

**THE EXECUTIVE**

**Tuesday, 29 June 2004**

**Open Reports**

**Agenda Item 4.      Housing Management Best Value Review  
(Pages 1 - 93)**

A draft copy of the Best Value Review and the Improvement Plan.

**Agenda Item 5.      Human Resources Policies and Procedures  
(Pages 95 - 195)**

Full copies of the draft procedures referred to in the report.

Contact Officer:      Barry Ray  
Telephone:            020 8227 2134  
Fax:                    020 8227 2171  
Minicom:              020 8227 2685  
E-mail:                [barry.ray@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:barry.ray@lbbd.gov.uk)

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## Draft Report for Landlord Services Review

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Barking & Dagenham is committed to ensuring the best possible services are provided for its residents, and recognises that Housing plays a key part in people's lives. With that in mind a review was undertaken of the Landlord Services function, where the aim is to be a 2 star service in 2004 and 3 stars (excellent) in 2006. Our vision for the service is to be recognised as the best public Housing provider within the Thames Gateway. We will do this by:
- Empowering our residents through Community Housing Partnerships and the Tenants Compact;
  - Placing community regeneration at the heart of our strategic investment decisions;
  - Valuing and respecting the diversity of our customers;
  - Being loyal to our residents, the Council and Barking and Dagenham;
  - Recognising and rewarding the loyalty of our staff;
  - Encouraging innovation to deliver better housing solutions;
  - Being professional but enjoying doing our job;
  - Embracing the Housing Futures project;
  - Being flexible and fit to take on new challenges;
  - Doing all the above working with our partners.
- 1.2 Our performance has improved rapidly over the last few years, and continues to improve based on Performance Indicators (PIs) and tenants' surveys. We have instigated new schemes to improve security and cleanliness on estates by introducing concierge schemes on more of our estates and an extended caretaking and cleaning service. These are the areas that tenants tell us are important.
- 1.3 Starting from a low base on tenant involvement we have set up 6 Community Housing Partnerships (CHPs) with agreed proposals to develop them further. The setting up and training of Board members has been seen as good practise by other bodies and a number have adopted our processes for their own organisations. Decision making and budget spending, particularly on security issues have been devolved, and the recent independent survey by Pathways and the audit by our external auditors all give positive feedback on the actions taken.
- 1.4 As a result of the review we are confident that this is a good service, based on our self assessment against the CPA housing criteria, and the implementation of the Improvement Plan means we are confident we can demonstrate 2 stars by the inspection rising to 3 stars in 2006.

- 1.5 Our plans are robust, and we have a track record on delivering improvements. This can be seen in the improved rating for the Repairs service; the fact that the Housing Strategy and Business Plan have been judged as Fit for Purpose; our use of the Balanced Scorecard as a service planning and monitoring tool has been widely acclaimed; we have examples of good practise in the setting up of the CHPs and our Project Plan for the Housing Futures Option Appraisal has been agreed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
- 1.6 Our Improvement Plan is geared to achieving 2 stars in 2004 and 3 stars in 2006. We have identified the following key areas to focus on as these are the areas that make a real difference to the tenants
- Caretaking – embedding the new scheme and evaluating it
  - Concierge – rolling out project plans and reviewing consultation and service charges
  - Implementing project plan to achieve PSA target of 25 day turnround on voids
  - Setting a vision for the future of the rents service that meets future needs – e.g good collection rates; dealing with “write offs”
  - Action plans to improve tenant empowerment and involving more Members in CHPs
  - Implement the restructure of Landlord Services to deliver improved services
  - Strengthen and develop links between Housing Services and Customer First
  - Complete Equalities & Diversity Impact Assessments in 2004/5
- 1.7 For each of the above areas there is a plan with designated leads and timescales supporting the Improvement Plan.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The future of the Council’s housing stock will be appraised as part of a 30-year strategy. The Council will respond to the proposal in the Sustainable Communities Plan that the condition of the stock is improved to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 2010. To achieve the level of regeneration desired by the Borough, the Council has agreed a Decent Homes Plus standard that goes beyond the DHS. This extended standard includes, for example, improving estate management including security, hygiene and caretaking, as well as tenant empowerment. The aim is to drive up standards of liveability under the banner ‘Housing Futures’.

- 2.2 The Housing Futures programme will be investigating housing needs and its main aims will be to inform the Council's assessment of housing, including:-
- Providing reliable and comprehensive information on the current and future housing needs, preferences and aspirations of existing and potential households.
  - Determining the needs of various household groups, including BME households, young people, the homeless and those in need of supported housing
  - To inform and support the Council's housing strategy and planning policies
  - To further link with the sub-regional and key worker housing needs.
- 2.3 Barking & Dagenham is currently, through its Housing Futures project, undertaking the option appraisal of its housing stock in order to meet the decency standard. This work will be informed by the review of Landlord Services, to ensure that all options are available to the Council and its tenants. This means ensuring that the existing service is of overall high quality with plans to improve further.
- 2.4 The Landlord Services division provides maintenance and management services for approximately 23,500 properties within the housing revenue account. Services include:
- day to day estate management functions including tenancy sign ups, property inspections, enforcing tenancy conditions and dealing with complaints and enquiries
  - void control, repairs and maintenance (since May 2003, the repair service has been provided in partnership with Thames Accord)
  - right to buy and leasehold services
  - tenant empowerment and participation
- 2.5 270 staff are employed by Landlord Services and the estimated budget for 2004/05 is £11.7 million.
- 2.6 Rent collection is carried out by a team in the Revenue Services division of the Finance Department. This is an historic arrangement which has worked well for the Council, providing an efficient, cost-effective service. It is recognised, however, that there are some weaknesses in this arrangement, particularly relating to communications between teams. Working practices have been reviewed and Members are considering a report on future structure and location of the service in summer 2004. The service costs £1.65 million.

