



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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6 March 2026

TO: Councillors Chowns, Harvey (Hughes), Hughes and Morris

Dear Member

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Resources Committee** which will be held in the **Council Offices, Church Lane, Ledbury**, on **Thursday, 12 March 2026 at 6:00 pm** for the purposes of transacting the business set out below.

Yours faithfully

Angela Price
Town Clerk

FILMING AND RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members of the public are permitted to film or record meetings to which they are permitted access, in a non-disruptive manner. Whilst those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record or broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending under the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018

A G E N D A

1. **To receive apologies for absence**
2. **To receive declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations**
(Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by Ledbury Town Council's Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011)
(Note: Members seeking advice on this item are asked to contact the Monitoring Office at least 72 hours prior to the meeting)
3. **To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held on 21 January 2026 and to consider any recommendations therein**
(Pages 747 - 749)

4. **Date of next meeting**

To note that the date of the next meeting of the Resources Committee will be held on 2 April 2026

5. **To give consideration and approve, subject to amendments, the following Policies: (Pages 751 – 765)**

- i. Flexible Working Policy
- ii. Parental & Paternity Leave Policy

6. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

In accordance with Section 12(2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting

6. **Staffing Review – update (Pages 766 - 767)**

Distribution: Full agenda to: - Committee members (5)

Agenda front pages to all non-committee members (6)

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2026**

PRESENT: Councillors Chowns, Harvey (Chair) and Morris

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk

R324. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hughes.

R325. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

R326. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of Resources held on 4 December 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

R327. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of the Resources Committee is scheduled for

R328. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

R329. TRAINING REQUEST FROM POST HOLDER 50

Members considered a request from Post Holder 50 for funding in respect of PRINCE2 Project Management Course.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Full Council be asked to support the request from Post Holder 50 to undertake PRINCE2 Foundation and Practitioner (E-Learning) at a cost of £1,335, which includes the following:**

- Course Materials**
- Pre-course reading**
- Foundation and Practitioner exams**
- E-book manual**
- 12 month's access to course materials**
- Hard copy manual**

The Post Holder had asked the Council to consider covering the cost of insurance for exam resits, however members of the Resources Committee felt that the Post Holder should cover this cost rather than the Council.

- 2. That any project management projects be planned out with the Post Holder and their Line Manager ahead of the commencement of the course work.**
- 3. That the Post Holder be advised that the start of the course would be delayed until the 2026/27 financial year and that consideration should be given to the post holder's agreed responsibilities and commitments within the next 12 months to ensure the Post Holder has time to complete the course.**
- 4. That the Post Holder be advised that she would be expected to undertake the course work in her own time as well as allocated time as agreed with her line manager taking into account the operational needs of the Council.**

R330.

STAFFING REVIEW - DRAFT OPTIONS REPORT

Members of the Resources Committee had met previously informally to consider the Staffing Report provided by Local Council Consultancy (LCC) and been advised that the Clerk had been asked to provide a draft report outlining the options available to the Council in respect of the Staffing Review.

The Chair thanked the Clerk for the thought and effort that had gone into taking the information provided within the LCC report and putting forward a proposal that reflects the needs of the Council, whilst looking to minimise cost and risk in taking it forward.

The Clerk provided an overview of her report which had been drawn up in line with a Statement of Requirement provided by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council following a meeting with Hoople. Members felt that the options within the report provided scope for the Council to phase staff changes/recruitment, whilst also offering opportunities for skills transfers to current staff through the potential use of temporary fixed term roles.

