

To: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors David Absolom, Page, Skeats
and Terry

Our Ref: perscttc/agenda

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1 November 2017

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NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - 9 NOVEMBER 2017

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on **Thursday 9 November 2017 at 6.30pm** in **Committee Room 1**, Civic Offices, Reading.

AGENDA

	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST			-
2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 13 JULY and 12 OCTOBER 2017	DECISION	BOROUGHWIDE	1
3. PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL JOINT FORUM 13 JULY 2017	INFORMATION	BOROUGHWIDE	9
4. EMPLOYEES' CODE OF CONDUCT	DECISION	BOROUGHWIDE	12

At this point, the following motion will be moved by the Chair:

"That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item on the agenda, as it is likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of that Act"

5. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES	DECISION	BOROUGHWIDE	31
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CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: *If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 13 JULY 2017

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors David Absolom, Page and Terry.

Also Present: W King and A Barker (for items 1 to 3); K Magee (for items 1 to 4).

Apologies: Councillor Skeats.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2 March, 16 March, 15 May and 4 July 2017 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

2. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Chief Executive submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 2 March 2017.

Resolved - That the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting be received.

3. KENNET DAY NURSERY FEE INCREASE

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services, submitted a report providing the Committee with details of the Kennet Day Nursery's budget for 2017/18 and proposed an increase in fees for the Nursery from September 2017.

The report explained that the last proposal to increase fees had been in August 2016 and had required the nursery to run on a self-funding basis with a zero budget build. To achieve this, a consistent 85%+ occupancy level was required throughout the year. In the 2016-20 budget proposals it had been agreed that the Nursery would be required to achieve a profit and in the financial year 2017/18 the Nursery would need to make a surplus of £20,000 which would increase to £30,000 for 2018/19.

Changes in Government policy from September 2017 would result in working parents of three to four year olds in England being eligible for 30 hours of free childcare rather than the current 15 hours for 38 weeks of the year (term time). Families working over 16 hours a week with children of this age would be eligible for this if:

- Their child would be aged 3 or 4 years old when the scheme started;
- Both parents had to be working, or the sole parent was working in a lone parent family;
- Each parent earned, on average, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage;
- Each parent had to have an annual income of less than £100,000;
- The family lived in England.

Parents would be eligible to apply for both the 30 hour scheme and the Tax-Free Childcare scheme through a joint online application that was being developed by HMRC, this was because the eligibility requirements for both schemes were aligned.

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The report proposed that the Nursery fees be increased by 2% from September 2017 and included a table that compared prices for local day nurseries within the vicinity.

The crèche service at the Nursery currently offered nursery users an opportunity to add, subject to availability, additional ad-hoc hours to sessions allowing them to attend meetings, appointments and other commitments that fell outside of their 'booked' sessions. The report proposed that that the crèche ad-hoc hour rate be increased from the current £6 per hour to an £8 charge for all users. This hourly charge had remained at this rate since 2012 when the service had been introduced.

The report explained that the fine for 'lateness' was custom and practiced in the childcare sector and the late fee rate of £5 had been in place for over 20 years. There were not many occasions when this fee was applied and parents were always given an opportunity to appeal by email within five working days. However, it was considered that this fee now required a review to cover additional staffing costs that were incurred when staff were required to wait with the child and it was proposed to increase the fee to £10 for the first 15 minutes and £25 thereafter.

Resolved -

- (1) That the fee structure for the Kennet Day Nursery be increased by 2% to apply from September 2017 as follows:

£217.65 per week - £43.53 per day (RBC Users)

£238.75 per week - £47.76 per day (Non RBC Users)
- (2) That the current discount of £2 a day for siblings continue unchanged throughout the year and the current additional charge of £2 a day for children under two years continue unchanged;
- (3) That the 'crèche' ad-hoc hourly rate be increased from the current £6 per hour to an £8 charge for all users;
- (4) That the additional charges for users who had 'late fines' be increased from £5 to £10 for the first 15 minutes and £25 thereafter.

4. WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of Whistleblowing activity over the previous twelve months.

The report explained that at the 17 July 2014 meeting of Personnel Committee (Minute 4 refers) a revised Whistleblowing Policy had been approved which had replaced the earlier version that had been introduced in 2000. The Council was committed to the highest possible standard of openness, honesty and accountability and in line with that commitment, officers were encouraged, if they had serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It had been recognised that certain cases would have to proceed on a confidential basis and to support this a Whistleblowing Policy had been introduced.

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Since the beginning of 2016 there had been ten recorded cases of Whistleblowing and a table was included in the report that provided an anonymised summary of Whistleblowing Activity.

Resolved - That the overview of Whistleblowing Activity be noted.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

6. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES

The Interim HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out twelve requests for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy; one request for flexible retirement; and one request for early retirement.

The proposals, together with the financial implications, were set out in a schedule appended to the report on the following basis:

- The financial case was given which represented the highest cost to the Council. In most cases this included discretionary added years on pension (where payable), as this represented a direct and ongoing cost to the Council. This was in accordance with the Council's current practice of considering redundancy and retirement terms up to the maximum limit of discretion, where applicable. The Committee was asked to approve individual proposals subject to a maximum ceiling on the exercise of discretion;
- The financial implications were costed on the basis of the estimated figures, which were subject to final confirmation. The figures might be affected by changes to final salary, pensionable service, age or date of leaving. The Committee was asked to approve the proposals on the basis of the estimated figures, subject to any individual proposal being brought back to Committee if the confirmed costs were more than 10% in excess of those reported;

The report sought approval for the payment of a compensation package in the case of the proposed termination of employment on grounds of redundancy, subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters, including ongoing consultation with the employee and their representatives, and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate.

Resolved -

- (1) That the dismissal of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employees A, B, D, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L, the early retirement of

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employee C and the flexible retirement of employee E be approved on the terms set out in the schedules appended to the report subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with the employees and their representatives and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate;

- (2) That the proposal set out in (1) above be approved on the basis of the financial implications set out in the report, and that authority to conclude the proposal be delegated to the Head of Finance, Monitoring Officer and HR and Payroll Services Manager (acting jointly) within that framework, and subject to the maximum ceiling identified for the proposal;
- (3) That the current terms for agreeing compensation packages in specific cases of early retirement or termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy or efficiency be confirmed.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.43 pm).

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 12 OCTOBER 2017

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);
Councillors David Absolom, Livingston (in place of Councillor Page), Skeats and Terry;

Also Present: W King and P Sloman;

Apologies: Councillor Page.

7. PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES AND DENS

Further to Minute 20 of the meeting held on 8 December 2016, the Chief Executive submitted a report that set out proposals to strengthen the senior management structure of the Corporate Support Services Directorate and the framework and timetable for the review. A family tree setting out the proposed structure for the Directorate of Resources was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that key objectives of the review had been to strengthen the corporate centre and build capacity to take forward the authority's transformation process to deliver significant budget savings and other changes across the whole Council and to make direct appointments to senior management posts in place of current interim appointments. A new post of Director of Resources would be established in place of the Strategic Director of Finance, and would be filled by competitive external recruitment. This post would be the Council's Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Director would have responsibility for all services in Finance and Corporate Support Services and five Head of Service posts would report to the Director, as follows:

- Head of Customer Care and Transformation;
- Head of Finance;
- Head of Human Resources;
- Head of Law and Governance;
- Head of Procurement and Contracts.

The posts of Head of Human Resources and the Head of Procurement and Contracts were new posts and the Head of Finance role would be substantially amended as part of the review. All three posts would be subject to competitive external recruitment. The report stated that creating these corporate support posts was essential to drive through the necessary savings to secure the financial sustainability of the Council. The post of Head of Customer and Transformation would be that of the current Head of Customer Care, Zoe Hanim, and the post of Head of Law and Governance would be substantially that of the current Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Chris Brooks, the Council's Monitoring Officer, but without responsibility for Human Resources.

A review and restructuring of the Council's Finance section was underway which would see the inclusion of a Chief Accountant. Detailed proposals on the restructuring of the Finance Section would be submitted to a future meeting as would proposals for other functions such as management of IT systems and performance data.

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The report stated that consultation had taken place with the trade unions and a consultation document had been sent to all staff in Corporate Support Services and a meeting had been held which all staff had attended.