- 2.7 In 1997 the management of the stock was tendered under CCT regulations, and the contracts won in house, and has been managed through 7 contract areas from 3 area offices.
- 2.8 Members agreed in principle in 2000 that housing services should be localised, and in October 2001 the Executive agreed that management of the council's housing stock should be through 6 Community Housing Partnerships (CHPs), coterminous with Community Forums. CHPs form the basis for consulting tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders and for managing the Council's stock. CHPs began operating in April 2003.

### **3. The Council's Context**

- 3.1 The Community Strategy (Building Communities: Transforming Lives) provides a clear framework to make Barking and Dagenham a place where people feel proud to live, work and spend leisure time. It sets out the areas for improvement that local residents and service providers have told us they would wish to see. These are reflected in the extensive consultation on the 2020 vision for the borough and further consultation that has been undertaken on the development of various strategies, including the Housing Policy commission, which also informed the Community Strategy.
- 3.2 Our vision is based upon the recognition that housing is more than just "bricks and mortar". It impacts upon quality of life, health, education and the wider social and economic regeneration of the Borough. In this context, it should play a key strategic role in driving forward Barking and Dagenham's 2020 Vision and community priorities.

#### **Housing Outcomes from the Community Strategy**

A range of both affordable and aspirational high quality private and social housing that will contribute to building sustainable communities.

All partners will achieve this by

- Supporting improvements in resident's quality of life by implementing decent homes standard in exiting provision and new developments.
- Ensuring equal access to excellent services
- Providing a better quality and range of housing for all in terms of tenure and size.
- Having a range of affordable social housing that meets the decency standard.
- Empowering local Community Housing Partnerships to have a significant impact on decisions about their housing.

- 3.3 The review of Housing Management within Landlord Services relates to service delivery to those who historically have been the most vulnerable in one of the most deprived boroughs in the country (26<sup>th</sup> in the Indices of Deprivation 2004 ) Improving service performance helps to improve the quality of life for the most deprived, which is also part of the sustainable Communities Plan and the Community Strategy. 2 Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinators work within the Landlord Services area, and directly with Members, residents and colleagues on housing estates.
- 3.4 Barking & Dagenham is changing rapidly; in terms of educational attainment; cost and quality of private housing; use of partnerships and in the make up of the population.
- 3.5 Since the census in 1991, the BME population has increased from 7% to just over 14%, particularly in the south of the borough, and this will continue with government plans to give leave to remain for asylum seekers. This has very real impacts both on our housing, health and social care provision, and is a factor in our review of housing services. Impact Assessments of all council policies are part of the corporate equalities and diversity policy and included in the workplan for 2004. Access to existing services, and the nature of future services are an integral part of our vision for the future, and are also very much part of the council wide Customer First initiative, with which the housing service is working, firstly on initial contact and accessibility to our local offices.
- 3.6 The Council has a clear framework for linking in to the Community Strategy through its service and financial plan – the Balanced Scorecard, and the following diagram shows how this works in practice.

## Service & Financial Planning Calendar



3.7 The strategic view for the Housing Service is contained in the Balanced Scorecards (BSCs) for Housing Strategy and Landlord Services. In addition the percentage of homes that meet the decency standard is a key performance indicator in the Council's overall scorecard, and links to the Regeneration BSC as well.

3.8 All plans work towards delivering the community strategy and the 7 Community Priorities of:

- Promoting equal opportunities and celebrating diversity
- Better education and learning for all
- Developing rights and responsibilities with the local community
- Improving health, housing and social care
- Making Barking and Dagenham cleaner, greener and safer
- Raising general pride in the borough
- Regenerating the local economy



#### 4. Boundaries and Scope

4.1 Landlord Services has not been subject to formal external assessment, with the exception of repairs, which was reviewed and inspected in 2001, when the assessment was 0 star but with excellent prospects for improvement. It was re-inspected in 2003 and the assessment was 1 star with promising prospects for improvement. This improvement was reflected in an improved score in the housing component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

4.2 We used the CPA service criteria for Housing as the basis for the review as this appeared to be the favoured format for inspections, a view confirmed in the consultation from the Audit Commission on future inspections, and at our meeting with the Lead Inspector in February 2004.

4.3 Under the Housing criteria in the CPA there are 3 distinct areas:

- **Strategy & Enabling** which includes Housing Strategy, Supporting People and Homelessness.
- **Community Housing Services**, which includes Choice Based Lettings, Housing Needs and Advice and Private Sector Housing.
- **Housing Management**, which includes the HRA Business Plan, tenant consultation and participation, tenancy management, rent collection, estate management, sheltered housing and repairs and maintenance including decent homes, capital works and responsive repairs.

