data is relevant to what it is needed for

Data will be monitored so that too much or too little is not kept; only data that is needed should be held.

Data is accurate and kept up to date

Personal data should be accurate, if it is not it should be corrected.

Data is not kept any longer than it is needed

Data is processed in accordance with the rights of individuals

This means that individuals must be informed, upon request, of all the information held about them.

Data is kept securely

This means that only staff and councillors can access the data. It should be stored securely so it cannot be accessed by members of the public.

Storing and accessing data

3.3 The council recognises its responsibility to be open with people when taking personal details from them. This means that Councillors and staff must be honest about why they want a particular piece of information. If, for example, a member of the public gives their phone number to staff or a member of the council, this will only be used for the purpose it has been given and will not be disclosed to anyone else.

The council may hold information about individuals such as their addresses and telephone numbers. These will be kept in a secure location at the town council office and are not available for public access. All data stored on the council's computers is password protected. Once data is not needed anymore, if it is out of date or has served its use, it will be deleted from the computers.

The council is aware that people have the right to access any information that is held about them. If a person requests to see any data that is being held about them:

- they must be sent all the information that is being held about them,
- there must be explanation for why it has been stored,
- there must be a list of who has seen it,
- it must be sent within 40 days.

A fee to cover photocopying and postage charges will be charged to the person requesting the information. The charges that apply are stated in the Council's Publication Scheme.

Disclosure information

3.4 If an elected member of the Council needs to access information to help carry out their duties, this is acceptable. They are only able to access as much information as necessary and it should only be used for that specific purpose. If, for instance, someone has made a complaint about over hanging bushes in a garden, a Councillor may access an address and telephone number of the person who has made the complaint, so they can help with the enquiry. They can only do this providing they represent the area that the subject lives in; however, before they access any sensitive information about a person, they would need consent to do this from the Town Clerk. Data should never be used for political reasons unless the data subjects have consented.

For most instances Southam Town Council can only process data in the following circumstances:

- The data subject has given consent to the process in using that data
- Contractual obligations need to be completed with subjects data being processed
- Necessary for public functions or to carry out the interest of the subjects

interest

- Legal obligation to process this information
- The processed information is in the legal interest of the subjects or it might be in the legitimate interests of the data controller

4. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed annually

INFORMATION SECURITY

1. Aim

1.1 To ensure that confidentiality, integrity and availability of information is maintained by implementing best practice to minimise risk

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 Information exists in many forms including:

- Printed or written on paper
- Stored electronically
- Published on the internet
- Transmitted by post or electronically

3.2 Information Security requires the adherence to both the Record Management and the Data Protection policies of the Council.

3.3 Information Security is primarily vested in the staff employed in the Town Council Office. However, individual Councillors are also required to meet the objectives of these policies as well as those contained within Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct.

3.4 Where sensitive information is provided, all recipients are expected to respect the nature of such information and afford it the appropriate level of security. Such security will include the prevention of access by unauthorised personnel.

3.5 Nothing in this policy, or those for Record management and Data Protection, will detract from the basic principles of the Freedom of Information Act.

4. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed annually

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

1. Aim

1.1 Southam Town Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution.

1.2 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff of Southam Town Council.

1.3 Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by Southam Town Council.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 Legal Documents

Minutes	-	To be kept indefinitely
Burial Records	-	To be kept indefinitely
Deeds/Leases	-	To be kept whilst the Council owns or occupies the land/property, the original documents to be kept in strong box at the Solicitors

3.2 Inland Revenue and VAT

Salaries	-	If a pension is payable details should be kept until two years after the former employee dies
Inland Revenue Papers	-	To be kept for 6 years
VAT Papers	-	To be kept for 6 years
Annual Returns	-	To be kept indefinitely
Statement of Accounts	-	To be kept indefinitely
Audit Papers	-	To be kept for 5 years

3.3 Insurance

Certificates of Employment Liability	-	To be kept for 40 years
Public Liability Insurance Policies	-	To be kept for 21 years

3.4 Planning Applications

There is no requirement to keep Planning documents, as planning applications can be viewed online or at Stratford upon Avon District Council.

Planning Applications and grants of permission for Council property should be kept indefinitely.