It was agreed that the proposals provided by the Clerk were pragmatic and risk managed and that subject to amendments proposed at this meeting and any further comments received from Hoople the clerk be asked to prepare a presentation for the briefing of the staff review for a meeting on 12 February 2026.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Clerk provide a presentation of the content of her report to a meeting of Councillors to be held on 5 February 2026.
2. That the presentation includes a copy of the current staff structure.
3. That the following meetings be arranged to consider the staff review and budget:
 - 5 February 2026 – budget briefing
 - 12 February 2026 – staff review briefing with presentation
 - 19 February 2026 – Scheduled council meeting – to agree budget
 - EO Meeting of Council to be arranged for consideration of staff review
4. That a draft of the budget, to include the estimated cost of the phased implementation of the clerk's recommendations, be shared with Members of the Resources, as Chairs of Standing Committees, to allow them to feed back prior to the draft being shared with all councillors for the briefing on 12 January 2026.

Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

POLICIES

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the adoption of two updated employment policies:

1. Flexible Working Policy
2. Parental & Paternity Leave Policy

These policies have been updated to ensure compliance with recent and upcoming legislative changes taking effect from April 2026, as well as to ensure the Council continues to operate in line with current UK employment law and best practice.

Background

Employment legislation relating to family leave and flexible working has undergone several reforms through the Employment Rights Act reforms and associated statutory regulations, with changes taking effect from 6 April 2026.

Local authorities and councils, as employers, must ensure that internal policies accurately reflect statutory rights. Failure to maintain up-to-date policies could expose the Council to:

- Non-compliance with employment legislation
- Potential employment tribunal claims
- Reputational risk
- Lack of clarity for staff and managers

The proposed policies incorporate these legal changes and establish clear procedures for both employees and managers.

1. Flexible Working Policy

The updated Flexible Working Policy reflects the statutory framework governing employees' right to request changes to their working arrangements.

Key provisions included within the policy are:

- A day-one statutory right for employees to request flexible working
- The ability for employees to make two requests within a 12-month period
- A requirement for employers to respond within two months
- A duty on the employer to consult with the employee before refusing a request

- Refusal permitted only on statutory business grounds

The attached policy outlines examples of flexible working arrangements, including:

- Part-time work
- Compressed hours
- Flexitime
- Hybrid or home working
- Job sharing

Although flexible working is not an automatic entitlement, the policy ensures that requests are handled fairly, transparently, and in accordance with statutory guidance.

Adoption of this policy ensures that Ledbury Town Council has a clear procedure for handling requests and demonstrates its commitment to supporting work-life balance while maintaining operational effectiveness.

2. **Parental & Paternity Leave Policy**

The Parental & Paternity Leave Policy consolidates statutory rights relating to family leave and incorporates significant legislative changes effective from April 2026.

The attached policy covers statutory provisions relating to:

- Maternity leave and pay
- Paternity leave and pay
- Adoption leave
- Shared parental leave
- Unpaid parental leave
- Neonatal care leave
- Parental bereavement leave
- Bereaved partner's paternity leave

Key legislative changes from April 2026

The policy reflects the following reforms:

2.1. Paternity Leave – Day One Right

From 6 April 2026, employees will be entitled to take paternity leave from the first day of employment, removing the previous requirement for 26 weeks' service.

2.2. Flexibility in Taking Paternity Leave

Employees may now take the two weeks of statutory paternity leave:

- Together or separately
- At any time within 52 weeks of the birth or adoption placement.

2.3. Unpaid Parental Leave – Day One Right

The qualifying service requirement for unpaid parental leave is removed, making it a day-one employment right from April 2026.

2.4. Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

A new statutory entitlement allows a bereaved partner to take up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave following the death of the child's mother or primary adopter.

2.5. Updated Statutory Pay Rates

For the 2026/27 statutory rate year, relevant family leave payments are set at £194.32 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

3. **Benefits of Policy Adoption**

Approving these policies will ensure that Ledbury Town Council:

- Remains legally compliant with UK employment law
- Provides clear guidance to employees and managers
- Demonstrates commitment to fair and supportive employment practices
- Reduces risk of legal challenge or employment disputes
- Aligns with modern employment standards and local government best practice

The policies also support staff wellbeing, retention, and workforce stability by providing clarity around family-related rights and flexible working arrangements.

