

To: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);  
Councillors Gavin, P Jones, Page, Rye,  
Skeats, Terry, Vickers and White.

Your contact is: Sally Poole - Committee Services

**NOTICE OF MEETING - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - 12 DECEMBER 2013**

A meeting of the Personnel Committee will be held on Thursday 12 December 2013 at 6.30pm in Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Reading.

**AGENDA**

	ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST			
2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2013	INFORMATION	BOROUGHWIDE	1
3. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUMS HELD ON: 24 SEPTEMBER 2013 21 NOVEMBER 2013	INFORMATION	BOROUGHWIDE	6 12
4. HR/ICT POLICY REVIEW	DECISION	BOROUGHWIDE	18
5. DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE	INFORMATION	BOROUGHWIDE	162

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

*CIVIC CENTRE EMERGENCY EVACUATION: Please familiarise yourself with the emergency evacuation procedures, which are displayed inside the Council's meeting rooms. If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble at the Hexagon sign, at the start of Queen's Walk. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

“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 items 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”

6.	EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES, INCLUDING THE 2013 VOLUNTARY RELEASE SCHEME	DECISION	BOROUGHWIDE	Report to Follow
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## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

Present: Councillor Lovelock (Chair);  
Councillors P Jones, Maskell (in place of Cllr Gavin), Page,  
Terry and Vickers.

Also Present: R Ketley (for items 8-12), I Wardle, A Burton and S Poole.

Apologies: Councillors Gavin, Rye, Skeats and White.

### RESOLVED ITEMS

#### 8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 9. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM

The Managing Director submitted the proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 3 July 2013.

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

#### 10. HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Committee on revisions to some 'family friendly' policies and procedures, specifically the Maternity Scheme, Paternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Parental Leave.

The report stated that maternity and related benefits and provisions for Reading Borough Council staff were governed by legislation and by national and local conditions of service. They were an important strand of the Council's approach to developing 'family friendly' policies and supporting flexible working, for the benefit of the service as well as individuals. These policies and guides incorporated changes to legislation and the structure and presentation of the documents had been reviewed to ensure that they were as clear and concise as possible for staff and managers.

It was noted that the scope of the Maternity Scheme did not include teachers or lecturers and so the alternative scheme for these staff would need to be acknowledged in the guidance.

A copy of the proposed revised policies and guides were attached to the report at Appendix A. The main changes and sources had been discussed with the joint trades unions and at the Local Joint Forum.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

- (2) That the revised 'family friendly' policy framework as attached at Appendix A to the report be approved.

### 11. REVIEW OF APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Committee on the outcome from the recent review of the appraisal systems and guidance. The Local Joint Forum and Personnel Committee had approved the proposed redraft of the framework, subject to consultation with the Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC) and Corporate Management Team (CMT). A copy of the revised framework was attached at Appendix A to the report.

The outcome from the review in summer 2013 had highlighted the need for changes in the following areas:

- That the current 'dial' format be replaced with a simpler 'Met, Part Met or Not Met' to indicate whether objectives have been achieved;
- That the number of objectives to be set were reduced to a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10;
- That the term 'grandparent', used to signify the senior manager signing off the appraisal, be replaced with a more appropriate term;
- Simplification of the appraisal guidance and aims - in particular, how these fitted within the general pay and grading framework;
- Adjustments to the processes used in social services to allow the appraisal process to meet the needs identified by regulatory bodies;
- Revised guidance on the setting and evaluation of performance targets;
- Ensuring that issues of general wellbeing and workload management were incorporated into the appraisal dialogue.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the revised Appraisal Guidance as attached at Appendix A to the report be endorsed.

### 12. REVIEW OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Committee on the exercise that had been undertaken into the processes and systems that the Council used for the management of change. This exercise had been led by HR and had involved representatives of the JTUC and managers and was still subject to consultation with the JTUC. The revised draft guidance was attached to the report at Appendix A.

One of the first outcomes of the review had been to refresh the guidance that was already available for staff and managers to assist them with the change process and to review the broader support that could be made available for both groups.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

In conducting the review, particular attention had been paid to the following areas:

### For Staff

- Understanding the language and process of change;
- Re-enforcing the role of all the different parties;
- Re-enforcing the commitment of the Council to find alternative employment;
- Ensuring that a sufficiently wide range of other work and non-work based support services were available.

### For Managers

- Greater clarity about sequencing and planning;
- Consultation and involvement of staff and trade unions;
- Finding work for staff at risk.

The opportunity had also been taken to bring together various guides and information available for managers and staff which had been developed since the Employment Stability Agreement had been introduced in 2004.

Resolved - That the report and updated guidance be noted.

## 13. 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 items, as it was likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

## 14. STAFF CAR PARKING REVIEW

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report to advise the Committee of the launch of a review of staff car parking in the Town Centre offices to resolve some long-standing anomalies and in preparation for the office move in 2014. This review was currently subject to consultation with the unions and was intended to result in car park passes only being allocated related to business need.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

## 15. EARLY RETIREMENTS AND REDUNDANCIES (INCLUDING NEW VRS SCHEME)

The Head of Human Resources, the Monitoring Officer and the Director and Council Manager submitted a joint report, which set out 13 requests for termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy, seven requests for early retirement on the grounds of redundancy, one request for early retirement on the grounds of efficiency and five requests for retirement on the grounds of redundancy.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

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

- Financial cases were 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;
- 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 costs of early retirement on the grounds of ill health were met by the Local Government Pension Scheme or the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

The report sought approval for the payment of a compensation package in the case of proposed termination of employment or early retirement on grounds of redundancy, efficiency of the service or ill health subject to the conclusion of all outstanding matters in each case, including ongoing consultation with employees and their representatives, and efforts to secure alternative employment, where appropriate.

One proposal for voluntary termination or early retirement under the Voluntary Release Scheme 2013 was also brought. This was presented in a spreadsheet that set out the information relating to compensation or capital (early release of pension) costs and 2014/15 salary savings (that included on-costs). The payback period of the proposal was also shown in the spreadsheet.

Resolved -

- (1) That the termination of employment on the grounds of redundancy of employees A, D, H, I, J, L, O, P, S, U, W, X, Z, the early retirement on the grounds of redundancy of employees B, F, G, M, N, T, V, Y, the retirement on the grounds of redundancy of employees C, E, K, Q and R 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

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2013

conclude the proposal be delegated to the Managing Director, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Head of Human Resources (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;
- (4) That the proposals for voluntary termination of employment or early retirement under the Voluntary Release Scheme 2013 as detailed in the consolidated spreadsheet attached to the report be approved.

(Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2).

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.55 pm).

Present:

Councillors Lovelock(Vice-Chair in the Chair), Page and Vickers

Mr P Kenny	Unison Staffside
Mr R Kiff	Unison Staffside
Mr P Narancic	Unison Staffside
Mr R Ketley	Education & Community Services Unions
Ms D Sander	Association of Educational Psychologists
Ms K Gray	Unite
Ms A Burton	Head of Human Resources
Mr J Hoggart	Human Resources Services Manager
Ms S Poole	Committee Services

Apologies:

Cllr Gavin

Cllr Skeats

Mr K Magee (Chair) Unite

Mr D Plews Head of Communications

## 1. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 3 JULY 2013

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 3 July 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

It was noted that Councillor Page had sent his apologies to the meeting, that the Health and Safety Policy had not yet been signed and that the further report providing an analysis of staff not in the pension scheme had not yet been produced.

## 2. HR ISSUES - GENERAL UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Forum on a number of ongoing Human Resource (HR) and development issues:

**Voluntary Release Scheme** - In July 2013, Personnel Committee had approved the launch of a further phase of Voluntary Change and Voluntary Release Schemes (VRS), designed to achieve headcount reduction by voluntary means wherever possible, and reduce the need for compulsory redundancies associated with the current and forthcoming budget challenges.

Attempts had been made to address budget challenges and to achieve staffing changes and reductions through non-compulsory means such as Vacancy Management, Voluntary Flexible Working, broader VRS schemes and Flexible Retirement.

The key features of the new VRS were as follows:

- The VRS was focussed on termination of employment and early retirement on efficiency grounds, and not other voluntary changes;
- The compensation available was current 'redundancy equivalent' terms. These terms would be maintained for any departures agreed under this VRS programme or Reshape redundancies (under the current Phases 1 - 3) regardless of actual leaving date (subject to no change in legislation governing compensation payments or pension provisions in the interim);
- As before, any agreed termination should enable changes to be made which ensured a 'payback period' (total cost of compensation) of one year (or a maximum of two years for individual cases if taken together across a team / service area). This would entail the deletion of posts or part posts, and might include voluntary redeployments to allow for departures;
- The scheme would run from 2 September 2013 to 14 October 2013;
- Departures would be expected to take effect as soon as possible, with a default leaving date of 31 March 2014, but earlier or later departures might be agreed subject to service need;
- The current restrictions on re-employment after individuals had taken a compensation package (including unreduced early retirement) would be reaffirmed. Any service-based exceptions to this provision had to be taken to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) for agreement, if required;
- The VRS would be open to all Council employees, with the clearly indicated caveat that applications might have to be refused for service reasons. Management decisions would continue to be final in respect of all aspects of this Scheme and there would be no 'appeal' rights (the scheme oversight would be provided by DMTs and CMT).

Anne Burton reported that there had currently been 230 requests from staff for estimates and 30 confirmed applications for redundancy or early retirement. The final lists would be taken to CMT on 15 October 2013 for consideration.

Council Reshape - After an extensive period of consultation on the Phase 1 proposals, the internal round of 'ring-fenced' interviews had been held for new posts at Director and Head of Service level resulting in the following appointments, commencing on 1 October 2013:

Director of Environment, Culture and Sport - Alison Bell  
Head of Transportation and Streetcare - Anthony Bolton  
Head of Economic and Cultural Development - Grant Thornton  
Head of Commissioning and Improvement - Brigid Day

Members did not make an appointment to the post of Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services so this role would now be released for wider internal and external recruitment.

Phase 2 of the Reshape Programme would be launched on 27 September 2013, when service areas would bring forward proposals for consultation across the Council. Phase 3 would commence in Spring 2014.

Anne Burton reported that a consultant, Warren King, had been appointed to provide additional HR support to guide staff, managers and unions through the consultation process. Councillor Lovelock stressed the importance of all staff having the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Family Friendly Policies - Maternity and related benefits and provisions for Reading Borough Council staff were governed by legislation and by national and local conditions of service. They were an important strand of the Council's approach to developing 'family friendly' policies and supporting flexible working, for the benefit of the service as well as individuals. The policies under review were the Maternity Scheme, Paternity Scheme, Adoption Leave and Parental Leave. It was noted that the scope of the Maternity Scheme did not include teachers or lecturers and so this needed to acknowledge the alternative scheme for these staff.

These policies / guides incorporated changes to legislation and the structure and presentation of the documents had been reviewed to ensure that they were as clear and concise as possible for staff and managers.

The main changes had been tabled with the Joint Trades Unions Committee (JTUC) and were detailed in the report, with the draft documents attached at Appendix A.

Sickness Absence Management - Further to the report submitted to the last meeting of the Forum on the work being undertaken to strengthen and review the Council's approach to the management of sickness absence, additional work had been undertaken (and agreed with the JTUC in July 2013) on developing a sensitive approach to the management of absence when managers were conducting return to work interviews and / or reviewing absence in teams. Further guidance to managers about handling such situations was attached at Appendix B.

An agreement in principle had been reached with the JTUC to develop an attendance management guide for staff which would set out the Council's commitment to manage absence and attendance sensitively and to improve performance management across the Council. This would also complement the work being undertaken within the 'disability in employment' Group and would be the subject of a further update in November 2013.

### 3. REVIEW OF APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The HR Services Manager submitted a report updating the Forum on the outcome from the recent review of the appraisal systems and guidance. The Forum and Personnel Committee had approved the proposed redraft of the framework, subject

to consultation with the JTUC and CMT. A copy of the framework was attached at Appendix A to the report. It was proposed to present the final version to Personnel Committee in December 2013 following the conclusion of the consultation process with CMT and with the unions.

The outcome from the review in summer 2013 had highlighted the need for changes in the following areas:

- That the current 'dial' format be replaced with a simpler 'Met, Part Met or Not Met' to indicate whether objectives have been achieved;
- That the number of objectives to be set were reduced to a minimum of 6 and maximum of 10;
- That the term 'grandparent', used to signify the senior manager signing off the appraisal, be replaced with a more appropriate term;
- Simplification of the appraisal guidance and aims - in particular, how these fitted within the general pay and grading framework;
- Adjustments to the processes used in social services to allow the appraisal process to meet the needs identified by regulatory bodies;
- Revised guidance on the setting and evaluation of performance targets;
- Ensuring that issues of general wellbeing and workload management were incorporated into the appraisal dialogue.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

#### 4. REVIEW OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS - UPDATE

The HR Services Manager submitted a report updating the Forum on the exercise that was being undertaken into the processes and systems that the Council used for the management of change. This exercise had been led by HR and involved representatives of the JTUC and managers.

One of the first outcomes of the review had been to refresh the guidance that was already available for staff and managers to assist them with the change process and to review the broader support that could be made available for both groups.

In conducting the review, particular attention had been paid to the following areas -

##### For Staff

- Understanding the language and process of change;
- Re-enforcing the role of all the different parties;
- Re-enforcing the commitment of the Council to find alternative employment;
- Ensuring that a sufficiently wide range of other work and non work based support services were available.

### For Managers

- Greater clarity about sequencing and planning;
- Consultation and involvement of staff and trade unions;
- Finding work for staff at risk.

The opportunity had also been taken to bring together various guides and information available for managers and staff which had been developed since the Employment Stability Agreement had been introduced in 2004. The draft revised guidance for managers and staff was attached to the report at Appendix A. The drafts were currently the subject of consultation with the JTUC and the final versions of these documents would be presented to this Forum and Personnel Committee once agreed with the local unions. In addition, training on Change Management would be provided in Autumn 2013 for both managers and union representatives.

### 5. CAR PARKING REVIEW

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report to advise the Forum of the launch of a review of staff car parking in the Town Centre offices to resolve some long-standing anomalies and in preparation for the office move in autumn 2014.

Following a review in 2003, passes for Civic Centre Car Parks A and B and Queen's Road car park had been provided free of charge to certain staff during the working day, broadly based on work-related criteria. Some passes had been issued to named individuals, and others had been designated as service or team 'pool' passes to be used flexibly for work purposes.

There were also a diminishing number of 'transitional' free of charge passes provided for Cattle Market and Hills Meadow (pay & display) car parks, and the Madejski Park and Ride. These passes were used by individuals who did not fully meet the work-related need criteria, but who had previously been accommodated in Chatham Street Car Park.

The need for access to a vehicle for work purposes, during the working day, was also met through the provision of a number of Car Club and pool cars. There were four Car Club cars, three based at the Civic Centre and one at The Avenue and these were all reasonably well used. The Council had four centrally located pool cars bookable on Iris and they were generally used all the time. There were also a small number of other pool cars available on a service basis at other locations.

After the office move in 2014 there would be a total of 202 spaces, with 160 spaces in Plaza West Basement and 42 in Civic Centre Car Park A. If the current ratio of 1:1.6 passes for spaces was retained, 202 spaces represented availability of 323

passes.

In order to address the anomalies and to prepare for the move to Plaza West, all current access car park passes and the current temporary transitional passes would be deleted with effect from 31 March 2014, with staff given three months notice of the change on 31 December 2013.

This proposal would affect staff mainly based at the Civic Centre and Fountain House. At this stage, it was not proposed to review or withdraw car parking provision at other 'self-contained' town centre or peripheral sites.

Directorates had now commenced an exercise to identify staff / teams who met the work-related criteria for a pass for reissue in April 2014, which would transfer across to Plaza West when the office move took place. The criteria schedule was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

It was proposed that the lists would be taken to CMT for moderation and consideration given to union involvement in the final decision process.

Councillor Page stressed that the process for the allocation of car park passes needed to be fair and transparent. It was also intended to review parking for Councillors so that car parks could be used to generate income.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

## 6. OTHER BUSINESS

Rob Ketley, Education and Community Services Unions, reported that the Department for Education were consulting on Trade Union Facility Time in Schools. Councillor Lovelock confirmed that she would respond to the consultation.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.45 pm).

Present:

Councillors Page, Skeats and Vickers

Mr R Ketley (In the Chair)	Education & Community Services Unions
Mr P Kenny	Unison Staffside
Mr R Kiff	Unison Staffside
Ms D Sander	Association of Educational Psychologists
Ms K Gray	Unite
Ms A Burton	Head of Human Resources
Mr J Hoggart	Human Resources Services Manager
Mr R Morris	Human Resources Partner
Ms S Poole	Committee Services

Apologies:

Cllr Gavin

Cllr Lovelock (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Rye

Mr K Magee (Chair) Unite

## 1. PROCEEDINGS OF THE LOCAL JOINT FORUM MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Proceedings of the Local Joint Forum meeting held on 24 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 2. HR ISSUES - GENERAL UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources submitted a report updating the Forum on a number of ongoing Human Resource (HR) and development issues:

### Voluntary Release Scheme

The report stated that the Personnel Committee had approved the launch of a further phase of Voluntary Change and Voluntary Release Schemes (VRS) which were designed to achieve headcount reduction by voluntary means wherever possible and reduce the need for compulsory redundancies associated with the budget challenges.

The key features of the VRS 2013 were as follows:

- The VRS had been focussed on termination of employment and early retirement on efficiency grounds, and not other voluntary changes;
- The compensation available was current 'redundancy equivalent' terms. These terms would be maintained for any departures agreed under this VRS programme or Reshape redundancies (under the current Phases 1 - 3)

regardless of actual leaving date (subject to no change in legislation governing compensation payments or pension provisions in the interim);

- Any agreed termination should enable changes to be made which ensured a 'payback period' (total cost of compensation) of one year (or a maximum of two years for individual cases if taken together across a team / service area). This would entail the deletion of posts or part posts, and might include voluntary redeployments to allow for departures;
- The scheme had run from 2 September 2013 to 14 October 2013, but late applications had not been refused;
- Departures would be expected to take effect as soon as possible, with a default leaving date of 31 March 2014, but earlier or later departures might be agreed subject to service need (but not anticipated to be agreed beyond 30 September 2014);
- The current restrictions on re-employment after individuals had taken a compensation package (including unreduced early retirement) had been reaffirmed. Any service-based exceptions to this provision had to be taken to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) for agreement, if required;
- The VRS had been open to all Council employees, with the clearly indicated caveat that applications might have to be refused for service reasons. Management decisions would continue to be final in respect of all aspects of this Scheme and there would be no 'appeal' rights (the scheme oversight would be provided by DMTs and CMT).

Anne Burton reported that there had been 327 requests from staff for estimates and that 54% (177) of these had converted to applications. Although the scheme had formally closed, they were still accepting late applications. Initial recommendations had placed applicants in the following categories:

- 18 applicants Category A - Firm yes, and no further work was needed in order to make it happen on the agreed leaving date;
- 46 applicants Category B - Yes, in principle, subject to some further work being done, such as team restructuring;
- 50 applicants Category C - No, unless something else could happen to make it feasible, such as savings found from somewhere else;
- 51 applicants Category D - Firm no, for service reasons;
- 7 applicants Category E - Firm no, as a result of other reasons;
- Recommendations for 5 applicants were unresolved.

Applications would be approved through the management assessment process and would be taken to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) for approval at the end of

November 2013. Individuals would then be notified and proposed compensation payments considered by Personnel Committee on 12 December 2013.

### Council Reshape

Phase 2 of the Council's Reshaping Programme had commenced on 1 November 2013 and focused on Customer Services, Children's Services, Commissioning and Improvement and Directorate of Education, Adult and Children's Services (DEACS) Business Support. There was also a further consultation on proposals to changes in the Supported Living service.

Details of all the proposals and how staff could contribute to the consultation were available on a dedicated pod on the IRIS intranet site and had been cascaded by managers to staff not able to access IRIS. A series of information sessions were planned that would be open to everyone as it was important that all staff felt that they could contribute, even if they were not in a department directly affected by the current phase. There would also be individual and team meeting sessions for those directly affected by the proposals.

The next phase of consultation on further reshape proposals (Phase 3) would be launched in January 2014. Details had not been concluded, but the Managing Director and HR would continue to keep trade unions informed through regular meetings. All consultations would be framed in a consistent format and incorporate a 45 day period for views to be expressed and information to be sought.

### ICT Policies Revision

The Cabinet Office and the Information Commissioner required local government to improve information governance as part of overall corporate governance. In pursuit of this, the Council had developed a programme of work that had resulted in a review of the following policies:

- Information Security and ICT use of Equipment Policy;
- Protective Marking, Handling and Disposal Policy;
- Personal Commitment Statement - Using Removable Electronic Media;
- Security Incident Management Policy.

It was agreed that the policies would be taken to Personnel Committee for approval and that consultation would be undertaken with the trade unions on how to launch policies with staff, and the support, training and guidance that would be required to ensure that staff understood what was required of them.

### New Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014

Following publication of the Hutton report on public sector pensions, changes had been proposed to all the main public sector pension schemes from April 2015 to

ensure long term sustainability. This was also linked to a member contribution increase in all the major unfunded public sector schemes.

In December 2011 the Government had agreed that the Local Government Association (LGA) and main local government unions (Unison, GMB and Unite) could put forward a proposal for a new LGPS that met government objectives and the provisions of the new scheme were finalised at national working parties.

Draft regulations for LGPS 2014 had been issued for consultation earlier in 2013 and the final regulations were expected in November 2013. Once these were received, the impact of changes would be assessed and further communications issued to councillors and employees. A dedicated pod on the IRIS intranet site would be developed, with other material available to staff not able to access IRIS. The main route of communication about the changes would be through the Berkshire Scheme Pension Administrators (Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead).

Current LGPS members who moved to the new scheme would have certain key protections, including retaining the final salary link and the normal retirement age of 65 and the guarantee that no member within ten years of age 65 as at 1 April 2012 would be worse off.

#### Staff Car Parking Review

A review of staff car parking in the town centre offices had been launched to resolve some long standing anomalies and in preparation for the office move in 2014. Directorates were reviewing their allocation of passes, in accordance with consistent work-related criteria, in order to determine the number and distribution of passes from April 2014. This would result in some changes to pass allocation, and staff would be given appropriate notice of this change in order to allow individuals to review travel to work patterns as necessary.

The current position would be reported to the meeting of the Joint Trade Union Committee in December 2013.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

### 3. HR POLICY REVIEWS - WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICY; FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES GUIDANCE; FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

The HR Services Manager submitted a report updating the Forum on the outcome from the recent reviews of HR policies. In preparation for the move to the new Civic Offices and the reshaping change programmes, the opportunity had been taken to review some key corporate policies and procedures that contributed to these work areas. The redrafted copy of the Work-Life Balance Policy Statement was attached to the report at Appendix A, the Guidance on Flexible Workstyles at Appendix B and the Policy on Flexible Retirement at Appendix C.

It was intended that these revised policy commitments and guides would make a significant contribution for staff and managers when dealing with the physical and organisational changes and transitions in 2014. They had benefited from input from the Joint Trade Unions Committee (JTUC) as well as service managers and other stakeholders. Consultation with the JTUC was ongoing and so further revisions might be made prior to approval by Personnel Committee.

#### Work-Life Balance Policy Statement

The report recognised that Work-Life balance had to encompass a diverse selection of policies, practices and benefits to be appropriate for all employees. The policy commitment document had been shortened and updated and, following endorsement by the JTUC and Personnel Committee, would be signed by the Managing Director and the Leader of the Council.

#### Flexible Workstyles Guidance

This guide had been updated and now incorporated the separate guides for managers and staff. This would be particularly relevant for the new Civic Office context of 3:2 desk working and the associated need for flexible workspace.

#### Flexible Retirement

The current policy on flexible retirement had been introduced in 2008, but had not been used extensively. The policy had been updated to clarify the scheme and to include reference to teaching staff pension schemes and contact information.

AGREED: That the report be noted and the redrafted policies and guides endorsed, subject to further consultation as required.

#### 4. DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The HR Services Manager submitted a report updating the Forum on the progress of the Disability in Employment review and the development of manager guidance. Attached to the report was a copy of the Guide to the Council's Policy and Practice and Frequently Asked Questions for the Recruitment and Retention of Disabled People. This review had been undertaken by a working group led by an HR Partner (Roger Morris) and with the active support and engagement of representatives of the JTUC.

Roger Morris stated that the development of a training course for managers on the employment of staff with a disability was close to completion and would be reported to the next meeting of the Forum. In addition, the Council's recruitment and selection procedures had been amended to ensure that managers established the minimum requirements of posts prior to advertisement, which would underpin the Council's commitment to ensuring that all candidates with a disability were

interviewed if they met these minimum requirements.

The Council were also completing a major programme to encourage staff to declare any disability, as part of the re-profiling exercise, as it was felt that this was currently under-reported.

The following work areas had been identified by the Group and endorsed by the Forum and Personnel Committee:

- Development of work placement opportunities;
- Revitalising the Council's disability awareness training programme;
- Development of further guidance on 'reasonable adjustments';
- Encouraging existing staff to declare that they had a disability;
- Updating Council guidance and support to managers on the recruitment of staff with a disability;
- Completing and promoting the Council's 'Two Tick' accreditation;
- Reactivating a focus group to consult and listen to the collective views and opinions of disabled staff;
- Working with individual staff who had a disability to discover more about their direct experience of recruitment and assimilation into the Council's workforce;
- Working in partnership with a professional employment organisation to obtain examples of good practice in the private and public sector and possibly hosting a seminar or conference to share ideas and experiences;
- Ensuring that the new Civic Offices reflected the needs of disabled people.

It was noted that Disability Leave had not been covered by this report and that this was an issue that had been previously raised by the JTUC for inclusion in the review. Anne Burton stated that she felt that the proposals for Disability Leave could be disproportional to the problem, which was currently managed on a case by case basis with support from HR and so enabled managers to be more creative around making 'reasonable adjustments'. Rob Ketley requested that the JTUC proposals be reconsidered prior to the endorsement of the guidance by Personnel Committee.

AGREED: That the report and position be noted.

(The meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 6.00 pm).

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
DATE:	12 DECEMBER 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	4
TITLE:	HR / ICT POLICY REVIEW		
LEAD MEMBER	CLLR LOVELOCK	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE CHAIR	
SERVICE:	CORPORATE RESOURCES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
AUTHOR:	ANNE BURTON / JIM HOGGART	TEL:	72492/72215
JOB TITLE:	HEAD OF HR / HR SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:anne.burton@reading.gov.uk">anne.burton@reading.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:jim.hoggart@reading.gov.uk">jim.hoggart@reading.gov.uk</a>

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 To update the Committee on reviews of HR and ICT Policies and to seek the Committee's approval to the revised documents, subject to final comments from consultation where appropriate.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That you note the report and approve the redrafted policies and guides attached, subject to final amendments following ongoing consultation where appropriate (as noted in the body of the report).

3. FLEXIBLE WORKING / WORK LIFE BALANCE

3.1. In the lead up to the move to the new Civic Offices and the current reshaping change programmes, the opportunity has been taken to review some key corporate policies and procedures to contribute to these work areas. In particular:

- Work/Life Balance Policy Statement.
- Guidance on Flexible Workstyles (formally called 'flexible working').
- Policy on Flexible Retirement.

3.2. It is felt that these revised policy commitments and guides will make a significant contribution for staff and managers when dealing with the physical and organisational changes and transitions in 2014.

3.3. These revisions have benefited from input from the JTUC as well as service managers and other stakeholders. If there are any final amendments to

the wording in any of these documents, they will be reported at the meeting of the Committee.

- 3.4. **WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICY STATEMENT (Appendix A)** - This policy commitment document has been shortened and updated making it crisper and more accessible to staff and managers.
- 3.5. **FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES GUIDANCE (Appendix B)** - This guide has been brought up to date with the benefit of a growing use of flexible workstyles over the past 5 years, the new Civic Office context of 3:2 desk working / flexible workspace, including the concept of 'Our space, not my space'. Separate Guides for Managers and Staff have been brought together in one document in an attempt to simplify and streamline the guidance into one document.
- 3.6. **FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT (Appendix C)** - The current policy on flexible retirement was introduced in 2008 to coincide with the changes in statutory pension schemes at that time - in particular the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 3.7. Although not used extensively, the ability to take flexible retirement - with or without the link to LGPS benefits - has proved beneficial and this experience and recent feedback has led to further changes to the policy document as follows:
  - Defining the document more clearly as a Council Policy rather than guidance
  - Shorten and clarify some passages to make it more accessible and easier to understand.
  - Clarify the 'tests' that are applied to applications.
  - Update contact points for further information
  - Make specific references to the Teachers Pension Scheme
  - Include new elements on timescales and representation rights

#### 4. FOSTER CARER SUPPORT (Appendix D)

- 4.1. This is a new policy intended to add to the Council's suite of policies under the general heading of 'family friendly' and also to contribute to the Council's broader objective of increasing the level of fostering within the Borough.
- 4.2. The policy broadly follows the shape and form of other family friendly policies such as the adoption policy and recognises that being a foster carer is an important social role. The main elements of this policy are:
  - The Council's commitment to supporting fostering by its employees;
  - A commitment to paid time off of up to 5 working days for a maximum of 2 placements per year;
  - An express link between this policy and other 'family friendly' policies such as compassionate and parental leave which will also apply to foster parents.

4.3. We are consulting with trade union colleagues on this new policy, and again any amendments to wording will be reported at the meeting of the Committee.

## 5. ICT POLICIES REVISION (Appendices E - I)

5.1. It is good practice to keep under review Council policies, procedures and guidance concerning the use of ICT. In particular, at present, the Cabinet Office (as part of standards required to connect to and use the Public Services Network PSN and GCSX) and the Information Commissioner (as expected best practice to comply with the Data Protection Act) are driving Local Government to improve Information Governance as part of overall Corporate Governance.

5.2. In pursuit of this, the Council has been progressing a Programme of Work for which the key themes include:

- Review and re-issue of ICT Security Policy
- Withdrawal of unencrypted USB sticks
- Introduction of Document Marking and associated policies
- Review of management of IT Security incident logging and assessment

5.3. Policies impacting on staff are approved through this Committee. We have therefore launched consultation with trade union colleagues on revised documents as follows, and these are being brought to this Committee for approval in principle, subject to the ongoing consultation. The focus in the consultation will be on how to launch these important (renewed) policies with staff, and the support, training and guidance that will be needed. If there are any fundamental issues arising in the initial consultation, these will be reported at the meeting of the Committee.

- Information Security and ICT Use of Equipment Policy (Appendix E)
- Protective Marking, Handling, and Disposal Policy (Appendix F)
- Personal Commitment Statement - Using Removable Electronic Media (Appendix G)
- Security Incident Management Policy and Procedures (Appendices H and I)

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Included in the report, where applicable.

