

## **CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON DRAFT MOBILE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2009 – APPENDIX 2**

<b>Feedback from</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Paragraph No</b>	<b>Page No</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response to Feedback by CMT</b>
<b>Unison 14<sup>th</sup> September</b>	15	15(b)	10	How will employees be reimbursed for internet connectivity when doing Council work but it is not high security	An employee will be advised at the outset and as part of their personal plan whether they are eligible for broadband costs. If applicable, they will receive an allowance which will be calculated in line with paragraph 15.1 (b) of the policy.
	15	15 (c)	11	Who has agreed the household costs expenses when nothing has been agreed by Cabinet/Council	The policy, like any others, is written assuming it is agreed by the Council. It will be for the Members of C&R Committee, Cabinet and Council to request amendments as they see fit.
	16	16.2	12	If managers have the responsibility to ensure Health and Safety and RISK assessment of the work area in the home are they qualified and trained	All Managers will need to be trained to ensure Health and Safety and Risk Assessments are carried out to the required standard.
<b>ICT Consultant 15<sup>th</sup> September</b>	5	5.1	4	Definitions is Sect 6 not 5	Noted. A typo and now corrected.
	6	6.2	5	There's a gap between 4 working days and 2.5. Why not state 50% and 49% respectively for these categories. These will then balance with Appendix C if you change as I propose below.	There is no conflict here. 'At Home' workers are those principally fixed at home (i.e at least 4 days); 'From Home' workers will vary between working at home and in the office but would be expected to spend at least half of the week at home.
	15	15.1b	10/11	Why not also state staff working at least 50% also qualify since you have selected Benefits staff.	This section refers to levels of security, not type of worker and just refers to Benefit's employees as an example of requiring high levels of security.
	15	15.1b	10/11	How will we provide consistency across the Council if Directors make assessments on a case for case basis?	Directors are working closely through Carol Wolliscroft on the assessment of posts to ensure consistency is achieved and in particular for those generic ones.
	Appendix C	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> bullet points	26	There is a gap between 50% working and 2 days per week. I suggest 2 days per week be increased to 49%	Appendix C to be removed; this is too detailed and unnecessary for inclusion in this policy and will require case by case assessment as to IT requirements.
<b>CAPS Directorate 16<sup>th</sup> September</b>	3	3.1	4	Why do we need to spell out – is it not enough to say fairly and consistently to all employees	Point noted. However to meet our duties under equality and diversity legislation it is important that policies reinforce the message that employees' are treated equally and fairly.

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CAPS Directorate 16 <sup>th</sup> September	5	5.6	5	Why is there no appeals procedure?	The assessment for mobile / flexible working is based on posts and meeting the business needs of the Council. It is not based on employees and their preferences. There are already policies in place to support employees with work life balance situations, which the Council fully embraces. Any post that is considered not suitable for mobile / flexible working due to the business needs of the authority, there will be a written assessment as to the reasons why and this will be available to the employee whose post it refers to. For generic posts Directors will work closely together on their assessments to ensure there is a consistent approach taken. The policy will be kept under review.
	12	12.5	9	Think it needs to be a corporate message, agreed by senior managers rather than different messages from different directorates	Point noted and agreed it should be part of the Customer Services Strategy.
	14	14.4	9	Think this is not compatible with the ICT policy e.g. employees are able to search internet on work computer in office outside of working times, this statement would suggest homeworkers are not.	Point noted. The current sentence is too specific and will therefore be amended to state 'in line with the ICT policy'. This will ensure there is no misinterpretation as to what it includes or not.
	15	15.1c	11	Feel household allowance should be paid, working from home would not save travel costs or time as have to take children to childcare, also you are paying for broadband	Noted that in support of household allowance.
	17	17.4	13	The policy mentions clearing your flexi-desk, while I appreciate we are moving towards a paperless office, it does not mention any office storage space for flexible and mobile workers	Where Directorates are in a position to implement the flexi desk initiative before Single Site they will need to address office storage space on a directorate /building basis. If they can't, this part of the policy will not then be fully implemented until single site.