4. **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of these policies beyond statutory obligations already required under employment law. Statutory payments such as maternity, paternity, and neonatal care pay are largely recoverable through HMRC in accordance with statutory reimbursement rules.

5. **Legal Implications**

Failure to adopt policies reflecting updated legislation could expose the Council to potential claims including:

- Failure to comply with statutory leave rights
- Unfair dismissal
- Discrimination under the Equality Act 2010
- Procedural unfairness in handling flexible working requests

The adoption of these policies helps ensure the Council operates within the current statutory employment framework.

Recommendation

That Ledbury Town Council:

1. Approve the Flexible Working Policy
2. Approve the Parental & Paternity Leave Policy

to ensure compliance with employment legislation effective from April 2026 and to provide clear guidance for employees and managers.



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Date Drafted: 25 February 2026
Date Adopted: 6 April 2026
Review date:

1. Introduction

Ledbury Town Council recognises that flexible working can support work-life balance, wellbeing, inclusion, and productivity. We are committed to considering flexible working requests in a fair, reasonable, and consistent manner, while ensuring that business needs continue to be met.

This policy sets out employees' statutory right to request flexible working and explains how requests will be handled.

Flexible working is not an automatic entitlement. Each request will be carefully considered on its individual merits.

This policy applies to all employees of Ledbury Town Council.

2. What Is Flexible Working?

Flexible working is any agreed change to an employee's contractual working pattern. This may include changes to:

- Hours of work (e.g. part-time, compressed hours)
- Times of work (e.g. flexitime, staggered hours)
- Place of work (e.g. homeworking, hybrid working)
- Working pattern (e.g. job share, annualised hours, term-time working)

This list is not exhaustive.

3. Eligibility

All employees have a day-one statutory right to request flexible working. Employees may make:

- Up to two statutory flexible working requests in any 12-month period
There is no minimum service requirement.

4. Making a Flexible Working Request

Requests must:

1. Be made in writing (email is acceptable).
2. State that it is a statutory flexible working request.
3. Set out the change requested.
4. State when the employee would like the change to take effect.
5. Confirm whether any previous flexible working requests have been made in the last 12 months and, if so, when.

Employees are encouraged to discuss requests informally with their manager before submitting a formal request.

5. Consideration of Requests

Ledbury Town Council will:

- Deal with requests in a reasonable manner.
- Consider each request on its individual merits.
- Not reject a request without consultation with the employee.
- Make a decision within two months of receiving the request (unless an extension is agreed in writing).

Managers may invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the request and explore alternatives where appropriate.

Employees may be accompanied at formal meetings by a work colleague or trade union representative where applicable.

6. Decision

Requests may be:

- Approved in full
- Approved with modifications (by agreement)
- Refused on one or more of the statutory business grounds (see section 7)

If approved, the change will normally constitute a permanent contractual variation, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

A trial period may be agreed where appropriate.

If refused, the decision will be confirmed in writing and will clearly state the statutory business ground(s) for refusal.

7. Statutory Grounds for Refusal

Under legislation, a flexible working request may only be refused for one or more of the following business reasons:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

8. Appeals

Employees may appeal a refusal within 14 calendar days of receiving the decision.

Appeals must:

- Be made in writing
- Set out the grounds for appeal

An appeal meeting will be arranged where appropriate, and the outcome will be confirmed in writing. The appeal decision is final.

9. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Flexible working requests will be handled consistently and fairly. Ledbury Town Council will ensure that decisions are not discriminatory and comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Flexible working may also be considered as a reasonable adjustment where an employee has a disability.

10. Informal Flexible Arrangements

Managers may agree informal or temporary flexibility outside the statutory process (for example, short-term adjustments due to personal circumstances).

These arrangements:

- Do not remove the employee's statutory right to submit a formal request.
- Do not permanently amend contractual terms unless confirmed in writing.