For ease of reference the Town Council Office retains Planning Applications for 4 years.

3.5 Contract Documents and Related Receipts

To be retained for 6 years after the end of the contract term

3.6 Handwritten Notes from Meetings

Handwritten notes which are simply intended as a personal aide memoire must be destroyed immediately after they have served their purpose. If this is not done, there is a risk that they may be subject of a Freedom of Information Act request and may have to be disclosed.

3.7 Audio and Video Recordings

Audio and Video recordings simply intended as a personal aide memoire must be destroyed immediately after they have served their purpose. If this is not done, there is a risk that they may be subject of a Freedom of Information Act request and may have to be disclosed.

3.8 Computer Hard Drives etc.

When computers are upgraded and data that needs to be kept must be transferred to the new computer, it is imperative that the old hard drive is destroyed using a professional company in order to prevent the Council's data falling into the wrong hands

4. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

ASSET MANAGEMENT

1. Aim

The aim is to assist Southam Town Council in the effective management of its physical and financial assets.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Councillors

2.2 Councillors delegated to the Finance Working Party

2.3 Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk in the preparation of financial accounts, maintenance of required records and documents, communication of financial information.

3. Procedure and guidance

3.1 Financial management principles

- a) Sufficient General Reserves – Need a level of reserves (to cover up to 6 months expenditure) that will cover most eventualities, ensure the council has adequate balances so that there aren't any cash flow problems etc. and is able to deal with unexpected events/emergencies. Reserves shouldn't be seen as a way of earning interest to keep the precept down. General and Earmarked Reserves need to be kept at a fair and reasonable level.
- b) Use of Reserves- Need to maximise return from investing these reserves but in safe and secure products (no risk), preferably with local banks and building societies.
- c) Cash flow – This needs to be reviewed on a regular basis so that the minimum amount possible is kept in current accounts, leaving more to be invested on a longer term basis, earning more interest.
- d) Grants – give grants to local organisations that promote the council's values and aims. Level of grant dependant on organisations resources. Encourage these organisations to use STC grant to 'lever' in monies from other organisations e.g. WCC SOADC etc. Seek some form of service level agreement if possible with these organisations
- e) Value for money – demonstrate to public how assets are used efficiently and value for money is sought from suppliers e.g. Procurement Strategy. However STC should seek to use local suppliers/trades people if possible.

3.2 Asset Management principles

- a) Fixed Assets need to be maintained properly in a planned and organised programme. Money should be earmarked for this purpose on a regular basis so large 'one-off' bills are avoided.
- b) Maximise use of assets – e.g. hire out to local organisations, maximise income. Ensure fixed assets energy efficient – financial and green implications. Invest in asset to bring into better use.
- c) Work in Partnership to maximise asset use, lever in funding to improve asset.
- d) Asset Usage Review – Need a comprehensive list of assets so STC is in a position to be able to review, and if necessary, rationalise its assets. Are they meeting their original purposes and also providing maximum benefit to STC and the Town.
- e) Review Assets annually to see if there are any implications for the precept.
- f) Regularly consult with stakeholders on need/use of assets.
- g) Sensitively balance commercial and social interests.

4 Related Documents

4.1 Asset register

5 Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

GRANT APPLICATION

1. Aim

1.1 To ensure that Southam Town Council distributes grant aid in a manner which is equitable, fair and in line with its Equality of Opportunity Policy.

1.2 To ensure that Southam Town Council actively widens participation of community groups and adds value to community projects

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council collectively is ultimately responsible for allocating grants to community groups annually or as requested

2.2 The Town Clerk has delegated responsibility for collating funding application requests and informing the applicant(s) of the outcome of their request within 10 days of Council decision. The Town Clerk is also responsible for issuing cheques to the agreed amount and keeping appropriate records of expenditure. The Town Council will collate feedback and evaluation from recipients.

3. Procedure

3.1 Grants will be primarily awarded to voluntary organisations.

3.2 Applications for specific projects will be considered in preference to general running costs of an organisation.

3.3 Grants will not be considered for statutory services provided by either another precepting authority or central government.

3.4 Grants to voluntary organisations will be conditional upon the following;

The organisation is based in Southam. If not based in Southam the organisation provides a service that is a direct benefit to all or some of the residents of Southam. Grants will be considered for leisure and sporting activities or facilities only when they are based in Southam.