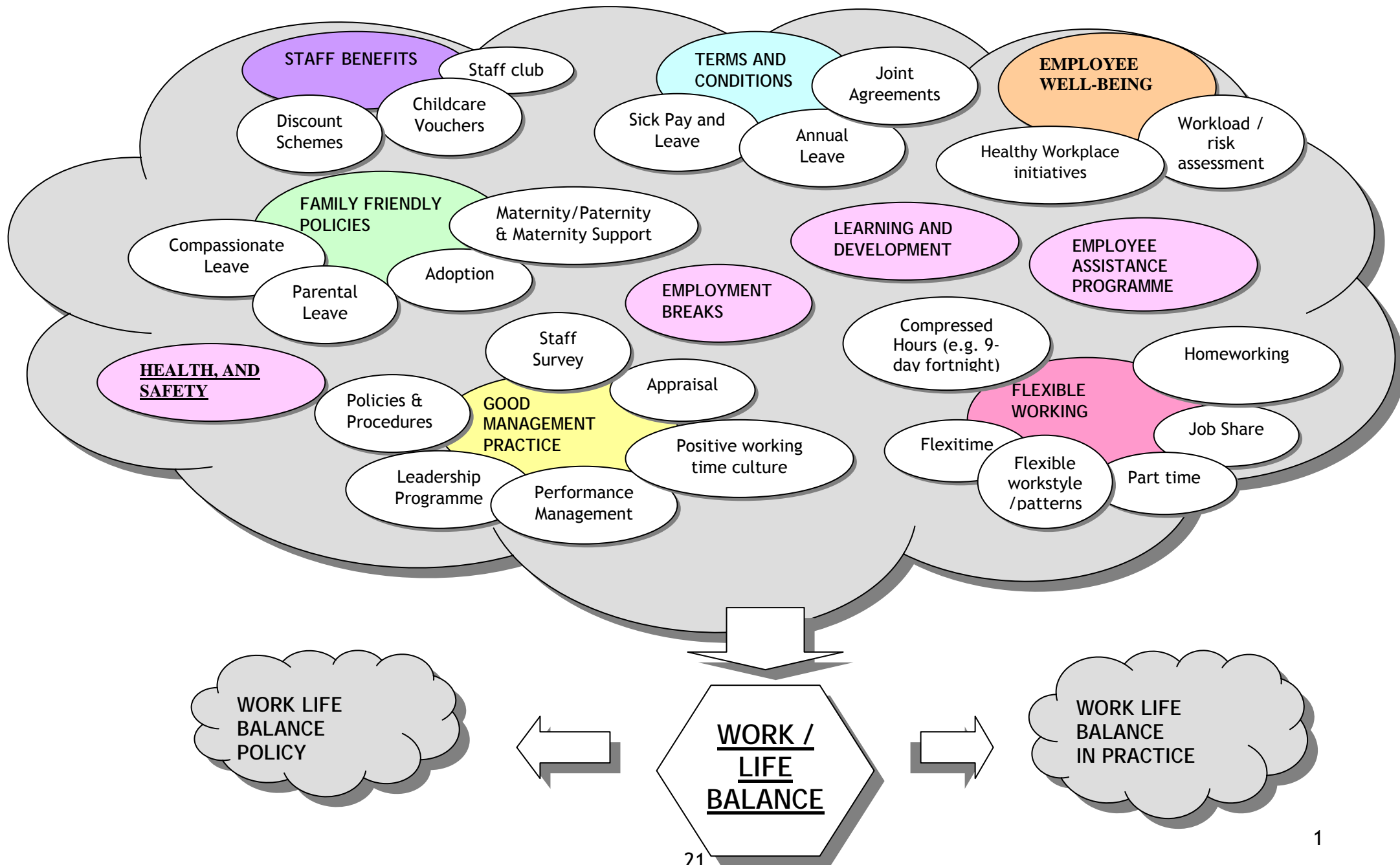
## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None arising directly from the report.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1. None

WORK LIFE BALANCE - POLICY AND GUIDANCE



Reading Borough Council  
Work Life Balance Policy

Our Commitment

Reading Borough Council and its recognised trades unions are committed to achieving a work-life balance for all employees:

- We recognise that effective practices to promote work-life balance will benefit the Council in its core business, by providing services to our customers and supporting its employees.
- We acknowledge that individuals at all stages of their lives work best when they are able to achieve an appropriate balance between work and all other aspects of their lives.
- We believe that the council and its employees have joint responsibility to discuss workable solutions to challenges and encourage a partnership between individuals and their line manager.
- We will develop appropriate policies and practical responses that meet the specific needs of the council and its employees, paying regard to:
  - fairness and consistency, although accepting that not all service areas or posts are suitable for flexible workstyles
  - valuing employees for their contribution to the service,
  - monitoring and evaluations
- We will demonstrate our commitment to work life strategies and communicate these to employees.
- We recognise that any work-life balance must ensure balance for the service, our customers and employees.

What is Work-Life Balance?

A work life balance can be made up of a whole range of different elements, which have links across a diverse selection of policies, practices and benefits. The cloud diagram accompanying this document expresses this.

An employee's thoughts about work-life balance will vary depending on their personal circumstance. "one size does not fit all". The council has a range of policies and procedures to try and help employees achieve their work-life balance. The range falls broadly into two categories; flexible workstyles that includes working from home, work location, working hours and working patterns, all of which may be adjusted to accommodate the balance required, and secondly, family friendly options.

Work-life balance - Employer Benefits

The Council will benefit from:

- Having a more motivated, productive and less pressured workforce
- Making effective and efficient use of Council office accommodation
- Maximising available resources by improving an employee's ability to manage a work-life balance



## APPENDIX A

### FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

Reading Borough Council has a number of agreements and policies which can be categorised as family friendly. These play a key role in:

- Allowing employees to combine work and family responsibilities,
- Enhancing the equal opportunities of employees at work,
- Providing a supportive environment within which to work, and providing a contribution to retention initiatives.

The relevant policies and agreements are summarised below and found in full detail on IRIS.

#### Maternity Leave

Every woman irrespective of her length of service will be entitled to 26 weeks maternity leave. For employees who have 26 weeks continuous service at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of confinement, then there is an additional 26 weeks on top of the original 26.

#### Antenatal care

Employees are entitled to take reasonable paid time off during normal working hours to attend antenatal appointments. These may be with a GP, hospital clinic or relaxation classes. Parent craft classes may also be offered (advice on feeding, childbirth etc) which a midwife or physiotherapist, may arrange, in the evening or during the day. Wherever possible employees are encouraged to attend these classes in their own time. In addition, wherever possible employees are encouraged to take appointments at the beginning or end of a day. It is important that managers have as much notice as possible about appointments. Employees may be asked to produce appointment cards.

#### Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is designed to enable fathers to assist their partners at crucial times during pregnancy and confinement. The maximum amount of paid paternity leave is 10 working days. There will be a pro-rata entitlement for those who work part-time or those who do not work a standard 5 day week work pattern. This leave is not available in addition to Maternity Support Leave and vice versa.

#### Adoption leave

Paid adoption leave is available for employees. The level of pay and leave depends on length of service, but leave will be in line with maternity so 26 weeks or 52 weeks is available. Paternity leave is also available to adoptive fathers.

#### Maternity Support leave

The maternity support leave entitlement is 5 days paid leave, granted to the child's father or partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother, to be taken at or around the time of the birth.

The equivalent pro-rata entitlement will be calculated for part-time employees and those who do not work a standard 5 day working week pattern.

## APPENDIX A

### Parental Leave

Parental leave is a statutory right to parents of a child born or adopted on or after 15 December 1999. The leave is intended to be an important means of reconciling work and family life, and promoting equal opportunities and treatment between men and women. Each parent is entitled to take 13 weeks unpaid leave per child.

### Annual leave

The total annual leave entitlement for each employee will depend upon an individual's terms and conditions of employment and length of service. This entitlement can be taken to help manage an individual's work-life balance.

### Compassionate leave

This paid leave is granted to employees who need to care for sick dependants or where there has been bereavement.

### Employment Breaks

An Employment break is a period of unpaid leave from work. The Council will consider requests from employees for an Employment break for domestic, educational or other exceptional reasons.



# FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES

## GUIDANCE

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## FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The evidence that different flexible workstyles deliver real and measurable business benefits is evident within the council. Flexible workstyles have been introduced at The Avenue Centre which shows that they are not just part of making a work life balance and benefits for employees, but it has a contribution to business performance and efficiency.

1.2 The Council supports flexible workstyles in many ways, some of these means of support are:

- The 3:2 workstation ratio allowing more room for other more flexible workspace such as meeting rooms and breakout areas
- A centralised corporate facilities management service of which the main office accommodation buildings are part
- New office furniture which is easily adjusted and can cater for a large proportion of people
- Phones where you can log into any handset and it becomes yours until you log out
- Provision of wireless network into RBC servers

1.3 When developing a successful business case for flexible workstyle, whether on an individual basis or team approach, the following are likely to feature:

- Case based on measurable performance indicators
- Clear cost benefit analysis
- Takes account of experience of others
- Risks are understood and dealt with

### 2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 Realism - we are committed to providing a wide range of positive working patterns. Managers and employees must be realistic and recognise that the full range of flexible workstyle options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the council.

2.2 Eligibility - it is recognised that not all of the flexible workstyle patterns considered will be suitable for all sections of the council's workforce, although there should be no unnecessary barriers. Employees in all areas and at all levels may be considered for flexible workstyle regardless of personal circumstances, seniority, current working pattern, employment status (permanent/fixed term).

2.3 Right to apply - There is no automatic right for employees to change to any flexible workstyle pattern; each application or request must

## APPENDIX B

be considered on the basis of the particular work involved and the impact of the change on the individual, team or service performance. The principle therefore is that “everyone has the right to apply, but there is no automatic right to a flexible workstyle”. The ‘right to apply’ procedure will be used consistently for applications by employees and actioned by managers. Application forms (see [appendix 5](#)) and [further guidance](#) are available on IRIS.

- 2.4 **Flexibility and discretion** - rigid rules and policies can stop the creativity and productivity of flexible workstyle arrangements. There is no “one size fits all” working pattern or set of rules about what may be negotiated with an individual or groups of staff. Managers have discretion to agree arrangements to fit the needs of their particular service area. In order to achieve a consistent and equitable approach, managers must act within the framework of this document, and must ensure that there are sound and demonstrable service, management and operational reasons for the decision they make, particularly as agreements may be seen as setting precedents elsewhere in the organisation.
- 2.5 **Challenging assumptions** - Managers must take care to ensure that they do not make decisions, which may lead to challenge on grounds of alleged discrimination. Managers are encouraged to discard their preconceptions about flexible workstyles and should focus on outcomes and challenge assumptions about alternative styles of working such as:  
time taken to manage change outweighs any future benefit  
employees wanting to work flexibly are not interested in a career  
employee visibility is an important part of their performance  
this job simply cannot be done in any other way
- 2.6 **Trust and Confidence** - a consequence of letting go of preconceptions and challenging assumptions is that a manager must be able to develop greater trust and confidence in their employee’s ability to work effectively and perform well, whatever the work pattern. What really matters is not when they start or finish at work, but the output that they achieve, the tasks they complete and the quality of the work. Managers will need to develop their performance management techniques to cope with different work patterns, the Council’s guidance on 121 supervision and appraisal will help to ensure this happens effectively.
- 2.7 **Training and Support** - Managers may seek advice and support from a number of specialist teams (HR, health and safety, Learning and Development, IT, legal) to help with their assessment of flexible workstyles requests or initiatives. Managers should discuss their immediate needs with their HR advisor / the Learning and Development team.
- 2.8 **Consultation** - Managers must observe good practice and consult with recognised trades unions and employees when considering the

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introduction of flexible workstyle arrangements at the request of an individual or group of workers, or as a result of changing service needs.

- 2.9 Review - All flexible workstyle arrangements need time to establish and settle down. They should all be subject to regular review to ensure that they remain suitable and effective and meet the needs of both the service and the employee(s) concerned.
- 2.10 Performance management - The development of a work life balance culture, and in particular a flexible workstyle will mean moving away from physical supervision to performance management and support. Employees will need to know what is expected of them and how they will be judged/managed. A manager may require an employee to work at the principle work location in the interests of the service. This may also be required for an employee if there was a need for closer supervision perhaps linked to a performance improvement, capability issue, or during a probationary period.
- 2.11 Assessment - Any proposal or request for a flexible workstyle must be subject to a full and thorough assessment of a number of considerations taken together. This assessment may be facilitated by considering the following points: analysing the job; the individual concerned; team/joint working issues; role of the manager; accommodation considerations; risk assessment.

## 3. ADOPTING A FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLE

- 3.1 The adoption of a flexible workstyle practice means that the council:
- is making a positive and proactive response to legislation, service demands and needs of staff, which aim to establish a more flexible workforce;
  - contributes to an enhanced employee work/life balance by allowing employees choice in where and how they work, at the same time delivering value for money and quality services;
  - enhances its reputation as an 'employer of choice', which has a positive impact on the aptitude and qualifications to deliver council services to the highest standards;
  - encourages diversity in the workforce, e.g. by offering increased options for candidates/employees with disabilities;
  - can support environmental and transport strategies, e.g. travel to work plans, by reducing travel to work and thereby traffic congestion, travel costs and car parking;
  - can positively support any organisational change programme, by:
    - making better use of accommodation and facilities, e.g. desk sharing and home/mobile working
    - reducing overheads e.g. accommodation costs
    - maximising the effectiveness of its two largest resources - people and property

## APPENDIX B

- can improve sustainable local economies, e.g. home workers use local shops and services on a more regular basis.

### 4. EMPLOYEE PROFILES

#### 4.1 An employee may be designated as one of the following:

- **Static** - Employees who spend the majority of their time working within an office location, with a clear business need for them to be present within Council premises
- **Flexible** - Employees who spend the majority of their time working within an office location, with a clear business need for them to be present within Council premises but with the possibility of homeworking, alternative offices or mobile working
- **Mobile** - mobile working using office location or home as base, but predominantly working remotely, out of office or Council locations, Clear business need for them to provide a service by operating in a mobile way for the majority of the time
- **Homeworking** - permanent working from home. Workstyle generally requires individual with a limited need to interact with colleagues or members of public face to face.

### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS

#### 5.1 Consultation

- If introducing flexible workstyle arrangements as part of a service review it is important to consult, involve and communicate with all those affected, including staff, trade unions and, where appropriate, service users. You are more likely to win support if you involve others who have a stake in the outcome.
- Have an open mind and avoid a preconception that final decisions have already been taken. Be prepared to respond to issues and concerns, particularly amongst staff.
- Give time for people to talk about worries and actively listen to matters of concern. Encourage solutions and options. This will help counter initial resistance to change based on a mixture of fear, ignorance and cynicism.

#### 5.2 Managing Performance

- How are performance targets defined and monitored?
- Are outputs and standards clearly articulated and understood?
- How will managers ensure that the appropriate regular performance monitoring happens e.g. appraisals, 1:1's, etc?

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### 5.3 Communications

- How would communications be conducted with a remote worker?
- How would the manager ensure they remain part of the team?
- What arrangements are needed for team meetings, briefings - keeping flexible workers in touch with the 'bigger picture'?
- Are social events possible?

### 5.4 Identifying Training Needs

- It is important that managers identify their own training needs, e.g. managing performance of remote workers. It is recognised that managers may require support and assistance in adapting their management style to accommodate different flexible workstyles and the adoption of a variety of flexible options requires a huge cultural shift. It is also important to assess the training and learning needs of flexible workers and others who may be affected by the arrangements e.g. time management, new equipment, risk assessment, upgrading support staff skills.

### 5.5 Accommodation Considerations

- It is important to build into the design and layout of new office accommodation, the potential changes in working practices. This means that office plans/moves should consider the potential impact of flexible workstyles on space/furniture requirements, encourage better use of office facilities and help to facilitate more flexible ways of working. Office layouts alone will not enable flexible working, working methods will also need to be reviewed alongside accommodation reviews in order to maximise the benefit from flexible working. The Council's agreed 3:2 workstation ratio will be the model in any change to work location or office layout.

### 5.6 IT Considerations

- Flexible workstyle does not only involves the better use of employee time and office space, but the more effective use of IT, which should enable employees to work at any desk, stay in touch and have access to relevant information.
- What adverse effects would there be if the employee performed the job away from the normal office environment?
- Consider the effects and possible solutions for overcoming any anticipated difficulties, e.g. availability, customer service issues, demands on manager's time, some workload transferred to other team members.

## APPENDIX B

- What arrangements are in place for the employee to return to the office, or other work place if IT connections are unsuccessful or if the arrangement does not work out?
- Individual and workstation assessments should be carried out (see managers' advice in [Appendix 1](#)).

### 5.7 A Pilot

- Before any change to working arrangements is made, it is advisable to carry out a pilot. Make sure this works using the principles and advice contained within this document before you make the final decision to proceed with a permanent change.

### 5.8 Reshaping services/organisational change

- Include the idea of different flexible workstyles in any review that is being carried out. This is an ideal time to consider whether more effective and efficient ways of providing services can be achieved.

### 5.9 Contingencies

- Conduct risk assessments of flexible workstyle options. Set up contingency plans to cope when things go wrong, such as the network going down and cutting off links for flexible workers.
- Make sure staff know what to do when things go wrong. Make sure you think about the need for the employee to return to the office to work, whether for a short term or in the longer term.
- The Council reserves the right to end a flexible workstyle arrangement which may include homeworking. Where this is the case employees will be consulted by management and reasonable time given to discuss alternative arrangements.

### 5.10 Budgetary Implications

- Any change to the way people work may have an implication on the manager's budget. This impact needs to be carefully assessed and a business case demonstrated that the benefits of the service and the contribution to the accommodation strategic aims of the accommodation project are clear from the change.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 The Council positively encourages employees to consider flexible workstyles arrangements as a means of managing their work life balance.

## APPENDIX B

- 6.2 It is important that any requests to work flexibly are discussed between the employee and line manager; communication is a very important element of any new working method so start as you mean to go on. Wherever possible, think through the request that is being made, the impact that it may have on the job, colleagues and, if necessary, any other service areas that affect the job. If any difficulties arise as a result of this exercise, think through the problems and come up with workable solutions; this will help to aid the discussion process.
- 6.3 Any employee wishing to make a request to work flexibly should do so using the [‘right to apply’ application form](#).
- 6.4 Where the need to work in a different way is the result of a review of a post or team then it is the responsibility of the employee to engage in any consultation that the manager initiates, offer objective suggestions and be clear about any concerns and express these in an informed way.
- 6.5 It may not always be possible to agree to every request to work flexibly. There may however be alternative options and compromises that can be reached. Employees need to work with their managers to achieve this.

## 7. FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLE ARRANGEMENTS

### 7.1 Flexible Office - “our space, not my space”

7.1.1 The Council’s policy on a 3:2 workstation ratio and corporate facilities management with the provision of a wireless network and VOIP phones allow easy contact with staff in any location to allow for flexible workstyles.

7.1.2 In any new or revised Council office accommodation there will be designated team space, providing a mix of static and shared desks as well as other accommodation which will include touchdown space, breakout/rest space and meeting rooms.

7.1.3 Tips on how to achieve a 3:2 workstation are available in [Appendix 2](#).

### 7.2 Flexible times/patterns

7.2.1 The Council positively encourages the use of flexible contracts as detailed below, but recognises that there may be alternatives and that the working pattern arrangements appropriate to one individual could be unique involving a combination of options.

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7.2.2 In all cases, the assessment of suitability must be based on the underpinning principles and budgetary implications detailed in this document, with the needs of the service paramount.

### 7.3 Job Share

7.3.1 This is where two or more people share the responsibility for a full-time job, which means that people with a different range of skills, experience and knowledge can work together to deliver specific tasks.

7.3.2 Greater flexibility in providing cover for holiday periods and peaks in service demand can be achieved.

7.3.3 In job share cases, the employment of each partner is dependent upon the employment of the other and communication between the job share partners is very important.

7.3.4 Account must be taken of what happens if one individual leaves, and the possible impact of prolonged sickness or other absence of one partner.

### 7.4 Part-time Working

7.4.1 The employee is contracted to work fewer than the standard number of contractual hours per week/per year.

7.4.2 Part-time working can create greater flexibility for the Council and its employees by:

- attracting back to work trained and experienced people who are unable to work full-time and
- helping employees to arrange their hours to suit domestic, leisure or educational needs.

7.4.3 The Council will ensure that part-time employees are treated no differently from full-time employees. They should:

- receive the same rate of pay for the jobs as full-time employees;
- enjoy all terms and conditions of full-time employees on at least a pro-rata basis; and
- be given equal training and development opportunities.

7.4.4 Annual leave will be calculated in hours rather than days

### 7.5 Term Time Working

7.5.1 This is a contractual arrangement, whereby a part-time employee works term time only, which is encouraged as a means of providing support for school arrangements and allowing employees to balance their work/childcare responsibilities. A salary is paid for the

## APPENDIX B

weeks worked (usually 38/39) plus an agreed pro-rata annual leave entitlement, which has to be taken during school holiday periods.

7.5.2 Pay is paid in 12 equal monthly payments (known as equated pay). A consistent formula for calculating pay should be used. This method of working can aid the recruitment and retention of individuals whose childcare responsibilities might otherwise keep them out of the employment market.

7.5.3 Longer hours could be worked during term time and shorter hours during the school holidays to make up full-time hours.

### 7.6 Annualised hours

7.6.1 The employee's contractual working hours are expressed as the total number of hours to be worked over the year, allowing flexible workstyle patterns to be worked throughout the period. Payment is usually in 12 equal instalments.

7.6.2 Annualised hours are rarely appropriate on an individual basis. The option is usually considered to provide greater flexibility in the way that work is organised to accommodate peaks and troughs in demand. Adopting an annualised hours system requires careful planning and communication and will usually require lengthy consultation and agreement.

### 7.7 'V' Time (Voluntary reduced hours/ variable hours contract)

7.7.1 This is a temporary arrangement, which allows an employee to work voluntarily a reduced number of hours for an agreed period, with an appropriate reduction in salary. The employee is guaranteed the right to return to his/her original hours at the end of the temporary arrangement. Salary, pension, holiday and other benefits are pro-rata during this time.

7.7.2 The temporary reduction in hours allows an employee to accommodate a specific event in their lives, but the security to return to a full-time position.

7.7.3 The employee's skills are retained on a reduced basis at a point when they might otherwise have been lost completely.

### 7.8 Compressed hours

7.8.1 This contractual arrangement allows an employee to do a full time job in, for example, four days a week instead of five, or nine days over a ten-day period.

7.8.2 Compressed working weeks can aid recruitment and reduce turnover and absenteeism. These arrangements require careful monitoring to ensure that the employee does not work excessively long days to the

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detriment of their health and in contravention of the [Working Time Regulations](#). In order to ensure this, it may not be appropriate for employees who work compressed hours to be subject to the Council's flexi-time schemes.

7.8.3 Where more than one employee in a team wishes to work compressed hours, a rota may be necessary as same days (usually Monday and Friday) will be more popular choices for employees. This rota should include the pro-rata of bank holidays.

### 7.8 Flexi-time / TOIL (Time off in lieu)

7.8.1 Flexi-time - a system that permits flexibility of working hours at the beginning and end of a day or shift. The employee must work designated 'core hours' and complete an agreed number of hours over an agreed period, usually 4 weeks.

7.8.2 The employee is normally permitted to carry over a specified number of credit or debit hours to the next period, usually up to 10 hours and may be allowed flexi-time off in addition to annual leave.

7.8.3 The Council has a standard flexi-time scheme which will be a contractual term and condition for those employees to whom it applies. Managers may consider variations to 'core' times if these can be accommodated within service needs and team working, and justified following a full assessment of the circumstances. Unless variations are managed, additional burdens may be placed on other team members or customer service may suffer at particular times.

7.8.4 It does allow employees more scope to manage work and personal commitments.

7.8.5 TOIL - this system gives back to employees hours worked over the normal contracted hours, which can provide mutual benefits for the Council and employees by:

- providing cover outside standard opening hours and thereby reducing need for any overtime payments;
- giving employees greater freedom to organise their working lives to suit personal needs

## 9. FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLE ARRANGEMENTS - LOCATION

9.1 The Council recognises that for some tasks (not all) varying the location of work from a fixed office base to home, or an alternative location, will, if managed and planned properly, offer mutual benefits and savings through the improved use of time, accommodation and available technology. This is particularly important in any accommodation strategy and the need to reduce office space.

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9.2 The outcomes should be better value services to the public, whilst providing a valuable contribution to and lead on, environmental and sustainability issues.

9.3 Therefore, where work tasks are not location dependent, the Council positively supports the establishment of the following arrangements on an informal or contractual basis.

9.4 All flexible work place options require a full assessment of suitability.

### 9.5 Flexible/Mobile Workstyle

9.5.1 This will involve an employee being equipped with a laptop, which they can use at their main office base, their accommodation and other suitably equipped Council locations. This will be adopted by whole teams/sections in order to maximise the use of office accommodation and flexibilities for employees.

9.5.2 In order to reduce the levels of accommodation needed for employees, flexible workstyles will need to be established. This will need careful planning. It will not be easy for an employee to give up the personal space represented by a desk, and people need time to get used to the idea, and feel comfortable that new arrangements can work in practice. Issues that need to be resolved and introduced in guidelines are:

- How to make sure employees get their phone calls wherever they are working (the VOIP phones allow for this).
- Providing storage for working documents.
- Introducing a clean desk policy
- Providing convenient fixed filing, as there will be no 'under desk' filing.
- Considering the management of the process
- How will workstations be managed: drop-in, pre-booked time?

### 9.6 Mobile working

9.6.1 Mobile working may take a number of forms: it may be workstation ratios at the office, some homeworking or accessing work information from offices other than the main offices.

### 9.7 Homeworking

9.7.1 The Council recognises that for some tasks (not all) varying the location of work from a fixed office base to home, or an alternative location, will, if managed and planned properly offer mutual benefits and savings through the improved use of time, accommodation and available technology. This is particularly important in any accommodation strategy and the need to reduce office space.

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9.7.2 Permanent homeworking may involve an employee carrying out their work from home returning to the office only for training, team or other meetings. Whereas other models of homeworking may involve an employee in a mobile occupation (i.e. one that entails visiting sites, clients etc.) using the home rather than an office as the base from which journeys are undertaken, or where work is carried out at home on an ad-hoc basis.

9.7.3 Employees will have one piece of ICT equipment which can be used in numerous work locations, including home, it will remain the property of the Council. Any expenses incurred as a result of working from home will be discussed with the employee on an individual basis, although where there is a mutuality of benefit then the Council may meet a proportion of the costs.

Equipment provided and paid for by the Council e.g.	Expenses not paid by the Council
Laptop or other IT solution	Insurance costs
Stationery	Reimbursement for heating and lighting and other utilities

## 9.8 Who is eligible?

9.8.1 Homeworking may be considered suitable for those employees whose work can be effectively performed away from an office location, who have the necessary personal skills/aptitude to work successfully from home and whose home is suitable for this purpose, where information of a sensitive nature may be displayed via a laptop or other IT device, or notes etc.

9.8.2 Usually, an initial approach will come from management seeking to implement alternative working arrangements. However, employees who believe that they meet requirements may apply to their manager outlining the reasons for wishing to commence homeworking, setting out their ideas of how the work would be managed, the benefits for both the employee and the service and the impact, if any, such an arrangement might have on other members of the team.

9.8.3 It must be recognised that not all requests for homeworking will be agreed. A manager needs to be satisfied that home working meets the following key points before entering into any agreements under this policy. If, at some date in the future, the Council required new staff to carry out homeworking then this will be made clear throughout the recruitment process for the relevant posts.

- Clear Outcomes - work outputs need to be capable of being measured;

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- Maximising Technology - the employee must be technically competent in using the available technology (training will be provided in the area);
- The nature of the work - it must be such that it is possible for the employee to be out of the office for part of the week without having a negative impact on colleagues, clients and work pressures; and
- The arrangement is not to be a substitute for meeting caring commitments, nor should there be other distractions that interfere with the work.

9.8.4 The homeworking criterion applies to all homeworking arrangements (both large and small, full-time or part-time, individuals or teams). The needs of the service must be the first consideration and the arrangement needs to be established with this in mind.

### 9.9 What facilities and equipment will be needed?

9.9.1 There should be sufficient space at home to ensure that work can be done safely and that equipment can be securely stored. All equipment needed will be supplied by the Council. Employees will be expected to take reasonable care of any such equipment and to use it only for work purposes. A risk assessment of both the premises and the equipment needs to be carried out before commencing working from home and regular inspections may be necessary.

9.9.2 Employees will not be permitted to install privately owned software on Council equipment. Secure user identity and password will protect all equipment and it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they maintain the confidentiality of these.

9.9.3 Employees will have received basic training in the use of the equipment and installed software. In some circumstances additional training to permit self-help in problem solving may be available. In the event that faults or problems cannot be rectified without access to equipment, it is expected that employees will co-operate in providing access to equipment by bringing the equipment into a Council support site. It may result in the suspension of homeworking and return to an office location until problems are rectified. While the Council is responsible for the equipment it provides, it has no responsibility for maintaining the house electrical sockets and electrical supply.

9.9.4 In all cases equipment remains the property of the council and will need to be returned at the end of any home/mobile working arrangement. An inventory of equipment should be kept.

### 9.10 Matters relating to homeworking

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9.10.1 Employees who are homeworking who use IT equipment regularly face the same work-related hazards as those employees working at an office base. Using computers brings potential hazards of repetitive strain injury and upper limb disorders. It is important that the workplace is properly assessed to ensure that it is suitable for this purpose.

- For regular Display Screen Equipment (DSE) users, assessments must be undertaken at the employees' DSE workstation.
- IT equipment supplied to an employee working at home must be checked and serviced by the Council.

9.10.2 Please refer to [Appendix 3](#) - Self assessment of premises for homeworking.

9.10.3 Employees who are homeworking may have to travel to different sites and may have to work in unfamiliar places, possibly on their own. Managers must ensure the particular risks to the employee are assessed and control measures are in place. Lone working policy should be in place. The hazards associated with driving should not be overlooked.

9.10.4 However, homeworking can mean an increased risk regarding possible inadequate communication of new information relating to site safety. While information may be available to office based employees, it may not be readily available to employees who are homeworking and they could enter sites ignorant of changes that could affect their safety. To prevent this, managers must formalise arrangements for ensuring relevant up-to-date information and local safety practices are received by all appropriate staff in adequate time.

## 10. ASSESSING SUITABILITY

### 10.1 Analyse the job

- Can the job be done on a flexible time arrangement?
- Does the job involve dealing with customers at particular set times and in particular locations?
- Analyse the tasks - what proportion of time is spent on different activities e.g. working alone at a desk, telephone contact, face-to-face discussions, scheduled meetings etc?
- Does work come through as a steady flow rather than peaks and troughs?
- Does the job have clear objectives and measurable outputs?
- How predictable/ 'planable' is the work programme?
- Can the job be done on a part-time/job share basis? If not, why not?
- Are there parts of the job that may be suited to working in isolation, allowing for uninterrupted periods of concentration (e.g. reading, planning, analysis work etc)?