11. Relationship With Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Parental & Paternity Leave Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Attendance & Leave Policies

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Parental & Paternity Leave Policy

Date Drafted: 25 February 2026

Date Adopted: 1 April 2026

Review Terms: Ledbury Town Council will update this policy when statutory Rules/pay rates change.

1. Introduction

Ledbury Town Council is committed to supporting employees at significant life moments, including the arrival of a child, adoption, or circumstances involving neonatal care or bereavement. We recognise that becoming a parent or experiencing the loss of a child can have a profound impact on employees and their families. It is important to us that employees are able to take the time they need, in line with statutory rights, while maintaining clarity about their employment protections and pay entitlements.

This policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities relating to maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental, neonatal care, parental bereavement, bereaved partner's paternity, and unpaid parental leave. It explains eligibility requirements, notice obligations, pay entitlements, and return-to-work arrangements.

The policy also reflects legislative changes taking effect in April 2026, including updates to paternity leave and unpaid parental leave entitlements. Our aim is to ensure transparency, fairness, and compliance with UK employment law, while providing clear guidance to employees and managers on how family-related leave is managed within Ledbury Town Council.

Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager and HR at the earliest opportunity of any anticipated need for family leave so that appropriate support and planning arrangements can be put in place.

This policy applies to: All employees of Ledbury Town Council.

2. Purpose

Ledbury Town Council supports employees who are becoming parents or carers. This policy explains statutory and any enhanced rights available at Ledbury Town Council relating to:

- Maternity leave and pay
- Paternity leave and pay
- Adoption leave and pay
- Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)
- Unpaid parental leave (also called "ordinary parental leave")
- Neonatal care leave and pay
- Parental bereavement leave and pay
- Bereaved partner's paternity leave
- Time off for antenatal/adoption appointments

This policy sets out minimum legal entitlements unless an enhanced benefit is stated.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are applied within this policy:

- **Expected week of childbirth (EWC):** The week (Sunday–Saturday) the baby is due.
- **Average Weekly Earnings (AWE):** Calculated under statutory rules.
- **Qualifying period/service:** Any minimum service required by law for a particular right.
- **Statutory rate:** The government-set weekly cap that typically changes each April.

4. Non-discrimination and job protection

Ledbury Town Council will not discriminate against employees due to pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave, neonatal care, or related family status. Employees have the right to return to work in line with statutory rules and to be protected from detriment for taking (or seeking to take) family-related leave.

5. How to request family leave (general process)

Unless a section below sets a different rule, employees should:

1. Notify their manager as early as possible.
2. Provide required statutory notices and evidence (e.g., MATB1, matching certificate, birth confirmation) where applicable.
3. Discuss leave dates, pay, and any handover plan.
4. Keep their line manager updated if dates change.

A. Maternity Leave & Pay

A1. Maternity leave entitlement

Eligible employees can take up to 52 weeks' maternity leave (26 weeks' Ordinary Maternity Leave + 26 weeks' Additional Maternity Leave) under statutory rules.

A2. Maternity pay (SMP) and rates for 2026/27

If eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is:

- **First 6 weeks:** 90% of AWE
- **Remaining weeks:** **£194.32 per week** or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower) for the 2026/27 rate year.

Applies from 5/6 April 2026 (statutory rate year).

A3. Keeping-in-touch (KIT) days

Employees may work up to 10 KIT days during maternity leave by agreement and paid in accordance with statutory provisions.

B. Paternity Leave & Pay

B1. Paternity leave entitlement (and what changes from April 2026)

Employees may take **1 or 2 weeks** of paternity leave. Two weeks can be taken together or separately, and leave must end within **52 weeks** of birth (rules differ for adoption).

With effective from 6 April 2026 (Employment Rights Act 2025 reforms):

- Paternity leave becomes a “day one right” (no 26-week service requirement to *take the leave*).
- The restriction on taking paternity leave after Shared Parental Leave is removed (you can take paternity leave after SPL).
- There is also a temporary notice adjustment for certain due dates around the implementation window (affected employees will be notified accordingly by their line managers).

