DRAFT MENOPAUSE POLICY

AGENDA ITEM No. 10

MEETING: **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

DATE: **2ND DECEMBER 2026**

REPORT BY: **CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Draft Menopause Policy attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration and approval.

2.0 Background to the Report

2.1 The Menopause has recently been legally recognised in the workplace under the Employment Rights Act 2025, in a broader effort to address the needs of the rapidly growing demographic of women aged over 45 in the workplace.

2.2 These changes reflect a shift towards a more proactive approach to managing the negative and stressful impact that menopause symptoms have on women's performance in the workplace, ensuring that employees' needs are met and the workplace remains a supportive and inclusive environment for all.

2.3 Menopause is a health and wellbeing concern for employees and needs to be handled sensitively by the Council as an employer. Women experience a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms, which can create a domino effect whereby one symptom leads to another.

2.4 The Menopause Policy uses the term 'menopause' referring to any stage of menopause in which women may experience symptoms and/or stigma related to menopause, including perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause stages.

2.5 The Policy aims to help women stay in work throughout the menopause and manage symptoms whilst at work. This can include employees who are transgender and those who are non-binary.

2.6 The term 'male menopause' can suggest a similar process to women's menopause, but as testosterone levels decline gradually, they do not experience the symptoms which women experience through menopause. If, however, a male employee is suffering with severe symptoms, the policy would apply in the same way for them.

2.7 Whilst the menopause usually affects women between ages 45 and 55, it can also occur earlier or later. For many people symptoms last around 4 years but in many cases can last a lot longer and symptoms can vary from very mild to severe.

2.8 The aim of the policy is to support employees in managing their symptoms so that they can continue to do their job confidently and effectively. Each case should be treated individually.

2.9 There is a need for employers to better understand menopause and provide for open communication in the workplace culture, policy and training for Managers to better support employees who are experiencing menopause symptoms in the workplace.

2.10 Training for managers is required to ensure that they are confident in supporting their staff who may be going through the menopause and able to have regular conversations to create positive and open communication and prevent the employee from losing confidence in their skills and abilities, taking time off work, increasing their levels of stress, anxiety or depression or leaving their job.

2.11 If an employee is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage due to their menopause symptoms, this could result in discrimination if connected to a protected characteristic such as age or sex under the Equality Act 2010.

2.12 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 says employers must, where reasonably practical, ensure everyone's health, safety and welfare at work.

2.13 ACAS also recommends employers develop an Action Plan, but this is only to make improvements if required and for organisations with 250+ employees. However, it is considered best practice for all employers to have a menopause policy.

3.0 Impact on Great Aycliffe Town Council

3.1 A Menopause Policy will support staff and assist with productivity and morale when an employee is suffering with menopause symptoms which affect their work, which in turn increases the probability of staff retention.

3.2 As highlighted above, it is envisaged that the Menopause Policy will ensure Managers receive training to support staff suffering from menopause symptoms and enable them to ensure the employee feels supported and is able to continue to work to a high standard.

4.0 Policy Implications

4.1 Conforms to assisting in the delivery of the following Council Aim:-

Aim 1 "To provide good quality governance and management of the Council".

5.0 Staffing Implications

5.1 This policy will cover all employees experiencing menopause symptoms at work.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There may be minimal cost implications for any reasonable adjustments made, particularly with flexible working arrangements but these are expected to be relatively short-term to support those employees who are experiencing menopausal symptoms.

6.2 It is hoped that the policy will help reduce employee absence costs associated with menopause symptoms.

7.0 Crime and Disorder Implications

7.1 None.

8.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 This is a positive policy which supports any employee who is suffering with menopause symptoms.

9.0 Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change Implications

9.1 There will be a minimal positive impact as employees will not need to travel into the office if working from home is allowed as a reasonable adjustment.

10.0 Risk Assessment

10.1 It is not considered that the matters contained in this report pose a risk to health and safety of staff or to the financial or public standing of the Council to a degree that a risk assessment should be appended to this report.

11.0 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

11.1 There are no implications for GDPR with the approval of the policy, any GDPR implications are taken into account when data from an individual is required for a specific project.

12.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Members:-

i) Consider the report; and

ii) Approve the Draft Menopause Policy.