



Cornwall Association of Local Councils

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Review of Saltash Town Council Policy Framework Stage 1 Report – March 2026

Executive Summary

Saltash Town Council commissioned the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) to undertake a comprehensive review of its full suite of policies and governance documents. Over many years, the Council has accumulated a large number of policies written at different times, in different styles, and for different purposes. The result is a collection that has become inconsistent, uneven in quality, and increasingly difficult for both councillors and officers to navigate effectively. This review provides an assessment of the current framework and sets out recommendations to support a clearer, more coherent and more practical approach to policy management.

The review examined 51 documents, each scrutinised for relevance, clarity, legal alignment, duplication, tone and accessibility. The analysis identified several recurring themes. Many documents are significantly longer than necessary, with detailed operational content embedded within strategic policies. Several policies overlap or cover the same ground, particularly in areas such as Data Protection, HR, Finance and Library operations. A number of documents originated from private-sector or principal-authority templates and are therefore more complex or procedural than is appropriate for a Town Council. These factors, taken together, have contributed to a policy suite that is cumbersome to maintain, difficult to use in practice, and not always aligned with the Council's preferred ways of working.

The review also found that the distinction between policy (strategic, Council-adopted) and procedure (operational, officer-owned) has become blurred. This has led to unnecessary committee workload, reduced officer autonomy, and inconsistent operational practice. In several cases the policies reviewed required modernisation to reflect plain English standards, remove gendered language, and ensure alignment with contemporary expectations for transparency and inclusivity.

To address these issues, a new policy structure is recommended. This involves streamlining the existing documents into a clear hierarchy of Council-adopted policies supported by officer-managed procedures, guidance and templates. The recommended new structure reduces duplication, removes obsolete or overly detailed material, and introduces two essential new documents: a modern Data Protection Policy and a Records Management & Retention Policy. Additional policy areas—such as Privacy Notices, Whistleblowing and Biodiversity—are identified for consideration to ensure that the Council's governance framework is complete and future-proofed.

Several long-standing documents are proposed for retirement or reclassification as internal procedures rather than formal policy. These include certain HR processes, finance-related guides, service-specific operational instructions, and documents that duplicate existing statutory or sector guidance. Simplifying these into a Staff Handbook and a Councillor Induction Pack would improve accessibility, reduce unnecessary policy volume, and ensure that staff and councillors can find the information they need more easily.

The report also highlights broader governance considerations. The Council's current committee structure, which includes multiple all-member committees, creates additional administrative pressure and can blur lines of accountability. A future review of committee arrangements may help to streamline decision-making and strengthen delegation.

Finally, the report outlines how any agreed changes could be implemented. This would involve a period of redrafting, consolidation and creation of new documents, followed by consideration through the Council's normal governance processes. The timeline will depend on capacity and meeting schedules though implementing the recommendations in this report will result in a more coherent, modern and sustainable policy framework.

The Council is to be commended for undertaking this work. It represents a proactive approach to strengthening governance, improving clarity, and ensuring that policies genuinely support effective decision-making and day-to-day operations. The recommendations contained in this report aim to provide a practical and realistic route towards a clearer and more efficient framework that will serve the Council, its staff and the community well in the future.

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Review of Saltash Town Council Policy Framework

Stage 1 Report – March 2026

Documents provided:

- Full Report
- Annotated copies of 51 policies/documents
- Full analysis table of all policies/documents

Abbreviations:

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
ACSS	Archives and Cornish Studies Service
CALC	Cornwall Association of Local Councils
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HR	Human Resources
ICO	Information Commissioner's Office
KIT	Keeping in Touch [days]
NALC	National Association of Local Councils
SAPPP	Small Authorities Proper Practices Panel
SLCC	Society of Local Council Clerks

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Saltash Town Council commissioned the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) to undertake a comprehensive professional review of its full suite of policies and governance documents. The Council's rationale for commissioning this work was clear and well-founded. Over time a large number of documents have accumulated, many written in different styles, reflecting different organisational eras, authors, external contractors, and sector influences. As a result, policies have grown inconsistent, overly detailed, and, in places, difficult to operate in day-to-day practice.

1.2 Objectives

The Town Council expressed a series of specific objectives for this review:

- To assess the full range of policies for consistency, clarity, legal compliance, and practical usability.
- To determine which policies may be simplified, combined, or retired, reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.
- To ensure the policy suite is coherent, modern, inclusive, and future-proofed, including use of universal language (e.g., Chairperson, they/them).
- To ensure that policies reflect the appropriate role of elected members (strategy & governance) and officers (operational delivery).
- To support the creation of a logical, navigable, user-friendly policy catalogue, useful to councillors, staff, and the community.