National charitable appeals will only be considered when organised on a local basis by Southam residents and only in exceptional circumstances,

e.g. Silver Jubilee. Annual appeals will not be considered.

Applications from Southam's churches will be considered on their merits.

Applicants will be required to provide a statement of their accounts and to complete a standard Application Form.

Recipients/Organisations of a grant will be required to complete a 'Feedback Report' form within 12 months of receiving their grant. If the recipient/organisation fails to comply Southam Town Council will not consider future grants from that recipient/organisation

3.5 Applications for funding will only be considered in February and September

3.6 Initial enquiries about funding will be invited by advertising in STC Newsletter, flyers on notice boards, Town Council website and local press.

3.7 Following initial enquiry, the Town Clerk will send out an Application Form for completion.

3.8 Completed forms will be presented to Council, by Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk after scoring.

- 2 Fully meets criteria
- 1 Partially meets criteria
- 0 Doesn't meet criteria

4. Related Documents

- 4.1 Application form
- 4.2 Feedback form

5. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

PLANNING

1. Aim

1.1 To guide Southam Town Councillors in making decisions relating to planning issues.

1.2 To ensure that observations and objections are made on sound material consideration

1.3 To ensure that Southam Town Council is appropriately represented at Joint Area Committees where objections to planning in Southam have been lodged.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council collectively is ultimately responsible for making observations and objections to planning issues.

2.1 Individual councillors are responsible for ensuring that they have examined relevant planning applications prior to Town Council meetings.

2.2 Individual councillors are required to attend training and updates on planning issues as deemed necessary

2.2 The Town Clerk has delegated responsibility for reporting councillors decisions (no observations, observations and objections) to the relevant Planning Officer at SDC by the due date. The Town Clerk will also, where deemed necessary and urgent between Town Council meetings, alert councillors of a forthcoming urgent planning applications and circulate necessary papers.

2.4 The Town Clerk is also responsible for alerting councillors of the date, time and location of the Planning Committee. All councillors have an allocated date to attend the Committee (if necessary) if they cannot make that date then they should swap with another councillor, in order for the Town Council to have representation at Planning Committee meeting if STC has objected to an application.

2.5 The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that, in the event of a major planning application, the procedure for alerting residents is followed

3. Procedure and guidance for planning decisions

3.1 Planning decisions must be made solely on the grounds of material consideration.

3.2 Form 3.2 is a guidance template for councillors to consider and complete during their evaluation of planning applications:

3.2 All councillors will indicate their availability to be on stand-by to attend at least one Planning Committee each year. The list of known dates will be included every month in the Town Council meeting papers

4. Representation at the Planning Committee

4.1 At least one councillor should attend the planning committee if Town Council has lodged an objection to a planning application.

4.2 The councillor attending is expected to relay the comments resolved by the Town Council regardless of their individual opinions.

4.3 Councillors should exercise caution and declare if they have attended briefings or been in receipt of correspondence on planning applications

5. Procedure for dealing with planning applications that cannot be considered at the Town Council meeting.

5.1 Planning Applications that do not coincide with the Town Council meeting are to be considered at a Joint ENV meeting.

5.2 The Town Clerk in conjunction with The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Past Mayor has delegated powers to consider planning applications during the Christmas and Summer Recess

6. Related Documents:

6.1 Southam Town Plan

6.2 Southam Design Statement

6.3 20:20 Vision Action Plan

6.4 Better Welcome Action Plan

6.5 County Structure Plan incorporating:

- SDC Local Plan
- SDC Local Development Framework
- County Minerals Plan
- County Waste Local Plan
-

5.6 PPGs – 15, 25 etc.

7. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

FORM 3.2 PLANNING

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATION

Material Planning Consideration	Applies	Unsure /Need More Information
Physical site considerations		
Loss of light or overshadowing		
Overlooking/loss of privacy		
Visual amenity (but not loss of private view)		
Adequacy of parking/lading/turning		
Highway safety		
Traffic generation		
Road Access		
Noise and disturbance resulting from use		
Smells		
Pollution		
Loss of trees		
Nature conservation, wildlife & habitats		
Effect on listed building and conservation area		
Archaeology		
Layout and density of building		
Landscaping		
Design, appearance and materials		
Disabled persons' access		
Existing land use in area		
Existence of alternative/better suited sites		
Lack of Sustainability		
Desire to retain/promote certain uses		
Previous planning history & decisions(including appeal decisions		
Compensation and awards of costs against the council at public enquires		
Conformance with:		
Development Plans		
Planning polices – local, strategic, regional and national		
Government circulars, orders and statutory instruments		

MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

1. Aim

A physical object can serve as a reminder to the wider community to celebrate an individual's achievements or associations with a particular location. They can also be used to recall famous or infamous events, enhance the environment, street scene and improve tourist attractions and facilities.

This Policy provides a focus for members of the public, elected members and officers. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the various parties. The Policy will act as a framework for applications to ensure that decisions are made consistently.

Individuals requesting a commemorative object will be encouraged to consider the benefits to the community as a whole and to also explore setting up or linking to an existing bursary, award or prize fund.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Town Clerk will bring all applications to the attention of Southam Town Council

2.2 A working party may be delegated to consider any application and recommend its findings to Town Council

2.3 The Town Council will not automatically be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of any commemorative object or for insuring against accident or damage to residents as a result of it

2.4 Southam Town Council will not be responsible for the costs of any information gathering or consultation to support individual or organisations applications

3. Procedure

3.1 Southam Town Council will consider requests or suggestions for commemorative objects including:

- Planting a tree in appropriate locations – subject to the advice of a recognised professional arboriculturist
- Benches
- Wall plaques – subject to planning restrictions
- Inscription on the Town War Memorial – subject to eligibility and the approval of Coventry Diocese

3.2 Southam residents and organisations may apply to Council with their suggestion. Southam Town Council or its working groups may itself also suggest suitable commemorative objects.

3.3 Town Council or ENV working group will consider the application against the following criteria:

a) The nature of the event or achievement of the individual and the nature and scale of the proposal:

- A significant event should have passed its centenary
- A person should be considered eminent by a majority of their own profession or calling
- A person shall have made an important positive contribution to human welfare or given outstanding service
- A person shall have promoted Southam town in a positive manner through their work or other activities
- An event has brought Southam to positive national attention
- An event or person should be recognisable to the well-informed passer-by
- A person shall have resided in Southam for a significant period of time
- A local history society or other recognised representative body supports the nomination

3.4 Consultation

The Town Council is to determine whether consultation with residents is necessary

3.5 Other matters including insurance, maintenance costs and who is responsible

The Town Council is to determine whether insurance is required and who is responsible for its future maintenance

3.6 Any application must be able to provide sufficient detail and evidence for these criteria

STREET NAMING

1. Aim

To assist Southam Town Council in fulfilling its delegated powers to name or rename streets in accordance with Public Health Act 1925

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Southam Town Council has delegated powers
- 2.2 The Town Clerk will forward agreed street names to Stratford District Council
- 2.3 Southam Town Council may delegate decision making to the Town Clerk in conjunction with a working group or sub group as agreed at full Council

3. Procedure and guidance

- 3.1 Names cannot be duplicated. A variation in the terminal word, e.g. 'street', 'road', 'avenue', etc., should not be accepted as sufficient reason to duplicate a name.
- 3.2 Suggested names need to be sufficiently unique to avoid confusion or misunderstanding
- 3.3 Names should reflect the history of the area or acknowledge the geography of the site
- 3.4 Names that could be seen as advertising are not allowed
- 3.5 Names that could be considered offensive are not allowed
- 3.6 Names of individual people or a family will be avoided
- 3.7 Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or spell. In general, words of more than three syllables should be avoided and this precludes the use of two words except in special cases.
- 3.8 No abbreviations or punctuation should be used
- 3.9 Street names should not begin with "The"
- 3.10 All **new** street names should end with one of the following suffixes:

Croft	for residential roads
Road	for any thoroughfare
Way	for major roads
Avenue	for residential roads
Drive	for residential roads
Grove	for residential roads
Lane	for residential roads
Gardens	subject to there being no confusion with any local open space
Place	subject to there being no confusion with any local open space
Crescent	for a crescent shaped road
Close	for a cul-de-sac only
Square	for a square only
Hill	for a hillside road only
Circus	for a large roundabout