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- What access is needed to information, files, manuals, corporate systems, incoming post etc?
- What specialist IT equipment/resources are needed?

### 10.2 The Individual

- Not everyone will be suited to a flexible workstyle arrangement. There may be a number of issues to consider to establish flexible working: self-sufficiency, trustworthiness, self-discipline, maturity, good time management and good communication skills.
- Consider the working style of the postholder - are they committed to making the flexible arrangement work?
- Are they able to organise their work and manage their time?
- Can they work with minimum direct supervision and cope with reduced social contact?
- Ask the employee whether they can switch off from work when necessary and draw appropriate boundaries between work and home life.
- Does the employee demonstrate proper awareness of health and safety considerations (e.g. lone working, home as workplace)?

10.2.1 If the above attributes are not present, how can these be attained, what support would need to be provided?

10.2.2 Employee's homeworking must confirm their childcare or dependant care arrangements with their manager, where these apply. Homework is not a suitable substitute for other childcare or dependant care and an employee homeworking should do so whilst in sole charge of others requiring care and supervision, unless agreed as "time out".

10.2.3 A manager may agree reasonable "time out" with an employee during core working hours in order to improve the employees work life balance (eg to take children to school or collect from school and take to after school care arrangements, or walk the dog, attend an appointment). This should be recorded and NOT counted as work time. These occasions should be recorded on the outlook calendar as "non working time".

### 10.3 Accommodation

- Separate dedicated room or area with sufficient space, power points and telephone sockets
- Suitable desk, chair and relevant storage
- Adequate heating, lighting and ventilation
- Adequate security

### 10.4 Team/Joint Working Issues

- How will the proposed arrangement impact on the rest of the team and others e.g. support staff, colleagues in other teams?

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- Can safeguards be built in which avoid detrimental impact e.g. proper lines of communication, clarity about access, fair sharing of holiday times/cover for urgent work etc?

### 11. ANALYSIS OF RISK

#### 11.1 The Workplace

11.1.1 An employee who is homeworking, either on a permanent or mobile working basis must have sufficient space for the work to be carried out. A separate room is not normally essential, although it may often be preferable. In any event, the area to be used as a workspace should be agreed, documented and assessed. A garage (unless redesigned for the purpose) is not a suitable work base. An assessment should be carried out periodically to ensure that the home base remains suitable. If the work area becomes unsuitable, the agreement to continue homeworking would need to be reviewed.

#### 11.2 Isolation

11.2.1 A key consideration for the management of employees who are homeworking is the degree of social isolation involved. Managers must ensure that contact is maintained with all employees and, to this end, employees who are homeworking should be required to attend the office from time to time. Guidelines formalising discussion and consultation agreements should be considered and incorporated into the procedures relating to homeworking for each individual service.

11.2.2 Employees who homework may also have trouble in establishing a boundary between work and private life. They may drift into working longer hours than they would do otherwise and may also feel that work is intruding on their private life. Where clients and colleagues have to contact employees working from home NO personal contact numbers should be given.

#### 11.3 Accidents and Incidents

11.3.1 Employees who are homeworking must report work-related accidents and incidents promptly to their line manager. The manager must keep a record of the accident or incident and report any serious occurrence. A Health & Safety representative may visit the home as part of any accident investigation.

### 12. IMPACT ON SUPPORT STAFF

12.1 Flexible workstyles which include homeworking will have a knock-on effect, as one person's working practices will affect their colleagues. Consideration needs to be given to other teams who may be affected, they may be asked to contribute to developing the flexible workstyle.

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12.2 Because of the nature of the work of some support staff, they may not have the option of flexible workstyles. Working relationships will need to be carefully managed, as there is potential to create divisions within teams.

12.3 The current structure of a service looking to explore flexible workstyles will need to be reviewed. The following needs to be considered:

- What support is needed?
- What changes could be introduced?
- Are there enough resources, or too many?
- Will the individual now carry out more of his or her own administrative tasks? This may reduce the number of support staff needed in those teams.
- If reversed, will individuals who had previously been self-sufficient need support staff to distribute material relay messages etc?

12.4 The skills of support staff may need to be upgraded if new responsibilities are introduced. These may be making decisions at short notice with no technical/professional employees around. They may need to make judgements about what information to pass to whom.

## 13. OTHER FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLE CONSIDERATIONS

### 13.1 Hours of work

13.1.1 There should be no change to the number of hours worked, although for those employees working at home in particular, there may be more choice regarding the pattern of hours worked. All employees will be expected to provide a written record of hours worked and to be aware of the requirements of the Working Time Regulations ([further information on IRIS](#)).

### 13.2 Insurance Arrangements

13.2.1 Each home worker should inform his/her own insurer at the start of any working at home to ensure his or her policy in respect of buildings and contents insurance is not invalidated. Some household insurers may not accept this risk or may require the payment of an increased premium. Where this happens, and if the Council requires the employee to homework, any additional cost may be reimbursed. When working at home on Council business, personal and public liability cover will be provided by the Council.

13.2.2 In the event of damage or loss of Council equipment, the manager will confirm whether the employee's insurance will cover the item or not. If not, the claim is referred to the RBC policy.

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13.2.3 Employees should ensure that they consult with their mortgage lender/landlord to obtain agreement for the partial use of premises for work purposes before beginning homeworking. As at present, all employees using their own motor vehicle for business purposes should ensure that the classification 'business use' is clearly endorsed on the policy.

### 13.3 Tax Implications

13.3.1 There should be no change to an employee's income tax position due to homeworking. Homeworking, which is a matter of choice or administrative convenience, does not qualify for tax relief. Employees should consult their local tax office if there are any specific queries relating to working at home.

### 13.4 Travelling/Mileage Claims

13.4.1 All claims for travelling/mileage must be made in accordance with the Council's [current policy](#), using the appropriate forms and authorisations. Mileage cannot be claimed for travelling from home to the 'normal' office base.

### 13.5 Security and Confidentiality

13.5.1 The same standards of security and confidentiality that apply for office based workers must be maintained by those employees homeworking. Attention must be paid to ensuring the security of IT equipment supplied by the Council. All confidential paperwork/files etc must be secured and employees must adhere to service guidelines on data protection. If the work involves contact with others, the employee must comply with the [Personal Safety and Lone Working policy](#) and not arrange meetings at home or release an address or private telephone number to non-Council employees.

## 14. CONTRACTUAL TERMS FOR FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES

14.1 Rates of pay, annual leave entitlements and entitlement to, and reporting of, sickness absence will not change.

14.2 Depending on the new flexible workstyle or homeworking arrangement there may be changes to previous working arrangements, the following should be included, discussed and agreed:

- Need to stipulate that there will be a requirement for the employee to attend the main office for meetings, 121's, training and appraisals. The cost of the journey to be met by the employee.
- Details for any interruption to ICT that does not allow for homeworking arrangement to continue. The need to return to an

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office location while problems are rectified. If employee subject to performance management intervention then this may also be an appropriate temporary arrangement to cease homeworking.

- Working hours - specify core hours when at home or mobile working. Employees must be contactable whilst working.
- The payment of a shift allowance is payable when the needs of the service and contractual requirement mean that work is carried out at times that would attract this payment. If an employee chooses to work at different times (which are agreed) as part of their flexible workstyle arrangement then no shift allowance will be paid.
- Notification of holiday and sick leave - holiday and sick arrangements are unchanged, but a procedure for notification must be established.
- Confidentiality and security - the employee should be aware of their obligation to protect, within the home or remote environment, the security of council information at all times.
- Provision and maintenance of equipment - the supplies, maintenance and costs must be agreed between the employee and the manager designated to authorise home working.
- Expenses and allowances - confirmation of any agreed reimbursements, ie mileage.

### 15. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 15.1 All decisions to implement or refuse a request for flexible workstyle, should be reviewed on at least an annual basis, to check whether:
- an arrangement is working well and/or needs adjustment; or
  - circumstances have changed that would now enable a declined flexible workstyle arrangement to be implemented
- 15.2 It is advisable to include a trial period at the beginning of any flexible workstyle arrangement; this will give all parties time to consider whether the arrangement can work.
- 15.3 The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and reviewed by Human Resources, in particular looking at each directorate to determine:
- the number and type of flexible arrangements introduced, and
  - the number and type of flexible arrangements discontinued

IT - MANAGERS' ADVICE FOR HOMEWORKING

Before staff members can work from home, managers are recommended to undertake the following assessment check to ensure appropriate consideration has been given to the IT Implications of homeworking:

No	Area	Manager To Check	Checked	
1	Policy & Budgeting	Check staff member is familiar with the Council's ICT policy and guidance ( <a href="#">Security Policy Statement</a> , <a href="#">Ten Golden Rules</a> , as these still apply with homeworking.	YES	NO
2		If you work in DEACS, check staff member has read the Directorate's ICT Policy held on Trove as these still apply with homeworking.	YES	NO
3		Have you matched the employee tasks to the IT equipment/software and networking available to the staff member at home? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work is stand alone on Council laptop or other mobile device from home?</li> <li>2. Work on Council laptop or other mobile device but also need occasional access to email /home drives from home?</li> <li>3. Work on Council laptop or other mobile device but requires regular access to email /home drives from home?</li> <li>4. Work on Council laptop or other mobile device requiring access to other systems from home?</li> <li>5. Is a mobile phone required?</li> </ol> (Contact Northgate/Pinacl Helpdesk - ext 72861 - for further advice.)	YES	NO
4		Have you budgeted for all IT equipment, mobile phone costs?	YES	NO
5		Have you considered the data security and backup implications of any electronic data you are allowing to be taken off site?	YES	NO
6		Is the staff member aware no "home visit" service is currently available from Northgate and Pinacl? All RBC equipment must be returned for repair.	YES	NO
7	IT Assets	Northgate Information Solutions own all our desktop equipment, and the staff member must be made aware they are responsible for proper care and control of all IT equipment issued to them. The Council (and, therefore, you as manager) is liable for the cost of repair or replacement of any equipment damaged through carelessness or negligence. Has the employee been briefed on their responsibility?	YES	NO

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No	Area	Manager To Check	Checked	
8		<p>Loading games, software, or a configuration of alternative Internet Service Providers on Council owned equipment is not allowed.</p> <p>Has the employee been briefed not to do this?</p>	YES	NO
9		<p>As a manager have you a record of assets, which you are allowing to go off-site to staff members' homes, to ensure these all return to the Council?</p> <p>It is recommended that the employee should sign a declaration that will undertake to return all IT equipment, mobile phones, and any other data or documentation that is the property of the Council upon receiving a request from a designated office of the Council to do so.</p> <p>This declaration should also include the right of access to said equipment / data / documentation either at home (with employee consent) or for it to be brought to an RBC workplace at reasonable notice when requested by a Manager / Audit / or other designated Council Officer to do so.</p> <p>(It is strongly recommended that this agreement is signed and lodged with your directorate personnel unit as a formal record).</p> <p>Has a signed agreement been put in place?</p>	YES	NO
10	Transport of Equipment	<p>Do not leave laptops unattended in vehicles or on public transport. Appropriate travel bags should be used to carry laptops.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
11		<p>Council supplied equipment is for the staff member's use only. Passwords must not be disclosed to family members or friends.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
12		<p>Do not leave equipment connected or logged into Council systems when staff member is not present.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
13		<p>Sensible security precautions to protect against theft are expected when equipment is at home.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
14	Virus Threats & Software Fixes	<p>Please check regularly that laptop virus protection is up to date. Staff Member should be made aware anti virus protection will go out of date if regular connection to the corporate network is not made.</p> <p>If in doubt ring the Northgate Helpdesk (ext 2861) who will advise on how to check you have latest updates. Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
15		<p>Do not load on or configure other ISP internet services on to Council supplied desktops and laptops.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO

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No	Area	Manager To Check	Checked	
16	Data	<p>Do not allow sensitive data to be put onto laptops or transmitted by email without consideration of further security measures.</p> <p>The Data Protection Act must apply. Further security measures should be considered for sensitive data (e.g. Data encryption, email encryption, password protected Zip files, use of password protected secure area USB Flash Memory Devices such as Disgo. Contact the Northgate Helpdesk for further advice - ext 2861)</p> <p>Employee should be made aware to check with manager, Northgate Helpdesk, Audit and/or IT Client of the suitability of any data going onto any mobile device.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of this?</p>	YES	NO
17	Insurance	<p>All incidents of loss or damage must be reported to the Insurance Section (Accountancy) within 5 working days. Employees are expected at all times to take reasonable precautions to protect Council assets for which they are responsible.</p> <p>Managers have a duty to carry out a risk assessment prior to approval for homeworking being given. There is an ongoing duty to review these and to ensure the safety of work equipment at all times.</p> <p>There is no insurance cover in respect of theft from unattended motor vehicles, and only very limited cover in respect of viruses/hacking &amp; corruption of data (£25K). It is essential therefore that employee's safeguard access to the equipment.</p> <p>Use of any Council assets is restricted to use on the business of the Council. Private use and use by other persons is forbidden.</p> <p>Employees should consider the impact of homeworking on their own private insurance arrangements and advise their property/contents insurers accordingly.</p> <p>Has employee been made aware of all these points?</p>	YES	NO
18	Monitoring of homeworking	<p>Managers are recommended to implement a regular review mechanism to assess how homeworking is progressing. Suggest this could be as part of a 1:1 or other formal meeting to assess and record if the manager and employee are satisfied with the arrangements.</p> <p>Has a review process been put in place?</p>	YES	NO

HOW COULD WE ACHIEVE A 3:2 WORKSTATION RATIO

HR can assist your service in developing flexible workstyles to achieve a 3:2 ratio. They can attend team meetings to facilitate discussion on flexible workstyles and explore options and share examples from other teams within the council.

- Be clear about what the council's principles are;
- Include any opportunity to consider flexible workstyle options when reviewing services or staffing structures;
- Ensure managers' and employees' continually communicate with each other, explore options and pilot them;
- Consider what office/telephone cover is required in order to deliver the service effectively, balance this against employees' wishes and try to compromise;
- Use service "givens" and be flexible about the rest.
- Consider working patterns to introduce flexibility - term time working, job share, part-time; not everyone needs their own desk, although some staff will.
- Consider working hours, who needs to be in the office/providing telephone cover, at what time. Think about introducing compressed hours. This can be a useful tool to free up workstations if a team work compressed hours and plan time in the office accordingly.
- Does it matter where you work - homeworking may be an option, or just desk sharing. IT facilities allow a variety of options.
- Some areas could adjust their start and finish times, this would allow for travel at non-rush hour and the use of desks when their colleagues are not at work or out on site visits etc.
- Think about whether your service benefits from the current flexi-time scheme, are you using it effectively?
- Think about the impact of flexible workstyles on support staff, can they work flexibly as well?
- Be clear about what homeworking means, what responsibilities managers and employees have;
- An option is available to work permanently from home, either individually or as a team, if this is something that is being considered then a business case will need to be presented, the principle being that there would no longer be a permanent workstation within the office.
- Come up with some service/team ideas and try them out. The Council has adopted the 3:2 workstation ratio so it will happen every time there is a move now, so why not sooner rather than later, at least give yourself time to try?

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF PREMISES FOR HOME-BASED WORKING

Name of employee

.....

Address of home base

.....

.....Postcode.....

.....

General Conditions of home-base	Suitable: Yes/No/ N/A	Any action needed? Who by? When by?
<b>1. Lighting</b> Is there adequate natural lighting? Is there adequate room lighting? Is there adequate task lighting? Are there adequate blinds/curtains? Is the lighting likely to cause glare?		
<b>2. Heating</b> Is the room heated? Is the room heated safely? Will room temperature be maintained?		
<b>3. Ventilation</b> Is there adequate natural ventilation for the work undertaken?		
<b>4. Electrical installation</b> Is there a 13-amp 240v AC supply? Are there a sufficient number of sockets? Do you know how to switch off the mains isolator?		
<b>5. Fire</b> Is the escape route free?		
<b>6. Rooms</b> Is the working space adequate (3.7 square m suggested minimum area)? Is the access to the room safe? Is there sufficient and safe storage available?		



FLEXIBLE WORKSTYLES - FAQ'S

*Would a flexible workstyle enable me to combine work and leisure effectively?*

Definitely, why not speak to your manager about the options you are thinking about. You could ask to vary your hours depending on your outside/personal commitments.

*I don't have any children, can I work flexibly?*

Flexibility is not just for parents or carers. You need to approach your manager to request working in a different way. You need to assess sensibly whether your specific role will allow a flexible workstyle option. A ["right to apply" application form](#) is available on IRIS or attached as [Appendix 5](#).

*How can I get my current role after maternity leave, without the full-time commitment?*

If you think that your personal circumstances mean that you will no longer be able to work full-time, you should be aware that although you do have the statutory right to return to work after the birth of your baby, you do not have the statutory right to work part-time only the right to ask. An application form can be found on IRIS.

*How do I overcome the negative attitude that my team or colleagues might have?*

You need to address all concerns with people and highlight the beneficial effect the change will have on you. Reassure your colleagues that they will have your contact details and emphasise that a flexible workstyle is about working differently and that you will still be available to them.

The wider use of flexible workstyles to support the accommodation strategy will reduce any concerns people have about individual patterns of work.

*How should I bring up the subject of a flexible workstyle with my manager?*

Whatever your reasons for wanting to change your working arrangements, make sure that you set some time up with your manager to discuss it, and/or complete the ["right to apply" application form](#). Make sure that you put forward a written proposal, showing how your role fits in and what colleagues, clients or suppliers expect from you.

Think about the options open to you, consider the issues and think carefully about your answers to likely questions beforehand. Consider any objections and show how these problems can be addressed. Be prepared to be flexible,

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if your first option was not acceptable then another may be possible as a compromise.

The Council's 3:2 workstation ratio will require a flexible/create approach within teams.

### *Can I be protected as a part-timer?*

The part-time workers regulations came into force in July 2000 and are intended to establish a minimum standard of fairness for part-timers so that they cannot be treated any less favourably than the full-timers they work alongside.

### *Does the law provide me with an automatic right to work flexibly?*

No, but you have the right to ask. Use the [‘right to apply’ application form](#) available on IRIS. The law allows mothers returning to work after childbirth the ‘right to apply’. The Council has extended this to all staff.

### *My manager has suggested an alternative working pattern to the one that I want. Do I have to agree to this?*

You do not have to agree to this, although it is important when thinking about flexible workstyles that you are prepared to compromise. Your request may have been genuinely one that could not be accommodated given the business need. Failure to discuss and compromise may mean that your request is refused.

The introduction of the 3:2 ratio and move to Plaza West will mean that many staff will need to work flexibly. A new working practice may be proposed and consulted upon by your manager, which may mean a change to the way you work.

### *What evidence must my manager provide if they refuse my request?*

The only reasons on ‘business grounds’ for refusing a flexible workstyle request from eligible employees are:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer service need
- Inability to reorganise work among existing staff or recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality or performance
- Insufficient work during period the employee proposes
- Planned structural changes

### *What happens if my manager doesn't take my request seriously?*

If you have used the ‘right to apply’ form on IRIS, your manager must take your request seriously.

## APPENDIX B

### *What happens if my request is refused?*

There is an agreed appeals process contained within the 'right to apply' procedure.

### *As long as there is cover in the office, can I work 37 hours over 4 days having Friday/Monday off on alternative weeks?*

Working 37 hours over 4 days is called compressed hours. You should make your request detailing your requirements and express why you believe this arrangement is possible.

Your manager will discuss this with you and make a decision depending on a range of issues surrounding the business requirements. Fridays and Mondays are popular days with most staff so not every request can be agreed.

### *Can I make a change to my core hours?*

Yes, you can ask your manager. It would be useful to say what you would like these hours to be and think about how this may impact upon your role and colleagues, but the outcome will depend on the service need.

### *How do I get an ICT connection so that I can access my emails from home, and is there a cost?*

Details for [homeworking](#) can be found on IRIS. There may be a cost, which will be charged to your manager.

### *I have requested to trial a flexible workstyle. If I agree, does it have to result in a permanent change to their terms and conditions?*

A trial period to assess whether the flexible workstyle request can be agreed is an ideal way for both sides to see if it works. If either side feel that it doesn't work then this does not have to result in a permanent change.

### *What happens if a permanent change is made and someone changes their mind?*

There would need to be another request made to make a change. There would have been a number of changes and costs incurred to accommodate the original request, so this would have to be assessed again and the business case considered.

### *I want to work at home so that I can avoid too many childcare costs. What should I say about this?*

The request to work from home could be made for a variety of reasons. But, not to replace childcare provision. Alternative childcare should be found.

## APPENDIX B

*How long does my manager have to consider my request?*

Your manager will need to follow the process set out in the [‘right to apply’ procedure](#) available on IRIS, which sets out timescales.

*Will working flexibly affect my career development opportunities?*

No, opportunities for career progression and promotion are the same for all staff irrespective of their working arrangements.

*How flexible is flexible working?*

It can be whatever can be accommodated by the service needs. Any request however ‘off the wall’ can be made, showing how this can be achieved. Your manager must decide whether the service or the role is suitable.

*What if the whole team want to work flexibly, but everyone wants Friday off?*

This will cause problems with regard to service provision. There will need to be compromises made in order to please everyone. It may be that a rota can be established so that everyone can benefit from Fridays off.



**FORM NO.1 - EMPLOYEES' FLEXIBLE WORKING APPLICATION FORM**

**Note to the employee:**

You can use this form to make an application to work flexibly under the right provided in law to help eligible employees care for their children or care for an adult, or to apply for flexible working under the Council's right to request. Before completing this form, you should check that you are eligible to make a request.

Further details on the right to apply and the procedure are contained within the Reading Borough Council procedure document available on [IRIS](#) or from HR.

You should note that under the right it may take up to 4 weeks to consider a request before it can be implemented and possibly longer where difficulties arise. You should, therefore, ensure that you submit your application to your manager well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect.

It will help your manager to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid. When completing sections 3 & 4, think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your manager (you might want to keep a copy for your own records). Your manager will then have 28 days after the day your application is received in which to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your request. If the request is granted, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions unless otherwise agreed.

Guidance packs are available from Job Centres, Social Security Offices or on IRIS.

**Note to the manager:**

This is a formal application made to apply for flexible working. You have 28 days after the day you receive this application in which to either agree to the request or arrange a meeting with your employee to discuss their request. You should confirm receipt of this application using the attached confirmation slip.

Forms accompanying the guidance have been provided on [IRIS](#) for you to respond to this application.

## APPENDIX B

Personal Details:			
Name:		Staff / Payroll Number:	
Manager:		National Insurance No:	
Request to the Manager:			
I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided in law. I confirm that I meet each of the eligibility criterion as follows:			
TICK:			
	<input type="checkbox"/> I am an employee of Reading Borough Council		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I have responsibility for the upbringing of either a child aged 16 and under or a disabled child aged 18 and under*/I am a carer of an adult*, on the date the application is made (*please delete as appropriate)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I am: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent of the child; or</li> <li>- Married to or the partner of the child's mother, father, adopter, guardian or foster parent</li> </ul>		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I am making this request to help me care for the child.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I am making this request no later than two weeks before the child's 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday or 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday where the child is disabled.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I have worked continuously as an employee of Reading Borough Council for the last 26 weeks.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I am not an agency worker		
	<input type="checkbox"/> I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.		
<p>If you are unable to tick all of the relevant boxes then you do not qualify <u>in law</u> to make a request to work flexibly. This does not mean that your request will not be considered.</p>			

2a. Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

--

2b. Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):

--

**APPENDIX B**

--	--

<b>2c. I would like this working pattern to commence from (date):</b>	
---	--

<b>3. Impact of the new working pattern</b>
---

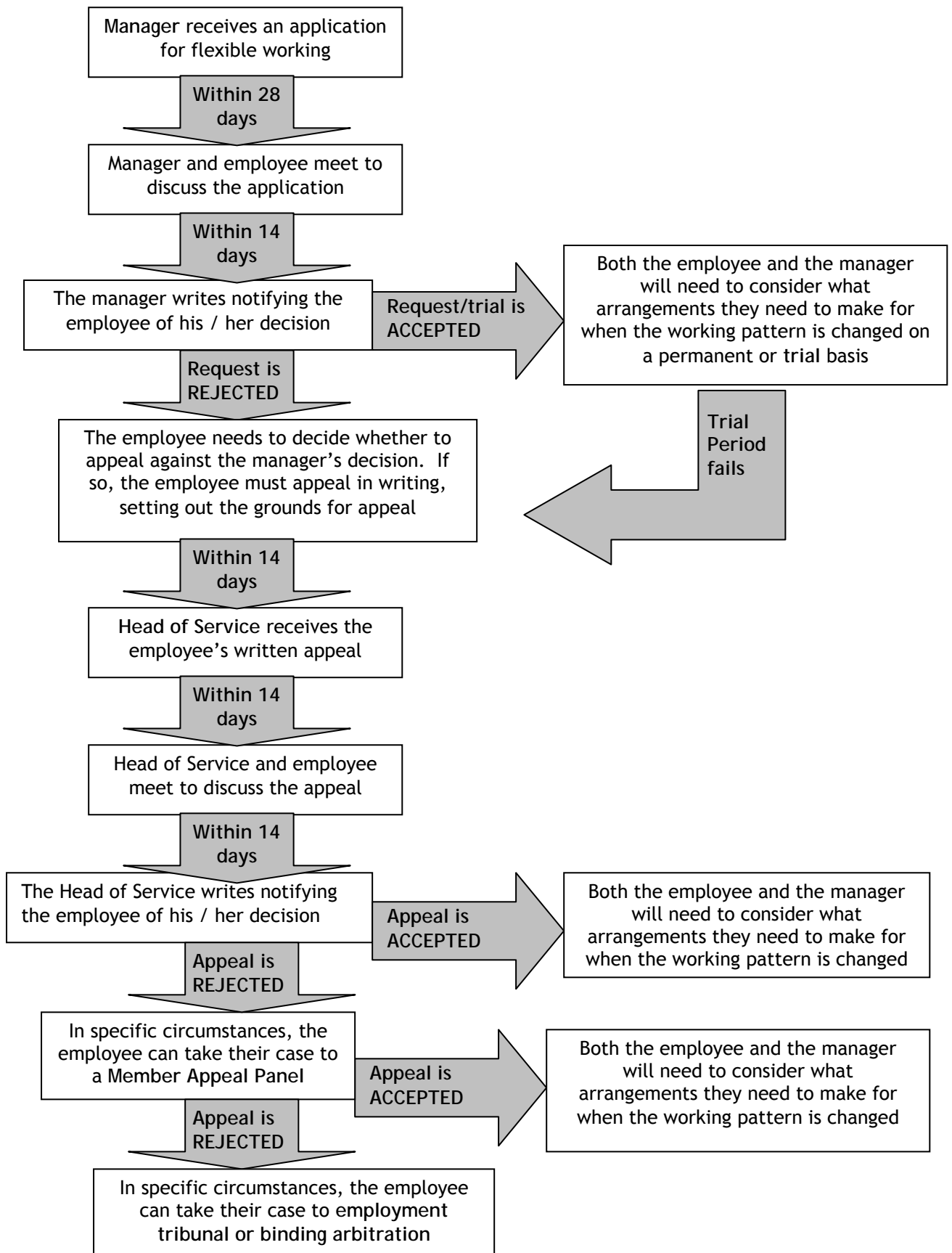
I think this change in my working pattern will affect my manager and colleagues as follows:
---

<b>4. Accommodating the new working pattern</b>
---

I think the effect on my manager and colleagues can be dealt with as follows:
---

**NOW PASS THIS APPLICATION TO YOUR MANAGER AND A COPY TO HR**

FLEXIBLE WORKING - RIGHT TO APPLY  
HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?





## FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY

EFFECTIVE FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2008  
REVISED FROM NOVEMBER 2013

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## APPENDIX C

### 1. Purpose

1.1 The Council is aware that individual employees have different attitudes and needs when approaching retirement. For some it is eagerly awaited and for others it can be a time of apprehension. The Council also recognises that the labour market is changing, with older members of the population seeking the financial and social advantages that being in work may bring. Whatever the individual desires that employees may have, the pathway to retirement needs to be planned. Flexible retirement is where employees change their work pattern prior to their planned retirement date. It can assist employees and the Council by -

- Enabling the transfer of skills and knowledge;
- Providing the opportunity for better succession planning and mentoring;
- Facilitating the retention of expertise and knowledge.

The key purpose of the Policy is to ensure that the transition to retirement is as flexible as possible to maximise the benefit to the employee and the Council .

### 2. Scope

2.1 The policy applies to all employees of Reading Borough Council.

2.2 For members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) or the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), the Scheme provisions relating to 'Flexible Retirement' and 'Phased Retirement' apply. Where there is no direct cost to the Council / School, the considerations relating to the impact of reduced hours on service provision will apply (see below).

### 3. Retirement Age

3.1 There is no default retirement age for employees of Reading Borough Council. Any employee can plan for their own retirement date in accordance with their personal circumstances and subject to the provisions of the relevant pension scheme they have membership of (where relevant). The age at which retirement occurs can have an impact upon the costs and benefits involved for the employee (and the Council) and will need to be identified, discussed and explored on an individual basis. Before an employee commits to reducing his/her working hours or grade, he/she should consider the effect on his/her retirement benefits and take appropriate independent financial advice.

### 4. Preparing for retirement

4.1 Retirement is a major change in an individual's life and the Council through its managers and HR Service should respond to any requests from staff who may wish to discuss their own retirement plans. In addition to such support, employees can be directed to towards other sources of information such as pension scheme details as well as the provision of pension workshops and sessions with independent financial advisers which are organised from time to time.

## APPENDIX C

### 5. Flexible retirement options & Eligibility

- 5.1 Flexible retirement is aimed at giving employees flexibility and choice around how to ease their way into retirement, and may include options such as reduced hours/days and / or reduced grade.
- 5.2 On or after age 55 (and with Council consent until April 2014), employees who have 3 or more months' membership in the LGPS (including transferred rights) can reduce their hours of work or grade in which they are employed and draw their accrued LGPS pension benefits whilst continuing in employment and (optionally) building up further benefits in the pension scheme - enabling them to ease into retirement. This would give individuals the opportunity to develop interests outside of work and make the transition to retirement easier.
- 5.3 Employees should be aware that their pension benefits will normally be reduced if paid early (in line with LGPS Regulations). However, The Council will consider granting flexible retirement with unreduced pension if sufficient financial benefit to the Council can be demonstrated through the individual's proposed change to working hours / grade.
- 5.4 Employees must be 55 or over on the date that any proposed changes are to take effect in order to be eligible to make a flexible retirement request (reduction in hours and / or grade) under this Policy irrespective of whether they are in membership of a pension scheme.

### 6. The Tests

- 6.1 In the event that an employee makes an application to vary their pattern of working under this policy the following tests will be applied.