Saltash Town Council has 55 identified policies and governance documents in their policy catalogue, of which 51 were provided to CALC for analysis. These documents span:

- Governance
- Finance
- HR and Employment
- Civic and Councillor Protocols
- Service Delivery
- Library Operations

This report provides CALC's full assessment of Saltash Town Council's current policy catalogue, drawing together the key findings from the detailed review. It offers a synthesised, high-level analysis of the principal issues identified, together with a comprehensive recommended new policy structure for the Council. In addition, it presents observations intended to guide the Council towards a more coherent, efficient and modernised governance framework, and concludes with a set of summarised headline recommendations designed to support practical next steps.

1.3 Essential companion documents

Whilst this report provides the narrative, strategic findings and overarching recommendations arising from CALC's review, it should be read alongside the full analysis table and the annotated policy documents supplied separately. These documents contain the detailed, line-by-line observations, examples, corrections and procedural suggestions that underpin the recommendations made here.

Without reference to those underlying documents, key nuances may be missed and the rationale for specific recommendations may not be fully understood. The analysis table and annotated policies therefore form an integral part of Stage 1 and will be essential for any Stage 2 implementation work.

1.4 CALC Credentials and reviewer expertise

CALC is the recognised professional body supporting Town and Parish Councils across Cornwall. CALC provides governance advice, training, policy development support, and specialist consultancy to over 200 local councils, maintaining direct links with NALC and sector bodies nationally. CALC's work is grounded in current legislation, best practice frameworks, and emerging sector standards. More about CALC can be found here: [The Association | Cornwall Association of Local Councils](#)

This review was undertaken by Lee Dunkley, the Association's County Executive Officer. Lee is an experienced governance and policy professional with senior experience across local government, civic administration, and organisational development. A detailed professional profile is available here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leedunkley/>

This combination of organisational and personal expertise ensures that the findings and recommendations within this report are rooted firmly in recognised good practice, realistic for councils of Saltash's scale, and directly aligned with contemporary sector expectations.

2. Scope of work and agreement

CALC advised that the review should be undertaken in two distinct stages, the first being a full assessment of the existing catalogue and the second being the implementation of any agreed changes.

Stage 1—commissioned by Saltash Town Council—comprised the detailed reading and analysis of every policy document, with each one annotated to highlight recommended amendments. This stage also involved identifying duplication, contradictions, outdated references, and areas where current documents diverged from accepted sector practice. Consideration was given not only to the substantive content of each policy, but also to style, tone, accessibility, internal consistency, and compliance with relevant legislation. A key output of Stage 1 was the development of a proposed modern, streamlined policy structure designed to rationalise the existing collection. The estimated time required to complete this stage was 40–56 hours (five to seven working days), reflecting the depth and breadth of the assessment.

The 51 documents provided to CALC for review were named as follows:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <i>Awarding the Honorary Freedom of Saltash</i> | 26) <i>DRAFT Receiving Public Questions, Representations and Evidence at Meetings</i> |
| 2) <i>Civic Awards Policy</i> | 27) <i>Freedom of Information & Model Publication Scheme</i> |
| 3) <i>Civic Handbook</i> | 28) <i>Scheme of Delegation</i> |
| 4) <i>Code of Conduct</i> | 29) <i>Standing Orders inc appendices</i> |
| 5) <i>Co-option Policy</i> | 30) <i>Data Protection and Retention Policies</i> |
| 6) <i>Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor</i> | 31) <i>Data Protection Policy (Employees)</i> |
| 7) <i>Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure</i> | 32) <i>Data Protection Criminal Records Information Policy</i> |
| 8) <i>Protocol for Member Officer Relations</i> | 33) <i>Disability Employment Policy</i> |
| 9) <i>Planning - A Guide for Councillors</i> | 34) <i>Employee Recognition Scheme</i> |
| 10) <i>Acquisition or Sale of Land and Property minus attachments</i> | 35) <i>Equality & Diversity Policy</i> |
| 11) <i>Annual Reserves Policy</i> | 36) <i>Health and Safety Manual</i> |
| 12) <i>Annual Statement on Internal Control</i> | 37) <i>Local Government Pension Scheme Policy</i> |
| 13) <i>Annual Treasury Management Strategy</i> | 38) <i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i> |
| 14) <i>Anti bribery Policy Statement & Anti fraud and Corruption Strategy</i> | 39) <i>Safeguarding Policy</i> |
| 15) <i>Finance schedule and precept plan</i> | 40) <i>Training & Development Policy</i> |
| 16) <i>Financial Regulations</i> | 41) <i>Communications Policy & Strategy</i> |
| 17) <i>Fundraising Strategy</i> | 42) <i>Noticeboard Policy</i> |
| 18) <i>Grants Policy</i> | 43) <i>DRAFT Complaints Policy</i> |
| 19) <i>Match Funding Policy</i> | 44) <i>Social Media Policy</i> |
| 20) <i>Receipting of Income and Banking Procedure</i> | 45) <i>Allotment Policy</i> |
| 21) <i>Annual Internal Audit and Business Risk Assessment</i> | 46) <i>CCTV POLICY</i> |
| 22) <i>Risk Management Plan Statement</i> | 47) <i>Corrections and Additions to Saltash war memorials policy</i> |
| 23) <i>Risk Management Strategy</i> | 48) <i>Hire of Town Council Premises and Events</i> |
| 24) <i>Annual Business Continuity Plan</i> | 49) <i>Public Loudspeaker System (Fore Street)</i> |
| 25) <i>DRAFT IT Policy</i> | 50) <i>Home Library Service Policy</i> |
| | 51) <i>Library - Stock Management Policy</i> |