The report also explained that there were currently four Heads of Service covering all the services provided by the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhoods. The departure of the Head of Transportation and Streetcare (HoTS) earlier in 2017 had presented an opportunity to reshape the senior management tier to provide the necessary capacity and focus whilst minimising any destabilising effects of any structural change. It had been proposed to delete the post of HoTS and to create two new Head of Service posts: Head of Environment and Commercial Services and Head of Transportation and Infrastructure. The other three Head of Service posts would be retained, but there would be some limited changes in reporting lines across the Directorate. Finally, the report stated that a two week staff consultation on the proposals would commence soon and the two posts would be advertised externally.

Resolved -

- (1) That the new post of Director of Resources be created, to have the range of responsibilities as set out in Appendix A, attached to the report, and be the Council's Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, in place of the Strategic Director of Finance;
- (2) That the following new posts be established:
 - (a) Head of Human Resources;
 - (b) Head of Procurement and Contracts;
- (3) That the post of Strategic Director of Finance be deleted and the current arrangement with Peter Lewis to cover the post on an interim contract be ended when an appointment had been made to the new post of Director of Resources and the successful appointee had taken up the post;
- (4) That the Head of Finance post be substantially re-scoped as part of the review, to include the creation of a Chief Accountant post, and as a consequence of this, the current Head of Finance's contract of employment be terminated on redundancy grounds from a date yet to be finalised, but likely to be 30 April 2018;
- (5) That the appointments to the new posts of Director of Resources and Heads of Finance, Human Resources and Procurement and Contracts be made by competitive recruitment by this Committee during the Municipal Year 2017/18;
- (6) That the current posts of Head of Customer Care and Head of Legal and Democratic Services be re-named Head of Customer Care and Transformation and Head of Law and Governance respectively, and that their current post holders, Zoe Hanim and Chris Brooks, be confirmed in the newly titled posts, with Chris Brooks as the Head of

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Law and Governance, continuing to serve as the Council's Monitoring Officer;

- (7) That the Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary action to undertake and implement the review of Finance and Corporate Support Services and to implement the new management structure below Head of Service level;
- (8) That, subject to any material issues arising from the proposed consultation in the Directorate of Environment and Neighbourhood Services, the senior management capacity in that Directorate be increased by the deletion of the post of Head of Transport and Streetcare and the creation of a Head of Environment and Commercial Services and a Head of Transportation and Infrastructure, as described in the report.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

9. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES

The Interim HR and Payroll Services Manager, the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Finance submitted a joint report, which set out a request for dismissal on the grounds of redundancy.

The proposal, together with the financial implications, were set out in a schedule appended to the report on the following basis:

- The financial case was given which represented the highest cost to the Council. In most cases this included discretionary added years on pension (where payable), as this represented a direct and ongoing cost to the Council. This was in accordance with the Council's current practice of considering redundancy and retirement terms up to the maximum limit of discretion, where applicable. The Committee was asked to approve individual proposals subject to a maximum ceiling on the exercise of discretion;
- The financial implications were costed on the basis of the estimated figures, which were subject to final confirmation. The figures might be affected by changes to final salary, pensionable service, age or date of leaving. The Committee was asked to approve the proposals on the basis of the estimated figures, subject to any individual proposal being brought back to Committee if the confirmed costs were more than 10% in excess of those reported.

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Peter Sloman, Chief Executive, assured the Committee that a rigorous assessment of the case for redundancy of employee A had been carried out, in accordance with the Council's HR policies and procedures, prior to the terms of the redundancy being brought to the Committee for approval. He was confident that the approach being recommended was appropriate in the circumstances of the case and that the proposal would be robust in relation to any audit of the decision-making process that had been followed.

Resolved -

- (1) That the dismissal of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employee A be approved on the terms set out in the schedules appended to the report subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with the employees and their representatives and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate;
- (2) That the proposal set out in (1) above be approved on the basis of the financial implications set out in the report, and that authority to conclude the proposal be delegated to the Head of Finance, Monitoring Officer and HR and Payroll Services Manager (acting jointly) within that framework, and subject to the maximum ceiling identified for the proposal.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1).

(The meeting commenced at 6.17 pm and closed at 6.43 pm).