Vale	for residential road (only for exceptional use)
Dene	for residential road (only for exceptional use)
Rise	for residential road (only for exceptional use)
Mead	for residential road (only for exceptional use)
Row	for residential road (only for exceptional use)
Wharf	for residential road (only for exceptional use)

All these words can be incorporated in a street name provided it terminates with an appropriate suffix (e.g. Mile End Road).

v) All new pedestrian ways should end with one of the following suffixes:

- Walk
- Path
- Way

All new building names should end with one of the following suffix:

- Lodge
- Apartments
- Mansions
- House
- Court residential only
- Point high block residential only
- Tower high block offices or residential
- Heights " " " " "

4. Related documents

- 4.1 List of historic street names
- 4.2 List of current street names

5. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

HEALTH AND SAFETY
HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK etc ACT 1974

1. Aim

1.1 To provide and maintain safe working practices, equipment and systems of work for all employees and councillors

1.2 To safeguard Southam community residents at events, on equipment or in buildings that are the responsibility of Southam Council

1.3 To ensure that the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and COSHH Regulations 2002 are fulfilled

1.4 The policy will be kept up to date

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council collectively is ultimately responsible for Health and Safety issues except where that responsibility is shared with recognised partners such as Stratford District Council (Grange Hall Stewards and shared ownership land).

2.2 The Town Clerk has delegated responsibility for the day to day management, maintenance, monitoring and reporting of Health and Safety in the Town Council offices, the safe working practices of the Deputy Clerk and Grange Hall Administrator, subcontractors (are responsible for themselves) and for the management and maintenance of equipment, property and lands.

2.3 The Grange Hall Management Committee is responsible for safety at the Grange Hall

2.4 The Accident Record Book is kept at the Town Council Office

2.5 Whenever an Employee, Councillor, Grange Hall Steward or member of the Grange Hall Management Committee notices a Health or Safety problem they must report it to the Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk or Grange Hall Administrator

2.6 All employees, Councillors, and volunteers have the responsibility to achieve a healthy and safe workplace and to take reasonable care of themselves and others

3. Procedures

3.1 Induction – on appointment all new staff will be given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy and an induction by the Town Clerk (or a delegated Councillor) on safe working practices in the office and any health and safety responsibilities. On election, all new Councillors will be given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy

3.2 Risk assessment –a Risk Assessment form will be completed by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk 5 days before any event or public meeting arranged by

Southam Town Council which is held in or on Southam Town Council property or land. Southam residents and organisations wishing to hold meetings or events in or on Southam Town Council property or land will carry out a Risk Assessment at least 5 days in advance and provide the Town Clerk with a copy. The Town Clerk will maintain a file of completed Risk Assessments.

3.3 Insurance

An emergency contacts list will be reviewed annually and included in Southam Town Council's Emergency Plan

In the event of an accident involving a member of staff, Councillor, member of the public, contractor working or visitor on or in Southam Town Council property or land, a report will be completed in the accident book held in the Town Council office.

Major injuries, work-related diseases, dangerous occurrences (near miss accidents) and work-related deaths should follow the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) by calling the Incident Contact Centre on 0845 300 99 23 and the details entered into the Accident Book

In the event of contentious public meetings advice should be sought from the police in order to maintain public safety and order. For security purposes, the Town Clerk should have access to a mobile phone during Town Council meetings.

At the beginning of Town Council and other public meetings the Mayor (or chair of the meeting) should point out fire exits and evacuation procedure.

3.5 Safe use of materials, equipment, manual handling, and safe working practices

All staff should be informed of the need for safe use of materials and equipment. Where hazardous substances such as cleaning agents and decorating materials are in use, a list of these substances and a risk assessment will be carried out according to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).

Under Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 staff who regularly use VDU display screen equipment will be entitled to request an eyesight test to be carried out by a competent person.