TEST 1 The 'Pension Cost Test': (for employees who are members of a pension scheme only).

An assessment will be done to weigh the costs of unreduced pension against any savings to be accrued as a result of the change to working arrangements. In general, the basic test of covering costs within a period of two years will need to be met. This test should include any direct and indirect additional costs arising from the application such as re-training, recruitment etc.

TEST 2 The 'Service Impact Test': (in all cases).

This is an evaluation of the impact of the proposed change on the service, taking into account (where applicable) -

- Impacts on the ability of the service to meet the demands of customers, quality or performance generally.
- The feasibility of re-organising work within the existing workforce where necessary.
- How these proposals link to other short to medium term plans for the service (including any additional costs that may be incurred).

## APPENDIX C

A summary of the above evaluation shall be reported to Personnel Committee in the event that consent to waive the reduction in pension benefits is made.

### 7. The Application

- 7.1 Employees requesting flexible retirement should do so using the Council's Flexible Retirement Application Form appended to this document.
- 7.2 Requests for flexible retirement should be made to the employee's line manager in the first instance and the manager will seek financial information and any further guidance needed from HR.

### 8. The Decision

- 8.1 In the event that an application has no financial implications for the Council, proposed changes to working arrangements can be agreed with the relevant Head of Service and put into effect.
- 8.2 Elected Members' consent (Personnel Committee) is required where there is a potential cost to the Council in relation to the release of an unreduced pension and the employees Head of Service agrees that this may be considered. This approval must be given before changes to working arrangements are formally agreed with the employee.
- 8.3 If approved, changes to working arrangements will be permanent. A model letter for confirming a successful application is attached as APPENDIX A

### 9. Timescales & Representation

- 9.1 It is difficult to set timescales for the application and approval process as the stages may be contingent upon the receipt of financial information from external sources and / or the scheduling of a Council Committee. However, as a general rule, managers should ensure that they communicate regularly with staff about the feasibility of an application and what stage the assessment process is at.
- 9.2 It is recommended that managers formally acknowledge requests for flexible retirement once they are made and instigate the request for the necessary financial information as soon as possible after receipt of a request. In most cases it should be possible to hold an initial discussion with the employee about the feasibility /options for flexible retirement within 4 weeks of a formal request being made. It should also be possible to confirm to the employee whether or not a formal recommendation for approval of the application to the Head of Service will be made within 8 weeks of the application being made.
- 9.3 If it appears, for whatever reason, that it is necessary to depart from the above timescales, then the employee should be kept informed.
- 9.4 At meetings held to discuss any formal application the employee shall be entitled to be accompanied by his / her trade union representative or a workplace colleague.

10. **Further Information**

The Berkshire Pension Fund Helpdesk: 0845 602 7237 or

<http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/berks-pension>

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/>

Employees can find information about their state pension on

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension>

Or

The employee's private pension provider

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT FLOWCHART

Employee completes Flexible Retirement Application Form and passes to line manager



Line Manager discusses with Head of Service and asks HR for pension costs information, and considers any other associated costs and savings taking advice from HR/Finance as necessary.



Managers calculate savings / costs and decide whether to recommend approval on financial and other grounds (in accordance with the Policy on Flexible Retirement)



Options for Response (by line manager and Head of Service):

1. Application is recommended for approval on unreduced pension

2. Application is recommended for approval on reduced pension

3. Application is rejected on financial and other grounds



Line Manager confirms response to employee



Request referred by manager to Director for approval



Request referred by manager to Director for approval



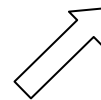
Employee may ask Director to reconsider



Request referred to ERRSOP for approval



Employee informed of outcome (if no cost to Council)  
OR Request referred to ERRSOP for approval if costs are involved



Request referred to Personnel Committee for approval



Request referred to Personnel Committee for approval if costs are involved



Employee informed of outcome and any changes are implemented (no further right of review)



Please read the Council’s Policy on Flexible Retirement before completing this form. You should ensure that you submit your application to your manager well in advance of the date you wish the request to take effect. It will help the Council to consider your request if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern. It is important that you complete all the questions as otherwise your application may not be valid.

When completing sections 3 & 4, think about what effect your change in working pattern will have both on the work that you do and on your colleagues. Once you have completed the form, you should immediately forward it to your manager (you might want to keep a copy for your own records). Your manager and Head of Service will then consider your request, and seek necessary approvals if the request entails a cost to the Council. If the request is granted, this will be a permanent change to your terms and conditions.

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Directorate: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Team: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Job Title: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Manager's Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Work Location: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Date of Birth: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	Payroll Number: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>
Length of <u>continuous</u> local government service (yrs/mths)*: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	

I would like to apply for flexible retirement under the Council’s policy:

I am a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme / Teachers Pension Scheme

I am aged 55 or above

I wish to apply for unreduced pension benefits (see below\*)

\*Pension Benefits - The Council will consider granting flexible retirement with unreduced pension (where applicable) if sufficient financial benefit to the Council can be demonstrated through the individual’s proposed change to working hours / grade. An assessment will be done to weigh the costs of unreduced pension against any savings to be accrued as a result of the change to working arrangements. In general, the basic test of covering costs within a period of two years will need to be met. This test should include any direct and indirect additional costs arising from the application such as re-training, recruitment etc. Members’ consent (Personnel Committee) is required where an employee makes a request for the reduction of benefits to be waived and the Council agrees that this may be considered. NB Release of reduced pension benefits (where applicable) may be approved if sufficient savings cannot be demonstrated to enable unreduced benefits to be released.

I wish to apply on the grounds of reduced hours (complete remainder of form)

I wish to apply on the basis of a reduction in grade (see below\*\* before signing and returning to your manager)



APPENDIX C

--

(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Signed:		Date:	
---------	--	-------	--

**PLEASE PASS THIS FORM TO YOUR LINE MANAGER**

## APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT

I refer to your recent request for flexible retirement under the Council's scheme. I am writing to confirm that at its meeting on [date] the Council's Personnel Committee approved the financial elements of your application and that it can now proceed as planned.

I understand that you have agreed with your manager that your new working arrangements will come into effect from [date] and this letter is formal confirmation therefore that with effect from that date your contracted hours will reduce to [x] hrs per week (XX FTE) and your new salary will be £[ ]pa. [insert / delete details as necessary]

Your local government pension will be released to you effective from this date on an unreduced basis and arrangements are in hand to notify the Pension Administrator accordingly. They will contact you direct in respect of these arrangements.

All other terms and conditions of your employment remain unchanged. Your annual leave entitlement will be prorated to take account of your new hours of work and your continuous service is unaffected.

Your manager has been given a copy of this letter and will discuss with you the transition to your new working arrangements.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,



## FOSTER CARER POLICY

This policy sets out the support for employees who are responsible for the care of a child, or children, under a foster care arrangement. It attempts to strike a balance between the operational needs of the Council and the needs of the employee to meet his/her obligations as a foster carer.

Foster carers are responsible for the daily care of a child who is unable to live with his or her own parents. Foster care may be short-term or long-term.

1. What do I need to tell my manager if I intend to become a foster carer?
  - 1.1. You are advised to tell your manager that you are to become a foster parent as soon as practicable. This is to ensure that your line manager and colleagues can provide support to you in this important role. Where paid release is requested under this policy for activities described in 2.1 below, you should give 4 weeks notice as this will ensure that your manager has sufficient notice to make any necessary arrangements for staff cover. Requests made with less than 4 weeks notice will not be unreasonably refused.
2. Will I get any time off to care for my new foster child/children?
  - 2.1. You may need to take time off to help the child/children settle into the new environment. You may also need time off to attend training courses, meetings or appointments with the child/children. Time off should be requested in writing and the period of time must be specified.
  - 2.2. You will be allowed up to five days paid leave for each placement (this may be one or more child at a time) to enable you to manage the activities in 2.1.
  - 2.3. Paid leave will be allowed for up to two placements (ie up to ten days) each year.
3. What if my foster child is sick?
  - 3.1. You are entitled to take reasonable time off during working hours under the Council's compassionate leave policy if caring for sick dependants (eg including where the child has been injured or assaulted) or following the breakdown of regular care arrangements (eg the regular childminder becomes ill or to deal with an incident in a period during which an educational establishment would have been responsible for the child).

- 3.2 You may be required to provide the line manager or supervisor with medical evidence from the regular carer's GP or a letter signed by the childminder or regular carer.
- 3.3 Further information may be found in the [compassionate leave policy](#) documents on IRIS.

#### 4. Can I take any other time off?

Yes, you have the right to take parental leave and the right to apply to work flexibly.

##### 4.1. Parental leave

- i. Parental leave of 18 weeks (in total) is granted to employees who have or are expecting to have responsibility for a child as defined in the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 13 (2) 1999 (as amended).
- ii. Parental leave will be granted up to the child's 8<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- iii. Employees with responsibility for a child to whom Disability Living Allowance has been awarded are granted 18 weeks in total. The leave entitlement of 18 weeks is available up to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- iv. One week's parental leave is defined as equal to the length of time that an employee is required to work in a week, e.g. pro-rata. When an employee's working week is variable, then an average working week is calculated.
- v. The right to parental leave is available to each parent and for each child.
- vi. Parental leave is an individual entitlement and, therefore, cannot be transferred between parents.
- vii. Parental leave is available for one foster placement per year. There is no entitlement to retrospective parental leave if a foster arrangement has ceased.
- viii. Parental leave is unpaid.
- ix. Employees have the right to parental leave if they:
  - Are the parent named on the birth certificate of a child born after 15<sup>th</sup> December 1999 who is under 8 years old
  - Have at least one year's continuous service
  - Have adopted or fostered a child on or after 15 December 1999.
  - Have "parental responsibility" under the law (as defined in S.3 Children's Act 1989 and S.1 (3) Children (Scotland) Act 1995)

- x. Employees need to give at least 21 days notice of their intention to take parental leave; they must give dates for the start and finish of the leave period.
- xi. An employee on parental leave shall have the same right to return to their job as provided to those on maternity leave under Part 2, Para 11.6 of the Green Book.
- xii. Employees wanting parental leave should make the request to their manager using the attached [request form](#).
- xiii. Further information on parental leave can be found in the policy document on IRIS.

#### 4.2. Flexible Working

- i. Employees who have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 17 (under the age of 18 for a child with a disability) have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly.
- ii. In order to make a request for flexible working, an employee must:
  - Be an employee of Reading Borough Council
  - Have at least 26 weeks continuous employment with the council
  - Have a child under 17, or under 18 in the case of a child with a disability, the date the application is made (statutory provision)
  - Make an application no later than two weeks before the child's 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (statutory provision)
  - Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing (statutory provision)
  - Be making the application to enable the child to be cared for (statutory provision)
  - Not be an agency worker
  - Not have made another application to work flexibly under the right, in the last 12 months
- iii. The right to apply is designed to meet the needs of both parents and employers. It aims to facilitate discussion and encourage both employee and manager to consider flexible working patterns and to find a solution that suits both, enabling an effective work-life balance. The procedure is available on IRIS.
- iv. Further information on flexible working can be found in the policy documents on IRIS.

HRNov2013

## FOSTER CARER LEAVE REQUEST FORM

Name: .....

Directorate: .....

Payroll reference no: .....

Position: .....

Location: .....

Foster leave dates: From: ..... To: .....

Additional comments in support of your application:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Authorised by: .....

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Position: .....  
(*manager*)

Dated: .....

Please forward to the Payroll & Employment Services Team  
ABSENCE SHOULD BE DECLARED ON MONTHLY ABSENCE REPORT FORM AS  
ADOPTION LEAVE UNDER 'OTHER'

**PARENTAL LEAVE REQUEST FORM**

Name: .....

Directorate: .....

Payroll reference no: .....

Position: .....

Location: .....

Parental leave dates: From: ..... To: .....

Additional comments in support of your applications:

Signed: .....

Date: .....

---

  
Authorised by: .....

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Position: .....

*(manager)*

Dated: .....

Please forward to the Payroll & Employment Services Team  
ABSENCE SHOULD BE DECLARED ON MONTHLY ABSENCE REPORT FORM AS  
PARENTAL LEAVE UNDER 'OTHER'



## **Information Security and ICT Use of Equipment Policy**

Reading Borough Council

Author: Corporate ICT Service

Reading Borough Council

Version 1.4 dated 14th October 2013

## Purpose

This policy addresses the information security risks of Reading Borough Council and use of Council owned Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

## Document control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec 2011	Mike Ibbitson	Full review, minor corrections and incorporation of later comments.
1.1	23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec 2012	Mike Ibbitson	Reviewed
1.2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept 2013	John Barnfield	Councillor Policy Introduction
1.3	12 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2013	John Barnfield	Calendar Adjustment for Councillors
1.4	14 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2013	John Barnfield	Monitoring and Non-EU Usage, Mobile Phone (reinstated)

## Distribution

Releasing and issuing of this document is restricted to Reading Borough Council.

## Maintenance

Following approval any required changes to this Policy shall be raised and notified to the Corporate ICT Service (CICTS) specifying the reason for and details of the changes.

## Document references

Document title	Date	Published by
Data Protection Act 1998	1998 c.29	UK Public General Act
Computer Misuse Act 1990	1990 c.18	UK Public General Act
Freedom Of Information Act 2000	2000 c.36	UK Public General Act
Environmental Information Regulations 2004	2004 No.3391	UK Statutory Instruments
Human Rights Act 1998	1998 c.42	UK Public General Act
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	2000 c.23	UK Public General Act
Whistleblowing Policy	July 2000	Reading Borough Council
Procedure for Dealing with Requests for Information	June 2007	Reading Borough Council
Grievance and Disputes procedure	September 2006	Reading Borough Council
The Code of Conduct	March 1999	Reading Borough Council
Customer Care Handbook	November 2009	Reading Borough Council
Records Management Policy	May 2005	Reading Borough Council
RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) guidance	n/a	Reading Borough Council
Data protection policies, including subject access request procedures	n/a	Reading Borough Council
Information sharing policies	Various	Reading Borough Council
Document retention schedules	varies by directorate	Reading Borough Council
Equality and diversity procedures	n/a	Reading Borough Council
Joiners & Leavers process	n/a	Reading Borough Council

## Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
EAS	E-mail Archiving System
GCSX (PSN Code of Connection)	Government Connect Secure Extranet - secure, private, Wide Area Network. PSN being the Public Service Network Code of Connection standard the Council must adhere to.
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IM&T Security Officer	Information Management and Telecommunications
ISO27001/2	Standard for Information Security Management Systems
NETConsent	Software that allows for electronic acceptance of policies at logon
PC	Personal Computer
RBC	Reading Borough Council
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Officer (Head of Legal)
VPN token	Virtual Private Network token

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1 This policy sets out the Council's rules and procedures relating to information security and all employees & councillors responsibilities with regard to information security. Information security is of great importance to the Council to protect vulnerable citizens, ensure compliance with legislation and demonstrate that the Council understands and applies proportionate guidance and process to recording, storing, processing, exchanging and deleting information. Should this not be achieved the Council can risk, at worst, the safety of individuals, loss of financial information, breach of commercial confidentiality and subsequent financial penalties from the regulator, the Information Commissioner.
  
- 2 This policy provides detailed guidelines on all aspects of information security and associated ICT equipment use. It also provides guidance for all employees relevant to their role in the organisation (see Appendices). A summary of these guidelines should not be regarded as sufficient knowledge but the principles which run through these guidelines are simple and can be summarised as follows:
  - All staff and councillors should consider the sensitivity of the information they handle (with personal and sensitive information about vulnerable people being the most important)
  - They should protect that information in proportion to that sensitivity by applying this policy and ensuring that information, whatever it's format, should be secured by physical means (such as locking paperwork away) or by using approved electronic means (such as only using Council IT equipment)
  - Managers and Group Leaders must ensure this policy is applied within their areas of work and should also lead by example to all employees / councillors
  
- 3 This policy is compulsory. Any breach of the policy may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure for staff, and action progressed for councillors in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct as set out in the Constitution of the Council.

- 4 Any breaches of security (non-compliance with this Policy) must be reported in accordance with the Councils Security Incident Management Policy and processes (see Appendix 4). This is to safeguard the Council and limit potential damage from information loss and to ensure appropriate notification of all relevant persons/organisations.

## 2. Purpose

- 5 The purpose of this policy is to protect from all threats, whether internal or external, deliberate or accidental, the information assets of Reading Borough Council and in doing so assist the Council in planning and delivering high quality, safe services to all customers and ensuring compliance with legislation.

## 3. Introduction

- 6 This policy sets out the Council's rules and procedures relating to information security and all staff's responsibilities with regard to information security. The implementation of strict guidelines is a matter of great importance.
- 7 **SUCH GUIDELINES MUST BE RECOGNISED BY STAFF AND COUNCILLORS AT ALL LEVELS WHO MUST ENSURE THEY ARE APPLIED AT ALL TIMES. ANY BREACH OF THIS POLICY MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION BEING TAKEN UNDER THE COUNCIL'S DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE OR MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT (IN THE CASE OF COUNCILLORS), AND COULD FOR STAFF, IN THE CASE OF GROSS MISCONDUCT, RESULT IN DISMISSAL FROM EMPLOYMENT.**
- 8 They must also be supported by Staff Management and Group Leaders who must take responsibility for their implementation and continued adherence.

- 9 Any breaches of security (non-compliance with this Policy), however minor, must be reported to Northgate Service Desk (Ext 72861), line managers, the Council's Solicitor Head of Legal (Senior Information Risk Owner), and the ICT Manager, in accordance with the Councils Security Incident Management Policy and in the case of Data Incidents using the Information Security Incident Reporting form (see Appendix 4) to record the incident at the earliest opportunity. Referrals may be

referred to the Head of Internal Audit and the Head of Human Resources for further investigation.

## 4. Policy Statement

- 10 It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all information systems operated by the Council are secure systems, which must aspire to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, the Computer Misuse Act and, at the level of principles, aspire to the International Standard for Information Security ISO27001/2:2005. It is also the aim of the Council that all their staff and councillors must be fully aware of the need to maintain secure systems and they must fully understand their responsibilities as outlined in this policy document.
- 11 All employees and councillors are responsible for ensuring that they understand and abide by these procedures and their contents. Failure by any employee of the Council to abide by the contents of this document will be viewed as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action. Failure by any councillor of the Council to abide by the contents of this document could result in action being taken in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct. The ICT Manager will be the IM&T Security Officer as defined within standard ISO27001 (formerly BS7799) although responsibilities may be delegated. The implementation of this policy is important to maintain and demonstrate the integrity and security of the Council's dealings with our customers, partners and other members of the community.
- 12 The Council's ICT Systems are treated as business systems and are monitored accordingly for security compliance. It is the policy of the Council to ensure:
- The Councils ICT Infrastructure is protected from external threats and malware
  - A risk based approach is taken to Information Management.
  - Information is protected against unauthorised access.
  - Confidentiality of information is maintained.

- Information is not disclosed to unauthorised persons through deliberate or negligent action.
- Integrity of information through protection from unauthorised modification.
- Availability of information to authorised users when needed.
- Regulatory and legislative requirements will be met (see goals, specific policies and conditions).
- Contingency plans will be produced and tested as far as is practicable to ensure business continuity is maintained.
- Information security training will be given to all staff and councillors.<sup>1</sup>
- All breaches of information security and suspected weaknesses are reported, investigated and appropriate action is taken.
- Access to the Council's network from non-EU (higher risk) countries will only happen following appropriate risk assessment and sanctioning.

13 It should be noted that the Council policy on information and information technology security is evolving alongside technology and further guidance will be added where and when necessary.

14 Where this policy touches upon these areas it is written as if these exist but there are footnotes which make this clear and link existing practice to the policy. This policy itself will evolve over time and will be part of the Council's Information Security Management System (ISMS) as defined within ISO27001.

15 The Information Security policy, together with the following documents, comprise the key policy and process elements of the ISMS.

- ICT Security Policy Statement
- Information Sharing Code of Practice(s)
- Document Retention Schedule
- Information Asset Ownership Register

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<sup>1</sup> A Corporate ICT induction is planned to be introduced during 2012. Further training and guidance to all staff will be issued via NETconsent.

- Information Risk Management Document Marking
- ICT Standards Expected of Third Parties
- ICT Use 10 Golden Rules
- ICT Huddle Acceptable Use Policy
- GCSX (PSN) Personal Commitment Statement
- Personal Commitment Statement for Removable Electronic Media
- Incident Reporting
- Data Protection Policy Application
- Freedom of Information Policy

The consequences of breaching the rules detailed here is reflected in the Disciplinary Policy for Staff and the Member Code of Conduct for Councillors.

## 5. Applicability & Monitoring

- 16 All employees, temporary staff, visitors and workers, and councillors who have involvement with information assets covered by the scope of this policy, will be responsible for implementing this policy and shall have the support of the Council who have approved this policy. Where services are provided to the Council by outside organisations then the contracting officer shall ensure that the provisions of this policy are known to, and accepted by that organisation as part of that contract.
- 17 Councillors now fall within the scope of this policy.
- 17 The Council has provided ICT Systems for Council business use and therefore there are no automatic rights of personal use or individual privacy. However the Council does acknowledge that there are some occasions in a modern electronic age where an employee may require reasonable access to personal e-mail and restricted appropriate internet sites where this contributes to their productivity as part of a work life balance.
- 18 The Council is ultimately responsible for all business communications, but subject to that will, so far as possible and appropriate, respect your privacy and autonomy while working. However in return the Council expects employees to follow instructions for conducting business and personal use at the Council's discretion as directed within this document and employees **must not** see the Council's ICT working environment as an extension of their own private home environment.
- 19 The Council will monitor your business communications for reasons that includes:
- Providing evidence of business transactions
  - Ensuring the Council's business procedures, policies and contracts with staff are adhered to
  - Complying with any legal obligations
  - Monitoring standards of service, staff performance and for staff training
  - Preventing or detecting inappropriate unauthorised use of Council's ICT Infrastructure and systems

- Maintaining the effective operation of the Council's ICT systems.

## 6. Goals Of This Policy

- 18 To manage risks to an acceptable level through the design, implementation and maintenance of a formal Information Security Management System.
- 19 To comply with legislation, examples of which include;
- Data Protection Act 1998
  - Computer Misuse Act 1990
  - Freedom Of Information Act 2000
  - Environmental Information Regulations 2004
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- 20 To comply with statutory and non-statutory guidance as issued from time to time by Government (e.g. PSN Code of Compliance).

## 7. Responsibilities

- 21 The Council accepts and endorses this policy (in accordance with the Councils ICT Security Policy Statement).
- 22 The Corporate Management Team will approve detailed policies and procedures for Information Security and agree implementation arrangements.
- 23 The ICT Manager and the Council Solicitor (as SIRO) will be responsible for the creation and review of this policy and underpinning Information Security Management System.
- 24 The Information Security Manager (or person whose role encompasses this function) facilitates the implementation of this policy through the appropriate standards, committees and procedures.

- 25 All employees, temporary staff, visitors and workers, councillors and anyone with access to RBC equipment or data, must follow all and any procedures in place, which are designed to maintain the Information Security Policy.
- 26 All such personnel have a responsibility for reporting security incidents and any identified security weaknesses.
- 27 The Council will update employees on Information Security matters by briefings, workshops and other means as necessary.
- 28 Any deliberate act to jeopardise the security of information that is the property of the Council or their clients may be subject to disciplinary and/or legal action, as appropriate.

## 8. Guidelines

### 7.1 General

- 29 Security is not just a matter of restricting unauthorised access to data; it is also a question of ensuring that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the data is kept. This applies to IT systems as well as data held on paper files.

### 7.2 Network Security

- 30 Under no circumstances is any non-Reading Borough Council owned equipment to be connected or installed to the Council data network (computer network), communications facilities or any Council owned computer without the written consent of the ICT Manager. The Council does provide some publicly available wireless networks these networks do not require the use of RBC equipment to allow connection and are secure and physically separate from the Council's business network.
- 31 Remote access to the Council's network is granted from within the E.U. If remote access is required from other countries this must be preceded by a risk assessment and specific permission of the ICT Manager. Under no circumstances must remote direct network access be attempted from high risk countries such as China or Russia.

### 7.3 Physical Security

- 32 Access to data held on the Council's information systems can be minimised by restricting physical access to the Council's buildings. Where information is kept in offices, access to buildings must be restricted. Such restrictions include making sure security doors are closed properly and that entry codes are kept secure and changed regularly. Doors and windows must be secured at lunch times and overnight and at all times when the office is left unattended.
- 33 Visitors to Council buildings must be accompanied at all times and signed in and out of the premises on arrival and departure. Incidents or concerns regarding physical security should be reported to the facilities management team or manager based on that site.

## 9. Computer Security

### 8.1 Data Storage

- 34 All members of staff and councillors are responsible for data entered onto Council computers. The very nature of many types of Council information makes protection of that information of prime importance. All staff have legal responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and the Computer Misuse Act to ensure that unauthorised access to data is not allowed and also that data is accurate and kept up to date. Such restrictions apply not only to people outside the Council but also apply to those in the Council whose work does not necessitate access to the data. All staff and councillors must abide by the rules of the Data Protection Act and the Computer Misuse Act. Specific attention is drawn to caution handling personal or sensitive personal data as outlined in the Data Protection Act.
- 35 **INFORMATION STORAGE ON C:\ (LOCAL HARD) DRIVE OF DESKTOP COMPUTERS OR LAPTOPS IS ONLY PERMISSABLE WHEN PROTECTED BY FULL DISK ENCRYPTION**
- 36 This is because the C:\ is not backed up and does not have the physical security access protection of servers if the PC is stolen or lost. Also, if the PC is to be repaired or replaced, the unit is swapped and the data will be lost. All information related to Council business is to be stored on the personal network drive (the H:\ drive) or on Council shared drives (usually the S:\ drive on the network). This is a

secure storage area which is regularly backed up and is therefore resilient to failure. The only exceptional use of the C:\ drive is to temporarily store files during a working session. If this is the case the files should be deleted at the end of that work session.

- 37 The following types of file should only be stored if they relate to explicit business needs and in any event should be stored sparingly as some file types are often very large and consume a high proportion of the shared drives. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list of file types that are considered potentially unsuitable for storage - it is the initial list which will be reviewed as necessary.

File Type	Description
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.AVI	Movie Files
.MPG	Movie Files
.MPEG	Movie Files
.MP3	Sound Files
.MP4	Sound Files
.M4A	iTunes Files
.MOV	Movie Files
.EXE	Executable files <sup>2</sup>
.SCR	Screen Savers

## 8.2 File Storage and Naming Conventions

- 38 All documents and files must be given clear and descriptive titles that will help others to understand what is contained within them. All documents should have a date and version number clearly included. This information will help manage and dispose of information responsibly.
- 39 Individuals working on projects must also ensure that they adhere to any document standards specified by the project's configuration librarian.
- 40 Information which is no longer required (in line with the directorate's document retention schedule) should be promptly disposed of by deletion or destruction. Unless an audit record of versions is explicitly required previous versions of documents should be destroyed when the new version is created.

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<sup>2</sup> No member of staff should be installing software on PCs

### 8.3 Screen Locking

- 41 **Computers must not be left unattended when logged on.** Whenever staff or councillors move away from a workstation they should ensure that they have logged off or locked the workstation. As an extra precaution computers will be automatically screen locked after ten minutes. When leaving a place of work staff should ensure they have logged off and closed down the workstation correctly.
- 42 Further guidelines apply to mobile and home workers in respect of portable equipment - see section 11.

### 8.4 Memory Sticks & Removable Media

- 43 The only memory sticks which are currently allowed to be used on Council computers are those which are supplied as fully encrypted by the Council's ICT Partner via the ICT Service Desk or by the Corporate ICT Service.
- 44 Memory sticks are tagged as assets and must be treated as such.
- 43 Any loss must be treated as a security incident.
- 45 **NO COUNCIL DATA IS TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A HOME PC / LAPTOP FOR WORKING AT HOME.**
- 46 If you need to work on Council information at home or at a remote location, the Council secure VPN system is only to be used from a Council-issued computer, unless in exceptional or temporary circumstances with the prior consent of a Head of Service.

### 8.5 Mobile Telephones and Blackberry Devices

- 47 The rules of data storage and care of device security apply equally to mobile telephones and Blackberry devices, which should not have business related stored data held on them and should be kept secure at all times. Blackberry devices must be protected with a password to a minimum standard as detailed in paragraph 49.
- 48 Council issued mobile phones, PDAs and other mobile technology must be authorised by managers in accordance with business need and arranged within the

corporate contracts. Employees should always be issued with the standard kit offered within the contract unless there is a justified business need for an upgrade.

- 47 All staff and councillors must be aware of heightened risks associated with mobile technology, in particular information security risks, risk of theft and possible risk to personal safety. Consider these risks when using mobile technology in Council Offices, outside in public places, and use appropriate caution and safeguards to minimise those risks.
- 48 Staff and Councillors issued with mobile phones, Blackberries or other Personal Digital equipment are responsible for its safekeeping and security. Security lock and pin protection must be used where available to protect the device and any stored data. This should not be disclosed to anyone else, and you should not leave the device unattended especially in public areas.
- 49 Use of Mobex codes on Council mobile phones when dialling internal Council numbers should be considered mandatory to minimise charges to the Council.
- 50 Staff and Councillors should record the security number of their mobile device to allow the mobile network operator to bar the service in the event of loss.
- 51 Asset details of Council purchase mobile devices must be recorded with personnel to allow tracking and recovery upon employees leaving the Council.
- 52 Contracts must only be taken out with the Council's approved mobile phone operator. Permission must be sought from the Head of ICT for use of any other mobile operator.
- 53 Always check with CICTs for any returned mobile devices awaiting reallocation before entering into a new mobile device contract.
- 54 Broken/faulty mobile devices under warranty should be returned to point of purchase for warranty replacement.