Present:

Councillors David Absolom, Lovelock, Page and Steele
Ms B Reynolds UNISON
Mr K Magee Unite
Mr W King Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager
Mr R Woodford Committee Services

Apologies:

A McNamara National Union of Teachers (NUT)

As the meeting was inquorate on the Union side, it was agreed that each item on the agenda would be discussed and noted by the Local Joint Forum

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Alison McNamara was elected to serve as Chair of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2017/2018, subject to ratification at the next meeting.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Lovelock had been appointed to serve as Vice Chair at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 24 May 2017 (Minute 11 refers).

3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2017

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 2 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. WHISTLEBLOWING ACTIVITY

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, submitted a report providing the Forum with an overview of Whistleblowing activity over the previous twelve months.

The report explained that at the 17 July 2014 meeting of Personnel Committee (Minute 4 refers) a revised Whistleblowing Policy had been approved which had replaced the earlier version that had been introduced in 2000. The Council was committed to the highest possible standard of openness, honesty and accountability and in line with that commitment, officers were encouraged, if they had serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to come forward and voice those concerns. It had been recognised that certain cases would have to proceed on a confidential basis and to support this a Whistleblowing Policy had been introduced. Since the beginning of 2016 there had been ten recorded cases of Whistleblowing and a table was included in the report that provided an anonymised summary of Whistleblowing Activity.

AGREED: That the overview of Whistleblowing Activity be noted.

5. MATTERS RAISED BY THE UNIONS

(a) Progress with Recruiting Permanent Posts in Place of Interims/Contractors/Locums

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, reported on recent recruitment activity to appoint permanent posts in place of interims/contractors/locums including the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive, and the recent appointment of Director of Adult Care and Health Services. A recruitment exercise was also ongoing to recruit permanent social workers in Children's Services.

Councillor Lovelock also reported on recruitment work in Education, specifically, the work on the appointment to the post of Head of Education and a Business Manager post. In the case of the Head of Education post, interviews and shortlisting would take place during August 2017 and an appointment would be made in early September 2017.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(b) Salary Supplements for Adult Social Care Social Workers

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, reported that officers were investigating the payment of supplements to social workers in Adult Social Care in the light of supplements having been paid to social workers in Children's Services and would be looking at what other authorities were doing. A proposal would then be presented to the new Director of Adult Care and Health Services.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(c) Interim Managers' Awareness of Council Policies and Procedures

Having expressed concern about interim managers' lack of awareness of Council Policies and Procedures, Billie Reynolds, UNISON, reported that at a recent meeting she had been told that officers were working closely with Workforce Development to ensure that the induction process would make sure that all interim managers were made familiar with Policies and Procedures on joining the Council and that a robust programme was being put together to address this issue.

Warren King, Interim HR/Payroll Services Manager, agreed that managers needed to be given an overview of Policies and Procedures as part of their induction but should ask HR for a refresh when they needed to apply them in practice.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(d) Income Generation, Identifying Markets and Marketing the Council

Kieran Magee, Unite, acknowledged the work that the Council had done over recent years to generate income and suggested there were further opportunities, both internally and externally. For example, he suggested there were opportunities internally around facilities management to bring more work in-house. In addition, with the large number of housing associations and two universities in the Borough there was also an opportunity to bid for repair work.

Kieran also presented the Forum with details of a post in Education Services which arranged lectures which were attended by schools. He suggested that this was an example of the type of income generating post/function that should be investigated with the aim of possibly expanding it. He also suggested that, as a principle, managers should consider in-house provision before looking at appointing outside contractors.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That Andy Fitton, Head of Service - Early Help, investigate the opportunity for income generation in Education Services suggested by Kieran Magee and detailed above.

(The meeting opened at 5.05 pm and closed at 5.34 pm).

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 NOVEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	4
TITLE:	EMPLOYEES' CODE OF CONDUCT		
LEAD OFFICER:	WARREN KING	TEL:	74500
JOB TITLE:	INTERIM HR AND PAYROLL SERVICE MANAGER	E-MAIL:	warren.king@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current Employee Code of Conduct is outdated, having been written in excess of 10 years ago. The Strategic Risk Register has identified this and requires for the Code of Conduct to be refreshed and relaunched.