Stage 2—outside the scope of this report—would involve putting those recommendations into practice. This implementation phase would include rewriting and simplifying policies, producing new or replacement documents, removing or merging outdated items, modernising language throughout to ensure consistency and inclusivity, and assembling a final, coherent policy suite ready for Council approval and publication.

Saltash Town Council commissioned Stage 1 only, and the findings of that stage are presented in full within this report.

3. Methodology

CALC undertook the following work:

3.1 Categorisation

The 51 documents were grouped into thematic areas:

- Councillors & Civic
- Finance
- Governance
- HR & Employment
- Public-facing communications
- Services (Allotments, CCTV, Facilities Hire, Library, etc.)

3.2 Document summaries

CALC prepared a detailed assessment for every document in the catalogue. For each policy, a concise explanation of its remit and purpose was produced, along with contextual notes on the legal or statutory framework underpinning it. CALC also examined the structure, internal logic and practical alignment of each document, commenting on how effectively it fits within the Council's wider governance arrangements and day-to-day operations.

3.3 Detailed annotations

Each document was also annotated extensively, with CALC identifying a wide range of issues and opportunities for improvement. This included highlighting content that had become outdated, instances where a policy extended too far into operational territory that should properly sit with officers, and areas where duplication served no useful purpose. CALC drew attention to documents that lacked essential legal references or, alternatively, contained incorrect or superseded statutory information, as well as those that conflicted with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, or established procedures. The annotations also addressed concerns about language—such as the use of gendered terms or inconsistent styles—alongside examples of administrative requirements that were unnecessarily onerous or impractical to implement.

3.4 Policy framework analysis

CALC also undertook a holistic review of the entire policy suite to understand how well the collection functions as a whole. This involved assessing whether the overall size and volume of the catalogue is proportionate to the needs of a Town Council of Saltash's scale, and whether the Council is attempting to do too much in policy areas where a simple reference to established external guidance would be more appropriate. The review examined which documents genuinely constitute strategic policy—requiring formal adoption by the Council—and which, by contrast, are operational tools that should properly sit under officer management rather than forming part of the Council's adopted policy framework.

3.5 Development of a new structure

Drawing on sector best practice, CALC evaluated the full policy suite to determine which documents are fit for retention in their current form, which require revision, which are no longer necessary and should therefore be withdrawn, and which could be merged to remove duplication. The review also identified a number of documents that, while useful, should not sit within the formal policy catalogue because they are operational in nature and should instead be managed internally by officers. In addition, CALC highlighted several areas where entirely new policies are required to ensure the Council has a coherent and complete governance framework. Together these assessments inform a streamlined, fit-for-purpose policy catalogue that better reflects the needs and responsibilities of Saltash Town Council.

4. Analysis – High-level findings

A synthesised summary of key themes is set out below. The detailed policy-by-policy analysis appears in the separate analysis table and annotated documents.

4.1 Overall volume and complexity

Saltash Town Council has accumulated a policy suite more typical of a large principal authority or a complex charitable organisation. This has resulted in:

- Overly long policies, sometimes 25–40 pages, when 4–12 pages would suffice.
- Duplication of statutory guidance, especially in HR, Safeguarding, Planning, FOI and Data Protection.
- Multiple documents addressing the same issues (e.g., Data Protection policies, finance procedures).
- Private-sector HR policy content not suited to a Town Council.