4.4 We have focused on the services covered by the Housing Management section of the CPA assessment process. This was on the basis that:

- our housing strategy had achieved 'fit for purpose'
- private sector housing had previously been reviewed and inspected
- performance against the two BVPIs relating to Community Housing Services is improving
- there was a new homeless strategy, which had been praised by Shelter, and
- housing needs and advice services were in the process of being reviewed and re-sited in the Housing Strategy division to further separate the strategic and operational roles of landlord services
- a review of the council's sheltered housing services is being undertaken and is due to report later this year. This review is being done separately as it is being carried out jointly with Social Services and other stakeholders, but the findings will feed into the improvement plan from this review and the Housing Futures project.

4.5 Following discussion with the Lead Housing Inspector, it was agreed that the review would focus on:

- tenant participation
- estate and tenancy management
- rent collection
- a 'light touch' re-inspection of repairs

## **5 Our Approach**

5.1 The review was led by a Steering Group, chaired by the Head of Landlord Services and comprising senior managers, the Executive Member with portfolio for Housing, a trade union representative and support officers.

5.2 The Steering group were supported by four working groups covering each of the areas under review. Staff had input through the various working groups.

5.3 A 'Critical Friend Group' comprising Members, staff and residents, was also set up to act as a sounding board throughout the process.

5.4 The review began with an objective assessment of each service area against the CPA service criteria, and the gap analysis is attached as Appendix I. All areas identified as a gap are in the Improvement Plan.

5.5 Best practice examples were explored through Audit Commission reports, Housemark case studies and organisations such as HQN and BV & Quality Forum.

5.6 Information from these exercises and performance information on services provided the basis on which existing services were measured and challenged and the improvement plan developed. The plan has been consulted on with all CHP Boards and Members were briefed on the review as part of the Housing and Health briefing in February 2004, which 19 Members attended.

5.7 Staff were kept informed and given the opportunity to input to the review and the improvement plan through a series of all staff briefings in February and May 2004.

5.8 In line with good practice, a risk assessment was also carried out.

## **6. The 4 C's**

6.1 Prior to a best value housing inspection a Council, among other things, would have to demonstrate the application of the 4 'C's :

- challenging why and how a service is being provided
- comparing their performance with others
- embracing fair competition as a means of securing efficient and effective services; and
- consulting local people, customers and other stakeholders.

6.2 As described earlier in this paper the housing service has undergone an assessment using the CPA criteria. This assessment followed the principles of Best Value, but was a different approach to that taken with other reviews. Therefore, it was felt appropriate to demonstrate that the application of the 4 'C's had been robust and show how they have been mainstreamed in to the day to day working methods of the department.

### **6.3 Challenge**

6.3.1 In 2001 the Housing Policy Commission provided a wide-ranging challenge to housing in the borough in its broadest sense.

6.3.2 The department is constantly challenging the way that it operates by reviewing the way:

- services are provided
- services are procured
- customers and other stakeholders are engaged
- it responds to local, regional and national agenda

6.3.3 On an ongoing basis, performance is challenged by Members through the Scrutiny Management Board and Corporate Monitoring Group. In addition, the Executive receives quarterly reports on key performance indicators.

6.3.4 The growth of tenant and resident empowerment through the development of Community Housing Partnership's (CHP's) has proved a strong vehicle for allowing customers to question, and challenge the way the Council provides its services.

#### **Case Study-**

Strong representation from the tenants in Ibscott Close persuaded the Executive to ring-fence proceeds from the sale of an underused car park on the estate. The money has been used to fund improvements on the estate and additional funding has been drawn in from London Riverside to finance additional environmental improvements.

- 6.3.5 The objectives of the CHPs have been reviewed 12 months after their introduction by the Council's auditors Price Waterhouse Coopers, and their audit report and recommendations have been included in the Improvement Plan. A survey was also undertaken in April 2004, by Pathways, of CHP Boards, Members, Tenants & Residents Associations, officers and tenants who attended CHP meetings which will ensure an objective view is taken.
- 6.3.6 The use of a Critical Friend Group in the Repairs review was found to be very helpful and we have repeated this on the Landlord Services review, as well as the use of external consultants on specific pieces of work such as the caretaking review and the capital works division.
- 6.3.7 Stakeholders and partners are now more involved in the development and planning of services and initiatives. Traditional methods of working are therefore challenged and discussed by such agencies as the police, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local community groups. An example of this is the work that has taken place with the police in relation to hate crime and in particular racism and domestic violence. A housing officer spends 2 days per week based at the local police station supporting joint working in this area. In addition to this work the same housing officer works 1 day a week in the police intelligence unit.

#### Case example

The police have responded to anti-social behaviour issues at Marks Gate by increasing their presence in the area and extending operating hours at the local police station.

- 6.3.8 Staff are also encouraged to play an active role in challenging the way the services are developed. Staffworking/focus groups are given specific subject areas to explore new ways or working.