- 55 Damaged or out of warranty mobile devices must be disposed of in consultation with CICTS for recycling or appropriate electrical item disposal in accordance with the Council’s “Green” policies.
- 56 When taking work-related photos or video using Council mobile devices, care must be taken not to include members of the Public/Staff/Children without prior permission. Consideration must be given to:
- Obtaining permission of subject/s and recording this
  - Minimising time images remain on unsecure devices and memory cards and thereafter ensuring secure storage and restricting access on a role based need basis
  - Ensuring separate secure storage of memory cards and electrical devices minimising any threat of theft
  - Set local policies for transport of cameras or video devices to minimise theft of the device in the field
  - Avoiding further sharing of information without the specific permission of the data subject. Use book in/ book out to record location, who, when and why information shared and ensure ultimate retrieval. Ensure all third parties are aware of the Council’s security requirements in handling such data
  - If information has to be moved use encrypted electronic media to do so
  - Logging and recording detail of all such information for disclosure if required under Data Protection Subject Access Requests and performing searches as and when required to do so
  - Managing the ultimate destruction of all such material under defined retention policies which must have been set

- 57 Council-issued mobile phones, Blackberries and PDA's are provided for work-related purposes. If they are used for private purposes the Council must be reimbursed for personal call charges including VAT (as this is payable on personal calls).
- 58 Staff and Councillors should not respond to unsolicited commercial text / voice-mail messages as this could introduce viruses onto your Council mobile phone.
- 59 Staff and Councillors must not send inappropriate content from a Council mobile device, or download chargeable ringtones, wall paper, or screen savers to the device.
- 60 Personal mobile devices should also not be inappropriately used in the workplace. All effort must be made to avoid wasting in-hours working time, disrupting colleagues in their work, and have due regard to maintaining work performance at all times. Phones should be set to discrete settings or turned to silent/vibrate mode wherever possible. Similarly texting personal messages should not disrupt an employee's work performance or distract others.
- 61 Phones, blackberries and other personal mobile devices should be turned to silent or vibrate when taken to meetings. All care must be exercised so as not to distract the purpose of the meeting. If in exceptional circumstances this cannot be avoided then the Chair of the Meeting should be warned of possible interruption to allow appropriate planning as in the main your full attention is reasonably expected by attending the meeting.
- 62 Employees must not use a hand-held phone whilst driving; this is illegal under current UK law and is dangerous. Employees must park their car and switch off the engine before using a hand-held. To avoid damage, injury and distraction hand-held mobile phones must also be secured properly when used in a car.
- 63 Personal mobile devices must not be connected to the Council network or other Council equipment with the exception of Council laptops or netbooks where the personal mobile just provides internet connectivity.

- 64 No inappropriate photographs, images or jokes received on a Council mobile device should ever be forwarded on. Material of this nature received, gathered or sent genuinely and necessarily in the course of work duties is exempted.
- 65 Mobile phones and other mobile devices must not be used to harass any persons.
- 66 Business data/confidential information can only be stored on a mobile device where further security measures protect the data - e.g. encryption and remote wiping.
- 67 Email with confidential personal information must not be sent from mobile devices unless the device has appropriate security measures (e.g. encryption).

## 8.6 Passwords

- 49 Most systems within the Council require a log in name and password for access. All staff are given access rights and privileges to the various systems in accordance with the area in which they are working and the type of data they are required to use. All staff will have a log-in for one or more of the network servers in addition to any other systems they use. Councillors will not be given access to Council Application Systems.
- 50 In all cases any passwords given to you personally are for your use only. Passwords should not be written down in an insecure location or given to others to use under **any** circumstances. This includes your manager or Group Leader. If your manager or Group Leader needs access to your computer, for example if you are off sick, they must contact the ICT Service Desk to request managerial access to your computer.
- 51 Passwords must be a minimum of 8 characters<sup>3</sup> and should be a combination of upper and lower case characters with a minimum of one number. Ideally it should also contain random characters such as #@?!\$& etc. Passwords must include at least three different character types, or they will not be accepted.
- 52 Do not use family or pet names and if at all possible try not to use proper words. This makes the accidental discovery of a password more difficult.
- 53 Your passwords must be changed on a regular basis. The Council's policy is every 90 days. Some systems will prompt for this; others do not. If they do not, it is your

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<sup>3</sup> This is the minimum standard required under GCSX CoCo requirements for connection Government secure extranet.

responsibility to change them. You should not choose a password that you have previously used.

- 54 If you suspect someone else may have detected your password, or you suspect someone else is using it you must change your password immediately and report this as a security incident.

## 8.7 Backups

- 55 The Council's ICT Partner team will ensure that all RBC controlled servers and the files contained thereon are backed up on a daily basis. It is the responsibility of individual users to back up any systems which do not deposit their data centrally: they should seek advice from the Corporate ICT Service if this applies. All backups must be kept up to date and must be checked on a regular basis to ensure that it is possible to recover the data on them.

## 8.8 Network Shared Drives

- 56 It is the policy of the Council to keep all of its data in a secure manner and to only allow authorised access to files to those who require the data as part of their normal duties. The Corporate ICT Service will grant access to individual data areas as requested in writing by the "owners" of that area. Additionally, managers and supervisors will have access to their staff's individual working areas if required. Group Leaders may request similar access for councillors working areas if required within their own political groups.
- 57 It is expected that users will make all files of general interest available (normally read only) on a suitable location on the server(s), or on the intranet. Each user is assigned their individual storage area, known as your Home or H:/ drive. Only you have access to the files in this area unless you specifically ask the ICT Service Desk to grant access to others.

## 8.9 Viruses

- 58 It is the responsibility of all staff to protect the Council's computer systems from viruses. All files received on disc from outside the Council (including those used at home on home PCs) and any received via electronic mail must be checked for

viruses before being used on Council equipment. Please contact the ICT Service Desk for assistance (ext 72861).

- 59 If you receive any e-mails that you are unsure of or you do not recognise the sender then do not open them. If you are unsure seek information from the ICT Service Desk.
- 60 If a virus is suspected, the ICT Service Desk should be informed immediately. The workstation should not be used until given permission from the ICT Service Desk and a sign stating this should be placed on the workstation to warn other users. Any disks, CD ROMS, and USB memory sticks that have been used on the suspected infected workstation should be gathered together and not used.
- 61 The intentional introduction/sending or downloading of files or attachments which contain viruses, or which are meant to compromise the Council's systems, is a serious breach of this Policy and may result in disciplinary action which could result in dismissal and prosecution under the Computer Misuse Act.

### 8.10 Network Accounts

- 62 The Council's ICT Partner Service Desk is responsible for the creation and setup of New User Accounts (network logins) and also for e-mail accounts. Individual departments and system owners are often responsible for allocating access rights to staff wishing to access their line of business applications and systems. Councillor Services will act on behalf of Councillors in respect to councillor accounts.
- 63 Any access to internal systems via dial-in connections is prohibited. All requests for external 3<sup>rd</sup> Party network connections will be processed by the Council's ICT Partner and will be strictly governed by relevant standards and approval process.

## 10. Clear Desk

- 64 The safest approach to information security is the use of a "clear desk" approach. This is strongly recommended for all users. All manual files and paper records should be locked away before leaving the office. Where this is not possible or where offices employ "open" shelving for the storage of files and documents, offices must be locked when left unattended.

- 65 Confidential waste shall be disposed of securely. Confidential waste shall be shredded or placed in the appropriate containers for secure disposal.
- 66 All confidential information shall be held securely in locked containers, lockers, drawers and filing cabinets to prevent unauthorised access

## 11. E-mail, GCSX & Internet Use

- 67 The Internet is a useful tool that enables individuals to access a range of information and services in support of their business roles. This policy sets out the expectations for all Council users.

### 11.1 Scope

- 68 This policy applies to all individuals who are provided with access to the Internet whether from an office or from an RBC-provided home or mobile broadband connection and from any device. Access is made available to: RBC employees, temporary workers, and inward secondees, councillors and also those consultants and contractors who are primarily based on RBC premises.

### 11.2 Provision

- 69 The Internet is provided primarily for business use. Reasonable personal use (quota time is usually set at one hour per day) will be permitted provided that it does not interfere with the individual's delivery of their duties or breach any requirements of this policy.

### 11.3 Downloading of Information Resources

- 70 Individuals may download information including PDFs and Microsoft Office files from the Internet. To reduce the likelihood of a virus infection, individuals must take care to ensure that the files are from a trustworthy source.
- 71 Graphical, audio and video files may be downloaded and stored on RBC's network for business use only. Individuals with personal needs for accessing such files must use their own personal equipment and Internet connections to do so.
- 72 Individuals requiring any new software, including any plug-ins, must make a formal request to the ICT Service Desk (Ext 72861). Software must not be downloaded

and/or installed onto Council ICT equipment unless it has been approved by the Corporate ICT Service and can be validated that it is licensed for current use.

- 73 Individuals are reminded that copyright laws apply to the Internet and care must be taken should there be a need to re-use any information (including images) in any Council work. If there is any doubt, individuals must liaise with RBC's Legal Services department.

#### 11.4 Uploading Data / Information to the Internet

- 74 Any user or councillor who carries out this function must be sure that the information being uploaded is suitable to upload, and not confidential or personal. If information is confidential or person-specific, advice must be sought from the ICT Service Desk to ensure security controls are in place.

#### 11.5 Prohibited Activities

- 75 Individuals are explicitly prohibited from using RBC's Internet connection to undertake the following activities:
- Accessing gambling sites (excluding the National Lottery)
  - Share dealing
  - Auctions and sales of goods except where authorised
  - Accessing firearms sites
  - Conducting private/freelance business
  - Looking at pornographic or offensive images/material
  - Accessing sites that promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, sex, sexuality, or other factor that is protected by law is otherwise prohibited under RBC's diversity and equality procedures
  - Accessing militant or extremist resources
  - Using it to attempt to gain unauthorised access to private networks (i.e. hacking)
  - Any activity which is contrary to the Council's Code of Conduct or brings the Council into disrepute
  - Any other unlawful or illegal activity

## 11.6 Internet Filtering and Blocking

76 So that the Internet is used efficiently, safely and primarily in connection with Council business the Council uses Internet filtering software. This software monitors Internet use and bars or limits access to various categories of websites. An individual attempting to access some sites will see a standard web page that explains that access has been blocked or restricted (blocked until an option from a menu is selected). For virtually all sites there is an option to either confirm it is being used for business purposes or to use browsing quota time to continue to access the site. Quota time is usually set at one hour per day but this may vary or change in the future. Individuals who encounter a commonly used business site which is blocked and have genuine business reasons for accessing that site frequently may contact the ICT Service Desk (Ext 72861) and request the site is on an approved list of websites.

## 11.7 Internet Chat Facilities and Social Networking

77 Individuals may access and use approved chat rooms, discussion group's bulletin boards and social networking sites, but must not post comments that identify or indicate such views to be those of the Council unless authorised to do so by the Head of Communications.

## 11.8 Monitoring and Misuse

78 RBC's web filtering and monitoring software both limits what individuals may access and logs those sites that individuals access or attempt to access. If a line manager or Group Leader is concerned that an individual is misusing their access to the Internet they should contact the ICT Manager or HR Business Partner and make a request for the individual's usage to be investigated.

## 11.9 E-mail and GCSX

79 All individuals granted an e-mail account must adhere to the policy contained in Appendix 2 of this document in the use of e-mail and calendar functions. All GCSX users must have a minimum of a Baseline Personnel Security standard check undertaken before connection is permitted. GCSX email is not available to councillors.

- 80 Any Personal Identifiable Data sent via e-mail must be sent in an encrypted format which meets the Council standards. You can request a secure e-mail account by contacting the Corporate ICT Service.
- 81 Some users are provided with a high security Government Connect (GCSX) e-mail account which transfers data across secure, approved government pathways in order to link organisations within the Public Sector.
- 82 To become a GCSX user you must have a role-based need approved by your manager. You must have had a satisfactory basic level personal security screening (independent external checks against your name arranged through personnel) before a GCSX email account can be created for you. If you are a GCSX user you will be required to sign up to a GCSX Personal Commitment Statement electronically which confirms you understand how you must behave when using this facility and that you will comply with the required GCSX standards at all times.
- 83 The GCSX email is accessed via a web-based email account which is separate to your normal Council email account (instructions will be provided to you). You must not send RESTRICTED data (which will be shown in the email subject line) to non-GCSX accounts and your standard RBC email. A serious Reading security incident involving the GCSX service could result in the Council being disconnected from the extranet with severe consequences for associated business processes which already rely on this service. Therefore, it is essential you understand and comply with the required operational standards at all times.
- 84 Employees, workers and councillors understand that the RBC e-mail account must only be used for work-related purposes and not for personal use. The RBC e-mail account stores e-mails, which can be retrieved and viewed by other officers of the Council.
- 85 Auto-forwarding of Council emails, i.e. without intervention, to personal accounts is not permitted. Auto-forwarding of Council e-mails to known business partners will be controlled by the Head of ICT, and is on an exception-basis only.

## 12. Mobile Workers and Home Workers

- 86 Any portable device, such as a laptop or Blackberry, must be kept in a secure location when not in use. When using equipment on the move, or outside of office hours, reasonable care should be taken to secure it. Equipment should only be left unattended when necessary and if necessary additional steps should be taken such as locking the laptop in a secure, non visible place. Laptops should not be taken into pubs or other busy social areas or where it may be difficult for the user to keep hold of the equipment at all times, and care should be taken to avoid being overlooked whilst using Council equipment in any public area.
- 87 Any portable computing equipment must not be left unattended during the normal working day unless it is on Council premises where there is good physical security at entrances to the building. Even in these circumstances, users of portable equipment must give consideration to whether an additional security such as a locking device secured to the desk is necessary. Outside of normal office hours and when the building is closed, all portable computing equipment left on office premises should be secured by a device lock or kept in a locked cupboard or similar storage.
- 88 Portable computer equipment containing personal files shall only be removed from the Council's premises where absolutely necessary. If personal data is used off site then, wherever possible, the equipment shall be returned to the Council's premises immediately after use. Where it is absolutely necessary for sensitive personal data to be processed and stored away from Council premises individuals should inform and record this step with their line manager / Group Leader.
- 89 Where manual files are processed outside of the Council's property they should be kept with the individual completing this work wherever possible. When left unattended they should be in a locked container and out of view. Any computer equipment or manual files that are travelling with an employee should be locked in the boot of the car or kept with the individual at all times when travelling by public transport. Under no circumstances should any computer equipment or manual files be left unattended on a train or bus or left in a vehicle overnight.

## 11.1 Virtual Private Network (VPN) Tokens

- 90 Any member of staff or councillor who has been authorised to use a VPN token will be allowed, by default, to connect their Council-owned computer to the Council network. This is comparably as secure as connecting directly to the network in a Council office using the local area network.
- 91 To ensure protection of this connection mechanism and value for money, users who do not use their tokens will be challenged to ensure they are still required. All token users have signed for their token and agreed to specific terms of use for their VPN connection.

## 11.2 Incident Reporting

- 92 Any breaches of security (defined as non compliance with this policy), however minor, must be reported to the individual's line manager or Group Leader, the Council's Monitoring Officer and the ICT Manager, using the Council's reporting form and process to record the incident at the earliest opportunity.
- 93 Loss of any piece of ICT equipment (computer, laptop, blackberry, mobile phone, USB storage device, VPN token etc), is classed as a security incident and should be reported as outlined above.

## 13. Management of User Accounts - Leavers

- 94 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that a Leaver Form is completed and handed to the ICT Service Desk on the day of leaving for all staff that leave the organisation, to ensure that their IT account is closed immediately after their departure. Prior to the account being closed, line managers are to ensure that the users work related information, e-mails and data is transferred, if required, to the respective working directory for future access on the system or is deleted. This will ensure that the appropriate security is maintained on leavers' information and data. Councillor Services will perform this function on behalf of councillors in consultation with Group Leaders.
- 95 All Council owned ICT equipment must be handed back with the leaver's form or fully notified to the ICT Service Desk in the case of items which are too large to easily be handed in. All ICT equipment within its reasonable life will be utilised by

the organisation. If the equipment is not to be re-used, it should be returned Northgate for disposal.

- 96 Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy in relation to ICT equipment is regarded as a serious breach of this policy as it means that ICT equipment can go missing unnoticed, is incorrectly assigned to an individual and can mean parts of the Council have a lot of ICT equipment when others have little or that new items are purchased unnecessarily.

## 14. The User's Responsibilities

- 97 Each individual must ensure that as far as is possible no unauthorised person has access to any data held by the Council. Each person must ensure that any physical security measures are properly used.
- 98 Individuals must not deliberately or negligently corrupt, damage or destroy data, software or hardware belonging to the Council. This includes the spreading of viruses or other similar computer programmes.
- 99 Individuals will be given access passwords to certain computer systems. These must not be disclosed to other members of staff or councillors. They should not be written down and they should be changed regularly.
- 100 Staff shall not load or download software packages onto their PCs. This must only be carried out by ICT staff. On no account must games software be loaded on staff PCs.
- 101 Staff are permitted to store a small number of personal documents or files on their personal network drives (which do not impact onto the Council operations or back-up capability). Any staff found to be storing large numbers of personal files, especially large files such as photographs or videos may be asked to remove them or in some circumstances be the subject of disciplinary action.
- 102 Any files received on any media, brought or sent into the Council or files received by electronic mail must be virus checked before being loaded onto a Council PC. This includes any media which have been used on machines at home or otherwise not on the Council's Premises. For assistance with this, please contact the ICT Service Desk.

- 103 Never leave your computer unattended when it is logged on. Whenever you move away from your workstation ensure you log off or lock your workstation (locking can be achieved by simultaneously pressing the Control, Alt and Delete keys once and selecting “Lock Computer”). If you are not able to lock your workstation you must ensure that a screensaver is set to a time of not more than ten minutes and is password protected.
- 104 If you cease to be employed by the Council, you must return all paper and computer files, including those on portable media such as CD ROMs, plus all software and hardware to your manager.
- 105 A security checklist covering these responsibilities is given in the Leavers Form. All staff will be provided with a copy as a reminder of their responsibilities and a confirmation of compliance.

## 15. Managers / Group Leaders Responsibilities

- 106 All managers & Group Leaders must give their full backing to all the guidelines and procedures as set out and agreed in this document.
- 107 Certain managers, where they have responsibility for individual systems, must maintain records of users of that system and control their access to it by the granting of access privileges, passwords etc. They must:
- check the user has authorisation to use the service (including that the user has a valid CRB check where this is relevant).
  - check the level of access is the minimum level appropriate for the business purpose and is consistent with this security policy.
  - maintain a formal record of all registered users.
  - immediately remove access rights of users who have left their department or the Council.
  - periodically check for and remove redundant users' accounts from the system.
  - ensure redundant user accounts are not re-issued to new users.
- 108 The granting of user access to the Council network can only be carried out by the ICT Service Desk. For some line of business systems, the manager is responsible for granting access. In these cases, the manager must ensure they fulfil the above, and keep a record of access granted.
- 109 Line managers must make the ICT Service Desk aware of all new staff (requiring access to any ICT equipment) so that log-in rights and access privileges can be set as appropriate. This is part of the Council's joiner's process.
- 110 Where staff or councillors do not have sufficient knowledge to be able to use systems efficiently and securely their managers must ensure that appropriate training is arranged before allowing them access to the Council's computer systems. Advice to managers in making this assessment can be obtained from the ICT Service Desk.
- 111 Managers must also take responsibility to ensure:

- all staff receive a briefing on this policy as part of their induction programme within two weeks of joining the Council.
- all staff are aware of the strict confidentiality of the information to which they will have access.
- staff use the information in an appropriate manner at all times.

112 A more detailed explanation of these responsibilities is given in Appendix 1. All staff must be provided with a copy as a reminder of their responsibilities.

## 16. Controls

113 It is up to all managers of staff and Group Leaders for councillors in the Council to ensure that individuals adhere to these procedures. The ICT staff will be responsible for monitoring systems under their control for signs of:

- Illegal or unauthorised software having been loaded.
- Password misuse.
- Unauthorised access

114 Spot checks will also be made to ensure that where data is not held and backed up centrally, adequate backups are being made.

115 The Council's internal audit staff will regularly review the Council's performance in implementing this policy.

## 17. Appendix 1 - Security Responsibilities

### Computer User's Security Responsibilities

116 If you use a Council computer system then you have the following responsibilities.

117 **Under no circumstances is any non-Council-owned equipment to be connected or installed to the Council IT computer network (with the exception of the public wireless facility) or any Council-owned computer, or for any software to be installed without the consent of the ICT Service Desk.**

1. You will have a log on account which is unique to you and which you must not let anyone else use.
2. You will maintain a password as set out below which you will not allow anyone else to use (access to other people's data through your own account may be arranged through the ICT Service Desk in exceptional circumstances)
  - In all cases any passwords given to you personally are for your use only. Passwords should not be written down in an insecure location or given to others under any circumstances.
  - Passwords should be a minimum of 8 characters and should be a combination of seven characters and one number as a minimum, ideally 8 characters comprising of upper and lower case, numbers and random characters such as #@?!\$& etc.
  - Do not use family or pet names and if at all possible try not to use proper words.
  - Your passwords must be changed on a regular basis. The Council policy is every 90 days. Some systems will prompt for this; others do not. If they do not it is your responsibility to change them
3. You must report any suspected tampering with your log-on accounts to your head of department and the ICT Service Desk.
4. You must not load any private programmes or games onto any Council owned ICT equipment.
5. You must not load any other software (other than data) without the express permission of the ICT Service Desk.

6. No unauthorised private work/projects are to be carried out on the Council's devices.
7. All data disks and all files from any source (including e-mail) must be virus checked prior to being used. Please contact the ICT Service Desk for assistance with virus checking.
8. All data to which you have access during the course of your work is to be treated in strict confidence and its accuracy must be maintained.
9. You must not access information unless your job specifically requires it.
10. You must abide by the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
11. Do not store personal data or other confidential data on portable ICT equipment which is taken out of the office and/or will be left insecurely unattended.
13. Any Personal Identifiable Data (PID) sent via e-mail must be sent in an encrypted format which meets the Council standards. Standard, non-encrypted e-mail must not be used. If you need to request a secure e-mail account, please contact the Corporate ICT Service.
14. No Council files are to be transferred to any home PC for working at home. The Council secure VPN system is to be used for this purpose.

**118 Failure to carry out these responsibilities will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action.**

### **Line Manager's Security Responsibilities**

**119** As a line manager responsible for other staff you have the following responsibilities in addition to those you have as a user.

**120** Under no circumstances is any non-Council owned equipment to be connected or installed to the Council computer network or any Council owned computer, or any software to be installed without the consent of the ICT Service Desk.

**121** You are not permitted to give any local exemptions to this policy.

- 1 You must maintain a record of the access rights your staff have to line of business applications where these are granted by someone other than the ICT Service Desk. As a minimum, this should include: user's name, access rights granted, data granted, date rescinded.
- 2 You must notify the ICT Service Desk or the manager responsible for particular computer systems of any changes of staff (i.e. joiners and leavers) and what levels of access you require your staff to have to the various systems.
- 3 You must notify the ICT Service Desk of any starters and leavers where these staff have access to any ICT equipment.
- 4 You must ensure that all your staff are aware of their responsibilities and that they carry them out. Any breaches must be treated as serious and be reported to the ICT Service Desk or in the case of serious breach to the Monitoring Officer or ICT Manager.
- 5 You must only provide staff with the minimum access required to carry out their duties.
- 6 You must ensure that all your staff are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate training before they are allowed access to the Council's computer systems.
- 7 You must set an example to all your staff in your conduct and attitude towards computer use and security.
- 8 You are to ensure that staff who work on Council information at home do so in accordance with this policy.
- 9 You must ensure that mailboxes for staff who are away from the office due to unplanned sickness are monitored as required for their role.

**122 Failure to carry out these responsibilities will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action or action under the Member Code of Conduct for councillors.**

## Directors and Head's of Service Security Responsibilities

- 123 As a Director or Senior manager in addition to your responsibilities as a computer user and a line manager user you must also:
1. Ensure that your line managers are implementing this security policy.
  2. Set an example to all your staff in your conduct and attitude towards computer use and information security.
- 124 **Failure to carry out these responsibilities will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action.**

## 18. Appendix 2 - Use of E-mail and Calendar

125 Outlook is a useful tool that enables individuals to organise themselves and communicate with others. This policy sets out the expectations for all RBC computer equipment users who are provided with access to Outlook. Outlook is provided as a business tool and should not be used for non-work related matters. Individuals with a need to send personal mail during working hours must do so using personal webmail accounts (such as Hotmail or Google-mail).

### 17.1 Mailbox Size and Housekeeping

126 The standard individual mailbox size provided is 100mb. There will also be unlimited archive space when e-mail archiving is introduced<sup>4</sup>. In addition to individual mailboxes, shared mailboxes can be provided where there is a specific business need. Please contact the ICT Service Desk for assistance. Each mailbox will have a designated owner who will be responsible for housekeeping (archiving or deletion) all types of Outlook items. Once the mailbox limit is reached, users of that mailbox will not be able to send or receive any further mail and therefore housekeeping must be planned well in advance of reaching the space limit.

### 17.2 Distribution Lists

127 Mail distribution lists are provided to enable business communications to be made to groups of individuals, and each list must have a designated owner. Lists should only be used for related business purposes, and any queries related to their use or composition should be directed to the list owner in the first instance.

### 17.3 Mailbox Management

128 Individuals are expected to treat their mailbox like an electronic in-tray, ensuring that it is regularly checked and that messages requiring further action are dealt with promptly - including sending holding responses where appropriate.

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<sup>4</sup> A Corporate archiving system will shortly be introduced for all staff.

129 Individuals should only archive and retain messages that need to be kept and these should be selected in line with business needs and any corporate retention schedules that may exist. All other e-mail that does not constitute a necessary record of business should be deleted once it is no longer required.

#### 17.4 Sending E-mail

130 E-mail is set up by default to conform with RBC branding and house style, and a corporate disclaimer is applied to all outgoing messages. Individuals must use the default settings and not make changes to the disclaimer. All e-mails must have the subject line completed and should be checked for accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Bold text should only be used sparingly, and for emphasis, and underlining should only be used for links. The use of upper case text should be avoided as this may be interpreted by recipients as shouting.

131 To avoid information overload, individuals should consider carefully who needs to be included in any e-mail and whether face-to-face or telephone contact could be an alternative method. When sending confidential or sensitive e-mail Individuals should be mindful of any delegate permissions that recipients may have set up.

132 Individuals must not alter the text of any received messages, including when forwarding them to others. Similarly, individuals should not assume that a forwarded message matches what was originally authored.

133 Individuals must not use others people's mail accounts nor attempt to impersonate someone else or appear anonymous when sending e-mail.

134 For full guidelines on considerations when communicating by e-mail, please see the Communications Handbook (chapter 7, section 3).

#### 17.5 Agreements by E-mail

135 Individuals should take care not to enter into any agreements via e-mail that could constitute a contract, and if in doubt must seek the advice of RBC's legal and procurement advisors.

- 136 Where the text of an e-mail or any attachments are deemed to need specific marking to indicate that they are confidential or commercial (protectively marked), this should be clearly flagged at the top of the e-mail.

## 17.6 Misuse of E-mail

- 137 Individuals must not send or forward any abusive, threatening, defamatory or obscene messages. Likewise individuals should avoid sending messages in the heat of the moment, taking time to reflect on drafts and how they may be interpreted before sending them.
- 138 RBC has spam filtering software in place to help reduce the volume of unsolicited e-mail. However, such software is not infallible and individuals should therefore take care with any suspected malicious or nuisance e-mails (e.g. chain e-mail, hoax and spam e-mails) they receive, ideally deleting them. Individuals must also never open attachments to an e-mail of unknown origin as they may contain viruses and other malware.

## 17.7 Mail and Absence

- 139 The "out of office" notice must be used whenever an individual is away from their normal office base, and messages should clearly indicate a date of return and contact details for those who can deal with issues whilst the individual is away. Full guidelines can be found in the Customer Care Handbook (chapter 7, section 4). Individuals with a Blackberry should note that they can turn on or switch off out of office using their Blackberry.
- 140 In the event of an unforeseen absence where there is a need for the "out of office" function to be turned on, the line manager should provide the ICT Service Desk with the required text.
- 141 To protect individual privacy, access to other individuals' mailboxes is not normally provided. Where there is a business need for emergency temporary access, this can be provided with the individual's explicit written consent. In the absence of consent, the manager should contact the ICT Service Desk for advice. The ICT Service Desk will not be able to arrange access without sight of the written advice from the Council's data protection adviser.

## 17.8 Calendar

- 142 In order to help with setting up meetings and locating colleagues, calendars will be set by default to be viewable by all RBC Outlook users. Consequently, it is important that individuals use the "private" option for all confidential appointments. If you are unsure how to do this, please contact the ICT Service Desk. It is acknowledged Councillors may wish to operate an off-network electronic diary to facilitate single source diary management (which includes ward work) and is allowable under this policy.
- 143 Individuals are required to keep their calendars up to date, and must indicate their whereabouts when away from their normal office base.

## 17.9 Attachments

- 144 Attachments should not be included in any internal mails or meeting invites wherever it is possible to use a link to a document instead.

## 19. Appendix 3 - References

### 16.1 Related Policies and Documentation

- Information Sharing Code of Practice
- Document Retention Schedule
- Information Asset Ownership
- Document Marking Policy
- ICT Standards Expected of Third Parties
- Data Protection Policy application
- Freedom Of Information Policy
- Incident Reporting
- Disciplinary procedure and rules
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Grievance and Disputes procedure
- Records Management Policy
- The Code of Conduct
- RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act) guidance
- Data protection policies, including subject access request procedures
- Information sharing policies
- Customer Care Handbook
- Equality and diversity procedures
- Joiners & Leavers process

### 16.2 Legal References

- Computer Misuse Act 1990
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Regulation Of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

This list is not exhaustive and may be subject to additions or deletions to be approved by the Council from time to time.

### 16.3 Regulations - Guidance

- CoP 45 Code of Practice On The Discharge Of Public Authorities Functions Under Part 1 Of The Freedom Of Information Act 2000
- CoP 46 Code of Practice On The Management Of Records Issued Under Section 46 Of The Freedom Of Information Act 2000
- ISO27001/2:2005 International Standard for Information Security Management

These lists are not exhaustive and may be subject to additions or deletions to be approved by the Council from time to time.

## 20. Appendix 4 - Information Security Incidents

Information Security Incidents should be reported in accordance with the Council's Security Incident Policy which classifies the type of security incident and ensures appropriate notification of relevant parties including CICTS, Legal SIRO, Data Protection Officer and external organisations set out in the PSN Code of Connection (GCSX).

Security Incidents should be reported to the Northgate Service Desk (Ext 72861) by telephone call or Web Form (IRIS) at the earliest opportunity.

Additional detail relating to loss of data must be recorded using form below and attached to call or sent separately to council's SIRO (Legal Section).

REPORT OF LOSS OF DATA
<p><b>Data lost:</b></p>          <p>Describe the data that has been lost - including its level of security</p>
<p><b>What happened?</b></p>          <p>Describe how the data was lost - give specific details of how/when you realised the data was lost, and what actions you took to recover or cancel it</p>
<p><b>Who lost the data:</b> <i>Name and post of officer holding the data</i></p>

<b>When was it lost?</b> <i>Date and time</i>
<b>Where was it lost?</b> <i>Give precise location</i>
<b>Security of Data</b> <i>Describe how the data was stored</i> <i>Was the data encrypted?</i>
<b>Action taken</b>
<b>Data Controller:</b>
<b>Management Action Taken:</b> <i>To be completed by Data Controller</i>
<b>Notification to Others:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Head of Service</b> <b>Date .....</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Monitoring Officer</b> <b>Date .....</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Internal Audit</b> <b>Date .....</b>
<b>Signed</b>

# READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## INFORMATION RISK MANAGEMENT

### Protective Marking, Handling, and Disposal Policy

Not Protectively Marked

## Purpose

This policy addresses Protective Marking, Handling and Disposal at Reading Borough Council and relates specifically to email (both GCSX and Standard) and all documents produced from the point of introduction of this Policy Guidance (July 2013).

