



## Lowestoft Town Council

### Councillor Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 There is societal recognition that mental health and wellbeing should receive more attention and support. There are opportunities to learn from the pandemic experience and create enhanced governance arrangements to support councillors, including when there are challenging and abnormal pressures.

1.2 Mental health concerns include stress, depression, anxiety, bipolar and schizophrenia. While not a medical condition, problematic stress in this context can be an adverse reaction to excessive pressure or other types of work-based demand and can lead to mental health problems.

1.3 LTC recognises that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplaces stressors. HSE define stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them'.

1.4 Mental health and wellbeing are jointly referred to as wellbeing within this policy.

#### 2.0 Commitment

2.1 Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) is committed to the wellbeing of its councillors. This commitment is based on moral and practical reasons, not least the importance of the wellbeing of decision-makers in the context of public service expenditure.

2.2 LTC will endeavour to ensure the provision of a safe, inclusive and supportive culture and environment, with councillors protected from discrimination. This includes the provision of suitable resources, facilities and training for the matters at 1 to 8 below.

2.3 Councillors have a singular leadership position and are subject to requirements to conduct themselves ethically under LTC's Code of Conduct; this leadership forms part of the cultural framework which supports the wellbeing of councillors and those affected by their decisions.

2.4 LTC will maintain in this and any successor policies, its positive and proactive approach to wellbeing, with an appropriate resource allocation. It will also maintain equality and diversity and health and safety policies and will have appropriate induction support and co-option procedures.

2.5 The Personnel Committee will:

- Promote a culture which is positive about councillor wellbeing
- Receive reports from the Clerk on councillor wellbeing
- Review this policy and the related councillor wellbeing delivery at least annually
- Encourage initiatives and events which promote councillor wellbeing

2.6 The Personnel Committee (on behalf of Full Council) in conjunction with the Clerk will ensure that the following matters, as relevant, are duly considered and incorporated in the context of mental wellbeing, including through meeting, co-option, training and induction support:

1. **Reasonable adjustments** i.e. the required reasonable adjustments for disabilities
2. **Individual adjustments** i.e. enhancements, where reasonable, to take account of individual characteristics to enable their positive and productive participation
3. **Resilience and responsibility** i.e. individual responsibility for own health and wellbeing
4. **Demands** i.e. streamlining meeting arrangements
5. **Control** i.e. information about participation in online meetings
6. **Support** i.e. the level of encouragement, resource, training and support provided by the organisation



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7. **Relationships** i.e. promoting positive working, the avoidance of undue conflict, and addressing unacceptable behaviour
  8. **Role** i.e. the understanding of their role and how this fits with the roles of other councillors and the workforce
  9. **Change** i.e. how organisational change is managed and communicated within the organisation
  10. **Work environment** i.e. the sites and equipment required for participation
- 2.7 The Clerk will receive suitable training to enable them to fulfil their functions under this policy and will continue to ensure that there is a trained staff Mental Health First Aider and Mental Health Champion. This will support the delivery of this Policy, the identification of early warning signs of poor mental health, the identification and amelioration of workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress, and the signposting to sources of support.
- 2.8 The Clerk will ensure that the Council is advised of any resources and support required for the fulfilment of this policy.

Revisions	
Date	Amendment
February 2025	Added 1.3  2.6 amended to read <i>“The Personnel Committee (on behalf of Full Council) in conjunction with...”</i>