2. KEY ISSUES

The existing Code of Conduct is outdated and needs to be revised. In addition, new employees have not received a copy of it due to a previous management decision to no longer send the employee handbook to new starters.

The new Code of Conduct will be issued with contracts of employment and will also be rolled out to the existing workforce through Netconsent.

Attached at Appendix 1 is a revised Code of Conduct. It has been written by Human Resources with input from Audit.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

3.1 To approve the revised Code of Conduct.

4. NEXT STEPS

Once approved, the new Code of Conduct will be provided to existing staff, new starters and will also be part of the Corporate Induction process.

CODE OF CONDUCT



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SECTION 1: PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

PURPOSE

- To meet requirements specified by the National Conditions of Service for all employee groups
- To specify and explain the standards the Council has set, therefore protecting employees from misunderstanding or criticism.
- To help employees maintain fully acceptable standards of conduct set by the Council.
- To ensure that the Council maintains a deserved reputation for the high standards of its activities and the integrity of its employees at all levels.

WHO IS COVERED BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

- The Code of Conduct applies to all those working for Reading Borough Council, including those on permanent, temporary or part-time contracts, job sharers, and employees on non-standard terms of employment. Relevant parts of the Code should be included in the specifications for consultants and contractors, and drawn to the attention of voluntary workers on Council projects.
- Some employees may already have specific requirements relating to conduct included in their contracts or standard conditions of employment. Where contract conditions and requirements of individual contracts are more specific, due to the nature of the work, they will override the provisions of this Code.

In addition:

- a) The Code may be supplemented within services/directorates by specific provisions or requirements, for example, a professional Code of Conduct. Where this is the case, proposed codes and rules should follow proper process by consulting through the Directorate Joint Forum.
- b) Individual services and professions may have their own Codes of Conduct and/or ethics. Where this is the case, they complement, rather than replace, this Code of Conduct.
- c) References to “the Council” throughout this document mean Reading Borough Council.
- d) This Code has been agreed between the Council and recognised trades unions.

PRINCIPLES

This Code is based on and consistent with the following seven Principles which are set out in Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, and which were originally set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life:

- a) **Selflessness**
Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits.
- b) **Integrity**
Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- c) **Objectivity**
In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- d) **Accountability**
Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- e) **Openness**
Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- f) **Honesty**
Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- g) **Leadership**
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The various sections in [section 2](#) of this document set out how the general principles are applied to different aspects of conduct. The Code cannot describe every possible circumstance that may occur.

Employees and managers need to exercise good sense and judgement in deciding whether specific situations fall within the Code or not. For employees, a key guideline is:

**WHEN IN DOUBT AS TO WHETHER THE CODE APPLIES - ASK
YOUR MANAGER**

SECTION 2: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

1. Conduct during working hours

You have a responsibility to act in accordance with the Council's equal opportunities policies, statutory guidance and best practice. Service decisions and activities must not favour one person or section of the community on any grounds which would be in contravention of equal opportunity principles.

All forms of unlawful discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Allegations will be investigated and dealt with under the [Council's appropriate procedure](#), where necessary.

2. Political Neutrality

You serve the Council as a whole. This means that all Councillors are served equally, irrespective of their political group or affiliation and you must ensure that the individual rights of all Councillors are respected.

You must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work or influence the advice you give to Councillors, the public or other staff.

If your job involves you giving advice to political groups, you must do so in ways which do not compromise your political neutrality.

If your post is designated a "politically restricted post" under the provisions of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, certain additional rules will apply to you and you should have been informed of these rules when you are appointed. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourself with the rules, if they apply to you.

If your post becomes politically restricted during the course of your employment, then you will be notified.

Posts affected by these rules (politically restricted posts) fall into the following categories:

- a) Certain specified posts, such as the Head of the Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and all Chief Officers and their Deputies
- b) Posts that, by the nature of the work involved, are deemed to be "sensitive". For example:

- (i) posts where the employee regularly advises members, committees or sub-committees or any joint committee on which the authority are represented, and
- (ii) posts where the employee regularly speaks on behalf of the authority to journalists and broadcasters.