While a certain level of detail is sometimes appropriate, policies that become excessively long introduce several practical risks. Lengthy documents can obscure the key rules and responsibilities they are supposed to convey, burying essential information within dense narrative and making the policy harder to understand and less likely to be followed. They also create a significant administrative burden: long policies take considerable time to read, review, update and approve, placing avoidable pressure on both councillors and officers.

Moreover, the longer and more complex a policy becomes, the less usable it is in day-to-day practice. Staff and councillors are far less inclined to consult a document that is unwieldy, repetitive or difficult to navigate, which in turn increases the likelihood of inconsistent practice or non-compliance. Lengthy documents also pose challenges for version control; the more content a policy contains, the harder it is to keep it accurately updated across all platforms and ensure that officers and members are working from the correct version. Further, policies that include process-level detail tend to become outdated quickly. As working practices evolve or legislation changes, these detailed sections can conflict with other documents or with current law, creating confusion and operational risk.

For all these reasons, policies should be concise, accessible and focused on principles – not exhaustive procedural manuals.

4.2 Sector misalignment

Several of the Council's existing documents appear to have originated from sources outside the Town and Parish Council sector, including private-sector HR consultancies, NHS-style or principal-authority templates, and governance frameworks more commonly found in charitable organisations. While these documents are not inherently incorrect, they are frequently far more detailed, formal, or procedurally complex than is appropriate for a Town Council. Their tone, structure and expectations often reflect the needs of much larger organisations, and as such they impose a level of bureaucracy that is out of proportion to Saltash Town Council's requirements.

This situation leaves the Council vulnerable to a number of risks. The Council may inadvertently duplicate work that is already covered by statutory guidance or sector-standard resources; it may introduce unnecessary administrative barriers that slow down decision-making and reduce operational agility; and it may adopt procedural burdens that the law does not in fact require. Perhaps most importantly, documents of this nature can blur the essential distinction between the strategic role of the Council – as the decision-making body setting policy direction – and the operational role of officers, who are responsible for day-to-day delivery. Maintaining clarity between these functions is essential to sound governance, and policies that overreach into operational management risk undermining that balance.

4.3 Purpose of policies

A central issue emerged when analysing the collection of 51 documents:

- 1) A policy should set rules and principles for decision-making.

- 2) A policy should not attempt to describe operational process or workflow.

Across many of the Council's documents there is a blurring between the type of document and its purpose. It appears that an administrative burden is being placed on staff, and a time-burden on councillors, by bringing all documents to committee for discussion and decisions, when this is unnecessary and unproductive. The table clarifies the purpose of documents:

Type of document	Purpose	Role
Policy	Strategic, adopted by Council	Discussed and decided by <u>Council</u>
Guidance	Explanatory	<u>Officer</u> developed using external sources
Operational Procedure	Staff instructions	For <u>officer</u> use
Forms/Templates	Administrative tool	For <u>officer</u> use

This distinction is essential for effective governance.

4.4 Appropriate roles: Council and Officers

A well-designed policy suite must remain firmly at the strategic level and avoid slipping into operational management. It should not prescribe the specific workflows that officers must follow, dictate day-to-day procedural details, require councillor approval for routine administrative tasks, or restrict officers' flexibility to act within their professional roles. Several of the current documents, however, do exactly this. Items such as the Receipting and Banking Procedures, rules governing the Public Loudspeaker System, volunteer procedures, and the detailed terms and conditions for hiring council premises are all examples of material that belong in internal officer-managed operational guidance rather than in formally adopted council policy. These are essential working tools for staff, but they should not form part of the Council's strategic governance framework.

4.5 Modern language and accessibility

As annotated, many documents require:

- Removal of gendered terms (Chairman, he/him)
- Adoption of universal, modern professional terminology
- Consistent use of plain English
- Avoidance of outdated concepts

4.6 Overreach and bureaucracy

A number of the Town Council's existing policies introduce administrative requirements that go well beyond what is proportionate or necessary for effective governance. Several impose long timeframes for relatively simple actions, while others require multiple forms or layers of documentation for processes that should be straightforward. In some cases, the approval pathways set out in policies create unnecessary loops that slow down routine tasks, and there are also examples where procedures are duplicated across different documents, adding to confusion and administrative burden.

Taken together, these features risk reducing the Council's agility and efficiency. Policies should be designed to enable good decision-making and smooth operational practice. The aim is to provide a clear framework that supports staff and councillors in delivering services effectively, rather than creating bureaucracy for its own sake.