3.6 Safety checks

The Southam Town Council Assets Register lists all equipment owned by the Town Council which must be tested for safety and completeness. Safety checks may be delegated to suitably qualified 3rd parties e.g. play equipment by Coventry Contract Services

These include:

First Aid Boxes

The Grange Hall Administrator is responsible for ensuring they are stocked and located in the kitchen of the Grange Hall and the Town Council Office

Play Areas and Open Spaces owned the Town Council

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that regular inspections take place by the Town Council Maintenance Contractor, Coventry Contract Services or the Town Council appointed Tree Surgeon and that reports are received and maintained and that any issues arising are brought to the attention of the Council

Fire Extinguishers, Fire Exit Light and Electrical equipment

A schedule of checks and test reports will be maintained by the Grange Hall Administrator and any issues are brought to the attention of the Grange Hall Management Committee and Grange Hall Stewards

3.7 Lone working

It is the employer's duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risks where necessary

3.8 Smoking

It is against the law to smoke in the Town Council Office or in The Grange Hall

3.9 Employee Work Stations

All employees are required to complete the Town Council Work Station Assessment form within the first month of employment, this form should be reviewed by the employee on an annual basis and any issues arising reported to the Council

3.10 Annual reporting

The Town Clerk will notify Town Council or the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of any serious breaches of Health and Safety as they arise.

4. Related Documents

4.1 Accident Book

4.2 Risk Assessment Form and guidance

4.3 Insurance cover

4.4 Assets register

4.5 Inspection records of council owned Play Areas and Open Spaces

4.6 Electrical certification records

4.7 Job descriptions

4.8 Work Station Assessment Forms

LONE WORKING

1. Aim

1.1 Southam Town Council has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999.

1.2 The Council have a legal obligation to look after the health, safety and welfare of their employees and contractors.

1.3 Employees may be required to work by themselves from time to time and this policy is to ensure the following:

- Increase employee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working
- Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable
- Ensure that appropriate training is available so that employees are able to recognise risk and to provide practical advice of safety when working alone
- Encourage full reporting and recording of any incidents relating to lone working

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 Lone Working/Lone Workers

These are people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision

At a fixed base (office or other)

- Only one person working on the premises
- Working separately to others
- Working outside normal hours

3.2 Potential Risks to Lone Workers

- Open access and unlocked doors - accessible to the public
- Being taken ill whilst at work
- Hazards in the workplace
- Remote areas
- Parking arrangements – poorly lit and isolated

3.3 Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the layout of the building including fire exits and escape routes

3.4 Keep the Town Council Office door locked at all times

3.5 Do not open the door to unexpected visitors. In the case of contractors ask for identification. If still unsure check with the contractors employer/head office

3.6 Have contact numbers at hand (Town Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Grange Hall Administrator and Councillors) in order to contact someone in case of illness etc.

3.7 In the event of an intruder call 999 immediately

3.8 Park as near as you can to the Town Council Office

3.9 Ensure that you have made someone aware e.g. work colleagues that you are going to be in the Town Council Office on your own

3.10 Where possible, after meetings ask for someone to wait with you while you lock up

4. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually

RECRUITMENT

1. Aim

That Southam Town Council is an equal opportunities employer and applies a professional approach to recruitment

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Town Clerk in conjunction with the appointed Personnel Working Party has delegated responsibility to recruit and appoint all staff (not including the Town Clerk).

2.2 In the case of the appointment of the Town Clerk the Personnel Working Party will make a recommendation to full Council for approval.

3. Procedure

3.1 All Town Council vacancies will be advertised in the public domain, as appropriate, using one or more of the following methods:

- Local Newspapers
- Employment Agencies
- Town Council Website
- Town Council Noticeboard (s)
- Association of Local Councils (WALC)
- Society Of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

3.2 All persons seeking a position with the Town Council will be issued with a role description and person specification. They will be required to complete the appropriate job application form and provide references

3.3 The Personnel Committee has delegated authority to recruit and appoint all staff. However, in the case of the appointment of the Town Clerk, the Personnel Committee will interview and recommend a suitable candidate to full Council for approval

3.4 Interviews will be held as appropriate for the position being filled

3.5 The offer of a position will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references

3.6 Successful applicants will be provided with a Contract of Employment, which will specify the probationary period

3.7 Salary will be commensurate with the type of employment and experience of the person. Salaries will be set in accordance with the provisions of the NJC for employees of local government and in line with scales set by the NALC/SLCC

3.8 All employment will be subject to English Employment Law

4. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed annually

GRIEVANCE

1. Aim

1.1. This procedure applies to all employees of the council.

1.2. The objectives of the procedure are: -

- To foster good relationships between the council and its employees by discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
- To settle grievances as near as possible to their point of origin;
- To ensure the council treats grievances seriously and resolves them as quickly as possible; and
- To ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently throughout the council.