#### Case example

*Review of the capital works service by MACE<sup>1</sup> used staff workshops to explore shared objectives, which are then transformed into action plans. Such an approach ensures ownership and commitment to improvements in service delivery.*

## 6.4 **Consultation**

- 6.4.1 The department has a strong tradition in consulting stakeholders. This can be demonstrated using the following examples:

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<sup>1</sup> External consultants engaged to review capital works division

Table 1

<b>CHP's</b>	Are used as the main consultative body on subjects that effect local housing issues. Currently reviewing scope of Housing Management works. CHPs also determine local investment plans to enhance security provision.
<b>Road shows</b>	When promoting public interest in CHP's a number of road shows were held in strategic locations around the borough. The public was encouraged to engage with staff and become involved in community governance.
<b>Telephone surveys</b>	The housing repairs service conduct regular customer surveys to gauge levels of satisfaction. The Housing Office for CHP areas 5&6 also undertake regular surveys to assess satisfaction with reception facilities.
<b>Tenant Surveys</b>	Annual tenant surveys are planned to complement the three yearly Status survey. A similar survey has been carried out with Leaseholders. Tenants are surveyed as part of the tenancy audit process and there is a rolling satisfaction survey (currently under review).
<b>Specific schemes</b>	The department has a good record of consulting stakeholders on specific initiatives. Tenants and residents have been extensively consulted on the possibility of introducing security measures such as concierge schemes on flatted estates throughout the borough. Extensive consultation also took place on the regeneration of the Cleveland, Bloomfield and Wakerings estate.

<b>Housing Strategy Conference</b>	The Council consulted on the formulation of its housing strategy by holding a conference, which involved members of the public. A similar event is planned for the autumn.
<b>Selection of Council contractors and staff</b>	Council tenants played a role in the selection of the service provider for the out sourced housing repairs service and the ITA. Council tenants and lessees trained and take part in selection and recruitment panels for staff
<b>Staff focus groups</b>	Local housing office staff were encouraged by the use of focus groups to assist in developing local staffing structures to deliver local CHP services. Regular all-staff briefings are a well established mechanism for informing and consulting staff in Landlord Services.

## 6.5 Compare

- 6.5.1 The housing service can demonstrate its longstanding commitment and use of comparison in a number of ways.

Barking and Dagenham was a founder member of the East London Benchmarking Organisation (ELBO), a consortium of Registered Social Landlords and local authorities who worked together to compare aspects of their service delivery through process benchmarking. ELBO was formed in the early days of Best Value to address the need for comparative data. The work of the consortium was supported by Arthur Andersen who were able to bring data on private sector processes and best practice to the project. The ELBO project concluded in March 2003, but the following table illustrates some of the ways now used to benchmark and compare our services.

Table 2

	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Learning Points/Outcome</b>
External benchmarking through Housemark	The department is an active contributor to the Housemark benchmarking organisation. We regularly attend the London Benchmarking Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides valuable cost comparisons</li> <li>• Information exchange through club on e.g. rents</li> <li>• new void benchmarking forum</li> <li>• Housemark website extensively used for research/exchange of good practice</li> </ul>
Organisational Research Corporation mystery shopping	Spin off from London Benchmarking club with 15 other housing organisations. Professional researchers undertake regular mystery shops to test agreed services. Outcomes then benchmarked.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides objective assessment of services</li> <li>• results regularly reported to CHP boards</li> <li>• actions taken to address areas giving cause for concern</li> </ul>
Learning from high performers	Visits by staff, members and residents to high performing/beacon sites. Regular review of Audit Commission reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• best practice benchmarking with Barnsley and Oldham in relation to capital works and procurement</li> <li>• Lessons on motivational management from Unipart plc</li> <li>• best practice at Cardiff and Lewisham informed our plans for contact centre</li> <li>• visits to concierge schemes to inform procurement options for concierge schemes</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of 3* inspection reports used in gap analysis</li> </ul>
Process mapping	Work with ELBO during repairs review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise gained has since been applied in other areas such as voids and tenancy audits.</li> </ul>

6.5.2 The benchmarking and comparison work is used to identify where we need to make improvements to service delivery, or to identify poor performance.

## 6.6 Compete

6.6.1 Through challenging the way services are provided, and consulting our customers and stakeholders, the service has experienced degrees of competition for the services that we provide. It can be said that the service currently benefits from a mixed provision in relation to in - house and external providers.

6.6.2 Some examples of the services that have been exposed to external provision are detailed below:

Table 3

Service Area	Provider	Type of agency
Repairs Service	Thames Accord	Private Sector
Shape Up for homes	Various contractors	Private Sector
MRA work	Various contractors	Private Sector
Use of Consultants to support change management in capital works division	MACE	Private Sector
Capital Works Project Management	Schal International	Private Sector
Trickle transfer	Stort Valley	Partnership with RSL
Concierge– construction (staffing element of schemes will also be tendered)	Various contractors	Private sector
Estate Management – security patrols	Mixture of in-house and external provision	Leisure & Environmental Services/Private sector

6.6.3 The current estate management division is the product of a previous successful in-house bid made under the compulsory competitive tendering regime. Future plans for externalisation of this element of the service will be determined by the outcome of the Housing Futures exercise. It is likely that the outcome will not be a single solution for the entire stock, but rather a combination of options.

6.6.4 The stock options appraised will be undertaken as part of the Housing Futures programme, as outlined in paragraph 1.3. It will be based on the



stock condition survey and the objective of meeting the Decent Homes Standard.

- 6.6.5 The process will be robust and meet the requirements set out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The final report detailing the findings will be completed by April 2005.

