

Horrabridge Parish Council Probationary Policy

Introduction

A probationary period enables both parties in a contract of employment to assess the suitability of an individual to the role in the council, and to enable members of staff to be trained in the Council's working methods and procedures.

The purpose of a probationary period is to enable the Council to assess the skills, conduct, capability and attendance of an employee before deciding whether or not to confirm the appointment. Horrabridge Parish Council is committed to providing clarity of expectation, reasonable training and support needed for new employees to reach the required standard.

Scope

- The policy applies to any employee who is taking up their first appointment with Horrabridge Parish Council, whether it is a temporary or permanent contract or following a break in service
- All new employees (including from other authorities) to the Council are subject to the Probationary Policy.

Probationary Policy & Procedure

- The probationary period will normally be three months but may be extended to a maximum of six months. A probationary report must be completed and discussed with the employee.
- A formal probationary interview should be arranged when an issue has been identified and no improvement is apparent. The outcome must be confirmed in writing to the employee and if performance is unsatisfactory, an employee will be dismissed with one week's notice (unless in cases of gross misconduct).
- When a formal probationary interview or appeal is required, the Personnel Committee will seek advice from Devon Association of Local Councils.

Probationary Report

- The Chair of the Parish Council or Chair of the Personnel Committee will hold regular one to one meeting with the employee during the probationary period and throughout employment, to ensure the purpose of the role and specific objectives are clear. Records of the meetings should be kept.
- The probationary report must be completed and the Chair of the Parish Council or the Chair of the Personnel Committee and should discuss this with the employee to allow the opportunity to comment on feedback and to improve their performance where identified.

- An appointment can be confirmed at three months if performance is satisfactory.
- An appointment can be terminated if performance is unsatisfactory and unlikely to improve, and sufficient time has been allowed for improvement, or if the employee's actions are significantly unacceptable.
- Where no improvement is apparent during the probationary period, an employee will be dismissed with one week's notice.

Probationary Interview

- Where a need for improvement has been identified and discussed with the employee and no improvement is apparent, a formal probationary interview should be arranged as soon possible, no later than the fifth month following the employee's start date.
- The employee should be advised in writing of the interview giving a broad outline of the areas for improvement, to be discussed fully at the interview.
- The Chair of the Parish Council, the Members of the Personnel Committee and the employee will be present at the interview. The employee has the right to be accompanied at this interview if they wish.

The Chair of the meeting will introduce all parties and outline the format of the interview. They will present the background and the facts of the case to include

- Employee details – date of commencement, post title, grade
- Strengths and weaknesses identified
- Role, purpose and specific objectives
- Induction, support and training provided and timescales
- Guidance and assistance provided to overcome weaknesses
- Supervision and support provided, including evidence. e.g. reports from meetings

The Chair of the meeting will be clear how performance is unsatisfactory and that unless there are mitigating circumstances the employment will not be confirmed. The employee is invited to make a response or put forward any mitigating circumstances. The employee and person accompanying them leave the room.

The decision is made as to whether or not the employment should be confirmed, or the probation period extended. If the decision is made to dismiss, the Chair will consider whether the employee will be required to work the weeks' notice or be paid in lieu of notice.

The outcome of the interview must be confirmed in writing detailing the employee's right of appeal.

Extensions

If the performance is unsatisfactory but is likely to become satisfactory in a reasonable timescale, the probation period can be extended by a maximum of three months. The improvements required should be confirmed in writing. If there is no improvement within the set timescale, the employee will be dismissed under the Probationary Policy.

Dismissals

If performance is unsatisfactory (whether extended or not, and unless it is gross misconduct), the employee will be dismissed with one week's notice. It is important that the period of notice does not cause continuous service to exceed six months (unless an extension has been agreed), otherwise the employee cannot be dismissed under the Probationary Policy.

Rights to Appeal

- The employee has the right to appeal against the decision to dismiss under the Probationary Policy. The employee must lodge their appeal to the Chairman of the Parish Council or the Chair of Personnel within five working days of the decision.
- The appeal will be held by the previously appointed Appeal Working Group.

Probation Report

Employee Name:

Start Date:

Post Title:

Very Poor Poor Good Excellent

Quality of work and attention to detail

Conduct and co-operation

Attitude

Progress made

Relationship with Chair/Members/Colleagues

Reliability

Attendance and time keeping

Number of days off sick

Line manage comments (Chair) (Include and remarks regarding induction training, improvements identified and actions agreed. When assessing sick leave, consider if there is an underlying medical condition disability and reasonable adjustments have made when assessing).

Final Report

Do you recommend this employee passes their probation?

Yes No Consider Extension

Have you discussed this report with the employee? **Yes No**

Signed

Date