4.7 Use of external guidance

Where authoritative guidance already exists from bodies such as Cornwall Council, NALC, SLCC, SAPP, the ICO, ACAS or CIPFA – whether in relation to planning protocols, safeguarding frameworks, Freedom of Information requirements, or data-protection checklists – it is rarely necessary for Saltash Town Council to recreate or restate this material within its own policies. Instead, the Council should simply reference and link to these sector-standard frameworks, adopting and following them as appropriate. This approach avoids duplication, reduces the risk of misinterpretation, and ensures that the Council remains aligned with up-to-date professional and statutory guidance.

4.8 Risks of taking no action

The Council has reached a point where its policies have simply grown too numerous and uneven to function well as a framework for governance. Leaving things as they are would mean continuing to work within a system that no longer reflects the needs of a modern Town council. The risk is not dramatic failure but rather a slow and steady accumulation of inefficiencies, inconsistencies and avoidable problems.

The first and most obvious issue is compliance. Several of the existing documents no longer align with current legislation or accepted sector standards, and some contain outdated statutory references. Without a clear, single Data Protection Policy or a modern approach to retention, the Council remains open to errors that could easily be prevented. Auditors and members of the public expect councils to be able to demonstrate sound governance quickly and confidently; this becomes much more difficult when policies contradict one another or exist in multiple overlapping versions.

Operationally, the current suite places avoidable pressure on staff. Many documents stray into processes that should remain in the remit of officers, and others repeat the same information in multiple places. This forces officers to work harder than they should to determine which document they ought to follow. When routine tasks need to be escalated to committees because policies require it, delay becomes built into the system. Roles and responsibilities are also becoming less clear. The distinction between strategic policy and operational management is blurred meaning councillors can find themselves discussing procedural detail, and officers may second-guess decisions they are meant to take autonomously. The overall effect is a governance structure that is over prescriptive and inflexible.

Finally, there is the Council's public face. The policy suite is published online and used by residents, partners and contractors. When it appears outdated or unwieldy, it communicates a lack of coherence that does not reflect the professionalism of those working within the organisation. A more streamlined, modern framework would better represent the Council's ambitions and standards.

5. New policy structure (recommended)

Below is the comprehensive new policy structure, fully aligned with sector best practice and eliminating duplication.

	Policy area	Policy	Updates needed
1	Councillors and Civic	Awarding the Honorary Freedom of Saltash	Minor/Medium
2		Civic Awards Policy	Minor/Medium
3		Code of Conduct	Minor/Medium
4		Co-option Policy	Minor/Medium
5		Election of Mayor & Deputy Mayor	Minor/Medium
6		Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure	Minor/Medium
7		Member–Officer Protocol	Major
8	Finance	Acquisition / Disposal of Land & Property	Minor/Medium
9		Annual Reserves Policy	Minor/Medium
10		Annual Statement on Internal Control	Minor/Medium
11		Annual Treasury Strategy	Minor/Medium
12		Anti-Bribery, Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy	Minor/Medium
13		Financial Regulations	Minor/Medium
14		Grants Policy	Minor/Medium
15	Match Funding Policy	Minor/Medium	
16	Governance	Scheme of Delegation	Minor/Medium
17		IT Policy	Minor/Medium
18		Risk Management Strategy	Major
19		Freedom of Information Policy & Publication Scheme	Major
20		Standing Orders	Major
21		Complaints Policy	Major
22		Data Protection Policy	NEW
23	Records Management & Retention Policy referencing ACSS 2025	NEW	
24	Human Resources	LGPS Employer Discretions Policy	Minor/Medium
25		Training & Development Policy	Minor/Medium
26		Safeguarding Policy	Major
27		Equality & Diversity Policy	Major
28	Public-facing	Communications Policy & Strategy	Major
29		Social Media Policy	Major
30		Complaints Policy	Major
31	Services	CCTV Policy	Minor/Medium
32		War Memorials Additions/Corrections Policy	Minor/Medium
33		High-level Allotment Policy	NEW
34		High-level Hiring Town Council Premises and Facilities	NEW

6. Removal, integration or recategorisation of old policies

The below table summarises the existing policies that it is recommended to retire, merge or recategorise:

	Policy Area	Policy	Summary
1	Councillors and Civic	Civic Handbook	Retain as guidance, not policy
2		Planning Guide for Councillors	Retain as guidance, not policy
3	Finance	Finance Schedule and Precept Plan	Internal procedure
4		Fundraising Strategy	Staff guidance
5		Receipting and Banking Procedure	Internal procedure
6		Risk Management Plan Statement	Use Risk Register as internal document
7		Annual Internal Audit & Business Risk Assessment	Internal working document
8	Governance	Public Questions Policy	Retire. Use Standing Orders.
9		Data Protection and Retention Policy	Integrate into shorter Retention Policy
10		Data Protection (Employees)	Integrate into new Data Protection Policy
11	Human Resources	Recruitment and Selection Policy	Retire (or major review at minimum)
12		Disability Employment Policy	Integrate into Staff Handbook
13		Data Protection Criminal Records Information Policy	Retire (or major review at minimum)
14		Employee Recognition Scheme	Retire
15		Health & Safety Manual	Retain as operational, not policy
16	Public-facing	Noticeboard Policy	Append to Communications Policy & Strategy
17	Services	Allotment Policy	Split into new high-level policy and operational allotment tenancy agreement
18		Public Loudspeaker System	Integrate in new Hirer's Guide
19		Hire of Premises and Events	Replace with High-level Hiring Town Council Premises and Facilities Policy Develop new Hirer's Guide
20		Home Library Service Policy	Retain as procedural, not policy
21		Library Stock Management Policy	Retire. Already exists as Cornwall Council policy

7. New core governance documents to introduce

CALC recommends that Saltash Town Council introduces two essential new governance documents that will considerably strengthen and modernise its overall policy framework.

7.1 Data Protection Policy

The first is a new Data Protection Policy, written in a modern, concise and sector-appropriate style. This policy would apply consistently to councillors, employees, volunteers, contractors and members of the public, removing the duplication created by multiple overlapping documents and ensuring the Council's approach aligns with current ICO expectations and wider best practice across the local government sector.

7.2 Records Management and Retention Policy

The second recommended addition is a new Records Management and Retention Policy. This would be a short, clear governance statement formally adopting the ACSS/CALC Retention Schedule (2025) as the Council's authoritative reference point for all retention and disposal decisions. This single policy would replace the outdated retention content currently spread across various legacy documents and would provide the Council with a coherent, legally robust and future-proofed foundation for managing information.

Together, these two new documents would provide clarity, compliance and a strong structural basis for the Council's information governance arrangements, ensuring that policies are streamlined, consistent and aligned with recognised sector standards.

7.3 Additional policies not provided but expected in a complete policy framework

Although Saltash Town Council supplied 51 documents for review, a small number of policies that would normally appear in a complete, modern local council policy suite were not provided. These do not appear to be missing for reasons of poor governance, but rather because they may exist informally, be embedded within other documents, may have never been formally adopted, or were not required to be reviewed by CALC. We recommend that the Council considers whether the following should be added to the formal suite:

- Privacy Notice(s) – legally required under the UK GDPR for staff, councillors, service users and the public.
- Biodiversity and/or Sustainability Policy – a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021.
- Real Living Wage Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy – referenced implicitly in other HR documents but not provided as a standalone policy.
- Harassment and Bullying / Dignity at Work Policy – although elements appear in HR documents, a dedicated version is highly recommended.
- Civility & Respect Pledge – commonly adopted across the sector; the Town Council is encouraged to adopt and publish this as part of its commitment to a positive culture.
- Organisation Chart.
- Committee Terms of Reference – while these exist operationally, they were not provided in policy form, but should be published for transparency and induction purposes.

These documents would help complete the Council's governance framework and ensure alignment with sector norms and legal expectations.

8. A note on Staff Handbook

During this review it became clear that Saltash Town Council would benefit from consolidating numerous HR-related operational procedures into a single Staff Handbook. This document would not be adopted as a “policy” but would instead sit under the Town Clerk’s management and be issued to all employees on appointment. While there is reference to a Staff Handbook, CALC have not had sight of it. We recommend that the Staff Handbook may include (but is not limited to) the following:

To feature only in handbook - no stand alone policy needed	To feature a short summary of, or reference to, the separate standalone policy
Ethical Conduct	Training & Development
Good Faith and Loyalty	Data Protection
Proof of Identity	Health & Safety Policy
Dress Code / PPE use	Whistleblowing
Timekeeping	Disciplinary/Grievance/Capability Procedure
Adverse Weather / Travel Disruption	Equal Opportunities / Equality & Diversity Policy
Rest Breaks	Harassment & Bullying / Dignity at Work
Smoking	Pension Policy
Telephones	IT Policy
Driving	Member-Officer Protocol
Expenses & Allowances	Organisation Structure/Chart
Overtime	Real Living Wage
Purchasing Procedure	
Council Property	
Deliveries & Warranties	
Relationships at Work	
Unauthorised Absence	
Medical Appointments	
Ante-natal/Adoption Appts	
Jury Service / Other Time Off	
Compassionate/Bereavement Leave	
Parental Bereavement Leave	
Time Off for Dependants	
Annual Leave	
Christmas Closure Rules	
Reserve Forces	
Flexible Working	
Maternity Leave	
Adoption Leave	
Paternity Leave	
Parental Leave	
Shared Parental Leave	
KIT Days	
During Maternity/Adoption	
Carers Leave	
Lone Working	
Menopause Policy	
Stress and Wellbeing	
Sickness Absence Procedure	
Reasonable Adjustments - Disability	