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<b>Resources Directorate</b> <b>18<sup>th</sup> September</b>	16			<p>Health &amp; Safety</p> <p>The document does not seem to include how to address aggressive telephone calls from members of the public. Revenues and Benefits do experience extremely difficult calls and when together in the office environment there is support to call on. In a lone, home environment – whilst the member of Staff could terminate the call if the call has made the member of Staff extremely upset – there is no one physically present to assist in this matter.</p> <p>An incident in Revenues Section on 17<sup>th</sup> September has highlighted the need for this to be considered. Will calls be recorded as an aid to support Staff in proving the difficulties they were experiencing? How would a lone member of Staff be mentored on such an incident?</p>	<p>The situation described will be one of the challenges that certain service areas and in particular Revenues and Benefits face with colleagues working from home. There are no easy solutions to this type of situation as it will happen. However line managers across all service areas will need to ensure that clear arrangements are in place for home / mobile workers to be able to touch base with someone in management during office hours be it for the situation described or anything else where management support is needed. May be worth liaising with the Revenue and Benefit Sections in those authorities who have home working arrangements in place to see how much of a problem they find this situation.</p>
	15	15.1 (c)	11	<p>Whilst recognising the employee will be saving travel to work, costs £13 a month before tax seems a pitiful amount to contribute towards working from home. WFDC must also recognise (and factor in) the savings it is making by employees working from home. I am in no doubt there should be a household allowance.</p>	<p>The amount of £156 per annum is set by HM Revenue and Customs as the maximum that can be paid per annum to an employee in respect of heating, lighting, water, etc before the deduction of tax and without the need for evidence of expenditure. Some authorities operating home / flexible working policies do not provide such an allowance as they believe the savings an employee generates in commuting time and fuel costs is a sufficient allowance in itself.</p>
	15	15.1 (f)	11	<p>More clarity is required here. For example – the employees may be scheduled to be working from home but attending meetings during the normal working day. They are not coming into the office but go straight to the meeting venue. This may actually be close to the HQ. Does the employee claim mileage from home as they are not attending designated office space?</p>	<p>The Council is currently considering an appropriate scheme to ensure that no employee is disadvantaged with regard to car mileage claims. The Council is considering the taxation situation and is taking advice from other councils who have implemented mobile and flexible working. Details will be finalized for the adoption of the policy.</p>

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<b>Resources Directorate</b> <b>18<sup>th</sup> September</b>	14	14.1 to 14.8	10	What consideration has been given for employees working from home regarding desks and chairs? Can employees have on loan these items they are currently using? Is there an alternative one off payment to support this?	This issue has been explored with a number of authorities with home / flexible working policies in place. There is a mixed response, some do provide chairs and desks and others do not. At this stage, there would be no additional payment to that of the proposed Household Allowance. However there will be a point added in the policy which says that Managers can decide as to whether they are in a position to loan the chair or desk as it will depend whether the person will be working from home more than coming into the office. There will still need to be a desk and chair for when they are required to touch down at the office base.
<b>Resources Directorate</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> September</b>	19	19.1 to 19.4	13	Our insurers are happy with the information set out under Liability. However have asked that we ensure that all Health and Safety and Risk Assessment are carried out by the respective Manager and employees are not permitted to undertake their own 'Self Evaluation'.	Point noted. Will ensure this message is reinforced.
<b>CAPS Directorate</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> September</b>				Some time some of us can work some very strange hours including weekends which results in time off in the week. Currently this is managed via rota and paper time sheets. Some time days become really long without notice. This is currently dealt with by allowing shorter days when the opportunity presents. Operationally it would be good to have staff on call. ie available to work if a need arrives but not actually at work eg providing emergency cover for a colleague who is lone working or be on the end of the phone if a volunteer has an emergency. Currently we rely on good will and luck that when a problem arises there is a member of staff available and willing to come into work and sort stuff out. this happens about 6 times a year. Will the new system have any facility to help with this?	The Mobile / Flexible Working Policy is about introducing new ways of working to increase process efficiency and productivity as well as improved availability of services. Although the situation described relates to the Rangers service area, such flexibility and goodwill is present elsewhere. It will need to be discussed with the relevant Directors and Line Mangers to establish appropriate arrangements through the Personal Plan.