1.3. Matters excluded from this procedure are as follows: -

- Appeals against salary or grading;
- Appeals against disciplinary actions;
- Income tax, national insurance matters, rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level;
- Rules of pension schemes; and
- A grievance about a matter over which the council has no control.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Southam Town Council, Town Clerk

3. Procedure

3.1 Informal Grievance Procedure

In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee is encouraged to first discuss any grievance with [his/her manager/the clerk] with a view to resolving the matter informally if appropriate. If the employee feels that this is not appropriate or he or she wishes to pursue a formal grievance they should follow the procedure detailed below.

3.2 Formal Grievance Procedure

STANDARD COUNCIL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

3.3 The employee must set out his/her grievance in writing (“Statement of Grievance”) and provide a copy to [his/her manager/the clerk].

3.4 Once the Personnel Working Party has had a reasonable opportunity to consider its response to the information provided in the Statement of Grievance the employee will be invited to attend a grievance meeting to discuss the matter.

- (i) The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- (ii) Grievance meetings will normally be convened with [14] days of the council receiving the Statement of Grievance.
- (iii) The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
- (iv) If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or his or her companion, the employee has the right to postpone the meeting by up to [5] working days.

3.5 A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford [the Personnel Working Party] time to consider the decision and to put their recommendations to the Council for ratification.

3.6 After the meeting the employee will be informed of the council’s decision within [5] working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The council’s decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

3.7 If the employee wishes to appeal against the council’s decision he or she must inform the council within [5] working days of receiving the decision.

3.8 If the employee notifies the council that they wish to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting before the Council’s Appeal Panel. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.

3.9 A grievance appeal meeting will normally be convened within [7] working days of the council receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal pursuant to 3.5. above. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion, the employee may ask to postpone the meeting by up to [5] working days.

3.10 After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the council’s final decision within [5] working days. [The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose]. The council’s decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

4. Modified Council Grievance Procedure (for Former Employees)

- 4.1. If an ex-employee wishes to raise a grievance, he or she must set out their grievance and the basis for that grievance in writing and provide a copy to the Chairman of the Council's Staffing Committee.
- 4.2. Following receipt of a statement of grievance pursuant to 4.1. above, the council will either write to the ex-employee inviting him or her to attend a meeting to discuss the grievance, or to ask for the ex-employee's agreement to the council responding to the grievance in writing.
 - 4.2.1. If the ex-employee does not agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence within 7 working days of the council writing to them pursuant to 4.2. above steps 3.1. to 3.4. of the standard council grievance procedure will be followed. The meeting will be conducted by the Councils Personnel Working Party.
 - 4.2.2. If the ex-employee does agree to the matter being dealt with by correspondence, the Councils Personnel Working Party will consider his or her grievance and will respond to the ex-employee in writing within [14 days] of the receipt of such confirmation setting out the basis for the council's decision.

5. General Procedural Information

- 5.1. Grievances raised under the standard council grievance procedure will normally be investigated, and any meetings to discuss the grievance conducted by [the employee's manager/the clerk].
- 5.2. If an employee's grievance is about [his/her manager/the clerk] they should raise the matter with the Chairman of the Council's Personnel Working Party. All investigations and any grievance meeting will be conducted by the said Working Party and any grievance appeal meeting will be conducted by the Appeals Panel.
- 5.3. Where a grievance is raised by the clerk to the council or all employee relations matters are dealt with by the Council's Personnel Working Party all investigations and any grievance meeting will be conducted by the said Committee. Any grievance appeal meeting will be conducted by the Appeals Panel.
- 5.4. A copy of the Statement of Grievance, a note of the decision taken at the first stage of the procedure, any notice of appeal and appeal decision will be placed on the employee's/ex-employees personnel file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.

6. Policy Review

To be reviewed annually
Adopted 29th March 2007