



9th September 2025

Dear Councillor,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the **Governance & Performance Committee** on **Monday 15th September 2025** in the **Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee, SR8 2PH**, at **10.00 am**

Mr I Hall
Town Clerk

Membership: Councillor R. Moore (Chairman),
Councillor I Pygall (Vice-Chairman); and
Councillors P Brown, M Cartwright, S Franklin and A Laing

Members of the public are very welcome to attend our meetings. We have a limited number of designated public seating in our Council Chamber and so any members of the public wishing to attend to observe the meeting are advised to contact the Council in advance so that we can reserve a seat for you: council@peterlee.gov.uk or (0191) 5862491.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. To receive declarations of interest

Members are reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. Please seek advice from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk **prior to the meeting** if in doubt. Members are reminded that they can check their published declaration of interests here: <https://bit.ly/2wVyeLA>

3. Reviews of Policies

To review the Council's following policies (Copies attached):

- a) Councillor Email and Device Policy
- b) Sexual Harassment Policy



COUNCILLOR EMAIL & DEVICE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025: VERSION 1

ABSTRACT

The Council has undertaken to provide Members with a 'peterlee.gov.uk' email account and an electronic device in order to conduct Council business.

Town Clerk

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided
and in greyscale

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Statement

The Council has undertaken to provide Members with a 'peterlee.gov.uk' email account in order to conduct Council business. This will help authenticate communications and to ensure that sensitive information is handled in a controlled environment with appropriate security measures. In order to facilitate this Members will be supplied with an electronic device.

'peterlee.gov.uk' email addresses provide a clear record of communications, which is essential for transparency and accountability. It also helps in maintaining an audit trail and the effective management of Data Subject Access and Freedom of Information Requests.

The policy aligns with GDPR principles such as data minimisation, integrity and confidentiality, and therefore:-

- Members must use their peterlee.gov.uk email accounts and devices for all Council related communications. They must not be used for personal or political activities.
- Personal email accounts and devices should not be used for Council related communications

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to specify the principles that surround the use of the device and peterlee.gov.uk email address which are set out below.

Please read carefully the principles that surround the use of the device set out below, sign and date the declaration as confirmation that you understand the principles and agree to abide by them. A device will not be issued unless the declaration is signed.

Principles of Use

1. Use of Town Council owned devices are to be used for council business purposes only, political and personal use is not permitted, subject to legal compliance requirements including the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The information contained on the device may be subject to a Freedom of Information request or Subject Access Request.
2. Councillors must only use council-issued devices for accessing, storing, or transmitting council-related information. The use of personal devices (including personal phones, tablets, or computers) for council business is strictly prohibited. This measure is designed to:
 - Prevent potential viruses from personal devices compromising the Council's Microsoft tenancy
 - Ensure personal data is not stored on any unmanaged devices
 - Allow Document Solutions to retain control over accounts and devices in the event of loss, theft, or departure from the Council
3. All necessary training MUST be undertaken and successfully completed, before your email address and device are supplied to you.
4. Any Councillor who refuses a council issued device, will not be supplied with a peterlee.gov.uk email address.
5. No-one else should have access to the account or device.

6. Data must be treated as confidential unless freely available in the public domain. Any potential data breach must be reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible following detection.
7. All data and emails stored on the device and handled as part of Council business are the property of Peterlee Town Council and may be accessed at any time. The Town Council may at any time and without notice request that devices be returned for audit or inspection. Users may therefore be required to surrender their Council devices at short notice and must cooperate fully with any such audit or inspection including providing passwords and security settings.
8. Council business emails and confidential documentation that is not in the public domain must NOT be forwarded to personal email accounts or stored on external electronic media.
9. All necessary precautions should be taken to safeguard both hardware and software from misuse or damage. If the device is found to have been mishandled or neglected, you may be responsible for any associated repair or replacement costs.
10. The device is covered through the council's insurance policy. If the device is lost or stolen, it must be reported to the Town Clerk immediately.
11. In order to protect data held on the device, it must be protected with a passcode/security code or biometric security measure such as facial recognition.
12. You are not permitted to take the device abroad.
13. It is forbidden to send, receive or download inappropriate material i.e. text or picture or email messages must not contain, or have attachments that contain defamatory, offensive or harassing language, sexually explicit images or language, material that infringes copyright or other intellectual property rights of third parties, or offensive cartoons, or jokes or otherwise involve unlawful or wrongdoing conduct. Nor should they contain any remarks that might be potentially embarrassing to the Town Council, its employees or the general public.
14. Browsing on the internet and use of personal email on the device is forbidden. The council may monitor the use of the internet for legitimate business reasons.
15. All faults, warnings, updates or alerts should be reported immediately.
16. This device and associated equipment remain the property of Peterlee Town Council and must be returned at the end of your term of office as an elected Member, or before, if you cease to be an elected Member of the Town Council. Failure to do so may result in you being charged an amount equivalent to the cost of the device, replacement cost of charger or other peripheral items and any other charges made against the account. The Town Council may also apply an administrative charge to cover costs incurred in recovering the device and terminating the contract.

Data Controllers

Peterlee Town Council and its elected councillors may act as data controllers in different contexts, depending on the nature of their role and the purpose for which personal information is processed. When acting as a member of the council or committee participant, the council itself is the registered data controller. In these circumstances, personal information held by the council will not be used for political purposes unless both the council and the individuals concerned have given their consent.