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<b>CAPS Directorate</b> <b>24<sup>TH</sup> September 2009</b>	15	15.1 (c)	11	The decision not to pay allowances when working from home to cover incurred costs by the employee (heating/electricity) etc., I believe is unfair. Travel costs may still be incurred for example taking children to school/child care so to say working from home will save employees travel costs may in fact cause additional costs.	The Council is currently considering an appropriate scheme to ensure that no employee is disadvantaged with regard to car mileage claims. The Council is considering the taxation situation and is taking advice from other councils who have implemented mobile and flexible working. Details will be finalized for the adoption of the policy.
<b>Chief Executive's Directorate</b> <b>25<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>	2	2.1		Could add the Flexible Working Regulations 2009 which came into effect from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2009 and support parents with responsibility for children up to age of 16.	Noted and included.
	4	4.2		Should this read: to directorate.	Yes and amended.
	9	9.1		Bullet point 3. Should this add up to 7.24? rather than 7.42	Yes and amended.
	15	15.c		Would it be more cost effective to the Council if it was pro-rata rather than half?	Point noted. However due to it being a very modest fixed amount in the first instance, it is felt a pragmatic approach has to be taken to make the administration of it as simple as possible.
	General comments			As we are moving towards flexible working should ICT support be more flexible ie. A rota system so that someone is contactable during the evening – in case of problems?	The current ICT arrangements will be reviewed once the mobile / flexible working policy is rolled out.
<b>Chief Executive's Directorate</b> <b>25<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>	General comments			As an initial introduction to the policy should managers ask for volunteers rather than identify which posts	The pilots for mobile / flexible working have involved people who have volunteered. Once the policy has been adopted it will be based on posts and the business needs of the Council.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>	14	14.2  15.1b	10  10	14.2 States that dependent on the flexible or mobile working requirements, the Council will usually supply the following equipment and services, as set out in Appendix C. In Appendix c it highlights that the council will provide BT phone line and WFDC broadband along with other equipment. Within the expenses section 15.1b it states that employees will normally be requested to provide and pay for their own Broadband access via an internet service provider. There appears to be a contradiction between the two sections. I may like to comment further once this has been clarified, if it is the case that the employee burdens the cost of the broadband.	Appendix C to be removed as explained above.
	15	15.1c	11	The expenses for an employee is set at £156 per annum the document states that this may appear to be a modest amount, it is recognised that for many employees any additional costs they incur will be off-set by savings in travel to work costs and the associated time. Building Control Officer's (BCO ) will be required to travel into the district on a daily basis to carry out their site inspections as well as working from home therefore the saving mentioned are not applicable. It appears there will be a monetary cost to working from home for a BCO.	The Council is currently considering an appropriate scheme to ensure that no employee is disadvantaged with regard to car mileage claims. The Council is considering the taxation situation and is taking advice from other councils who have implemented mobile and flexible working. Details will be finalized for the adoption of the policy.