## **7. Are the service aims clear and challenging?**

- 7.1 The Council's strategic planning is informed by the seven community priorities and the 2020 Vision. Section 2 sets out the links and describes the framework to deliver the Community Strategy.

- 7.2 In recognition of the role housing will play in driving forward the 2020 Vision and the community priorities, a Housing Policy Commission was established and developed the following vision for housing:

- 7.3 'A decent home and living environment for everyone, supporting the Borough's economic and social regeneration' This vision is being achieved through measurable improvements in the quality, choice and availability of housing opportunities across all tenures within the Borough. The improvements are:

- Affordable and easy access
- Addressing social exclusion and empowering communities
- Creating a high quality environment that people will want to live, play and work in.

- 7.4 The points above form the basis of our 2003/06 Housing Strategy. The strategy identifies the following priorities:

- Building balanced and sustainable communities
- Improving housing standards across all sectors; and
- Strategic partnering and procurement.

- 7.5 There are a number of tangible examples of where landlord service priorities are linked to the bigger housing strategy and corporate ones. Some examples are:

- the percentage of homes meeting the decency standard is one of the strategic measures in the Council's balanced scorecard
- Community Housing Partnerships show strong links to the community priority Developing Rights and Responsibilities with the Local Community.

- The delegation of £2.75 million to CHPs for security measures which is linked to the Cleaner, Greener and Safer community priority, as is the developing Anti Social Behaviour work.
- Local tenants are actively involved in estate inspections which is linked to the housing vision of addressing social exclusion, empowering communities and Raising General Pride in the Borough
- Large scale estate regeneration through refurbishment and redevelopment work which is linked to the Housing Strategy priority improving housing standards across all sectors and Regenerating the Local Economy.

7.6 The service also works to a number of service standards and targets, which are published and reported to the Community Housing Partnership boards on a regular basis.

7.7 The aims of the service are clear and challenging and support the corporate and departmental aims, through the BSC for the service, which help deliver the Community Strategy.

## **8. How Good is the Service?**

8.1 The past few years have seen the introduction of many changes, improved performance management systems and results. Many positive practice points from excellent authorities are in operation here.

Case study:

We have extensively used IT to improve our performance and support our monitoring systems. The bespoke Estate Management Computer System was an early example of workflow software and provides an excellent way of managing and monitoring workloads. More recently we have introduced hand-held computers to be used in void inspections.

8.2 We have embraced Best Value and, as illustrated above, mainstreamed the 4 C's and done much to address the key points in the CPA assessment criteria for housing services.

8.3 The Council is striving for excellence and aiming to be a minimum of 2\* by end 2004, 3\* by 2006. The information provided in Appendix I shows that we can already demonstrate many of the features of an excellent housing service.

8.4 Landlord Services now has a well established performance management system centred on the balanced scorecard and complemented by

monthly monitoring of a range of local performance indicators (PIs) broken down by CHP area. Managers are accountable to the CHP boards who receive regular reports on performance against a wide range of PIs

8.5 Performance against most local PIs is improving, for example:

- efforts to reduce the number of unauthorised occupants are paying off
- estate management service requests are being actioned and closed more quickly
- improvement in telephone answering times
- continuous improvements against a range of repairs PIs

8.6 The table below sets out performance against the BVPIs relevant to the service areas covered by this review.

		2001/02	quartile	quartile LON	2002/03	quartile	quartile LON	2003/04
63	SAP rating	58	middle	top	59	middle	middle	60
66a	Rent collection	96.67	middle	top	97.96	middle	top	97.74
68	Relet time	60	bottom	bottom	42	middle	middle	47
72	Urgent repairs on time	85%	bottom	bottom	89.10%	middle	middle	95.20%
73	Time for non-urgent repairs	11.55	top	top	8.59	top	top	7.45
74a	Overall satisfaction - all	67%			67	bottom	middle	65
74b	Overall satisfaction - non-BME				46	bottom	bottom	58
74c	Overall satisfaction - BME				69	bottom	middle	66
75a	Satisfaction with participation - all	46%	bottom	middle	46	bottom	middle	50
75b	Satisfaction with participation - non-BME							52
75c	Satisfaction with participation - BME							50
164	Meeting CRE code	yes	top	top	yes	top	top	yes
184a	Proportion of homes non-decent				60.20%	bottom	middle	54.83% (48.84% at 1/4/2004)
185	Repair appointments				87.88%	top	middle	93.60%

8.7 Performance in most areas is improving, particularly in those areas relating to repairs. Performance around tenant satisfaction and relet times has been less successful and we have developed action plans to address these areas and deliver the required step change in performance.

8.8 The CPA housing service score for 2003 improved from 2 to 3, compared with a London average of 2.6. This improvement puts us in a group of only 46 Councils who scored 3, including high performers such as

Camden. The housing management sub-score improved from 1.8 in 2002 to 2.4 in 2003.

8.9 Housemark 2002/03 data shows that management cost per property had increased by £19 from the previous year, but at £340 per property is still well below the lowest cost quartile of £382. More information from Housemark report shows that, although among the most cost efficient, services are of good quality.