B2. Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) and rates for 2026/27

If eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay, SPP is **£194.32 per week** or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower) in the 2026/27 rate year.

The April 2026 reform makes *leave* a day-one right; statutory pay eligibility may still depend on statutory conditions (service/earnings) under HMRC rules. Your line manager will confirm eligibility and calculations.

B3. How to request paternity leave

Employees should give HR notice as early as possible, stating:

- The EWC/expected due date (or matching/placement date for adoption)
- Whether they want 1 or 2 weeks
- The requested start period/date (exact date not required in all cases)

C. Shared Parental Leave (SPL) & Pay (ShPP)

Eligible, parents may opt into SPL by curtailing maternity/adoption leave/pay and sharing leave between them, in line with statutory SPL rules.

Shared Parental Pay rate (2026/27): £194.32 per week or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower).

D. Adoption Leave & Pay

Eligible employees adopting a child may take statutory adoption leave/pay. Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) (2026/27):

- First 6 weeks: 90% of AWE
- Remaining weeks: £194.32 per week or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower).

E. Unpaid Parental Leave (Ordinary Parental Leave)

E1. Entitlement

Eligible employees may take up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave per child (limits apply per year/child under statutory rules).

E2. Change effective 6 April 2026

From **6 April 2026**, unpaid parental leave becomes a day-one right (removing the previous 1-year service requirement).

Requests must be made with the statutory notice period (Your line manager will confirm the notice requirement and scheduling rules).

F. Neonatal Care Leave & Pay

Neonatal care leave provides additional time off for parents whose baby requires neonatal care.

- Neonatal care leave and pay are in force (and should be managed alongside maternity/paternity/adoption/SPL as applicable).
- Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (2026/27): £194.32 per week or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower).

Employees should notify their line manager as soon as possible when neonatal care is required; Their line manager will confirm eligibility, evidence needs, and how this interacts with other leave.

G. Parental Bereavement Leave & Pay

Eligible employees may take statutory parental bereavement leave and, where eligible, pay.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (2026/27): £194.32 per week or 90% of AWE (whichever is lower).

H. Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave (new right from April 2026)

Where an employee is a bereaved partner following the death of the child's mother or primary adopter, a specific entitlement applies.

From 6 April 2026, bereaved partner's paternity leave becomes a right, providing up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave (taken within the relevant window).

Employees should contact their line manager immediately so that Ledbury Town Council can provide support and confirm applicable leave options and any pay/benefits offered.

I. Time off for appointments

I1. Antenatal appointments (partner)

Eligible employees can take unpaid time off to accompany a pregnant person to up to 2 antenatal appointments, subject to statutory rules.

I2. Adoption appointments

Eligible employees can take unpaid time off for adoption appointments under statutory rules.

J. Pay administration, benefits, pension and holiday

1. **Payroll:** Statutory payments are processed via payroll, subject to tax and NI.
2. **Benefits:** Contractual benefits during leave follow statutory rules and Ledbury Town Council's Policy.
3. **Pension:** Contributions continue according to scheme rules and statutory requirements.
4. **Holiday:** Annual leave accrues during statutory family leave. Employees should plan holiday usage with their manager, especially around return dates.

K. Contact during leave and return to work

- Ledbury Town Council will maintain reasonable contact during leave.
- Employees returning from family leave have return-to-work rights in line with statutory rules.
- Requests for flexible working on return will be handled under the Ledbury Town Council Flexible Working Policy.

L. Statutory rates and annual updates

Statutory family-leave pay rates and thresholds can change each tax year. For 2026/27, the statutory weekly rate for paternity, shared parental, adoption (after the first 6 weeks), parental bereavement and neonatal care pay is £194.32.

DRAFT