	18	18.3	13	It states in 18.3 that mobile and home workers who transport equipment e.g. laptops, mobile phones, handheld email devices and / or confidential information should not leave this unattended in vehicles. BCO's will be required to take their designated laptop out with them whilst carrying out their site inspections each day. It will be impossible whilst carry out site inspection not to leave the equipment unattended either on the construction site or within the car due to health and safety factors and practicality. Example, climbing scaffolding to inspect a roof.	Noted. Will add the words 'as far as practicable' after the words 'should not' to acknowledge that there will be circumstances as you describe where it will not always be possible for the equipment not to be left in the officer's vehicle.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>				<p>As stated previously BCO's will be required to travel into the district each day to carryout site inspections, there does not appear to be any guidance on the affect mobile/home working will have on mileage claims, does the BCO claim from their home to site to home again or from the moment they enter the district to site to the boundary of the district again or another way.</p>	<p>The Council is currently considering an appropriate scheme to ensure that no employee is disadvantaged with regard to car mileage claims. The Council is considering the taxation situation and is taking advice from other councils who have implemented mobile and flexible working. Details will be finalized for the adoption of the policy.</p>
	6	6.2	5	<p>Three main types of flexible worker. In conjunction with paragraph 15.1 c) would complications arise if a lot of site work / travelling / meetings etc meant less than 20 hours / week were worked from home.</p>	<p>The Household Allowance is as the name applies for the cost of water, electricity etc. Hence if as a mobile worker you are not in the house then you will not be using these utilities. Therefore working less than 20 hours a week would result in receiving half of the allowance.</p>
	7	7.4	6	<p>An employees 'normal place of work' remains unchanged. Please clarify.</p>	<p>Contractually all employees are required to have a designated office or place of work e.g. Duke House, Civic Centre etc. If an employee works on a flexible or mobile basis there are no current plans to change this, however it will need to be reviewed when the new ways of working become embedded.</p>
	9	9.5	7	<p>"Hours worked recorded on electronic time sheets" Why are such procedures being made different for flexible workers &amp; office based employees?</p>	<p>This is no difference to the current procedure.</p>
	11	11.2	8	<p>It was originally outlined that for Building Control the first point of contact would be Admin Control. With actual applications, clients would then have direct contact details provided on all correspondence</p>	<p>Operational contact will need to be organised on a team by team basis. This is not suggesting that citizens have access to mobile phones as they would not have intranet access.</p>

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b> <b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>	12	12.2a) and c)	9	Regular, informal communication would be a requirement of a small BC team.	Comment noted. It will be down to individual line managers to decide how frequent be it formal or informal they require to see their team.
	15	15.1 b)	10	If an employee has not got broadband but wishes to consider working flexibly it is not appropriate that they are obliged to pay for broadband provision. This should be provided by WFDC.	Comment noted. However it is anticipated that a large proportion of the workforce will already be connected to a Broadband provider. As stated in the policy there may be circumstances where a Broadband allowance will be payable to an employee and will be determined on a case by case basis.
	15	15.1c)	11	This is most definitely a modest amount. A home worker of more than 20 hours per week adding heating, electricity etc costs where previously there were none, would be considerably out of pocket, particularly during winter months.	This has already been responded to above.
	15	15.1f)	11	Following the explanation in 15.1 c) why would travel expenses not be available when a flexible / home worker is required to attend the designated office base?	The Council is currently considering an appropriate scheme to ensure that no employee is disadvantaged with regard to car mileage claims. The Council is considering the taxation situation and is taking advice from other councils who have implemented mobile and flexible working. Details will be finalized for the adoption of the policy.
				The remuneration items raised in section 15, Expenses and Costs, are unfairly weighted against the employee. It seems to positively discourage flexible working on monetary grounds.	This authority's remuneration package for mobile / flexible workers is in line with those authorities already with policies in place and unlike some authorities, this Council is not proposing to recover set up costs should an employee leave their post to work elsewhere or for very good reasons request to cease working on a flexible or mobile basis.