Exemptions to this Act (i.e. not politically restricted) are:

- (i) posts reporting directly to the Chief Executive where the duties of the postholder are solely secretarial or clerical.
- (ii) Head Teachers, Principals of schools or colleges, or other educational establishments maintained/assisted by the local LEA. Any person holding the post of Teacher or Lecturer in any such educational establishment will not be politically restricted.

If you are unsure if your post falls within the politically restricted categories, or whether your post is exempt from the political restrictions, you should speak to your manager or the Head of Legal & Democratic Services.

3. Personal Relationships

Personal relationships may develop with colleagues, Councillors, contractors, customers and clients. You should not allow a personal relationship to place you in a position where you are unable to carry out the duties of your job in a proper and impartial manner. Certain Directorates have particular rules regarding personal relationships, and you should ensure that you abide by these (e.g. Social Services & Housing; Education & Community Services).

You should inform your manager if you have, or develop, a close personal relationship with another employee which could be considered, by colleagues or others, to have an impact on how you conduct yourself at work. The information will be treated with confidentiality.

You must maintain a professional working relationship with colleagues, Councillors, contractors, customers and clients.

Elected Councillors are subject to their own statutory Code of Conduct which addresses relationships between Councillors and employees. ①¹

¹ (① The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 has given statutory status to the National Code of Local Government Conduct (for the guidance of councillors of local authorities)).

4. Recruitment

If you are involved with recruitment, you must inform your manager if you are closely associated with any of the candidates (for example, as a relative or close friend).

You must apply the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy and ensure fairness is applied at all stages.

5. Use of Information

The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Your manager must identify, and make you aware of this information at induction, including outlining when additional information is relevant.

Information you gather while working for the Council must not be used for personal or commercial gain, or be otherwise misused.

You must not destroy, alter or falsify any document or record, whether for personal gain or to cover up, mislead or deceive other people.

You must comply with the Council's Data Protection policy.

You must not pass on information to anyone not entitled to receive it, nor post it on any public forum or any social media platform.

You must comply with the Council's Social Media policy.

You must not pass on to the public or press, information from any Committee or meeting, from which they have been excluded.

You must not deal directly with the press or media, or make any public statement, unless you have been authorised to act as an official spokesperson.

6. Confidentiality

You may be subject to "restrictive covenants", which are intended to protect the Council's confidential information, which restrict you from disclosing or using such information during and after leaving employment.

7. Hospitality

In certain circumstances, receiving hospitality may be acceptable. Where that is the case, you must discuss it with your manager and the details - the type of hospitality offered and the person/organisation offering it - should be recorded in a register maintained by your directorate.

Examples of generally acceptable hospitality are:

- (i) Invitations to attend events where you represent the Council
- (ii) Hospitality offered by other public sector organisations or recognised civic or government bodies that have links with the Council
- (iii) A working lunch or other meal which allows the work or discussion to continue during the course of the day
- (iv) An event where the Council should be seen to be represented.
- (v) Hospitality to mark the completion of a transaction or piece of work provided it has been successfully concluded and the nature of the hospitality is reasonable
- (vi) Where the Council is a regular client of an organisation or firm and the hospitality is being offered to a number of clients in the ordinary course of the business.

Examples of hospitality which should be declined include:

- (i) Offers of hotel accommodation or other form of holiday
- (ii) Free use of other forms of leisure, sports or entertainment facilities or equipment

8. Gifts

If you are offered a gift you should consider whether it is one of “low” value (£25 as at 2017). You must use common sense and tell your manager, who should decide if the gift is acceptable or should be declined. It must be recorded in a register maintained by your directorate.

Examples of generally acceptable gifts:

- (i) Small gifts that have been sent or given as an advertisement for a particular firm, for example, appropriate items for use in the office
- (ii) Small gifts such as a bottle of wine or a box of chocolates that have been given at the end of work on a project. These gifts should be made generally available to those who have worked on the project
- (iii) Christmas boxes - in a number of jobs, for example, refuse collection, it has been traditional for members of the public to give the team concerned gifts with varying financial values. As a normal and well-established practice, acceptance of the Christmas gift, on behalf of the team concerned, is acceptable, provided:
 - The gift is not solicited or requested either directly or indirectly
 - There is no suggestion that decisions concerning the service, or the quality of the service provided will change in any way
 - Any gift that is of such a value that falls outside a normal range is notified to your manager

Gifts should be declined if it is from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the Council, seeking planning permission, seeking employment or in dispute with the Council.