8.10 Detailed findings for each of the four service areas are appended at I, but an overview is set out below.

### **8.11 Community Housing Partnerships**

8.11.1 Community Housing Partnerships have been developed as the principal means of empowering tenants and residents and involving them in the decisions that affect their lives. They have come a long way in their first year of operation. Other authorities have visited to learn from us, and a beacon bid under Round 6 will be made.

- boards established and meeting regularly
- training for board members to equip them for the role
- making decisions on investment priorities
- participating in recruitment of staff/contractors/ITA
- boards regularly monitoring performance and receiving comparative data
- independent agencies involved in reviewing CHPs to ensure an objective view

8.11.2 CHPs are now well established and have started to deliver tangible benefits. At the end of the first year Pathways conducted an independent 'healthcheck' which showed that 71% of respondents considered that CHP meetings were effective and more than half said that CHP boards had made a difference in their area.

#### Case study

London Borough of Enfield visited us to see how CHPs are working. They have now instituted three CHPs in their borough based on our model.

8.11.3 The Healthcheck also highlighted some weaknesses in the system, particularly around communications. The improvement plan addresses these and the recommendations made by PriceWaterhouse Coopers in their management letter and subsequent review of partnership working. It sets out how we will:

- Work to bring CHP board members closer to their ‘constituents’, especially bringing together CHP boards/TRAs
- Implement a new structure for Landlord Services that will
- Merge TP/CHP development teams to support above
- Place CHP support officers with departmental committee officers to improve professionalism of meeting administration and facilitate links with committees/forums and between CHPs
- Redefine Community Housing Manager (CHM) posts to strengthen their accountability to CHP boards for all Landlord Services and empower them to act as tenants’ advocates for other services
- Strengthen performance management by creating a dedicated business services team
- Further empower tenants through Housing Futures work and training plans
- Review and update the Tenant Participation compact with full resident involvement
- Broaden range of communication/consultation with residents
- Strengthen tenant involvement in setting service standards/priorities and managing performance
- Agree a set of performance indicators to monitor the success of CHPs

## **8.12 Our Housing Stock**

8.12.1 Our Housing Strategy and Business Plan were rated ‘fit for purpose’ and the Housing Futures project has been established to carry out a full option appraisal for meeting and going beyond the Decent Homes standard. In the meantime we have developed an interim plan for investment and appointed MACE to work in partnership with us to ensure good project management, value for money and full capital spend are achieved.

8.12.2 Over the past few years much work has been done to address the legacy of underinvestment in our stock and there has been a steady increase in the number of homes meeting the decency standard. Our performance shows that we are prepared to explore all options to secure improvements to housing. We have adopted a range of solutions to tackle problems:

- almost 20,000 houses and low rise flats have been improved through ‘Shape Up’ – an improvement programme that provided central heating, loft insulation, new windows and doors and repairs/replacement to roofs and rendering.
- around 500 sub-standard homes have been transferred to a housing association through our ‘trickle transfer’ programme. Under this

scheme the homes were renovated using social housing grant and we retained 100% nomination rights. A local housing company, the Barking and Dagenham Housing Association, for this stock has recently been set up.

- three tower blocks of large panel system (LPS) design with longstanding problems with water ingress were demolished. The land was sold and is providing a mix of private and affordable housing.
- 3 further LPS blocks in poor condition were also prioritised and have just been demolished. The land has been sold to provide a mix of private, social rented and intermediate tenure homes, including 8 units of self-build. The second phase of the development will also include a new GP surgery.
- service charges have been introduced to fund security works such as concierge schemes

8.12.3 The repair service was re-inspected in February 2003 and was judged to have improved. Since then there have been further improvements as the partnership with Thames Accord has progressed:

- Pondfield House open and call centre hours extended
- Number of appointments made & kept improved (92.8% compared to 88% in 2002/03)
- No. of right to repair jobs on target improved – up to 95.6% from 85% in 2001/02
- Annual gas servicing rigorously pursued
- reduction in number of emergency repairs to 16%
- Range of customer satisfaction monitoring arrangements in place
- customer satisfaction improved – 82.5% from 80.7% in 2002/03
- performance monitored against range of PIs and report to CHPs
- leaflet produced
- Growth in business

8.12.4 Pending the outcome of Housing Futures project, work is in hand to deliver agreed interim planned maintenance programme and further improve the repairs service through delivery of the repairs improvement plan. Key issues will be to:

- improve void turnaround times to meet challenging PSA target of 25 days by 2006
- undertake stock condition survey (update due June 2004)
- develop IT system to update/manage information
- Introduce quality assurance procedure for repairs

- define and publish void standard
- strengthen the client role
- improve communications/consultation with residents

### **8.13 Clean, Safe and Attractive Living Environment**

8.13.1 As well as improvements to the stock, we have done much to enhance people's living environment through initiatives on cleanliness and safety. The effectiveness of our estate management service is demonstrated through measures such as:

- a new caretaking/cleaning service including specialist teams
- concierge schemes funded through service charges
- a proactive stance on ASB
- revised conditions of tenancy
- a rolling tenancy audit
- work with tenants to review service priorities
- performance management reports to CHPs
- top quartile management costs (cheapest)
- involving residents in estate inspections
- neighbourhood management co-ordination projects
- effective working arrangements with other agencies e.g. police
- Streetwarden scheme targeted at certain areas of the borough
- establishing Housing Support officers to help tenants access benefits
- devolving £2.75 million security budget to CHPs
- dedicated leasehold management service
- good performance on rent collection – at 97.7 among the top performing boroughs (3<sup>rd</sup> highest in London in 2002/03)
- range of ways to pay
- joint working to prevent arrears/debt co-ordinator post
- plan developed in response to BFI report

Case study:

The Council has a history of dealing with contamination issues due to the industrial heritage of the Borough. Housing & Health is managing investigations that will ultimately effect environmental improvements and safeguard residents' health on Harts Lane, Whiting Avenue and Thames View estates.