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<p><b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b></p> <p><b>28<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b></p>	16	16.8	12	<p>Making contact with the office after each site visit would not be practical for BCO's.</p>	<p>The statement says 'they must ensure they make <u>frequent contact</u> with their office, usually after each visit and in line with the Council's lone working policy'. A pragmatic stance has to be taken by Managers, the policy can only act as an overall guide.</p>
	17	17.1	12	<p>Designated Office. For BCO's travelling from home to different areas of the district, the location of a designated office becomes relevant.</p>	<p>Should the last word be irrelevant? If this is the point being made, it should be noted that contractually all officers are required to be designated with a office based hence for its inclusion in the policy.</p>
	19	19.3	13	<p>The Council wishes home insurance companies to be contacted but will not cover any additional premiums. Why not? Also, what about liability for any expensive IT equipment?</p> <p>Insurers may ask for the It equipment to be listed as "named items", which may increase premium. It would therefore be unreasonable not to cover any increase.</p>	<p>Equipment supplied to the flexible / mobile worker is covered by the Council's insurance arrangements as long as it is used for work purposes only and in line with manufacturer's instructions. It is the Council's duty to advise employees they have the responsibility to inform their household insurers and mortgage companies as appropriate, that they are using their home for working on Council business. Whether they do is their choice. The Council does not pay for the increased premium that may be charged for using your car for business purposes; hence the same applies for using your home for council business. However, rarely do insurers increase premiums for using cars for business and it is anticipated that the same will be true of working from home Before entering into a mobile / flexible working arrangement it would be advisable you check any additional premium implications so you are clear of any additional costs and then you have the choice as to whether you wish to work on a mobile / flexible basis.</p>

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b> 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	5	5.1	4	Incorrect reference to section on "Definitions". States section 5, when it is actually section 6.	Noted. A typo and now corrected.
<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	1	2	3	The team broadly welcome the policy and think that it should lead to an improvement in productivity and sickness levels as well as supporting the council to better manage resources.	Comment noted
	5	5.1	4	There may be instances when a member of the team identifies their role as being appropriate for home working and should have the flexibility for requesting it be considered as well as being manager driven. Managers may also need to consider altering the whole way work is organised, job roles, structures and work processes as the absence of a team member may affect other people / partner organisations in undertaking their job where it is part of a process.	The assessment will be based on posts and the business needs of the Council. The implications of having a member of a team working on a mobile or flexible basis will be part of the criteria that managers consider when assessing the suitability of posts. If an employee's post has not been identified as suitable for mobile / flexible working they will be in a position to discuss this further with their Director or Line Manager respectively to determine on what basis the decision was made.
	6	6.2	5	The descriptions are very prescriptive – would be better to be slightly more flexible and certainly to consider people working "from home" who do less than 2.5 days a week and this would support Appendix C definition of "up to 2.5 days". The length of time someone could home work for needs to be as flexible as possible to take into consideration the very varied nature of some people's roles particularly where they include elements of strategic, operational and management responsibilities or where there are seasonal variances or differences due to workflow.	Comment noted. The Council does however have to consider the practicalities and resource implications for setting up someone with the relevant IT equipment for working at home say 1 day a week. There are significant time and resource implications involved.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>29<sup>th</sup> September 2009</b>	7	7.5	6	Would it possible for a supply of equipment to be made available to people wishing to trial home working (or where managers are unsure of it's applicability to a post) for a temporary period e.g. 28 days before contracts are amended or equipment purchased just to see if post / team can facilitate home working.	Point noted. However would be dependent on whether we have available time and resources to do this which is one of the reasons why a number of pilots have already been undertaken to see how well certain service areas are suited.
	9	9.1	7	The team welcomed the opportunity to work outside of core hours potentially to support work life balance especially for strategic posts where there is limited or no interaction with the public	Comment noted.
	14	14.1	9	Is it possible to consider access to web cams, telephone conferencing and other types of social networking media where job roles involve communicating to more than one person at once.	Although at present no provision has been made within the current mobile / flexible working policy for this type of communication infrastructure, as flexible ways of working become embedded then creative technologies can be considered.
	15	15.1	11	The payment of a contribution towards household expenses incurred over and above usual costs is welcomed and should cover if possible any expense incurred directly due to home working	Comment noted. The Household Allowance is very specific in what it can cover as this is set by HM Revenue and Customs.
	16	16.1	16	Will managers be required to home visit all staff to undertake assessments and how flexible can the arrangements be – must all staff have access to a desk and a certain degree of space for example?	Yes, Managers will be required to undertake the required Health and Safety and Risk Assessment of the proposed working area. The area identified will need to enable the employee to be able to use their laptop, computer etc so it is assumed a desk or table of some sort will be required. The Council is not specifying what furniture is required or the amount of space. However Health and Safety and Risk Assessment legislation will obviously determine this to a degree.
