



Immingham Town Council

Harassment Policy

Policy for ensuring the protection of Employees and Councillors

Purpose of Policy

On occasions Employees and/or Councillors may receive abuse or harassment from members of the public or contractors as a result of carrying out their official duties. The policy determines how such incidents should be handled to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Employees and Councillors is maintained, while also protecting the legitimate interests of members of the public.

Councillors and staff have the right to carry out their duties and work without fear of being attacked or abused. Any behaviour whether that be verbal, physical or in writing, which causes either Councillors or Council staff to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or threatened, is totally unacceptable.

The forms of abuse and harassment addressed under the policy.

It is not possible to identify all the types of abuse and harassment that may be suffered by individuals. The following list serves as examples to indicate the scope of the policy:

- Using abusive or foul language on the telephone
- Using abusive or foul language face to face
- Persistent or aggressive/threatening emails
- Leaving multiple voicemails
- Using abusive or foul language on social media comment
- Any threats of violence
- Any abuse which is based on the personal characteristics of the recipient such as their age, race or gender
- Any abuse or harassment which is aimed at someone closely associated with an employee or Councillor because of their relationship with the employee or Councillor

Employees and Councillors should not be subject to this type of behaviour and a zero tolerance approach is to be taken.

Steps which may be taken to protect Employees and Councillors

Any threat of violence must be reported to the Police. A note should be taken of the threat and passed to the Clerk and Council Chairman for consideration of further action.

If an employee or Councillor receives a phone call which they believe is either abusive or includes foul language, they should warn the caller that if such conduct continues they will terminate the call. If the conduct does continue, they should end the call immediately. A note should be taken of the call and passed to the Clerk and Council Chairman for consideration of further action.

Any personal abuse or threats via email or social media etc. should be reported and the perpetrators informed that they will no longer be dealt with by that member of staff.

Any other form of abuse or harassment should be reported to the Clerk and Council Chairman immediately in writing for them to take appropriate action.

Action which may be taken against a perpetrator may include:

- Banning the perpetrator from making contact by telephone except through a third party, e.g. a solicitor, Councillor, friend acting on their behalf
- Banning the perpetrator from sending emails to individuals or all Council staff
- Requiring contact to take place with a named member of staff only
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days / times / duration
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness
- Having a chaperone if dealing with the individual face to face
- The Council deciding not to interact with the individual at all

Note:

Councillors work in a political environment, this policy is not designed to stifle discussion and debate between Councillors and members of the public. There will be times where decisions made by the Council are disagreed with; that is part of normal Council life. The only restriction this policy is designed to create is the style of communication. People may disagree with the Council or have criticisms of the Council or individual members, but there are boundaries as to how that disagreement should be voiced.

Date agreed: July 2023

Date for review: July 2024