The unusual step of choosing management staff from Housing to run these environmental projects and buying specialist input during procurement has allowed LBBD to commission these complex and important studies on a reduced programme. Our initiative of employing and working with a dedicated Managing Agent has led to the successful delivery of these projects and cost savings. The team won a procurement award from the London Contract and Supplies Group.

8.13.2 A range of initiatives have been introduced in support of the community priority to make the borough cleaner, greener and safer. A high quality management service is provided at low cost, but there are plans to improve still further:

- increase tenant involvement in setting service standards and priorities and monitoring performance
- improve management information through IT development
- review information for tenants and publicity for launch of services/projects
- review and update management manual
- strengthen joint working protocols with social services and other agencies
- continue roll-out of concierge schemes
- develop initiatives in response to issues raised by tenants e.g. abandoned vehicles
- improve customer satisfaction
- better communication with tenants
- procedures around former tenant arrears
- continue to implement BFI improvement plan

#### **8.14 Access to Services**

8.14.1 The Customer First improvement plan is being implemented and much has already been done in Landlord Services to improve access to services for everyone. Examples include:

- Customer First influenced our plans for venues for CHP offices
- ORCI mystery shopper benchmarking
- audit of reception areas/improvements in response
- update of website – LBBB rated in top 10
- information offered in range languages/formats
- TIS contract/ language line
- introduction of impact assessments
- services available online
- Equalities and diversity pack produced for tenant reps
- BV75 shows no significant difference for BME groups
- officer designated to work with minority groups
- outreach work with groups perceived as hard to reach
- started to build 'profile' of our tenants



## Case Study:

A recent survey of visitors to the housing office at Becontree reported very favourable findings –98% of respondents were satisfied with the service given.

### 8.14.2 Much progress made in this area, but still plans to progress further

- customer first delivery plan (call centre etc.)
- further improve range of services available electronically
- continue impact assessments and audit regularly
- implement plans for further work with hard to reach groups
- work with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) on identifying Health Inequalities and how the service can alleviate these.

## 9. Key improvements

9.1 The Improvement Plan appended at II is based upon the key outcomes in the CPA Housing criteria, and focuses on the following:

- Providing effective tenancy management.
- Developing effective arrangements for tenant consultation and participation.
- Maximising collection of rent due.
- Improving repairs and maintenance services to residents.
- Resident involvement in planning and management of repairs.
- Tenant and resident involvement and access to repairs service.
- Reduce responsive/indirect costs for repairs.
- Access and customer care around capital improvements.

9.2 The plan contains our proposals, along with clear, challenging targets for delivering improvements in key areas such as further development of CHPs, improving tenant satisfaction and reducing void turn-round times to meet the agreed PSA target.

9.3 The Improvement Plan includes recommendations from the Repairs BV re-inspection in 2003, the recommendations from the BFI inspection in 2004, which apply to the rents service and cross reference to the Customer First action plan.

9.4 The Improvement Plan is a key part of the Balanced Scorecard for the Landlord Service, and will be monitored both within the department and by the Corporate Monitoring Group, chaired by the Deputy Leader with the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board. The scorecard is the focus for the personal performance management of the head of service that is undertaken by Members. Objectives and performance targets are

cascaded down to all staff through the appraisal system. This is now well embedded and in recognition the department was awarded Investors in People status in 2003.

#### Case study:

In a bid to counteract the difficulty in attracting high quality, well educated candidates from the Black and Minority Ethnic community the department is in partnership with the Positive action Training Highway (PATH). The scheme has been operating successfully for a couple of years and we were pleased to receive the National Outstanding Contribution Award this year.

implementation of the repairs improvement plan

- channelling resources into priority areas. The progress the council has made in the field of equalities and diversity is evidence that this approach works. At one time we were well behind other authorities, but since establishing a central equalities and diversity team with representatives in all service departments we have forged ahead with policy developments and introduced a range of innovative, highly acclaimed projects such as the 'Shifting Perceptions' videos. PWC reported in their management letter that the Council had met most of the targets in its Race Equality Scheme action plan.
- seeking external advice and expertise. There are a number of examples of this including the consultants working with us to deliver change management programmes in areas such as Customer First and capital works.

## 10. Option Appraisal

### 10.1 What are the options?

- 10.1.1 Best Value practice sets out 7 potential options for the future of the service. The table overleaf sets out each of the options and the circumstances where they would be appropriate.
- 10.1.2 For the purpose of this report 'Housing management' as listed in the table includes both estate and tenancy management and tenant participation functions as in practice these would be likely to be packaged together in any contractual arrangement.
- 10.1.3 Whilst it is not yet possible to carry out a full Options Appraisal before Housing Futures' recommendations are available in February 2005, this report does detail the various options that could apply once a conclusion is reached. In the meantime this review recommends positive developments within the Improvement Plan in order that the Council can

demonstrate good, cost effective management and that no options for Housing Futures have been discarded prematurely.