	18	18.1	13	This might mean the provision of lockable cabinets for financial information and consideration given to the transportation of sensitive paper based data.	Employees will need to take a pragmatic approach as they do currently when they may take sensitive information out of the office for reading at home etc.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009				Will other council policies be affected by this one and therefore need to be amended e.g. severe weather policy, confidentiality etc	As far as possible we have tried to ensure that this policy compliments existing ones. That is the case with regard to the IT policy. Where revisions need to be made to policies this will be done so accordingly.
<b>Resources Directorate</b>  29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	1	1.2	3	'Availability of services delivered ...' Will we be expected to work unsociable hours, to make ourselves 'available'	This is simply a statement to advise that we will need to consider how best services are delivered to ensure the best availability for our customers. Hours of work would be discussed and agreed with line managers as part of the personal plan. There is no intention by this statement to suggest officers will be required to work unsociable hours. As far as practical, the policy aims to support employees with being more flexible than perhaps current working arrangements.
	5	5.3	4	If employee opts for 'flexible working' & council decides later that services are not being delivered as anticipated, would the employee revert back to security of previous terms and conditions of employment.	Yes that would be the correct procedure.
	5 7	5.4 7.5	5 6	As employee will not normally be able to revert back to original working arrangements - Will there be a 'trial period' to test personal plan/agreement to mobile/flexible working before it is 'set in stone' so council & employees can see if practicable.	Yes, it is proposed that the agreement be reviewed in the first instance after 3 months – as per the Personal Plan on page 18.
	6	6.2	5	At Home/From Home – If a team Leader is required in the early stages to be 'At Home' (whilst staff training/support still in progress and systems being streamlined) would they then be able to change to 'At Home' at a later date. Or considered 'At Home' from the start as the intention will be to be 'At Home'	It would be down to the discretion of the line manager on an issue such as this as they together with the employee will know what the best arrangement is.

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<b>Resources Directorate</b> 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	7	7.4(b)	6	Normal place of work' remains unchanged ..' does this refer to current office location l'e Coventry Street' (bearing in mind relocation from Coventry Street is anticipated)	At present contractually all employees have a designated office base or place of work and even if they become a home worker or flexible worker they will still require a touch down base somewhere. So it is the office base currently identified on employees contracts, however if employees are relocated to a different office base than the new office location would become their designated place of work.
	9	9.3 9.4	7	Pattern of work agreed. Will these be our new core 'fixed hours' and will we still have the flexibility of current 'flexitime' arrangements around these core hours <b>or</b> will we required to work a fixed working day keeping to the agreed hours each & every day.	The working hours will be agreed between line manager and employee. The current flexi time scheme will still operate. It will be down to the service manager to agree how the hours are worked. This policy cannot dictate a fixed regime for pattern of work as every service area is different with varying needs for delivery.
	11	11.3	8	Staff would require refreshing on training for use of Groupwise Calendar & email 'out of office' messaging	Noted.
<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> October 2009				Remote working pilot to date has been undertaken in a selective manner where work has been 'cherry picked' for the purpose of the trial which would have given 'easy wins'/simple service delivery areas. It is felt that the current trials to date have not necessarily been representative of normal officer activity.	The pilots are felt to be representative of the types of functions and processes that lend themselves to flexible working in the first instance.
				It is felt that Hub implementation should be 100% telephone cover and admin to make home/remote working function correctly. This is fundamentally required for the delivery of it's presumed efficiency to be fully realised. This in turn would release the specialist officers to undertaken the duties on the ground. At present to many interruptions can take place such as the insistence of certain members of the public speaking with the investigating officer, or a technical question being raised needing expert advice.	Comment noted and will be passed to ICT consultant who is leading on the ICT / technical side of mobile / flexible working.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</b>				It is felt that areas of IT integration and development are either incomplete or poorly implemented without any training e.g. current EDRM system.	Comment noted and again will be passed to ICT consultant who is leading on the ICT / technical side of mobile / flexible working.
