



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held on

Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 7pm

* Councillor Woods (Chairman)

0 Councillor Tilley (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb

* Councillor Holt

* Councillor May

* Councillor Schofield

Councillor Wildsmith

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 4

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Establishment Committee meeting held on 9th July were approved and signed by the Chairman.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 5

INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT – EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

The Internal Auditor noted that, while all members of staff have signed contracts of employment, these contracts are inconsistent in both content and format. Some contain differing terms and conditions, while others omit reference to key employment provisions.

The Auditor recommended that the Council consider adopting the NALC Model Contract of Employment, which NALC advises has been developed in consultation with ACAS and reflects current best practice for local councils.

The Executive Officer advised that, following review, it is proposed that all staff contracts be updated and harmonised using the Council's current standard BrightHR contract template, rather than the NALC model, as this reflects existing working practices and legal requirements. The Executive Officer does not anticipate any significant issues in implementing this approach.

It was agreed that the Chairman of the Establishment Committee will be consulted on any complex or sensitive cases arising during the review. Where matters are particularly complex or have potential financial implications, these will be reported back to the Establishment Committee, either for information on how they have been resolved or for guidance on the appropriate course of action.

The Executive Officer aims to complete the review and issue updated contracts to all staff by **31 December 2025**.

RESOLVED

- a) To note the findings of the Internal Auditor regarding inconsistencies in staff contracts.
- b) That the Executive Officer review and harmonise all employment contracts using the Council's standard BrightHR template, ensuring consistency with current best practice and existing Council policies.
- c) That any complex or sensitive matters be discussed with the Chairman of Establishment in the first instance and referred to the Committee if further discussion or agreement is required.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 6

TRADE UNION REFORMS

The Employment Rights Bill introduces the most significant update to UK employment law in decades. Trade union reforms will be the first to take effect, commencing following Royal Assent expected in late 2025, with further stages to be implemented through to October 2026.

Members noted key proposed changes, including:

- the lowering of the threshold for recognising trade unions from 10% to 2% of employees;
- the creation of a new statutory body to issue guidance, mediate disputes, and enforce compliance with union access and recognition rules; and
- new employer duties requiring that all new starters are provided with written information about their right to join a trade union.

The Executive Officer advised that, as part of the wider contract harmonisation exercise, a record will be kept of those employees whose current contracts contain clauses regarding unions, so that these can be reviewed and formally varied once the new legislative requirements are confirmed. All other employees will be issued new terms based on the new legislation.

Members noted that the Bill remains subject to amendment prior to receiving Royal Assent.

RESOLVED

- a) To monitor Government and Fair Work Agency guidance as it is issued.
- b) To review current employment policies and contracts for references to trade union rights, access, and industrial action, noting which staff have existing clauses for later variation when the new law comes into effect.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 7

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS BILL

Members considered a report on the impact of the Employment Rights Bill on the Council.

RESOLVED

That members note the report and review relevant policies and procedures to ensure compliant with legal requirements.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 8

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Members considered the revised Whistleblowing Policy. Members requested that Councillors be added to the Scope.

RESOLVED

To approve the revised Whistleblowing Policy

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 9

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Members considered the revised Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Cllr Schofield raised the point that part of the definition of harassment was not easily understood, specifically the sentence, "*Harassment may occur by association or perception, even where the assumption is incorrect.*" Members agreed that this section should be clarified to ensure the policy is clear and easily understood.

It was further agreed that, once the clarification has been made and Cllr Schofield has confirmed that the amendments reflect the intended meaning, the policy will be deemed approved without the need to return to Committee.

RESOLVED

To approve the revised Bullying and Harassment Policy, subject to the clarification of the definition of harassment and confirmation from Cllr Schofield that the amendments are satisfactory.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 10

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Members considered the revised Grievance Policy and made several minor amendments.

During discussion, Members noted that the Council's Standing Orders would need to be updated to provide delegated authority for a Grievance Panel, in line with the arrangements recently approved for the Disciplinary Panel.

RESOLVED

- a) To approve the revised Grievance Policy.
- b) To amend Standing Orders to include the following provision:

Delegation to a Grievance Panel

- a) Comprising three Members of the Establishment Committee, to hear and resolve grievance matters raised by staff, including the authority to determine outcomes and make recommendations as appropriate.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 11

TRAINING UPDATE

Members noted training received by Officers since the last Establishment Committee meeting.

Members requested the ACT Awareness training also be circulated to all Councillors.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 12

STAFF APPRAISALS

All staff appraisals for 2024/25 have now been completed with the exception of the Executive Officer.

The Chairman of Establishment and the Chairman of the Council to arrange to meet with the Executive Officer to conduct her appraisal.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 13

STAFFING UPDATES

Members to note staffing updates since the previous Establishment Committee meeting.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 14

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Establishment Committee is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 7pm in The Harlington (Music Room).

Part 3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Chairman stated the reasons that the remainder of the meeting should be held in confidential session is due to matters relating to individual staff and terms of service being discussed.

RESOLVED

That subject to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press will be excluded from the Meeting.

EST NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 15

**STAFF SALARY BUDGET FOR 2026/27
FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members received the impact of draft payroll scenarios on next year's budget and agreed the recommended salary budget for inclusion in next year's budget.

RESOLVED

To recommend Option 2 to Council regarding the staff salaries budget for next financial Year.

Signed: **Date**.....
Chairman

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.