This is a requirement to ensure appropriate handling of all email and documents between Public Bodies and is necessary for compliance with Government Secure Extranet (GCSX) Public Services Network Code of Practice / Code of Connection which ensures common standards across all Public Bodies for the handling of information assets on a risk based approach.

## Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	01 July 2013	John Barnfield	First Version Issue

## Approvals

This document requires the following approvals before release.

Author	Comments
Mike Ibbitson	Head of ICT
John Barnfield	Information Security Role (CICTS)
Chris Brooks	Chair of Information Security Programme Board and SIRO

## Distribution

Releasing and issuing of this document is restricted to Reading Borough Council

## Maintenance

Following approval any required changes to this Policy shall be raised and notified to the Corporate ICT Service (CICTS) specifying the reason for and details of the changes.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 All information assets (paper, files, electronic media, emails or other) to be processed by Reading Borough Council (the Council), shall be protectively marked in accordance with the sensitivity of their content, following the requirements of HMG Security Policy Framework, and in compliance with standards laid down for the Government Connect Programme (GCSX). The protective marking of an information asset provides people with information on:-

- a. The correct level of protection for the information asset;
- b. Principles for the production, dispatch, receipt and destruction of the information asset;
- c. The severity or impact of the loss or compromise of the information asset.

1.2 There are several drivers for this including:-

- The need to adopt a common standard for the level of sensitivity of information to be shared with other agencies - particularly central government, the Police and Armed Forces, DSS, HMRC etc;
- The need to establish a common standard within local government, in order that each local authority treats shared data in exactly the same way and values its sensitivity;
- The need to raise awareness amongst employees, elected members and other interested parties of the sensitivity of particular information assets being handled by them;
- The need to comply with records management and Information Security Policies in the Council.

1.3 The Protective Markings do not impose any classification to restrict or to supply information under the Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act or Environmental Information Regulations. However, they may indicate that all or some of the information may be subject to exemptions, for example personal / sensitive personal information.

1.4 The Protective Marking Categories must always appear in UPPERCASE whenever they are used.

1.5 There is no requirement to retrospectively mark documents or emails, rather the Protective Marking Category should be applied on new or when documents are revisited as over time this will roll-out the standard.

1.6 Council Information Asset Owners, or where not Identified the appropriate Head of Service, are responsible for the on-going classification of Information in their Services subjected to Protective Marking and the associated retention periods and the onwards training guidance and supervision of staff for compliance.

## 2.0 POLICY AIMS

### 2.1 The aims of this Policy are to:

- Explain the principles governing the use of protective markings on documents and emails, and to show how these principles are applied to other information assets;
- Clarify the rules regarding the storage and retention of protectively marked material.

2.2 This policy will enable individual documents and emails to be produced and accounted for in a safe and secure manner while they are being processed and ensure that they are protected from loss or compromise.

## 3.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

### 3.1 This policy applies to:

- All permanent employees;
- All temporary/contract employees employed or engaged by the Council;
- Any Agency who is working with the Council;
- Workers/volunteers employed or engaged by the Council;
- All employees of partner or subsidiary organisations whilst at work and/or engaged on Council business;
- All Partners working with the Council;
- Councillor's when undertaking their duties as a Councillor of the Council;
- Any other users duly authorized by the Council who may be reasonably expected to handle protectively marked material during the course of their business or relationship with the Council.

Any reference in this document to “employee” is deemed to be a reference to any of the foregoing groups.

3.2 Managers should review current processes and procedures in context with this policy to ensure all necessary parties are aware of these changes and the controls which have been introduced and Security Incident Reporting of any breaches should these occur.

## 4.0 LEGAL AND OTHER REFERENCES

4.1 The following legal or other references may apply to this policy:-

Legal

- The Official Secrets Act 1989;
- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- ISO 27001/2 Information Security;
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004;

#### Council

- Council Document Retention Policies;
- Council ICT Use & Information Security Policy;
- GCSX Personal Commitment Statement;
- Removable Electronic Media Commitment Statement;
- 10 Golden Rules;
- Security Incident Management Policy
- Security Incident Management Procedures

## 5.0 THE PROTECTIVE MARKING DEFINITIONS

5.1 There are four levels of protective marking for documents, which the Council will or are likely to process or hold. These are:-

CONFIDENTIAL

RESTRICTED

PROTECT

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED or UNCLASSIFIED

(See Appendix 1 - Risk & Data Impact Assessment)

5.2 In view of the types of information that most employees and elected members are likely to come into contact with, this Policy concentrates on documents with the protective markings of RESTRICTED, and PROTECT. The higher level of CONFIDENTIAL will rarely apply in Local Government as it is aimed in the main at National UK level impact involving diplomatic relations, national security, national finances or economic and commercial interest, financial viability of major organisations, impeding the investigation or facilitate the commission of serious crime, and impede the development and operation of national Government policy and operations. It is however included for completeness.

5.3 The protective marking system is part of the overall concept of Information Security, and its proper use is essential. Failure to have regard for the appropriate protective marking could result in the compromise of the Council's assets, investigations or operations and a misuse of resources.

6.0 CONFIDENTIAL (Rarely applies to Local Government)

6.1 Documents, information and emails that are CONFIDENTIAL are the most sensitive documents the Council is likely to hold or process. It will be rare for Central Government to share documents protectively marked at this level or for the Council to choose to use itself due to the “national” impact nature of the category. The compromise of assets marked CONFIDENTIAL would be likely to:

- Damage diplomatic relations (i.e. cause formal protest or other sanction); to prejudice individual security or liberty;
- Cause damage to the operational effectiveness or security of the UK or allied forces, or the effectiveness of valuable security or intelligence operations;
- Work substantially against national finances or economic and commercial interests;
- Substantially undermine the financial viability of major organisations;
- Impede the investigation or facilitate the commission of serious crime;
- Impede seriously the development or operation of major government policies;
- Shut down or otherwise substantially disrupt significant national operations.

6.2 CONFIDENTIAL documents, where any have been entrusted to the Council, shall be given the utmost security, and access must be rigorously controlled and confined to those persons who are properly authorised.

7.0 RESTRICTED (Applicable to Local Government)

7.1 RESTRICTED documents and emails are less sensitive than CONFIDENTIAL documents but the compromise of assets marked RESTRICTED would be likely to:

- Adversely affect diplomatic relations;
- Make it more difficult to maintain the operational effectiveness of the security of the UK or allied forces;
- Impede the effective development or operation of government policies;
- Undermine the proper management of the Council and its operations with the Public Sector;
- Cause financial loss of earnings potential to, or facilitate improper gain or advantage for, individuals or companies;
- Prejudice the investigation or facilitate the commission of crime;
- Disadvantage government in commercial or policy negotiations with others.

7.2 Examples:

- a. Information could be RESTRICTED if its disclosure would prejudice an investigation, even though the case has not yet come to court.

- b. Documents involving management issues (e.g. contracts) could be marked **RESTRICTED** if there was a possibility of the negotiations being prejudiced by unwarranted disclosure.

The examples give some illustration of how the criteria of this grade of marking shall be applied. The first principle for the grading of a document shall be the sensitivity of the content and the consequences of its compromise.

## 8.0 PROTECT (Applicable to Local Government)

8.1 Documents, information and emails marked as **PROTECT** will be the most common protection category in day to day use in Local Government. The compromise of information assets marked as **PROTECT** would be likely to:

- Cause financial loss of earnings potential to, or facilitate improper gain or advantage for, individuals or companies;
- Prejudice the investigation or facilitate the commission of crime;
- Disadvantage the Council in commercial or policy negotiations with others;
- Cause substantial distress to individuals;
- Breach proper undertakings to maintain the confidence of information provided by third parties;
- Breach statutory restrictions on the disclosure of information;
- Include any documents defined as confidential information under Section 100A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972.

This involves information which would tend to be seen as sensitive because of issues which include commercial confidentiality or containing personal data. A **PROTECT** marking level would indicate there is nothing contained within it that would have a national security or impact dimension

## 9.0 NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKER / UNCLASSIFIED

9.1 All other information assets will be **NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED / UNCLASSIFIED** and will not require additional security measures in the handling and disposal of the information. The positive marking of the document or email communicates that there is no constraint on the sharing or printing of the associated information. It is not a requirement to protectively mark documents to members of the public.

## 10.0 MARKING AND PAGE NUMBERING

10.1 All electronically produced protectively marked documents shall be page numbered for protection of any information within a document. The page number should be positioned at the bottom of the page and placed above the protective marking. For a document with a centre positioned page number, the Footer will look as follows:-

page number # of #

## PROTECTIVE MARKING: CONFIDENTIAL / RESTRICTED / PROTECT

- 10.2 All other documents that require protective marking will be marked by way of a stamp or handwritten in permanent ink at the front of the document as CONFIDENTIAL or RESTRICTED or PROTECT.
- 10.3 Documents held with electronic document management systems should be marked noting it is not a requirement to mark documents to the members of the public (as document marking is aimed at advising security handling to other organisations and internally).

### 11.0 COPYING AND DISTRIBUTION

- 11.1 The copying of protectively marked documents shall be kept to the bare minimum, and access shall be registered and confined to authorised persons. Spare copies shall be reviewed regularly, with the aim of destruction as soon as they are not of value.
- 11.2 The distribution of documents shall be confined to those who have a clear Need-To-Know. Every protectively marked document shall have a distribution list which shows clearly who has received a copy of it.
- 11.3 Additional distribution lists shall be made and included on any reproduced documents.

### 12.0 FILING OF PROTECTIVELY MARKED DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 All protectively marked material shall be properly filed within secure servers or work areas. Where storage has been provided as part of the Managed Services contract with Northgate Information Solutions, then this can be considered secure.
- 12.2 All work areas which run their own filing systems should maintain a Master File Index List for protectively marked material.

### 13.0 TRANSMITTING PROTECTIVELY MARKED MATERIAL

- 13.1 All protectively marked material shall not be sent through the post or dispatched to other locations or transmitted electronically without appropriate safeguards being taken to prevent its compromise e.g. encryption, registered mail.
- 13.2 The authorised GCSx system shall be the sole means of receiving and transmitting RESTRICTED data electronically between the Council and Central Government and other Local Authorities.

#### 14.0 DOWNGRADING OR RE-GRADING DOCUMENTS

- 14.1 The Originator of the document/information asset is responsible for giving a document its protective marking and the responsibility for any change in that marking lies solely with the Originator. Recipients must not re-grade a document without reference to, and the agreement of, the Originator.
- 14.2 Where it is agreed to re-grade a document, all recipients of the document shall be informed of the re-grading. This will avoid different offices holding copies of the same document with different protective markings.

#### 15.0 STORAGE AND SECURITY OF PROTECTIVELY MARKED MATERIAL

- 15.1 The protective marking given to each document, governs the degree of protection afforded to it. Part of this protection includes how the document is stored within offices and secure servers and/or lockable cabinets shall be made available for the storage of protectively marked material.
- 15.2 All paper documents should be securely locked away when no longer required, by being placed in appropriate secure containers. There shall be a clear desk policy. This requires that all information protectively marked PROTECT, RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIAL shall be locked away when the desk is unattended.
- 15.3 Any person who produces protectively marked documents or is entrusted with any protectively marked documents by another person is formally responsible for the safeguarding and correct storage of those documents until such time as they are dispatched or handed over to another person.
- 15.4 For the purposes of storing and processing electronic RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIAL data between Central Government and other Councils, the Council has installed and operates the authorised GCSx email system to such specifications and criteria as may be determined or deemed appropriate by HM Government.
- 15.5 The Council shall protect the data by installing or adapting existing systems, with reference to national standards for Information Security and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, as well as current policies and standards adopted by the Council.
- 15.6 The Council shall further protect the data and systems by maintaining sufficient and relevant disaster recovery and business continuity measures.

#### 16.0 LOST DOCUMENTS

- 16.1 Documents and files which are protectively marked shall be available for inspection by the senior solicitor, the council's DPA officers or internal audit. Should any requested document not be produced within a reasonable period of being called for, a full search shall be initiated.

16.2 Should the full search fail to locate the document or file, the document or file should be formally declared lost, and the loss reported to line management and to the Originator. The incident should be subject to full investigation by an appropriate individual.

#### 17.0 REVIEW AND DISPOSAL OF HOLDINGS (RETENTION)

17.1 It is good housekeeping practice to reduce holdings of protectively marked documents to a minimum. Where the documents relate to individuals, Data Protection legislation requires that the information held should be retained only for as long as it is required and is relevant for the purpose.

17.2 All Managers and Information Asset Owners should ensure appropriate document retention standards are set and adhered to by staff.

17.2 All protectively marked documents that are no longer required should be destroyed securely, if due authorisation has been given by the Originator.

17.3 Special care must be taken in the disposal of electronic media containing protectively marked documents. All such data must be removed before disposing of the asset.

17.4 Special care must be taken when disposing of all assets which potentially could hold protectively marked documents in printed form. This includes, but is not exclusive to, old desks, old filing cabinets, pedestals, safes, storage bins etc. As part of good management practice special care should be taken to search local storage at times of restructuring which could involve moving staff and at times of furniture replacement.

#### 18.0 ARCHIVING

18.1 Where files containing protectively marked material are to be archived into a location separate from those in current use, such change of location shall be logged in the 'Disposal' column of the Master File List.

18.2 All such archiving should still be in line with document retention policies, statutory retention periods, and proportional to need in relation to the Data Protection Act.

#### 19.0 SECURITY INCIDENT REPORTING

19.1 The Council is obligated to review and on occasions externally report security incidents relating to Protectively Marked Documents and emails.

This includes, but is not restricted to:

- Physical loss of a printed protectively marked document or email;

- Inappropriate sending of RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIAL documents or emails across non-GCSX unsecure email;
- Inappropriate sending of PROTECT documents and email without the use of Global Certs secure email from a normal Council account;
- Inappropriate disclosure to unauthorised third parties of the content of a Protectively marked document or email;
- Inappropriate forwarding of Protected Documents or emails at levels of RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIAL (with or without use of Secure Email) to private email accounts;
- Inappropriate crossing of Protectively Marked emails and documents marked RESTRICTED or CONFIDENTIAL from GCSX email to less secure (outside of Council) email domains including @reading.gov.uk and @northgate-is.com where email delivery has been across a standard internet connection;
- Inappropriate disposal (in electronic or manual forms) of protectively marked documents or emails;
- Theft of media containing Protectively Marked Documents (in electronic or manual forms);
- Loss of media (manual or electronic) which contains Protectively Marked Documents or Emails;
- Inappropriate local unsecure storage of Protectively Marked Documents and emails which are then compromised;
- Failure to securely store Protectively Marked Documents or Emails at levels of PROTECT, RESTRICTED and CONFIDENTIAL;
- Failure to instruct Third Parties in Contracts or Partnership Agreements of the Council's expectations in the onwards handling of Protectively Marked Documents;
- Failure to manage Protectively Marked Documents and emails to a defined retention schedule set by the Service.

19.2 Security Incidents should be reported in accordance with the Council's Security Incident Management Policy and Security Incident Management Procedures.

(Call to Northgate ServiceDesk 0118 9372861 or Ext 72861 to initiate).

19.3 All employees are encouraged to openly and honestly declare potential Security Incidents for risk management and learning opportunities as these will lead into the on-going cycle of process adjustment, and employee training to reduce future risks.

## 20.0 SUMMARY

20.1 The protective marking system is used to enable all relevant documents, email and information to be protected appropriately in relation to the sensitivity of the content of each document. Every such document shall carry a protective marking.

20.2 Each document can have only one protective marking, given by the Originator.

20.3 All documents shall be securely locked away when they are not required, according to their marking, and individuals are personally responsible for those documents in their care.

## 21.0 CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

21.1 A schedule of documents, Appendix D, contains the Council's documents and the highest classification for those sets of records, summaries or extracts may have a lower classification but advice should be sought from the records owner or relevant Head of Service as to the classification.

## 22.0 POLICY REVIEW

22.1 This policy shall be reviewed on an annual basis and upon and major changes to the document marking scheme set by the Cabinet Office within HMG Security Policy Framework.

## APPENDIX A - RISK & DATA IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The table below defines how the information content in Reading Borough Council is assessed for risk and impact to determine the appropriate Protective Marking.

The Impact Levels refer to HMG Business Impact Tables defined in HMG IA Standard 1.

Impact if the data is disclosed, lost or stolen and misused	Protective Marking	Examples	Impact Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little or no impact on the finances of the Authority</li> <li>• No inconvenience or distress to the customer</li> <li>• Little or no financial impact to the customer</li> <li>• Little or no impact on the Authority's standing or reputation.</li> </ul>	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED / UNCLASSIFIED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and procedures</li> <li>• Documents available in the public domain or on the RBC public website</li> <li>• Property address where it does not identify the individual owner or residents</li> <li>• Names and contact details of specific employees or individuals that are in the public domain or an individual has authorised</li> </ul>	0 or 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term inconvenience, harm or distress to an individual</li> <li>• Cause financial loss or loss of earning potential, or to facilitate improper gain</li> <li>• Damage to the Council standing or reputation</li> <li>• Financial impact to the Council(up to 1M)</li> <li>• Breach proper undertakings to maintain the confidence of information provided by individuals or third parties</li> <li>• Breach statutory restrictions</li> </ul>	PROTECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information relating to any customer or employee such as a name, address and contact details, VAT number or National Insurance number for which we have a duty of care.</li> <li>• Exempt Committee papers excluded from the public under Local Government Act</li> <li>• An employee record</li> <li>• A customer case file</li> <li>• Draft documents before approval for release into public domain</li> </ul>	2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial inconvenience, harm or distress to individuals</li> <li>• Cause financial loss or loss of earning potential, or to facilitate improper gain or advantage</li> <li>• Substantial damage to the Council’s standing or reputation</li> <li>• Significant Financial impact to the Council (£Millions)</li> <li>• Prejudice the investigation of or facilitate the commission of low-level crime, hinder detection of serious crime</li> </ul>	<p>RESTRICTED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete set of an individual’s social care files or health record</li> <li>• Investigation files</li> <li>• A smaller multiple of complete customer/employee records where information is sensitive, or has financial or identity data (remembering that the marking reflects the highest impact individual item)</li> <li>• Large volumes of “Protect” data e.g. &gt; 100 cases/employees</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Damage diplomatic relations (i.e. cause formal protest or other sanction)</li> <li>. To prejudice individual security or liberty</li> <li>. Cause damage to the operational effectiveness or security of the UK or allied forces, or the effectiveness of valuable security or intelligence operations</li> <li>. Work substantially against national finances or economic and commercial interests</li> <li>. Substantially undermine the financial viability of major organisations</li> <li>. Impede the investigation or facilitate the commission of serious crime;</li> <li>. Impede seriously the development or operation of major government policies;</li> <li>. Shut down or otherwise substantially disrupt significant national operations.</li> </ul>	<p>CONFIDENTIAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Cabinet Office directives relating to national riots or civil unrest</li> <li>. Very few examples which relate to Local Government therefore notify CICTS if such data received and do not use this document marking unless in context of replying across GCSX to a document or email already marked.</li> </ul>	<p>4</p>

## APPENDIX B - ADDITIONAL PROTECTIVE MARKER DESCRIPTERS

The table below defines how a descriptor may be used with the marking based on information content. For example, PROTECT - PERSONAL. They are not mandatory. The descriptors also serve to help those handling the information to decide which people should have access to the material. Information received from public sector partners may use one of these descriptors. You may receive information marked with one of these descriptors. You can also add your own local caveats in addition, to aid understanding.

Descriptor	
<b>APPOINTMENTS</b>	Actual or potential appointments yet to be announced
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	Disclosure would be likely to damage a third party or commercial establishment's processes or affairs
<b>CONTRACTS</b>	Tenders in progress and contract terms accepted
<b>FOR PUBLICATION</b>	Information is planned to be published at a future date (when it will change to NPM)
<b>HONOURS</b>	Unannounced recognitions
<b>INTERNAL</b>	Only available to RBC employees and should not be published or circulated outside of RBC without permission
<b>INVESTIGATIONS</b>	Investigations into disciplinary affairs or may lead to criminal cases
<b>LOCSEN</b>	Locally sensitive issues not yet for publication
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	Policy and planning affecting the interests of the Authority or staff
<b>MEDICAL</b>	Medical reports, records and material relating to an individual
<b>PERSONAL</b>	Information that is personal to an individual or the sender and/or recipient
<b>REGULATORY</b>	Limited by existing regulation
<b>STAFF</b>	Contains references to named or identifiable staff or personal confidences entrusted by staff to management

## APPENDIX C - HANDLING STORAGE & DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

The table below defines how the information resource can be handled, transmitted, stored and disposed for the different security protective markings in use by the Council. Internal applies for sending information within Reading Borough Council, External applies for sending information outside of the Council to partners or third parties. Do not use a marking on correspondence sent to the public.

### Handling

	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED	PROTECT	RESTRICTED
Document Marking	“NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED” at the centre top or bottom of every page, when applicable.	“PROTECT[descriptor]” at the centre top or bottom of every page.  Page x of x to be in footer	“RESTRICTED [descriptor]” at the centre top or bottom of every page.  Page x of x to be in footer
Email	RBC internal email, internet email or Government secure email.  Do not mark email to the Public as Not Protectively Marked	Internal: RBC email marked PROTECT in the subject line using the Disclaimer  “Only to be opened by addressee(s) or delegated employee Seek permission of the sender before forwarding or sending to other addresses”  External using secure email Secure email marked as above using Government Connect Secure Email if available for public sector partners or Global Certs secure email for others.  External using internet standard email: Encrypt information in an attachment Only use if the sender needs a reply, you are sure who is receiving it, and they consent to a reply via internet standard email.	Internal: RBC email marked RESTRICTED in the subject line plus relevant disclaimer of “Restricted” inserted. “Only to be opened by addressee(s) Never forward or send to other addresses”  External using Secure email marked as above using Government Connect Secure Email if available for public sector partners  Encrypt any volume data in an attachment  External using internet standard email: Never send via internet standard email

Electronic transmission and media	Any	Secure, approved connection as agreed by Northgate or Encrypt data	Secure, approved connection as agreed by Northgate, or Encrypt data (FIPS-140-2)  Transmission/transfer only to take place with the approval of the Information Asset Owner or Head of Service.
Public Website	Can be used with uncontrolled or open access.	Only to be used with authenticated access.	Only to be used with authenticated access.
Post	Internal or external mail.	Internal: Sealed envelope marked "PROTECT Addressee Only". Only to be opened by addressee or delegated employee.  External: Sealed envelope using Royal Mail marked "Private and Confidential" where appropriate. If important or highly sensitive consider using 'Recorded Signed For' service.	Internal: Sealed envelope marked "RESTRICTED Addressee Only". Only to be opened by addressee or delegated employee.  External: Sealed envelope marked "RESTRICTED" contained within a package with no protective markings. Use of secure courier to named person or delivery by hand.
Telephone	Internal, public network, mobile	Normal use if recipient can be identified and spoken to.  Inform the recipient that the information is protected.  Do not leave messages on answering systems.	Normal use if recipient can be identified and spoken to.  Inform the recipient that the information is restricted.  Do not leave messages on answering systems.

Fax	Normal fax	Avoid using if possible as high Fine from ICO as fax not considered secure. Recipient must be at hand. Send cover sheet first and wait for confirmation before sending.	Do not use
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Mobile - home or working away from office	Normal policy restrictions	<p>Do not leave unattended.</p> <p>Secure assets out of sight and locked away when not in use. Information must not be discussed in a public place where it may be overheard. Not to be stored electronically on personal home computer or personal mobile device. Encryption protection on Council mobile storage device. Remote access to server based master is preferable. Personal use only, no access to unauthorised users.</p> <p>See “storage of papers” and “electronic storage” procedures above for procedure when away from office or at home.</p>	<p>Only if approved by the Information Asset Owner or Head of Service. Never leave unattended. Secure assets out of sight and locked away when not in use. Information must not be discussed in a public place where it may be overheard. Not to be stored electronically on personal home computer or personal mobile device. Encryption protected on Council mobile storage device. Remote access to server based master is preferable. Personal use only, no access to unauthorised users.</p> <p>See “storage of papers” and “electronic storage” procedures above for procedure when away from office or at home.</p>
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## Storage

	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED	PROTECT	RESTRICTED
Storage of papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protected by one physical lock. Examples: locked drawer or cabinet.</li> </ul> <p>Avoid taking Home</p>	<p>Protected by two physical locks. Examples: locked safe and office.</p> <p>Not Allowed at Home</p>
Electronic storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal Council or unencrypted mobile devices</li> </ul>	<p><u>Council network:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlled access by defined user groups to specific areas.</li> </ul> <p>For example: network storage, electronic document management systems, application systems.</p> <p><u>Mobile working:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encryption used</li> <li>Preferably access directly through remote network access. Examples: Secure fob and Citrix.</li> <li>Do not leave screen unattended.</li> </ul> <p>(See also Mobile Working)</p>	<p><u>Council network:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Controlled access by defined user groups to specific areas.</li> </ul> <p>For example: network storage, electronic document management systems, application systems.</p> <p><u>Mobile working:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encrypted used</li> <li>Preferably access directly through remote network access. Examples: Secure fob to Council server</li> <li>Do not leave screen unattended.</li> </ul> <p>(See also Mobile Working)</p>
Electronic backup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backup stored in locked cabinet / controlled access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backup stored in locked cabinet / controlled access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backup stored in locked cabinet / controlled access.</li> </ul>

## Disposal

	NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED	PROTECT	RESTRICTED
Disposal of papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recycle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure waste disposal - destruction or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure waste disposal - destruction or shredding.</li> </ul>
Electronic media disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normal deletion and reuse.</li> </ul>	<p>Destruction or erased to make unrecoverable if for reuse.</p>	<p>Destruction or erased to make unrecoverable if for reuse.</p>

Cupboards, Desks, Cabinets, Draws, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check contents for protectively marked documents.</li> </ul> <p>No action required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check contents for protectively marked documents.</li> </ul> <p>Shred any documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check contents for protectively marked documents.</li> </ul> <p>Shred any documents</p>
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## APPENDIX D - Record Classification

End of Document

## Personal Commitment Statement Using Removable Electronic Media

The following statement is a personal commitment by the signatory to comply with the terms of the Council's ICT Use and Information Security Policy with specific regard to the use of removable electronic media.

I acknowledge that removable electronic media (examples of which include USB Memory Sticks, CD's, DVD's, SD cards) can pose a significant risk of automatic fines under the Data Protection Act 1998 of up to £500K for the Council and up to £5K for the Individual with limited rights of appeal, if such media is lost containing Personal Sensitive Data.

I agree to be responsible and accountable for any use by me of Removable Electronic Media in my duties as an officer of the Council and agree to undertake all reasonable steps and due diligence to ensure that I control the use of and circulation of any such media to protect the integrity and security of that media and the data contained within to the best of my ability working within the direction of the Council's Policies.

I acknowledge that by failing to do so this could result in disciplinary measures being taken against me as such a transgression would be considered a breach of the Council's Information Security & Use of Equipment Policy.

In particular I shall not -

1. Use unencrypted removable electronic media to hold personal or sensitive personal data as defined under the Data Protection Act 1998.

### Personal Data:

Personal Data is data that relates to a living individual who can be identified a) from the data, or b) from the data and other information in the possession of or likely to come into the possession of the Data Controller. This includes business data if there is a named contact.

### Sensitive Personal Data:

Sensitive Personal Data is data that identifies an individuals race or origin, an individuals religion, an individuals political beliefs, an individuals sexual health, and individuals health, an individuals criminality history, an individuals financial records and any data relating to children.

2. Use unencrypted removable electronic media to hold information which could be reasonably considered to be sensitive to the political or business operations of the Council;

3. Use unencrypted removable electronic media to hold emails or documents which have been protectively marked under the Councils and Central Governments Document Marking Scheme (i.e. marked as old scheme PROTECT, RESTRICTED, CONFIDENTIAL, SECRET, TOP SECRET, and as new scheme OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE PERSONAL, OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE LOCSEN, OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE COMMERCIAL, SECRET, TOP SECRET).
4. Use unencrypted data to hold photographs of people and especially children unless is a camera supported by a business case and process controls which
  - a) obtains the consent of the individuals,
  - b) tracks camera usage
  - c) clearly minimises any “at risk” period data is held on the camera,
  - d) keeps the camera and the SD Card separately so card is not lost in the event of theft,
  - e) clears data off at the earliest opportunity to secure media,
  - f) is recorded and can be disclosed for the purposes of Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information (unless exempted),
  - g) is provided to the subject upon request,
  - h) has a clear retention and destruction policy which is followed,
  - i) all printed copies are strictly controlled through to end of lifecycle destruction;
5. Use removable electronic media to hold or export to other third parties data that has not been authorised by the designated Council Data Controller of that data (noting the media format must always be encrypted and secure delivery tracking mechanisms used where appropriate e.g. courier);
6. Use unencrypted removable electronic media (with the exception of cameras) to store or transport Council information assets;
7. Use removable electronic media without a role based need which has been risk assessed and agreed with my manager;
8. Introduce incoming removable electronic media without ensuring it has come from a known validated trusted source, and is checked off-network for the possibility of viruses and malware by only loading removable media on a desktop/laptop/netbook with an up-to-date virus signature file (i.e. has been recently connected to the network) and is not connected via cable or wireless to the Councils’ network whilst checking the removable media.

In particular, I shall take all reasonable steps to -

9. Ensure the 8 key principles of the Data Protection Act are applied to any use of removable electronic media namely:
  - a. Data will be processed fairly and lawfully;
  - b. Data will be acquired for only lawful purposes;
  - c. Data will be adequate and not excessive;
  - d. Data will be accurate and kept up to date;
  - e. Data will not be kept longer than is necessary;
  - f. Data will be processed in accordance with the rights of the Data Subject;
  - g. Data will be held securely;
  - h. Data will not be shared outside of the European Economic Area.

10. Take care of any removable media, controlling use, storage of the device and distribution to others so as to minimise the risk of damage and loss.
11. Report any loss as a security incident to the Northgate Service Desk Ext 72861 at the earliest opportunity.
12. Only use encrypted removable media when holding personal or personal sensitive data;
13. Take care not to introduce viruses and malware to removable electronic media by ensuring media your control is only used in foreign desktops protected by anti-virus software;
14. Ensure I have my Managers specific permission to use removable electronic media in connection with a specific task or process and this has been subject to a recorded risk assessment to both identify and allow this;
15. Ensure that usage of removable electronic media incoming and out-going has been risk assessed, documented and the media and contents are documented and can be subject to audit examination if required;
16. Undertake searches as required under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act for disclosure purposes as directed by the Council;
17. Only share and copy such media with the specific permission of the designated Council Data Controller and/or Process Controller within the Council. If in doubt speak to your Manager;
18. To delete information held on removable electronic media in line with information /document retention standards;
19. To highlight to my Manager any inappropriate use of removable electronic media discovered within my duties as a Council officer;
20. To notify my Manager and the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (Head of Legal) at the earliest opportunity in the event of losing any removable electronic media;
21. To continue to refresh my knowledge of the Council's ICT Security Policies and note such direction issued from time to time through ISI's, ICT News Letters and other Council communication processes.