				There is a lack of senior management involvement with line managers on this project. Officers are currently unaware of all pilots taking place at any given point in time, and I feel that there is no talk of issues across the organisation.	Senior Managers have been involved in the development of this policy through the following: Workshop session for the Corporate Development and Performance Management Working Group – 15 <sup>th</sup> July 2009 and at subsequent meetings in August and September. Representatives on the above Group have responsibility for cascading this work back to other managers in the Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate Information on development of the policy has featured in the Corporate Messages for Managers bulletin both September and October editions. This bulletin should be tabled at Directorate DMTs and then cascaded down to all managers and their teams. The Interim Chief Executive made reference to the development of the Mobile / Flexible Working Policy at the Officer Communication Group meeting on 9 <sup>th</sup> September 2009
				It is felt that operational people have not been involved in the formulation of the draft home working policy.	A number of the pilots have involved operational officers in addition Managers involved in developing the policy were asked to ensure they sought the views of their Teams on the policy so that would have included operational level officers.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</b>				It is felt that remote working solutions have not been developed sufficiently to introduce 'on-site' working.	Comment noted and will be passed to ICT Consultant Tom Kelly who has been leading the roll out programme for the pilots.
				As pollution control is a front line reactive service responding to complaints in the main, it is anticipated that the introduction of home working (not remote working) will reduce the level of cover and compromise response times to complaint work. This is accounting for the fact that 75% of staff live in a radius that is <10miles from the district.	This is an issue for discussion with Environmental Health Services Manager. Should be noted that the Policy clearly states that the suitability or not of services for Mobile / Flexible working will be discussed with the relevant line managers and teams accordingly.
				Smaller department's specialist teams such as the pollution team could not afford more than 2 people at a given time to be remote working, as telephone cover would become too onerous.	Same response as above.
				Home workers with family (wives, children, visitors, neighbours etc.) who may be at home are not required to adhere to confidentiality conditions placed by the individual's employment. This raises a security issue, this can become more concerning when the identified area of work may be a public area in the household i.e. Kitchen, lounge, dining room.	Commented noted, however, ICT equipment will have a range of security measures e.g. screensavers, password protection. Care will need to be taken with any papers that are taken out of the office, however it is anticipated that most will be accessed electronically.
				Most households do not have suitable accommodation to facilitate home working & may present health & safety issues to the worker and the occupiers of the household.	Noted. If there are health and safety issues an employee will not be able to work from home unless these are sorted.
				Studies have shown that remote workers are attracted initially to the prospect of remote or home working, but soon realise the negatives outweigh the benefits e.g. constant interruptions from infants, children during school holidays, partners other household activity i.e. builders etc.	Comment noted.

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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</b>				Staff do not benefit socially from home/remote working, and suffer with isolation from the rest of the team.	This shouldn't be the case if measures are put in place for effective communication and touch down meetings.
				Health and safety liability of the Council will extend to family members also who occupy the workplace (the home worker).	There should be no health and safety issues created as a result of working from or at home. If there are, then the employee will not be permitted to work from home as stated in the Policy.
				Lone working policy is out of kilter with home working expectations. Issues with out of hours working – who monitors enforcement staff?	Comment noted. This has been checked and there is no inconsistency between the two policies.
				Workplace risk assessments must be undertaken by a suitably qualified Health & safety representative who has been trained in undertaking risk assessments in the home.	All managers will be trained accordingly to undertake the required health and safety assessments as stated in the Policy.
				When an accident occurs in the workplace, how is the accident reported, and what are the controls that will be put in place if the employee works alone in the home or on the district?	If an accident happens in the workplace this is reported to your line manager. If an accident happens at home the same applies. If an employee works alone at home then arrangements for this employee's safety will be agreed and recorded in the Personal Plan.