Placing these operational matters in a Staff Handbook reduces the size of the policy suite while improving clarity, consistency and ease of access for staff.

9. A note on Councillor Induction Pack

Similarly, CALC recommends the creation of a structured Councillor Induction Pack. This should be produced and maintained by officers and issued to each councillor upon election or co-option. It should not form part of the formal policy suite. The pack should provide:

To feature only in induction pack - not needed to be replicated elsewhere	To append to the pack
CALC Induction pack commentary	Training & Development Policy
Who to contact and how	Data Protection Policy
Registering financial and other interests - summary	IT Policy
Code of Conduct – summary	Member-Officer Protocol
Members' Allowances	Standing Orders
Freedom of Information – summary	Financial Regulations
Training – summary	Recent minutes
IT usage – summary	Committee Terms of Reference
Attending your first meeting	Approved budget
The Annual Town Meeting	Calendar of meetings
The Annual Council Meeting	Organisation structure/chart
Roles of members and officers – summary	Code of Conduct
Gifts and Hospitality – summary	Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Useful links (NALC, CALC, ACAS, ICO etc)	Register of Interest
	Statement of Assurance
	Civility and Respect pledge
	NALC Good Councillor Guide
	Planning Guide for Councillors

This will support councillors in understanding their role, reduce reliance on lengthy policies, and promote good governance from day one.

10. Strategic recommendations (Higher-level)

Beyond individual documents, CALC recommends the following strategic changes:

10.1 Establish clear layers of documentation

Documents should be classified as:

- Policy (adopted by Council; high-level rules)
- Procedure (operational; officer-owned)
- Guidance (explanatory; non-binding)
- Forms / Templates (administrative tools)

10.2 Reduce bureaucracy

Administrative practices should be simplified where possible. Policies should enable action, not restrict it.

10.3 Adopt a “Principles and references” approach

Where external bodies have authoritative guidance (ICO, Cornwall Council, SLCC, NALC), the Council should reference, not replicate.

10.4 Ensure policies are actively used

Policies should not exist as static documents; they must actively shape and inform the Council’s day-to-day practice. They should underpin induction processes for new councillors and staff, guide the Council’s training and development arrangements, support consistent and lawful decision-making, and provide a reliable framework for committee procedures. To achieve this, the policy framework must be both accessible and genuinely used in practice.

For this reason, the new structure should be designed so that it is easy for users to navigate, subject to routine review, and maintained in both public-facing (unless not appropriate) and internal locations – namely the Council’s website and staff SharePoint system. Policies should also be clearly tagged or categorised by audience, distinguishing those intended for councillors, staff, and the wider public. This approach ensures clarity, fosters accountability, and makes the suite functional and actively supportive of the Council’s governance and operational needs.

11. A note on committee structure and usage

During the review process CALC noted that Saltash Town Council operates at least two committees comprised of all councillors, alongside a number of other committees and sub-committees. While this structure is legally permissible, it is unusually complex and may not provide the clarity, efficiency or delegation benefits associated with a more streamlined governance model.

Saltash Town Council's current committee structure creates several governance challenges that merit consideration. When every member is involved in committees, the distinction between the role of Full Council and the role of committees becomes blurred, making it difficult to achieve the clear separation of purpose that effective delegation requires. This arrangement also increases the administrative burden on officers, who must support, minute and service meetings involving the entire membership, often duplicating effort across multiple bodies.

Such a structure can also reduce the Council's agility, as decisions that could appropriately be delegated to a smaller group still require consideration by all members, slowing the process and limiting responsiveness. Meaningful delegation becomes harder to achieve, and committees struggle to develop distinct remits or a sense of ownership over their areas of responsibility. In practice, this can dilute accountability and strategic focus.

For these reasons CALC recommends that the Council undertakes a focused review of its committee arrangements. A more streamlined structure – where committees have clear and separate areas of responsibility, appropriate numbers of members, and genuine authority within defined limits – would support more efficient decision-making and reduce unnecessary duplication. It would also help ensure that workloads are manageable, that officers receive clear and consistent direction from the appropriate body, and that councillors' time is used effectively.