When councillors act as representatives of their ward residents, for example, when handling complaints or residents' casework, they are considered individual data controllers. While in most instances councillors are exempt from paying the Information Commissioner's Office registration fee, they must assess the context in which personal data is collected to ensure its use is fair and lawful, in line with the first data protection principle.

Breaches of Policy

Any misuse or non-compliance of this policy could lead to action such as withdrawal of device and/or suspension of your account.

Misuse of a Council-issued device may be referred to the Monitoring Officer and could result in further action under the Members' Code of Conduct.

Device Use Agreement

Councillor name: _____

I understand that by signing this agreement I agree to the principles of use listed above:

Signed by councillor: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

A copy of this signed agreement to be retained by the Councillor and the original to be retained by the Town Council.

For Completion by Administration

Equipment allocated by: _____

Make/model of allocated device and peripherals: _____

Device serial number: _____

Date issued : _____ Date added to asset register _____

Any queries regarding this Policy please contact either the Chief Officer / Town Clerk or Resources Manager on 0191 5862491.

Author of Policy;	Town Clerk
Date effective from;	September 2025
Policy review;	September 2029
Version Control;	V1



SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Version 1: September 2025

ABSTRACT

This Policy is to raise awareness amongst staff of the effects of Sexual Harassment and the impact on themselves and the workplace of inappropriate use

Resources Manager

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Introduction

This policy applies to all individuals working at or representing Peterlee Town Council, including employees, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

Peterlee Town Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all employees, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and job applicants in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

This policy aims to prevent sexual harassment and provide guidelines for dealing with incidents that may arise. It covers conduct that occurs both in the workplace and outside, such as during Council related events or online communications.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Inappropriate sexual comments or jokes.
- Displaying sexually explicit material.
- Online harassment, including through social media, email or messaging platforms.

Sexual harassment can occur regardless of the gender, sexuality or relationship of the individuals involved.

Responsibilities

Peterlee Town Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our organisation. We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, and we firmly believe in maintaining a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This policy applies to all individuals within our organisation, regardless of their role or status, including employees, management, members, contractors, and volunteers.

Complaints or reports of sexual harassment will be taken seriously, handled promptly, and investigated thoroughly. We are committed to ensuring that no complaint is ignored or dismissed, and that appropriate action is taken to address the matter while protecting the rights and well-being of all involved.

Reporting and Handling Complaints

Anyone who has experienced or witnessed sexual harassment should report the incident promptly. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled confidentially; reports can be made to:

- Town Clerk
- Resources Manager
- Line Manager

Managers should acknowledge receipt of any complaints of sexual harassment, then follow Peterlee Town Council's Grievance Policy.

A complaint of sexual harassment can be dealt with informally or formally and the person making the complaint can usually choose how they want it to be dealt with, however some situations might be too serious to be dealt with informally.

An informal process would be:

- The parties involved discuss their concerns and try to resolve issues.
- Record the resolution (if achieved) and monitor workplace dynamics closely.

A formal process would be:

- A designated investigating officer is appointed.
- A formal investigation is carried out.
- The evidence is considered, and the outcome is determined.

A written response will be provided to the complainant, summarising the outcome of the sexual harassment investigation. They should also receive a copy of the investigation report.

The Lead Officer may feel that it is appropriate to arrange a meeting with the employee to talk through the findings and explain how they reached their decision

If the complaint of sexual harassment was raised against another employee, the Lead Officer should also prepare a letter for them, summarising the outcome of the investigation. The full report should **not** be sent to the employee who the complaint was raised against.

Support for Employees

Support will be given to anyone who experiences sexual harassment including:

- People who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment
- Managers dealing with sexual harassment complaints
- Anyone accused of sexual harassment

Support for employees and managers can be sought from Zurich Support Services 0800 326 5061 or www.workplaceoptions.co.uk.

Confidentiality

All reports of sexual harassment will be treated with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in handling and resolving the complaint. Any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

False Allegations

Malicious or false allegations of sexual harassment are a serious offence. If a complaint is found to be deliberately false, Peterlee Town Council may take disciplinary action against the complainant.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current legislation. Feedback from employees will be considered in the review process.

Contact Information

For further information or to report an incident, please contact:

Resources Manager 0191 5862491

Preventative Steps for Managers to Avoid Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

1. Identify Workplace Risk Factors

- Assess work environments that may increase risks, such as isolated or unsupervised areas, power imbalances between staff, or work-related social events.
- Consider who staff are in contact with and if they are meeting third parties alone.

2. Open Communication

- Encourage staff to report any incidents of sexual harassment.
- Encourage staff to report situations where they felt at risk, even if nothing happened.

3. Educate and Train

- Ensure all staff have undertaken sexual harassment training.
- Promote inclusivity and monitor workplace dynamics.

4. Encourage Accountability

- Establish clear expectations for behaviour at all levels of the organisation whilst at work or work-related social events.
- Make it clear to staff, contractors, service users and members that we will not tolerate sexual harassment.

5. Safe Workspaces

- No lone working (where possible), use a buddy system especially for late shifts or working in secluded areas.

7. Conduct Periodic Risk Reviews

- Regularly assess workplace dynamics and identify potential areas for improvement.
- Adjust policies and practices based on employee feedback and workplace observations.

Author of Policy;	Resources Manager
Date effective from;	September 2025
Policy review;	September 2028
Version Control;	V1