				Availability of transport – one of the obvious savings the policy realises that vehicle travel will not be required (thus the assumed saving in fuel). Does this mean that staffs that are non-essential car users cannot be required contractually have a car available when home working?	<p>There will be no change to the current policy for non – essential users which is:</p> <p><i>It is desirable that the postholder provides an appropriate means of transport for use in connection with the duties of this post. Re-compense for the use of such transport on official business will not exceed the scale for casual car user allowance provided for in the National Agreement.</i></p> <p><i>You may, therefore, from time to time be required to provide a suitable vehicle and your car insurance should cover you for business use."</i></p>



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<b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</b>				Other conflict of interests may arise with work/life balance. This should be of concern to an organisation that is already suffering from low morale.	The Mobile / Flexible Working Policy aims to enhance work life balance arrangements. Again this will be discussed with the employee and any necessary arrangements included in the Personal Plan.
				There are many unanswered questions in relation to tax and insurance liability with regard to turning a domestic household into a workplace. The assumption that no change is likely is naive as this is a requirement for car insurance (travel to and from work/at work for business use) why should it be different from working from home?	From other authorities contacted on this issue, the experience of their employees is that there has been no increase in premium as they are just working from home not running a business from home.
				Re-imbusement of the use of the home as a workplace is totally unrealistic. No account is made for : - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water usage</li> <li>• Energy usage (Heating, Lighting, Equipment for charging telephones etc.)</li> <li>• Sundries</li> <li>• Insurance (vehicle contents (IT equipment) council tax</li> </ul>	The proposed Household Allowance covers the utility items mentioned on the list. The amount is fixed by HM Revenue and Customs. Some authorities with mobile / flexible working policies provide no allowance at all.
				Use of home broadband (standard home connection) is unacceptable, as increased broadband traffic will hinder the home connection and run up download limits placed by suppliers on contracts.	The use of home broadband will be discussed on an individual basis between ICT and the employee as to whether it is suitable or not for the purposes required.
				Wear and tear on the home office. The re-imbusement does not cover supply of desk/household chairs/furniture or additional insurance damage cover.	The implications of this new style of working will need to be considered by the employee and the benefits and disbenefits balanced.

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<p><b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b></p> <p><b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</b></p>				<p>The financial incentives to local workers are not realised in this package, as travel to and from work would be at minimal cost.</p>	<p>Employees have to make a choice as to whether the benefits of flexible or mobile working are sufficient for them to work this way.</p>
				<p>Monitoring performance in simple local government 'task and finish' type work is relatively straight forward. More complex areas of service delivery cannot be monitored in the same way, such as Environmental Health work. Monitoring performance at the moment may take a number of different forms : -</p> <p>Impromptu office or 'corridor meetings', short discussions about cases, requests for professional advice, cross organisational advice, storage and use of specialist equipment, project work etc.</p> <p>Hence monitoring performance will require greater systems and time put aside for more formal meetings. This will be an additional burden to operational/line managers within the organisation. This is not addressed in the policy.</p>	<p>Comments noted. This issue would need to be agreed with Line Managers and then be recorded in the Personal Plan.</p>
				<p>The policy currently makes it available for staff to opt-in provided that it is suitable. Staff are not given the option to opt-out and only given this in exceptional circumstance. There is no appeal process. It is felt that this is unjust.</p>	<p>There is significant resource and time investment for setting up mobile / flexible workers hence it is not possible for employees to just decide that it is no longer the way of working for them unless there is an exceptional circumstance. The reason for no appeals procedure is the assessment for mobile / flexible working is based on posts and meeting the business needs of the Council. It is not based on employees and their preferences.</p>

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<p><b>Planning and Regulatory Services Directorate</b></p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> October 2009</p>					<p>There are already policies in place to support employees with work life balance situations, which the Council fully embraces. Any post that is considered not suitable for mobile / flexible working due to the business needs of the authority, there will be a written assessment as to the reasons why and this will be available to the employee whose post it refers to. For generic posts Directors will work closely together on their assessments to ensure there is a consistent approach taken. The policy will be kept under review.</p>
				<p>Changes to 'Post' employment/contractual arrangements to that of home working only could be prejudicial to potential employees due to their personal circumstance.</p>	<p>No employee will be forced to work from home or on a flexible basis. It will be a decision taken with their Line Manager if their post is suitable. A variation to contract would then be issued.</p>