9. Bribery & Corruption

The Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to seek, accept or agree to accept a financial or other advantage as an inducement or reward to perform a function improperly. In simple terms, for public employees, agency and contracted staff it is a crime to seek or accept a financial or other advantage in return for making a decision, granting an award or performing any other public function, regardless of what decision is made. The maximum sentence for a bribery offence is 10 years imprisonment.

The Bribery Act 2010 also makes it an offence for employees to offer or pay bribes and both the individual and the organisation may be prosecuted.

The Local Government Act 1972 makes it an offence for employees to accept any fee or reward (including gifts) for their employment other than their proper pay, and on conviction employees are liable to be fined.

10. Dressing Appropriately

- a) You are expected to dress appropriately for the role for which you are employed. You must be mindful of the impact your appearance will have on the client/customer relationship.
- b) If you are required to wear a uniform you must conform to that requirement.
- c) You are required to comply with any Health & Safety clothing requirements.
- d) If you have personal, cultural or religious objections to these requirements, you should discuss them with your Head of Service who will consider each case on its merits and take appropriate action.

11. Use of Council property, facilities and equipment

- a) Be mindful that you are using Council assets, not your own personal property
- b) You may make phone calls within reason and within your own time
- c) You may access the Council's internet connection for personal use, but only within your own time and as stated in the Council's ICT rules
- d) Council vehicles must be used for authorised purposes only
- e) You must return any Council property if you stop working for the Council

12. Using the services of people who deal with the Council

You are not prohibited from personally obtaining goods and services from organisations that deal with the Council. However, you must make sure that you are not being offered preferential rates in an attempt to influence the Council to use that organisation. As far as possible, make sure that the price you are quoted is a competitive one.

If you are authorised to award or recommend the award of contracts to an individual or an organisation, you should try to avoid using that individual or organisation for the purchase of goods or services for yourself, unless it can be demonstrated that there was little or no alternative. This should be declared to your manager if this happens.

This does not affect the purchase of goods or services at discount rates negotiated through a scheme endorsed by the Council or a Trades Union.

13. Conduct outside working hours

In general, what you do outside work is your own concern. However, you must avoid doing anything which may result in damaging the Council's reputation. Some actions, including serious misconduct or criminal offences can lead to disciplinary action and may lead to dismissal.

Remember that if you are expected to wear a uniform as part of your job, and wear it outside working hours, you can be identified as a Council employee and you must act appropriately while wearing the uniform.

For certain professions, if it is considered that you have brought the profession into disrepute, you may be struck off the professional register and no longer able to practise.

14. Employment outside the Council

If you take on, or consider taking on, paid or unpaid work in addition to your work at the Council, you must be certain that it does not have an adverse effect on your work for the Council and does not conflict with the interests of the Council.

You must declare any personal interest or activities that may be perceived by others as being potentially in conflict with the Council's interests.

You should bring this to the attention of your manager to check that it is acceptable for you to do it. In particular, you must ensure that you comply with the following conditions:

- (i) You must not undertake private work or business (including private work for your line manager) during your Council working hours, on Council premises or using Council equipment.
- (ii) You must not take on work that will adversely affect the way in which you perform your duties for the Council. You must consider the Working Time Regulations.
- (iii) You should take care when undertaking paid or unpaid private work that involves official contact with the Council (for example, work for relatives or friends that needs

planning permission). You must discuss this with your manager.

- (iv) You must not undertake paid or unpaid private work for any person or organisation if you allocate business to them as part of your duties at the Council, or if you are in a position to award contracts or commission work, or influence the awarding of contracts or commissioning of work, or grant approval or permission.
- (v) You must not be involved in awarding, monitoring or managing contracts in which partners, spouses, relative or friends are employed.
- (vi) If you are invited to speak at a conference, in your position as an officer of the Council, your fees for this would normally be paid to the Council.

There may be situations where it may be appropriate to carry out some form of unpaid “outside work”, academic research or other task in the workplace. Generally this would only be appropriate out of work time (e.g. during lunch breaks or outside normal work hours) and in no way for personal gain.