CALC may be able to investigate governance models and facilitation support should Saltash Town Council wish to undertake such a review as a separate piece of work or as part of wider organisational refinement.

12. Summary of recommendations

Full recommendations and details are contained within the full analysis table. In short, CALC recommends Saltash Town Council adopt the following actions:

- A. Adopt the new streamlined policy structure (set out in Section 5)
- B. Remove the following categories of documents from the policy suite:
 - Duplicative Data Protection documents
 - Outdated Library and HLS operational documents
 - Recognition Scheme
 - Planning Guide (operational)
 - Receipting & Banking / Audit Schedules (operational)
 - Fundraising Strategy (operational)
 - Health & Safety Manual (operational)
 - Civic Handbook (operational)
 - Finance Schedule and Precept Plan (operational)
 - Public Questions Policy
 - Recruitment and Selection Policy
- C. Amalgamate or split the following:
 - Split Allotments into Policy and Tenancy Agreement
 - Merge Noticeboard rules into Communications Policy
 - Replace Hire Policy with short policy and Hirers' Guide, include the Loudspeaker details
 - Merge Disability Employment Policy into Staff Handbook entry
- D. Introduce new policies:
 - New Data Protection Policy
 - New Records Management Policy (ACSS 2025 schedule adopted)
- E. Consider the need for further additional policies/documents if not in place:
 - Privacy Notice(s)
 - Biodiversity and/or Sustainability Policy
 - Real Living Wage Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Harassment and Bullying / Dignity at Work Policy
 - Civility & Respect Pledge
 - Organisation Chart
 - Committee Terms of Reference
- F. Revise language throughout the remaining policies:
 - Use gender-neutral terminology
 - Remove private-sector HR language
 - Ensure consistent professional tone
 - Correct formatting errors – font size, line spacing etc.
 - Plain English approach
- G. Remove contradictory or third-party text where unnecessary (per annotations); replace with references to authoritative guidance.
- H. Review the following practices:
 - Complaints handling process
 - Public participation mechanisms

- Hiring processes for facilities
 - Co-option criteria
 - Grant Policy fairness
 - Fixing numbers on committees within Standing Orders
 - Whether an Appropriate Policy Document is required
 - Recruitment timelines and application process
 - War memorial additions requirements
- I. Consider undertaking a focused review of its committee structure to ensure decision-making arrangements are efficient, clearly delegated, and fit for purpose.

13. Implementing Stage 2

Once the Council has reviewed and resolved a course of action regarding the recommendations in this report officers and/or a contracted organisation (CALC or another) can begin to pursue implementation. Much of the effort will sit in the redrafting stage. Some documents need only tightening or a freshening of tone, while others will benefit from being reorganised or rethought more fully. Those documents requiring merging, major changes, or developing from scratch will of course take the most time.

Once the initial drafting is completed the documents can move back through the Council's usual governance pathways with committees, or the Full Council, considering the revised documents. This can be done in batches or all at once, according to prevailing preference. When the Council is satisfied with the final versions, they can be adopted formally and made available to staff and the public. Older documents can then be withdrawn or archived so that the new structure stands on its own.

How long this takes will depend on capacity and meeting cycles, but what matters most is that the pace supports thoughtful review rather than simply processing paperwork. If done in this spirit, the end result could be a framework that is more navigable, easier to keep current, and better aligned with how the Council already works.

14. Conclusion

Saltash Town Council is to be commended for taking the initiative to carry out such a comprehensive and forward-looking review of its governance framework. Few councils pause to examine the evolution of their policies in this way, and the decision to seek external expert support reflects a clear commitment to strong governance, transparency, and organisational clarity. Undertaking this exercise demonstrates the Council's desire not only to comply with statutory and sector expectations, but also to ensure that its policies genuinely support effective decision-making and operational delivery.

For the new policy framework to work effectively, it must be something people actually use. Policies should help guide induction for new councillors and staff, support ongoing training, inform day-to-day decision-making, and underpin how committees operate. They should be practical tools that support the Council's work, not documents that sit on a shelf.

To achieve this, the revised structure needs to be straightforward to navigate, regularly reviewed and available in places where people will naturally look for it – on the Council's public website and on the staff SharePoint system. Each policy should also be clearly marked to show who it is for, whether councillors, staff, or the public. This approach makes the whole suite clearer, more accountable, and genuinely useful in supporting both governance and day-to-day operations.

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