### **Using Removable Electronic Media Personal Commitment Statement**

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood the above commitments and that I am prepared to be bound by these commitments in relation to the use of removable electronic media.

Furthermore I confirm that I understand that failure by me to adhere to these commitments (and the terms of the Council's own ICT Use and Information

Security Policy) could result in termination of my right to use such media and likely subjection to the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and Rules.



**Information Security Document**

**Security Incident**  
**Management**  
**Policy**

## Version 1.0

<b>Version History</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Author</b>
1.0	02/07/2013	Completed for Distribution	Alison Lauri

## 1 Introduction

Reading Borough Council is responsible for the security and integrity of all data it holds. The Council must protect this data using all means necessary by ensuring at all times that any incident which could cause damage to the Council's assets and reputation is prevented and/or minimised. There are many types of incidents which could affect security:

- A computer security incident is an event affecting adversely the processing of computer usage. This includes:
  - loss of confidentiality of information
  - compromise of integrity of information
  - denial of service
  - unauthorized access to systems
  - misuse of systems or information
  - theft and damage to systems
  - virus attacks
  - intrusion by humans
- Other incidents include:
  - Loss of ID badge/s
  - Missing correspondence
  - Exposure of Uncollected print-outs
  - Misplaced or missing media
  - Inadvertently relaying passwords

Ensuring efficient reporting and management of security incidents will help reduce and in many cases, prevent incidents occurring.

More detailed information on the type and scope of security incidents is provided in the Policy Statement section of this policy.

## 2 Purpose

Management of security incidents described in this policy requires the Council to have clear guidance, policies and procedures in place. Fostering a culture of proactive incident reporting and logging will help reduce the number of security incidents which often go unreported and unnoticed – sometimes, over a long period of time and often without resolution.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the types of security incidents
- Detail how incidents can and will be dealt with
- Identify responsibilities for reporting and dealing with incidents
- Detail procedures in place for reporting and processing of incidents
- Provide Guidance

## 3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors
- All Council departments, personnel and systems (including software) dealing with the storing, retrieval and accessing of data

## 4 Policy Statement

The Council has a clear incident reporting mechanism in place which details the procedures for the identifying, reporting and recording of security incidents. By continually updating and informing Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors of the importance of the identification, reporting and action required to address incidents, the Council can continue to be pro-active in addressing these incidents as and when they occur.

All Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors are required to report all incidents – including potential or suspected incidents, as soon as possible via the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

The types of Incidents which this policy addresses include but is not limited to:

### Computers left unlocked when unattended

Users of Council computer systems are continually reminded of the importance of locking their computers when not in use or when leaving computers unattended for any length of time. All Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors need to ensure they lock their computers appropriately - this must be done despite the fact that Council computers are configured to automatically lock after 10 minutes of idle time.

Discovery of an unlocked computer which is unattended must be reported via the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

### Password disclosures

Unique IDs and account passwords are used to allow an individual access to systems and data. It is imperative that individual passwords are not disclosed to others – regardless of trust. If an individual needs access to data or a system, they must go through the correct procedures for authorisation – initially through the individual's line manager. If anyone suspects that their or any other user's password has been disclosed whether intentionally, inadvertently or accidentally, the Northgate Service Desk must be notified through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures. For more information, the Council Password policy is available on the intranet (Iris) or via the Northgate Service Desk. Under no circumstances should an employee allow another employee to use their user account details after they have logged onto a system – even under supervision.

### Virus warnings/alerts

All Desktop, laptop and tablet computers in use across the Council have Antivirus (including Anti-Spyware/Malware). For the most part, the interaction between the computer and antivirus software will go unnoticed by users of the computer. On occasion, an antivirus warning message may appear on the computer screen. The message may indicate that a virus has been detected which could cause loss, theft or damage to Council data. The warning message may indicate that the antivirus software may not be able to rectify the problem and so must be reported by the user to the Northgate Service Desk as soon as possible.

### Media loss including Encrypted Assets

Use of portable media such as CD/DVD, DAT (magnetic tape), USB Flash sticks/HD drives for storing data requires the user to be fully aware of the responsibilities of using such devices. The use of PCs, laptops, tablets and many other portable devices increases the potential for data to be exposed and vulnerable to unauthorised access. Any authorised user of a portable device who has misplaced or suspects damage, theft whether intentional or accidental of any portable

device/media must report it immediately through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

#### ID Badges

It is essential for us to identify individuals and wearing ID badges helps us to do this. All visitors to RBC should be allocated a temporary pass and should be accompanied at all times.

#### Data loss/disclosure

The potential for data loss does not only apply to portable media it also applies to any data which is:

- Transmitted over a network and reaching an unintended, unauthorised - recipient (such as the use of e-mail to send sensitive data)
- Intercepted over the internet through non secure channels
- Posting of data on the internet whether accidental or intentional
- Published on the Council's website and identified as inaccurate or inappropriate (which must be reported)
- Conversationally – information disclosed during conversation
- Press or media – unauthorised disclosure by employees or an ill advised representative to the press or media
- Data which can no longer be located and is unaccounted for on an IT system
- Unlocked and uncollected print-outs from Multi-Function Devices (MFDs)
- Paper copies of data and information which can no longer be located
- Hard copies of information and data accessible from desks and unattended areas

All Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors must act responsibly, professionally and be mindful of the importance of maintaining the security and integrity of Council data at all times.

Any loss of data and/or disclosure whether intentional or accidental must be reported immediately using the Council's Incident Reporting procedures

#### Unauthorised Personal information disclosure

All person identifiable information – i.e. information which can identify an individual such as home address, bank account details etc... must not be disclosed, discussed or passed on to any person/s who is not in a position of authority to view, disclose or distribute such information.

Any abuse/misuse of such person identifiable information must be reported through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

#### Physical Security

Maintaining the physical security of offices and rooms where data is stored, maintained, viewed or accessed is of paramount importance. Rooms or offices which have been designated specifically as areas where secure information is located or stored must have a method of physically securing access to the room – e.g. a combination key lock mechanism. Lower floor/level windows could also provide access to the room/office and must also be securely locked – particularly when the room is left unattended. Rooms which have not been secured should not be used to store sensitive and personal information and data - concerns about any rooms/office which should be securely locked or access restricted must be reported to the Transformation Service via the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

Continuing emphasis and re-enforcement of the Council's Secure Desk policy will further help to reduce the number of security incidents.

#### Logical Security / Access Controls

Controlling, managing and restricting access to the Authority's Network, Databases and applications is an essential part of Information Security. It is necessary to ensure that only authorized employees can gain access to information which is processed and maintained electronically.

#### Missing correspondence

Data or information which has been sent either electronically or physically which cannot be accounted for e.g. not arrived at the intended destination via physical post, sent electronically, sent for printing but no printed output retrieved etc... must be reported through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

#### Found correspondence/media

Data stored on any storage media or physically printed information which has been found in a place other than a secure location or a place where the security and integrity of the data/information could be compromised by unauthorised viewing and/or access e.g. unlocked printouts, discarded CD (media), must be reported through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures.

#### Loss or theft of IT/information

Data or information which can no longer be located or accounted for e.g. cannot be found in a location where it is expected to be, filing cabinet etc... or which is known/or suspected to have been stolen needs to be reported immediately through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures

#### Data/documents sent without appropriate Document Marking Protection

Data/documents need to be protectively marked according to its sensitivity, data/documents sent or received without appropriate marking needs to be reported immediately through the Council's Incident Reporting procedures

## **5 Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility for all Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors who undertake work for the Council, on or off the premises to be proactive in the reporting of security incidents. The Council's Incident Reporting procedures are in place to prevent and minimise the risk of damage to the integrity and security of Council data and information.

It is also a responsibility of all individuals and handlers of Council data and information to ensure that all policies and procedures dealing with the security and integrity of information and data are followed.

## **6 Compliance with legal and contractual obligations**

**The Data Protection Act (1998)** requires that personal data be kept secure against unauthorised access or disclosure.

**The Computer Misuse Act (1990)** covers unauthorised access to computer systems.

## **7 Breaches of Policy**

Breaches of this policy and/or security incidents are incidents which could have, or have resulted in, loss or damage to Council assets, including IT equipment and information, or conduct which is in breach of the Council's security procedures and policies.

All Council employees, elected members, partner agencies, contractors and vendors have a responsibility to report security incidents and breaches of this policy as quickly as possible through the Council's Security Incident Management Procedure. This obligation also extends to any external organisation contracted to support or access the Information Systems of the Council.

In the case of third party vendors, consultants or contractors non-compliance could result in the immediate removal of access to the system. If damage or compromise of the Council's ICT systems or network results from the non-compliance, the Council will consider legal action against the third party. The Council will take appropriate measures to remedy any breach of the policy through the relevant frameworks in place. In the case of an employee then the matter may be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary process or the relevant standards agencies in the case of elected members.

This Policy is referenced by other Council policies and guidelines. Copies of these policy statements are obtainable via the Council's Intranet (Iris).



**Information Security Document**

**Security Incident**  
**Management**  
**Procedures**

## Version 1.0

<b>Version History</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Author</b>
1.0	02/07/2013	Completed for Distribution	Alison Lauri

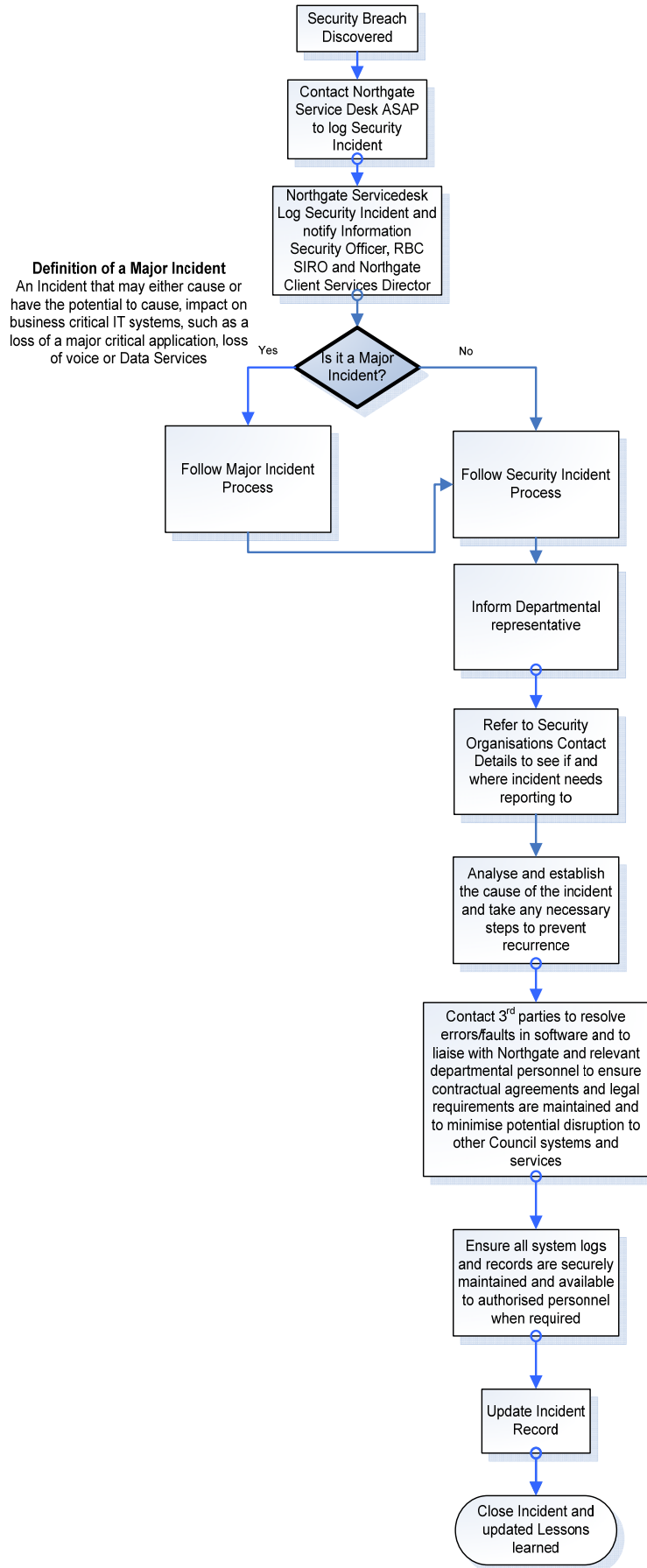
### **Overview**

The Corporate IT Team will continually highlight the importance of incident reporting. Breaches can be reported via a telephone call to the Northgate Service Desk. Breaches can involve not only Information Technology equipment but also data that is mishandled, lost or abused or any other incident which may cause a security concern.

Any incident, as described in the Security Incident Management Policy and referred to in the following table:

Incident Types
<i>Computers left unlocked when unattended</i>
<i>Password Disclosures</i>
<i>Virus warnings/alerts</i>
<i>Media Loss</i>
<i>Data lost/disclosure</i>
<i>Unauthorised personal information disclosure</i>
<i>Physical Security compromised</i>
<i>Logical security/access controls</i>
<i>Missing Correspondence</i>
<i>Found correspondence/media</i>
<i>Loss or theft of IT/Information</i>
<i>Data sent without appropriate Document Marking Protection</i>

Will need reporting following the process below;



## 1.1 Incident Reporting

Any breach of the Security Incident Management Policy must be reported as soon as possible via the reporting procedure.

Security incident breaches can be reported in the following ways:

- Via a Phone call to the Service Desk
- E-mailing the Service Desk

### Reporting via the Northgate Service Desk

Security incidents and breaches can be reported by telephoning the Northgate Service Desk on ext 72861 or 0118 9372861.

A Service Desk representative will log the details of the call in the call logging system based on the information given by the caller. Callers are advised to give as much information as possible including;

- Incident Date/Time
- Name
- Department – drop down menu
- Work location
- Contact phone
- Type of incident
- Description – more detailed information about the incident

The Service Desk representative will log the call and any further progress or information about the incident will be dealt with by the Information Security Officer or the RBC SIRO.

### Reporting via E-mail

Security incidents and breaches may be reported via e-mail to the Northgate Service Desk ([PS.ServiceDeskReading@Northgate-is.com](mailto:PS.ServiceDeskReading@Northgate-is.com)) however, wherever possible, confidential or personal identifiable information should not be contained in the e-mail e.g. logon passwords.

## 1.2 Incident Management

When an incident is reported and entered into the call logging system, an email will be generated and sent to the Information Security Officer and the SIRO and also copied to the Northgate Client Services Director. The Information Security Office/SIRO will then determine if the incident needs to be escalated to the appropriate pre-identified departmental representative to deal with as soon as possible. Representatives looking into security breaches will be responsible for updating, amending and modifying the status of incidents.

All parties dealing with security incidents shall undertake to:

- analyse and establish the cause of the incident and take any necessary steps to prevent recurrence
- report to all affected parties and maintain communication and confidentiality throughout investigation of the incident
- identify problems caused as a result of the incident and to prevent or reduce further impact
- contact 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to resolve errors/faults in software and to liaise with the Northgate and relevant departmental personnel to ensure contractual agreements and legal requirements are maintained and to minimise potential disruption to other Council systems and services

- ensure all system logs and records are securely maintained and available to authorised personnel when required
- ensure only authorised personnel have access to systems and data
- ensure all documentation and notes are accurately maintained and recorded in Service Manager and made available to relevant authorised personnel
- ensure all authorised corrective and preventative measures are implemented and monitored for effectiveness
- ensure that the relevant security organisations are contacted if needed.

All incidents logged within Infra shall have all the details of the incident recorded – including any action/resolution, links or connections to other known incidents. Incidents which were initially resolved but have recurred will be reopened or a new call referencing the previous one will be created.

Monthly reports on incidents generated by the Infra system are automatically sent to the Information Security Manager to facilitate the monitoring of the types, numbers, frequency and severity of incidents which will help to correct and prevent incidents recurring.

During the course of incident investigations, hardware, logs and records may be analysed by the Council's internal Audit function. Information and data may be gathered as evidence to support possible disciplinary or legal action. It is essential during the course of these investigations that confidentiality is maintained at all times.

The Information Security Officer/SIRO is initially responsible for handling security incidents and will make a decision as to whether an incident needs to be “handed” over and dealt with (including closed) by departmental representatives where appropriate.

### **How security incidents are handled by the Northgate Service Desk**

The information regarding any incident which has been provided will be logged in Infra and will create a Service Request record. An email will be then sent to the Information Security Office, the SIRO and to the Northgate Client Services Director.

The Information Security Officer/SIRO will deal with any reported incidents and will assign the incident to the relevant departmental representative if required.

The Service Desk will manage this incident through to closure.

Further information and guidance on the use recording of incidents may be obtained by contacting the Northgate Service Desk on ext 72861 or 0118 9372861

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TO:	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE		
DATE:	12 DECEMBER 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE		
LEAD MEMBER	CLLR LOVELOCK	PERSONNEL COMMITTEE CHAIR	
SERVICE:	CORPORATE RESOURCES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
AUTHOR:	JIM HOGGART	TEL:	72492/939 0492
JOB TITLE:	HR SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:jim.hoggart@reading.gov.uk">jim.hoggart@reading.gov.uk</a>

### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the progress of this review and to note the development of manager guidance.

### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

That you note this progress report and the management guidance attached as appendices.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 LJF and Personnel Committee have endorsed a programme of reviewing and updating our policies, procedures and practical support to employees and prospective employees with a disability. This work is being undertaken by a working group led by an HR Partner (Roger Morris) and has the active support and engagement of members of the JTUC, in particular Rob Ketley and Patrick Kenny.

### 4. UPDATE

- 4.1 The group has developed a series of work 'heads' as set out below and has now completed the development of a guide to the Council's policy and practice as well as developing a series of FAQ's to assist managers (Appendices A and B).
- 4.2 Following discussion at the November meeting of the Local Joint Forum about the support by the trades unions for the development of a 'Disability Leave' policy, further consultation is continuing on this matter and any further update will be reported to the Committee meeting.
- 4.3 To underpin the development of the guidance material, design work on a training course for managers on the employment of staff with a disability is

coming to a conclusion and will be reported to the next meeting of LJF and Personnel Committee.

- 4.4 Separate to the work of the employment Group, the Council's recruitment and selection procedures (and related admin processes) are being amended to ensure that managers who are recruiting to posts establish at the outset the minimum requirements of the post prior to advertisement. This will underpin the Council's '2 Tick' commitment to ensuring that all candidates with a disability are interviewed if they meet the minimum requirements. It will also assist to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to redeployees who have been affected by change programmes and who meet the minimum requirement for the post.
- 4.5 Finally, the Council is embarking this month on a major programme of encouraging staff to declare whether they have a disability as part of a re-profiling exercise previously reported to the LJF / Personnel Committee.

## 5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 The following work areas have been identified by the Group and endorsed by the Local Joint Forum and Personnel Committee (progress / planned work is highlighted in the RH column):

AGREED WORK AREAS	PROGRESS / PLANS
Developing work placement opportunities (and publicising successes) so that the Council is seen as visibly committed to its objectives.	Work in partnership with neighbouring health employer to understand key success criteria.
Revitalising the Council's disability awareness training programme to increase understanding, skills and awareness.	Under way - complete in December 2013.
Developing further guidance on 'reasonable adjustments'	Included in new Guide.
Encouraging existing staff to declare that they have a disability.	Survey to be launched in November 2013.
An overhaul of the Council's guidance / support to managers on the recruitment of staff with a disability.	Done.
Completing and promoting the Council's 'Two Tick' accreditation.	Will be completed by December 2013.
Giving staff with a disability a 'voice' through reactivating a focus group to consult and listen to the collective needs and opinions of disabled staff.	To be established in January 2014.
Working with individual staff who have a disability to discover more about their direct experience of recruitment and assimilation into the Council's workforce.	Scheduled for March 2014.

Work in partnership with a professional employment organisation to obtain examples of good practice in the private and public sector - perhaps hosting a seminar or conference to share ideas and experiences.	Negotiation on fees near completion. Agree outline programme by February 2014.
Ensuring that the new Civic Offices reflects the needs of disabled people and promoting its accessibility.	Under way - group involved in review and assessment.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Included in the report, where applicable.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.2 None arising directly from the report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.3 None



## Recruitment and retention of disabled people

Guide to Reading Borough Council's policy and practice.

This document is available on the intranet and in large print, computer disc, audio tape and Braille on request. Please contact Human Resources.

July 2013

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# Part 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose

This guide is designed to:

1. Assist managers and other employees involved in the recruitment, selection, management and retention of employees to change their workplace culture and to remove barriers to disabled employees;
2. Be at a glance guide for disabled employees to ensure they are aware of their employment rights and all the support and advice which is available to them as a disabled employee of Reading Borough Council;
3. Gives examples of reasonable adjustments which can be made to the working environment.
4. Please also see the Guide to Reading Borough Council's policy and practice 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

## 1.2. Relevant Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

- Prohibits discrimination against disabled people in a range of circumstances, covering the provision of goods, facilities and services, the exercise of public functions, premises, work, education and associations;
- Disability is one of the specified protected characteristics under the Act;
- Other protected characteristics are age; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnerships; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

## Part 2: Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability

### 2.1. Definition of Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial, long-term, adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Whether a person is disabled for the purposes of the Act is generally determined with reference to the effect that an impairment has on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be:

- Sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing;
- Impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME)/chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy;
- Progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, forms of dementia and lupus (SLE);
- Organ specific, including respiratory conditions, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease;
- Developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- Learning difficulties;
- Mental health conditions and mental illnesses, such as depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders, bipolar affective disorders and some self harming behaviour;
- Produced by injury to the body or brain
- Congenital (from birth)

## 2.2. Exclusions from the definition

Certain conditions are not regarded as impairments for the purposes of the Act. These are:

- Addiction to, or dependency on alcohol, nicotine, or any other substance
- The condition known as seasonal allergic rhinitis (e.g. hayfever)
- Tendency to set fires;
- Tendency to steal;
- Tendency to physical or sexual abuse of other persons
- Exhibitionism;
- Voyeurism.

## 2.3. 'Substantial adverse effect'

A substantial effect is one that is greater than the effect which would be produced by the sort of physical or mental conditions experienced by many people which have only 'minor' or 'trivial' effects.

Could include:

- The time taken to carry out an activity;
- The way in which an activity is carried out;
- Cumulative effects of an impairment;

For example, someone with depression experiences a range of symptoms that include a loss of energy and motivation that makes even the simplest of tasks or decisions seem quite difficult

- Effects of behaviour

For example, it would be reasonable to expect a person who has back pain to avoid extreme activities such as parachuting but would not be expected to give up or modify, more normal activities that might exacerbate the symptoms; such as moderate gardening, shopping, or using public transport.

- Effects of environment e.g. humidity, lighting, the time of day, how tired the person is, or how much stress he or she is under, may have an impact on the effects.
- Effects of treatment;
- Progressive conditions e.g. dementia, rheumatoid arthritis
- Severe disfigurements e.g. scars, birthmarks, limb or postural deformation

#### 2.4. 'Long-term effects'

The Act states that, for the purpose of deciding whether a person is disabled, a long-term effect of an impairment is one:

- Which has lasted at least 12 months; or
- Where the total period for which it lasts, from the time of the first onset, is likely to be at least 12 months; or
- Which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected

#### 2.5. 'Normal day-to-day activities'

The Act does not define what is to be regarded as a 'normal day-to-day activity'.

Account should be taken of whether the person's impairment substantially affects his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities such as remembering to do things, organising their thoughts, planning a course of action and carrying it out, taking in new knowledge, and understanding spoken or written information.

For example, a woman has Asperger's syndrome, a form of autism, and this causes her to have difficulty communicating with people. She finds it hard to understand non-verbal communications such as facial expressions, and non-factual communication such as jokes. She takes everything that is said very literally, and therefore has difficulty in making or keeping friends or developing close relationships. She is given verbal instructions during office banter with her manager, but her ability to understand the instruction is impaired because she is unable to isolate the instruction from the social conversation. Effective communication can be achieved in many ways including verbal and non-verbal communication, including follow up written confirmation of any instruction/request.

## Part 3: Fair Recruitment & Selection:

### 3.1. Application Forms

Application Forms are available in formats that are appropriate for applicants who are visually impaired and include large print, computer disc and Braille on request.

Consideration will be given to disabled applicants who wish to present the required information in a different way.

### 3.2. Job Descriptions & Person Specifications

Employee and person specifications that contain discriminatory criteria are contrary to the Equality Act 2010 and recruiting managers should review them prior to the recruitment process.

Health related criteria should be carefully considered as they are usually irrelevant e.g. good eyesight, good verbal skills or being “fit and healthy”. Even if a physical activity is usually essential to a job, a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act could be to allocate this duty to a colleague.

Many disabled people do not have the same level or number of qualifications of non-disabled people of similar age because they may have been involved in segregated (“special”) education. Although recent evidence between 2005/06 to 2010/11 would suggest that disabled students achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A\* - C has increased significantly.

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/disability-facts-and-figures.php#ed> . Many disabled people may be able to demonstrate skills equivalent to qualifications via previous experience. Consider whether academic qualifications should be required within the person specification.

### 3.3. Advertising

The Council’s JobNews bulletin is sent to the Job Centre Plus office. Managers are also encouraged to use the national disability newspapers e.g. Disability Now; the Disability Works website and the local Connexions service.

All vacancies go through the Payroll & Employment Services Team (PEST). The Council has achieved the two-tick status (‘positive about disabled people’) which informs disabled people that Reading Borough Council is committed to good practice in employing disabled people.

Vacancies should be advertised for a minimum of two weeks and the Disability Employment Review group would ask managers to consider allowing longer than two weeks between the advert and the closing date, allowing informal networks to circulate the advert to friends and colleagues, and achieve a wider circulation.

All advertisements should carry a positive action statement encouraging applications from disabled people, state the workplace is accessible if appropriate, and that the job is open to job share.

Advertisement should state the date the interviews will be held in order to give prospective applicants some idea of the timescale for recruitment. This is particularly important for disabled applicants who may need to make travel arrangements and book interpreters.

Application forms will be sent out in an accessible format upon request e.g. tape, large print. The closing date should be extended for candidates to compensate for any delay in arranging the application form in the correct format.

### 3.4. Shortlisting

Managers should contact a member of the PEST Team if you consider a disabled person should not be shortlisted because of his/her impairment.

Shortlisted applicants should be given at least 2 weeks notice of the interview date unless it was stated in the advert. This will enable disabled applicants to make travel arrangements and prepare for presentation.

All shortlisted applicants will be informed that reasonable adjustments will be made to the interview arrangements in order to meet their access needs. Applicants are requested to state their access needs (e.g. British Sign Language (BSL) signer or space for assistance dog) in the letter inviting them to the interview and these needs must be met if possible. The applicant will inform HR of their access needs and HR will inform the recruitment panel.

Access to Work may be able to cover the costs of interpreters and the disabled candidate's travel if a taxi is needed.

### 3.5. Disability Two Ticks Scheme

RBC has been awarded the Disability *Two Ticks* Symbol and this symbol identifies those employers who have agreed to meet five commitments regarding the recruitment, employment, retention and career development of disabled people:

Commitment 1: To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.

Commitment 2: To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

Commitment 3: To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment.

Commitment 4: To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make the commitments work.

Commitment 5: Each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let employees and the Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

How does the Two Ticks work at RBC?

The Two Ticks commitment means that all disabled applicants who meet the minimum/basic criteria for the job will be guaranteed a job interview. Therefore, if you do decide to disclose your disability, the information will be provided to the chair of the short-listing panel and the Payroll and Employment Services Team (PEST).

We ask all job applicants to complete our *Equal Opportunity Recruitment Monitoring* form (which is part of the RBC application form) as honestly as possible so that we can monitor the effective implementation of our policies. When we receive it, our PEST team will separate this from the main application form.

### 3.6. Selection Panel

All selection panel members should be trained in equal opportunities, diversity issues and disability awareness. The Council currently delivers a number of Recruitment & Selection courses and details are available from the Learning & Development team.

### 3.7. The interview

Interview panel members should not make assumptions based on a person's impairment or the person's ability to undertake work. This would contravene the Equality Act 2010.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to the conduct of the interview itself. At the beginning of an interview the chair of the panel must check with all candidates that their access needs have been met. If a disabled candidate uses assistive software a reasonable adjustment can be for them to do a computer test at home/at work. There are examples of the interview panel emailing a test and timing the disabled person to complete

the test which is then emailed back. The actual interview takes place later giving the candidate time to reach the interview venue. This can be easier and less stressful than trying to replicate assistive software at the interview as technical hitches very often occur.

All interviews should be held in accessible venues. Appropriate car parking may need to be arranged in advance.

Some candidates may benefit from having the interview at a particular time of the day, for example, if they have a condition that causes them to be drowsy at certain times of the day, they need to take medication or eat at specific times, or they have difficulty using public transport during the rush hour.

BSL Interpreters should be given the questions 15 minutes in advance of the interview to enable them time to prepare. Check with interpreters and the Deaf/hard of hearing candidate how best to arrange the interview room to ensure the Deaf candidate can communicate well.

Under the Equality Act it is unlawful for a prospective employer to ask a job applicant about his or her health before offering work. This means that you cannot ask job applicants questions about their health and sickness record (e.g. how many days sickness absence they have taken) at any stage of the recruitment process before a job offer has been made.

It is acceptable to engage in a discussion about access requirements (such as wheelchair access to the premises where they will be working), before any offer is made, but only where this is raised by the applicant.

Once a job offer has been made, the legislation does not prevent you from exploring any disability or health issues, such as instigating job related reasonable adjustments.

Usually, interview questions can be designed that explore an applicant's competencies without reference to his/her impairment.

For example, an applicant with a hearing impairment might apply for an office administrative officer post, which has "experience of dealing with challenging customers on the telephone" in the person specification. The panel could ask each applicant to give an example of how they have done this in previous employment. If the candidate with a hearing impairment can answer this it will demonstrate that reasonable adjustments can be provided which enable them to use the telephone and there will be no need to ask them specifically about their impairment.

### 3.8. After the interview

After offering a job to a disabled candidate, the manager is responsible for ensuring that s/he receives sufficient support to be ready for the new work. Managers must be proactive in enquiring about access needs and possible reasonable adjustments. It is not appropriate to wait until the Disabled person raises these issues.

If, following a job offer, you feel that there is part of the job which the disabled person would not be able to do on account of their impairment you may need to discuss this with them what adjustments would be required for them to undertake the full requirements of the job. All possible options must be considered, for example, reallocation of duties, support workers, purchasing aids & equipment, access improvements.