15. Personal Interests

It is accepted that you will have outside interests and will support, or belong to, different groups or organisations, whether this is paid or unpaid. You should declare to your manager your involvement or interest (financial and non-financial interests) if and when your outside activities, or the activities of the group you belong to, could conflict with the Council’s interests or Council policy, or with your duties and responsibilities as an employee.

You should declare to the Council’s Monitoring Officer (Head of Legal & Democratic Services) membership of any organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct (for example, Freemasons). The Monitoring Officer will keep a confidential record of such declarations.

16. Breach of the code

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could lead to criticism of the Council or you. In such cases, the Council’s Disciplinary Procedure would apply.

If you have any concerns about the application of any part of this code to your own circumstances you should discuss it, as soon as possible, with your manager.

DECLARATION OF RELATIONSHIPS, FINANCIAL & NON-FINANCIAL INTERESTS

From: Name of Employee _____
 Job Title _____
 Service Area _____

Please complete the relevant section(s) set out below:

In accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct, I wish to declare the following interest:

1. Is the interest pecuniary (i.e. involving potential financial benefit)?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
(Please tick No if this is a declaration of a relationship and provide details as appropriate below)
If YES, please indicate nature and approximate scale of financial interest:
If NO, please indicate nature of interest:
2. Details of the Council activity in which the interest exists (eg a contract for goods or services; Council grant, planning or licensing application etc.) Please include the identity of any outside person or organisation involved (the name of a contractor or supplier):
3. Are you the person to whom this interest directly applies: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If no (and/or if other persons are involved), please give details of the other persons (name(s); relationship to you (e.g. spouse, close relative, partner etc)):

DECLARATION

I undertake to comply with any reasonable requirement which the Council may specify in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

I appreciate Reading Borough Council has a duty to protect the Council's interest and therefore a failure to provide a full disclosure, or any action related to this declaration which results in unacceptable conduct, could result in disciplinary action against me by the Council.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Noted

FOR OFFICE USE

Further action by employee required? YES
NO

Action required by & notified to employee: _____

Signed _____ Position _____ Date: _____

Declarations must be made on the proforma. It should be completed and returned to the employee's managers. The form will be handled in confidence. One copy will be held on the employee's HR file, one copy retained for the directorate register and one copy sent to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE OUTSIDE WORK
(Paid/Voluntary)

From: Name of Employee _____
 Job Title _____
 Service Area _____

I wish to apply for permission to undertake the following outside work:

1. Name of organisation or person with / for whom I would be working:	
2. Type of organisation (e.g. own business, company, consultant, voluntary body etc):	
3. Is the organisation a supplier/contractor to RBC: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please give details:	
4. Please give details of the work you would be doing:	
Type of work:	
Time of work (please state whether on weekdays, evenings, weekends etc, and the time and duration of attendance):	
5. Would you require any time off from your RBC employment: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please give full details:	
6. Are you (tick relevant category):	
Self-employed <input type="checkbox"/>	A paid employee <input type="checkbox"/> An unpaid volunteer <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify):	

DECLARATION

In accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct, I undertake that should this request be approved:

- (i) the outside work involved will not conflict with the interests of Reading Borough Council nor adversely affect my ability to comply with my contractual duties as a Council employee.
- (ii) I will not at any time disclose any confidential information or use documentation which is the property of the Council or use any Council equipment or material in the course of this outside work.
- (iii) the organisation or person for whom I would be working is aware that I would be taking up such work as a private individual and not as a representative, agent or secondee of Reading Borough Council, and that all professional indemnity and other relevant insurance or tax requirements are my own responsibility.
- (iv) I appreciate Reading Borough Council has a duty to protect the Council's interest and therefore a failure to abide by this declaration could result in disciplinary action against me by Reading Borough Council.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE

Request approved? YES
NO

If refused, reason for refusal:

Signed _____ Position _____ Date: _____

The request must be made on the proforma. It should be completed and returned to the employee's manager. The form will be handled in confidence. One copy will be held on the employee's HR file and one copy will be held for the directorate register.

The rules relating to outside working are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct, [paragraph 8](#).