The manager should encourage the candidate to contact the Access to Work Team immediately to ensure any equipment and assistance is in place as soon as possible after s/he takes up post.

### 3.9. Occupational Health

All staff are required to complete a health questionnaire in relation to the demands of the job and may have a medical or health examination. If you have a disability you will be required to disclose this information to the Occupational Health service. Your medical information will be kept confidential to Occupational health at all times and they will use the information supplied to advise managers how you can be supported in the workplace. The information supplied or obtained will be processed only in accordance with medical ethical rules and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

### 3.10. Agencies

If a Manager is using a recruitment agency to find candidates, or is hiring temporary agency staff, s/he should ensure that the agency is aware of its duties under the Equality Act to make reasonable adjustments.

## Part 4: Explicit support for Disabled Staff:

### 4.1. Access to Work

Access to Work (ATW) offers advice, support and financial assistance to employers and disabled employees (the scheme also organises supported employment opportunities).

- Specialist equipment for disabled employees.
- Adaptations to premises.
- Employing a reader or support worker.
- Employing BSL interpreters for Deaf workers.
- Travel costs to and from work if public transport / personal transport is inaccessible to the disabled employee.

Managers should encourage applicants to contact ATW as soon as they have made a firm job offer and not wait until they start in employment.

The Access to Work Business Centre will refer the disabled employee to an Access to Work advisor who is local to the workplace.

100% of costs may be covered through ATW if you are a new employee, but it must be claimed within the first 6 weeks, otherwise cost sharing will apply.

For existing RBC employees, cost sharing will apply. The employer will pay the first £1,000 and 20% of costs up to £10,000.

Your circumstances may be reviewed by ATW after between one and three years.

ATW will only pay for equipment additional to what RBC would normally provide. As RBC is a large organisation, ATW may expect it to be reasonable for funding some adjustment costs. Managers should also note that they will initially have to use their own budgets to purchase equipment until costs are reimbursed by ATW.

Initial applications to ATW can be time consuming for the employee. Claiming back money for ongoing claims (interpreters or support workers) can also be time consuming and disabled staff may need additional administrative support, or additional support worker time each month to complete the claims.

## 4.2. Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010 an employer has a duty to make reasonable changes for disabled applicants and for employees whose condition is covered under the Act.

### 4.2.1. Adjustment

The adjustment could be a physical change or a change in the way something is done these changes could be assessing working hours, alternative duties & responsibilities, looking at alternative roles within the service you manage or adjacent services; if there is role available. If not, are you able request a swap from another employee (in the short term with consent) or is there a need to consider redeployment as, all other options have been explored? Please note this is not an exhaustive or exclusive list and in the course of your analysis, other adjustments you believe appropriate should be considered.

### 4.2.2. Useful factors to consider when determining what is *reasonable*

- The effectiveness in preventing disadvantage

How effective would/has the adjustment be in preventing the employee's disadvantage? It is important to note that if an adjustment doesn't remove or substantially alleviate the disadvantage, the effectiveness is not deemed reasonable. (Neither trials, nor any tools used in analysis would be accepted as making a reasonable adjustment; these are merely aids in determining whether an action might be a reasonable adjustment).

In reality, it may take several different adjustments to deal with elevating the disadvantage and, advice can be sought from Occupational Health with regards to options/ideas you have available or seek recommended options from a practitioner.

- Its practicality

It is likely an employer will implement an adjustment that is easier than to take a step that is hard therefore, if the disadvantage can easily be removed by changing the way things are done, or the equipment that is used, then the adjustment is likely to be considered reasonable. However, just because an adjustment may be difficult to implement this would not make it unreasonable and would need to be balanced against other factors.

- The financial and other costs and the extent of any disruption caused.

When trying to decide whether an adjustment would be reasonable, the cost of the adjustment and any disruption it might cause should also be considered.

- The extent of an organisation's financial and other resources.

A large organisation such as Reading Borough Council would be more likely to make a reasonable adjustment than one with fewer resources therefore, should an adjustment cost a significant amount it is more likely to be reasonable if the “organisation” has substantial financial resources.

It is important to note that “resources” should be looked across the whole of the organisation and not just the service area where the employee is situated. The balance of the factors practicality should be balanced against all above factors.

**Potential pitfall**

When assessing whether an adjustment is “reasonable” it is important to be mindful you are not making any assumptions or incorrect perceptions as to someone’s disability/illness. If in doubt or you require further advice/guidance with regard to an individual’s disability or illness; seek further information directly from the individual about their needs furthermore, you can seek advice from Occupational Health/GP/HR.

Previously, adjustments to premises and to policies, practices and procedures had to be made by service providers only where it would otherwise be ‘impossible or unreasonably difficult’ for a disabled person to use the service. Now, under the new Equality Act, adjustments must be made where disabled people experience a ‘substantial disadvantage’. This means that service providers may have to make more adjustments. Also, it was previously possible for a service provider to legally justify failing to provide a reasonable adjustment in certain circumstances. Now, the only question is whether the adjustment is a reasonable one to make”.

You are only required to make adjustments that are reasonable in all the circumstances. Factors such as the cost and practicability of making an adjustment and the resources available to you may be taken into account in deciding what is reasonable. Ultimately, it is for an Employment Tribunal to decide, in the event of a claim of alleged unlawful disability discrimination, what adjustment should be made for a particular disabled employee, and whether you were correct to decline to make an adjustment on grounds of practicality or cost.

Further guidance is available from  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>

- **Good practice in application**

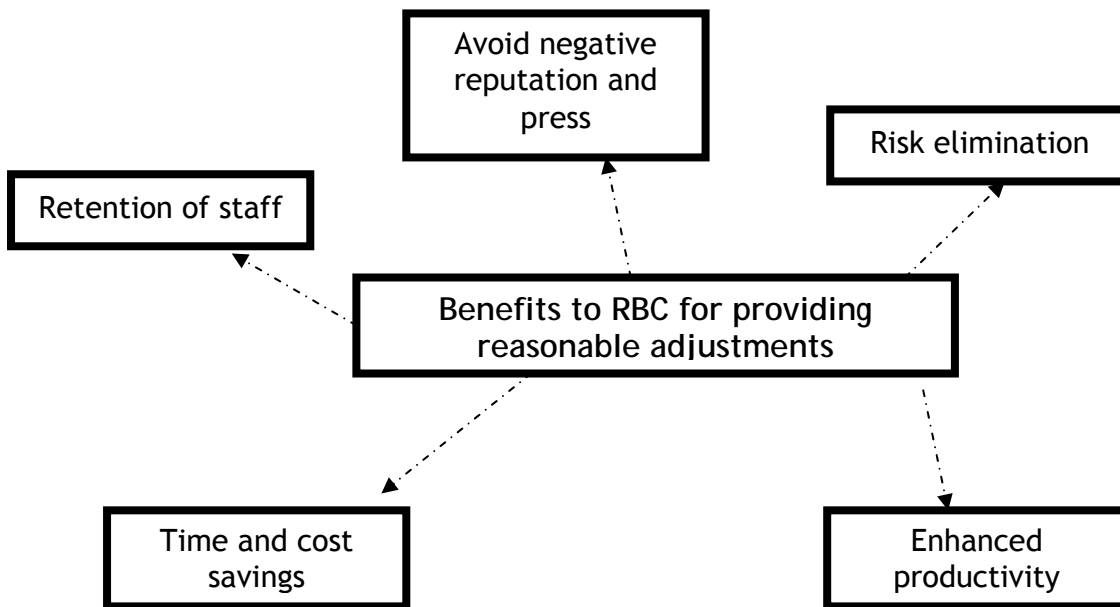
1. Give thorough consideration in making a reasonable adjustment for both employees covered by the Equalities Act 2010 and those who may have a health issue identified but are not covered by the definition of disability.
2. Consider each case fully and fairly on its individual merits.
3. Ensure as reasonably practicable a member of staff covered by the Equalities Act 2010 has the same access to all facilities and support that is involved in conducting a role as someone without a disability, throughout the employment relationship.
4. Seek advice and support from Human Resources in any stage of considering and/or when implementing a reasonable adjustment. Further advice from Occupational Health can also be sought.
5. There are currently no set time-scales for making a reasonable adjustment therefore, good practice should be making an adjustment promptly and managers should be actively monitoring and reviewing an adjustment in-line with any improvements or deterioration in the employee's health.
6. If you encounter a delay in implementing a reasonable adjustment, please contact your Human Resources Adviser for further advice, particularly if the cause of the delay may delay/prevent the member of staff from returning to work.

- **Examples of Reasonable Adjustments**

Examples:

- Access to Work fund taxi to work when unable to drive.
- Access to Work fund equipment for computer to enable employee to remain working.
- Allowing more flexible working or working from home on days when travelling in is difficult or more rest may be needed during the day.
- Adjusting start times when medication affects sleep.
- Enabling the employee to have a Personal Assistant (not RBC funded) to help them at work.
- Removing the need for an employee to push clients in wheel chairs.
- Purchase special chair for someone with back problem.
- Allowing the employee greater control over how they plan and manage their time and workload. If practicable.

- A phased return to work if the person has been on sickness absence- starting with a phased hours/days or part-time working and building up. 6-8 weeks.
- Allowing time off for attending therapeutic sessions, treatment, assessment and/or rehabilitation.
- Look at their physical environment and review what adjustments would be desirable. E.g. offer a quiet place where they can go if feeling anxious or stressed.
- Changing shift patterns or exploring different work options such as part-time, job-share, flexible working etc.
- Looking at aspects of the job that the person finds particularly stressful and rearranging responsibilities
- Redeploying the employee to another vacancy within the Council. This should usually be a last resort once all reasonable adjustments have been fully explored in the individual's existing role.
- Homeworking can be a positive reasonable adjustment for disabled staff whether it is occasional, partial homeworking, or a temporary arrangement whilst the office is being made accessible or for impairment related reasons. Managers should liaise with IT to ensure that assistive software is compatible with the home working arrangement.



### 4.3. Adapted workstations & accessibility

Currently it is RBC's practice that any workstation which has been adapted for a disabled employee will be dedicated solely to that employee. However, RBC is moving to new Civic Offices and encouraging flexibility to ensure that there is sufficient and maximum use of space. We therefore need to find ways to ensure that adapted workstations can, as far as possible, be made available to colleagues without compromising accessibility for the disabled employee.

Workstation assessments need to be undertaken to assess whether a workstation can be used flexibly, and managers must discuss their work environment with the disabled employee to ensure it meets their needs. Managers should not make assumptions regarding the needs of their employee.

### 4.4. Accessible Parking

If required a designated space should be made available as close to the building as possible and reserved for the disabled employee. The Council will reimburse parking fees if appropriate.

## Part 5: Supporting Disabled Staff at Work:

### 5.1. Preparing staff for working with the disabled employee

#### 5.1.1. Confidentiality:

HR and managers have a duty to keep information regarding people's impairments confidential under the Data Protection Act

#### 5.1.2. Colleagues

Managers may want to check with the disabled employee if they want colleagues to be informed that they have an impairment, and if so, discuss what to say and to whom.

### 5.2. Health and Safety

It is important that risk assessments are undertaken for lone workers, and a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) should be planned with the disabled employee. This should include arrangements if they are attending meetings etc. in other buildings. Advice can be sought from the Corporate Health & Safety Team.

### 5.3. Supervision

If necessary allow longer or more frequent supervision sessions initially, to ensure access issues and the job are discussed adequately.

### 5.4. Team Meetings

Disabled employees must have equal access to team meetings. Ensure access needs for team meetings are included in their Access to Work application (e.g. loop system in team meeting area).

### 5.5. Training

Disabled employees should be offered training which is specific to their needs, such as one to one IT training on how their specialist software interfaces with either an existing or new office IT system.

Training appropriate for all employees may need to be altered to be accessible to the disabled employee.

All trainers should be informed of the disabled employee's access needs before any training session.

## 5.6. Retention

The Council has a legal responsibility to attempt to redeploy employees who as a result of their impairment become unable to fulfil the duties of their substantive post.

If a disabled employee is unable to carry out their work despite reasonable adjustments being made, medical redeployment could be considered.

Ill health retirement or dismissal on medical grounds must only be considered when all other options have been fully explored.

## 5.7. Developmental Support

If a disabled member of staff wishes to discuss career development then support is available from Learning & Development, Human Resources and the Council's union learning representatives.

## 5.8. Sickness Absence

Please see the Council's Capability: Managing Sickness Absence Procedure & Guidance Notes

## 5.9. Employees with mental and emotional distress and/or stress related impairments

Employees experiencing mental and emotional distress must not be treated differently to other employees unless they ask for help or demonstrate clear signs through their performance or behaviour that it is needed.

Creative solutions need to be adopted for staff experiencing mental and emotional distress, such as being allowed to take time out in a quiet place if they are feeling anxious or distressed.

Flexible working can reduce potential periods of sickness absence e.g. starting work at a later time if they find it hard to leave the house in the mornings because of their impairment or medication.

One-to-one supervision sessions and informal discussions can be used as stigma-free opportunities to find out about any problems. Employees may be reluctant to talk openly if they feel that their disclosures will not be dealt with positively and sympathetically.

Managers need to check with the disabled employee how to explain any impairment related sickness absences. Colleagues are often unsure how to respond to colleagues who are off with depression etc.

Occasionally an employee may behave in a way that is unusual and affects colleagues or clients. Managers should try and take the individual to a quiet place and speak to them calmly. Suggest that the employee contacts a relative or friend or that they go home and contact their GP or Occupational Health.

### **5.10. Support for people with dyslexia, dyspraxia etc**

Assessments and emotional support can be obtained from:

Adult Dyslexia Centre  
2 Denmark Terrace  
Denmark Street  
Maidenhead SL6 7FN

Physical aids include memory prompt cards/cue cards/technology, chunking and checking, proof readers, encouragement, coaching, writing frames/templates, quiet environment, headphones, overlays, specialist lamps.

### **5.11. Allowing disabled employees to attend medical appointments during working hours**

Paid time off will be given for specialist or hospital appointments, meetings with a Disability Employment Advisor, rehabilitation or assessment.

### **5.12. Modifying policies and procedures**

If current policies and procedures appear too rigid to enable the disabled employee to benefit, contact HR to discuss adjustments. The Equality Act 2010 code of practice specifically refers to modifying disciplinary or grievance procedures and to redundancy selection criteria.

### **5.13. Making Adjustments to meetings and communication systems**

- Hold meetings in accessible venues.
- Do not table papers on the day.
- Ensure that staff know how to book sign language interpreters.
- Organise information in accessible formats.
- Agree access protocols at staff meetings.

## 5.14. Complaints

Any current employee who considers that he or she has been treated unfairly or discriminated against on the grounds of their impairment or mental and emotional distress may raise a complaint through the Council's Grievance Procedure.

However, external job applicants with a complaint about the recruitment process would seek redress through contacting Human Resources.



## Recruitment and retention of disabled people

Guide to Reading Borough Council's policy and practice.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document is available on the intranet and in large print, computer disc, audio tape and Braille on request. Please contact Human Resources.

July 2013

## 1. How does Reading Borough Council demonstrate its commitment to disability equality?

Reading Borough Council is committed to creating equal opportunities for everyone. One of our aims is to improve the job prospects of disabled people.

Reading Borough Council believes that disabled people have a right to be able to participate fully in employment opportunities that the Council has to offer.

How will the Council meet its aim?

- Ensuring that physical, social and attitudinal barriers that disabled people face are removed;
- Inclusive and accessible environments are promoted;
- disabled people experience equality of opportunity when applying for employment and working at the Council;
- providing tailored disability awareness training for staff involved in recruitment & selection and supporting employees who become disabled whilst employed;
- reviewing and developing its recruitment procedures which encourage applications from and the employment of people with disabilities. To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their merits;
- taking specific steps to ensure that disabled people have the same opportunity as other staff to develop their potential. To ask disabled people what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities at work during the annual appraisal interview;
- giving the fullest support to any employee who becomes disabled or whose disability becomes more marked;
- ensuring that disabled people are involved in work experience, training and education links.

Meeting these commitments will make it clear to disabled employees that the Council recognises and makes the most of their abilities. They incorporate the five promises made by the Council to abide by the Government's "Positive About Disabled People" two ticks symbol which is displayed in our recruitment advertising.

## 2. What is the Disability Two Ticks Scheme?

RBC has been awarded the Disability *Two Ticks* Symbol and this symbol identifies those employers who have agreed to meet five commitments regarding the recruitment, employment, retention and career development of disabled people:

**Commitment 1:** To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.

**Commitment 2:** To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

**Commitment 3:** To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment.

**Commitment 4:** To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make the commitments work.

**Commitment 5:** Each year to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let employees and the Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

**How does the Two Ticks work at RBC?**

The Two Ticks commitment ensures that any disabled candidate who meets the minimum/basic criteria for a vacancy will be guaranteed an interview. Therefore, if you do decide to disclose your disability, the information will be provided to the chair of the short-listing panel and the Payroll and Employment Services Team (PEST).

We ask all job applicants to complete our *Equal Opportunity Recruitment Monitoring* form (which is part of the RBC application form) as honestly as possible so that we can monitor the effective implementation of our policies. When we receive it, our PEST team will separate this from the main application form.

## 3. Why should I disclose I am disabled and will it remain confidential?

RBC's Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure aims to:

- provide a fair and objective method of recruiting employees who have the skills, knowledge and experience to do their jobs;

- ensure that we adhere to our Equal Opportunity in Employment Policy in recruiting employees;
- provide a method of recruitment suited to the Council's needs within its workforce planning framework;
- meet our legal obligations, including a commitment to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults when recruiting to posts with access to these groups ('vulnerable groups').

Applications will be based on the information you have entered and you will be assessed on whether or not you meet the criteria detailed in the person specification.

If you are disabled and demonstrate that you have met the person specification, then under RBC's commitment to the Jobcentre Plus's Two Ticks Disability Symbol you will be guaranteed to be shortlisted and invited to an interview.

#### 4. Should I tell you I am disabled on my application form?

Telling the Council about your disability is important as it will ensure that you are offered adjustments as part of any assessment, interview or ultimately to carry out your job if it is offered to you.

There are many benefits in telling us what your needs are or asking for support - moreover, it helps the Council to provide practical support to ensure that disabled people can participate on equal terms with non-disabled people. Providing information such as this helps RBC understand the diversity of its organisation.

#### 5. What are reasonable adjustments?

Equality law recognises that bringing about equality for disabled people may mean removing physical barriers and/or providing extra support for a disabled employee. This is the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that a disabled person has the same access to everything that is involved in getting and doing a job as a non-disabled person, as far as is reasonable.

Many factors will be involved in deciding what adjustments the Council needs to make and they will depend on individual circumstances.

## 6. How does RBC make sure that their services are meeting the needs of disabled people?

### Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

EIA is the thorough and systematic analysis of a policy, practice or procedure to determine whether it has a differential impact on a particular equality group (i.e. age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation). RBC undertakes EIAs as an integral part of the organisation's commitment to promoting equality and diversity to staff and the people of Reading.

## 7. What is the Equality Act 2010?

The main purpose of the Equality Act 2010 (EA) is to streamline and strengthen anti-discrimination legislation in Great Britain. It provides the legal framework that protects people, including disabled people, from discrimination. It replaces a range of anti-discrimination legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The Act says a disabled person is someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the affected person's life. Effects which are not long-term would therefore include loss of mobility due to a broken limb which is likely to heal within 12 months and the effects of temporary infections, from which a person would be likely to recover within 12 months.

In some circumstances, a person will have the protected characteristic of disability if they have had a condition in the past, even if they no longer have the symptoms, examples include cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions from the point of diagnosis; hearing or sight impairments, or a significant mobility difficulty; and mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

## 8. "People with disabilities have poor attendance records"

Disability and illness should never be equated. Research confirms that people with disabilities are no more likely to be absent from work than anyone else.

## 9. "Disabled people pose a health and safety risk"

There is nothing to show that employees with disabilities are any less safe than others, either in terms of safety relating to particular types of work or safety matters generally, for example, dealing with a fire alert.

**10. “Disabled people can’t do heavy work or work requiring dexterity”**

A physical impairment, such as a damaged hand or fingers, does not necessarily mean that a disabled person cannot be considered for a job which calls for dexterity. People often find ways of minimising the effects of their disabilities. Where difficulties are experienced, these can often be overcome with the use of special aids.

**11. “Disabled people costs more to employ”**

The cost of making adaptations to the workplace or buying special aids is likely to be less than you would expect. Financial help is available from the Government’s Access to Work Scheme to make even the most expensive of adaptations affordable.

**12. How can I support a disabled member of staff who has started working for me?**

As a manager, you will arrange an induction process to help your new member of staff to settle into their position and to help them see how their role fits into the wider organisation. During their probationary period they will take part in regular probationary reviews with you. This two way review of progress is a good time to discuss any reasonable adjustments.

**13. A member of staff I manage has disclosed their disability to me but does not want me to inform anyone else?**

You should take time to talk to the staff member in private and explain to them that disclosure is aimed at gaining knowledge on how reasonable changes can be made to the work environment to assist the staff member to realise his/her full potential. It is not aimed at learning about a staff member’s disability and is not meant to be intrusive or cause unlawful discrimination.

Explain that certain key people may/will need to know (if appropriate) about their disability so that bespoke /tailored support can be provided and staff will better understand how to make the work environment more accessible for the staff member (for example, with regard to accessing buildings, equipment, information, training and advice). Also explain to the staff member that a request not to make information available to others may affect the range of adjustments made. It may mean that either a reasonable adjustment has to be made in a different

way, a less satisfactory alternative reasonable adjustment is made, or no adjustment is made.

There are exceptional circumstances when you must share disability information. Please see FAQ 11.

NB. A disabled staff member has the right to request that you do not reveal the existence or nature of his or her disability to anyone else (the rules of confidentiality will ALWAYS apply). You should not press the staff member for their written consent, as this could be perceived as harassment.

#### 14. What is a Personal Emergency Evacuation Procedure (PEEP)?

A PEEP is a document that details how, if necessary, the safe evacuation will be conducted of a disabled person from a building in the event of an emergency situation. The Health & Safety Team is available to support managers, staff and students in this process.

It is crucial that a PEEP is in place as soon as possible when a disabled employee begins working at the Council. It is part of the induction process for new staff, so you should work with them to produce a PEEP for all buildings that they are based in and those they may visit.

#### 15. Under what exceptional circumstances must I disclose disability information?

Certain exceptional circumstances may allow for the release of personal data. These include where there is an immediate threat to the personal safety of the staff-member concerned, or to the safety of others; where there is a legal requirement to disclose that information (i.e. a crime has been committed or it is covered by Health and Safety legislation); and/or where professional fitness to practice may be compromised (this will apply to a limited number of jobs where the disclosure of personal data is necessary to assess fitness to practice).

This list is not exhaustive.

#### 16. What is Access to Work (AtW) and what support can they provide?

Access to Work (AtW) is a government scheme aiming to assist disabled people in paid employment or those due to start employment. The scheme provides practical support and a grant to meet costs associated with adjustments or equipment required by disabled people.

To be eligible for help, the applicant or member of staff must have a disability or health condition which is defined under the Equality Act and normally live and work in Great Britain.

Types of Help available from AtW:

a) Special Aids and Equipment (SAE)

Provides grants towards aids and equipment in the workplace which are needed as a result of a disability.

b) Adaptations to Premises and Equipment (APE)

Helps modify premises and adapt equipment to make it accessible for a disabled employee.

c) Travel to Work (TtW)

Provides a grant towards the extra costs of travel to and from work where a person cannot use public transport as a result of their disability or health condition, or helps with adaptations to vehicles.

d). Travel in Work (TiW)

Provides a grant towards the extra cost of travel incurred whilst at work where a person cannot use public transport due to their disability or health condition, or helps with adaptations to vehicles.

e) Communication Support at Interview (CSI)

A grant for an interpreter or other support at job interview for someone who has difficulties in communicating with others.

f) Support Worker (SW)

Provides support in the workplace (such as BSL Interpreter) to allow the person to access their work environment or a Job Coach to assist them with their duties.

**CASE STUDY:**

Alison was successful in securing a job as Human Resource Assistant. Registered blind, she could not read information on her computer monitor and written text. Using public transport was also a problem as catching a bus meant crossing busy roads and city streets. She contacted Access to Work for help who funded an in work assessment which recommended specialist software and a CCTV1. AtW also provided funding for a taxi to get her to and from work. CCTV1 (Closed Circuit Television) - A television video camera combination used by people who are visually impaired to magnify the print in books, newspapers and it can also be used to write letters.

**17. What is the process for implementing Reasonable Adjustments?**

Once a manager becomes aware that an employee is disabled for example, prior to an interview, during induction, following long term sickness absence or via a 1-2-1/supervision meeting, they will need to explore any needs/implications with the individual. This is because it is the manager's responsibility to ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented in relation to how work is undertaken on a day to day basis, the physical features of the premises, if the individual is likely to be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with an individual who is not disabled.

To do this, managers, in liaison with Human Resources, should meet with the individual to seek their views on how their impairment affects their day to day activities and what changes in relation to the above might help them in performing their role and remove any substantial disadvantage. This process of identifying and meeting individual needs is often straightforward although in some cases this may require a risk assessment, to identify risks and ways in which they can be mitigated or removed.

There will also be times when it requires input from other sources e.g. the Occupational Health Service, Human Resources, a Health & Safety Advisor and potentially other external bodies such as Access to Work (ATW). This information should then be used by the manager, in liaison with Human Resources, to give full and fair consideration to all potential reasonable adjustments. The manager and (where appropriate) a representative from Human Resources should then meet to discuss any potential options with the individual, and agree what action is required, by whom and within what timescale. During the meeting the employee may be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative. A record will be maintained by the line manager as to these considerations/outcomes.

Once implemented, the impact of any reasonable adjustments should be reviewed at an agreed timescale to ensure they continue to be the most appropriate way of achieving their means. Managers may need to occasionally consider making new reasonable adjustments or take existing reasonable adjustments into account as new situations emerge.

**18. A member of staff I manage has become disabled, what do I need to do to support them?**

If a member of staff becomes disabled during the course of their employment and tells you that they have concerns about access or their

ability to carry out their work, which you or they think could be for a reason related to a disability, you should arrange to meet and take the time to discuss the support sought in a confidential setting. During this meeting you should:

- ensure that you create a welcoming and open atmosphere;
- reiterate that it is in their best interest to disclose, emphasising that the aim of disclosing is to put appropriate support in place and that it is not necessary to give full personal details other than in a confidential setting;
- make it plain to the staff member that they do not need to tell you about all the details of their disability other than how they affect/relate to the work environment;
- discuss the staff member's reasonable adjustment requirements;
- ask the staff member's written permission to pass on the information necessary to make reasonable adjustments
- confirm who the staff member agrees the information necessary to make reasonable adjustments should be shared with, and which information should be shared;
- discuss confidentiality issues with them;
- advise the staff member that the Equality Act 2010 offers protection against Disability Discrimination.

If you have received written consent from the staff member, you must pass on the disability information, as agreed with the staff member, as soon as possible. Support and advice can be provided by Human Resources, who will attend meetings and liaise with Occupational Health and Access to Work as required. Losing the skills and expertise of a member of staff who becomes disabled during their working life is something the Council wants to avoid.

## 19. What is the Access & Disability Forum?

The Access and Disabilities Working Group is a formal council group of councillors and members of the public who are disabled themselves and/or who represent organised disability groups. The Working Group campaigns for improved access and information for disabled people. It acts as a pressure group and a consultative group in identifying and promoting public awareness of problems of access for disabled people to public buildings, commercial premises, the highway network and public transport within the Borough. It monitors and reviews the role of the Council as an employer and as a provider of services to disabled people.

**20. What type of assistive technology and software is available to support disabled staff?**

**TextHELP Read and Write**

This is a programme which will read text on the screen. It allows text enlargement and screen reading software which can be used for proofreading as well as listening to other text, such as information on websites.

**Inspiration**

This is a mind-mapping programme which is useful for staff with Dyslexia or other conditions which affect the ability to organise ideas.

**Microsoft Accessibility Wizard**

The Accessibility Wizard guides you through the process of customising your computer with tools designed to help meet your vision, hearing, or mobility needs. Accessibility options (such as StickyKeys, ShowSounds, and Mousekeys) help disabled users to make full use of the computer. Some of the options, such as MouseKeys, may be of interest to all users.

**Display Settings**

These are available to all users including the ability to changing to a high contrast profile. Please feel free to contact IT Services for assistance with customising the screen resolution/colour theme to suit your needs.

**Joystick controllers**

These are for people who have difficulty using a mouse.

**Speech Recognition / Speech-to-text software**

A number of applications, including Dragon Naturally Speaking Voice activated speech-to-text software can also be ordered for people who may have difficulty using a keyboard.

**21. Is it ok to discuss support for a disabled member of staff during their appraisal?**

Yes, but all managers are asked to make arrangements to meet with any disabled employees they manage on a regular basis through 1-2-1/supervision sessions and not wait for the Appraisal meeting, given that disability can change over time. It is good practice for both parties to

keep a note of these discussions and any actions agreed so that proper review and follow-up can take place.

The Appraisal meeting can provide a further opportunity for a discussion and to review arrangements and reasonable adjustments that have been made to support the member of staff to develop and use their abilities.

**22. What training is available for line managers of disabled staff?**

- Supporting Employees with Disabilities (working title to be developed with L&D)

**23. How should sickness related to disability be recorded?**

The absence of a disabled member of staff will be dealt with under the provisions of the Council's: Capability: Managing Sickness Absence Procedure. This policy provides a framework for the consistent management of absence across the Council.

Medical/hospital appointments are not recorded as sick leave.

Disability Leave (tbc)

**24. What do I need to take into account when I am involved in recruitment & selection of new employees?**

Anyone who is involved in any stage of the recruitment process should ensure they follow the Council's Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure. Training on the Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure is available from the Learning & Development Team. All members on recruitment panels must have undertaken the Recruitment & Selection Training or been assessed as competent by the Human Resources Team.

The Policy & Procedure sets out what should happen at each stage of the recruitment process - from when a vacant position arises to when that position is filled.

When recruiting the following should be considered with regard to encouraging disabled applicants to apply:

- Focus on the type of work which needs to be done in the role rather than how it should be done;

- Remove any negative language in adverts e.g. replace “must be able to touch-type at 80wpm” with “must be able to produce accurate reports using a word processing package”;
- Consider adjustments to tests, interview and assessments to accommodate disabled candidates’ needs;
- Ensure tests are accessible and non-discriminatory;
- Only specify qualifications when they are essential to the role.

25. What if a disabled member of my staff can’t get to work because of adverse weather conditions?

The Council recognises that severe weather may occasionally influence or prevent staff attending work due to the circumstances of the employee, or as a result of disruption to travel or carer arrangements.

The purpose of the Policy in the Event of Disruption to Staffing is to clarify the responsibilities of managers and expectations of employees in the case of severe weather conditions. This document will help to clarify the assessments required when a disabled member of staff is unable to travel to work or use alternative transport as a result of their disability.