10.1.4 The outcome of Housing Futures is likely to be a combination of solutions using developers, RSLs and the Council. These could be estate or even block based, and this appraisal will also feed in to the option matrix being completed for Housing Futures.

10.1.5 It is important to note that the Council's policy on option appraisals is that no option will be discounted, as decisions will be based upon quality and cost as well as looking at implications for all of the Community Priorities, not just the service under review. The Council has also recently carried out a Best Value review of procurement which endorsed this view.

Option	Applicable to	Comments
<p><b>Market Testing</b> (competitive tender with an in-house bid)</p>	<p>Housing management Rents</p>	<p>Only applies if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service reasonable with good prospects for improvement</li> <li>• Council can meet any capital expenditure required</li> </ul>
<p><b>Externalisation</b> (competitive tender with no in-house bid)</p>	<p>Housing Management Rents Repairs</p>	<p>Applies where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• existing service is weak/poor and/or</li> <li>• considerable capital expenditure required that cannot be met by Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Public Private Partnership</b> (partnership between public and private sectors following a competitive tender)</p>	<p>Housing management Rents Repairs</p>	<p>Applies where considerable capital expenditure required that cannot be met by Council</p>

<b>Restructuring the in-house service</b> (in-house team continues to provide service)	Housing management Rents Repairs	Applies where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>existing service is excellent and cost effective</li> <li>Council can meet any capital expenditure required</li> </ul>
<b>Renegotiations with existing provider</b> (where service already contracted out)	Repairs	Applies where external provider delivering good service and the contract permits
<b>Joint commissioning/delivery</b> (join with another organisation to jointly provide or procure services)	Housing management Rents	Could involve providing cross border services for other authorities – such as caretaking or jointly procuring services of similar need.
<b>Cease all or part of the service</b>	Housing management Rents Repairs	Would only apply if all stock sold/transferred

## 11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Whatever the outcome of the Housing Futures project, it is clear that tenants need and deserve the best and most cost effective service that meets their needs. The actions outlined in paragraph 1.6 will get us to a 2 star service in 2004 rising to 3 star in 2006. This will ensure that the full range of options to achieve the decent homes standard are available to the Council.
- 11.2 This report contains many examples of positive practice that serve to illustrate the quality of existing services and the council's capacity and determination to achieve excellence.
- 11.3 Decent Homes is in line with our vision that the housing service is about more than bricks and mortar. It enables our residents to achieve their full potential, and our intention in reviewing our service has been about ensuring that we can consider the widest options available for our

residents when completing the Housing Futures option appraisal, the ultimate conclusion to this review.

Appendices:

I – Gap analysis

II – Improvement Plan & Glossary

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## Improvement Plan Landlord Services Glossary of Terms

ABC	Anti Social Behaviour Contract
ASBO	Anti Social Behaviour Order
BFI	Benefits Fraud Inspectorate
BVI	Best Value Inspectors
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CHPs	Community Housing Partnerships
CMG	Corporate Monitoring Group
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
E & D	Equalities and Diversity
EM	Estate Management
EMCS	Estate Management Computer System
FTA	Former Tenants Arrears
MACE	Project Management Company
MCIL	More Choice in Lettings – (New allocations policy)
MRA	Major Repairs Allowance
NCS	Neighbourhood Cleaning Staff
ODPM	Office of Deputy Prime Minister
Pathways	Housing and tenant participation consultants
PDPs	Personal Development Plans
PI	Performance Indicator
PSA	Public Sector Agreement
PWC	Price Waterhouse Coppers ( Auditors)
SLA	Service Level Agreement
Spotlight	Tenant and Residents magazine
Thames Accord Service	providers for repairs and maintenance
TP	Tenant Participation team
TRAs	Tenants and Residents Associations
Void	Empty council property

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**Appendix N**

**Review Landlord Services**

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timeline	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
<b>Estate Management</b>							
<b>Key Outcome 1: Provide effective tenancy management</b>							
1. Ensure service standards are effectively communicated to tenants and are available in a range of appropriate languages and formats		Identify areas that are lacking and ensure all areas have appropriate service standards.  Involve the CHPs in the measuring of performance against the standards.  Produce leaflets about the services with translations/Braille/large print/tape option.  Revise content of website	Sept 2004  Ongoing  Sep 2004  May 2004& ongoing	Service standards approved Regular monitoring reported to CHP  Leaflets produced and circulated  Website updated (regularly)	Wide awareness of service standards  Reports on performance against standards	£5,000	CHP Manager JE  Stuart Beard  HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
2. Ensure tenants are aware of their obligations under their tenancy agreements and leases and ascertain their compliance with the terms of these		Develop effective monitoring of the tenancy audit. Make sure all CHPs use the same sign up process Update the tenancy pack and Landlord Services leaflets in general.	Aug 2004 Aug 2004 Dec 2004	Monitoring in place Information captured and available. All CHPs using sign up Tenancy pack updated and circulated	Wide awareness by tenants of their obligations. High levels of compliance conditions of tenancy	£10,000	G.Dickson G.Dickson Head of Business Service(HBS)
3. Undertake customer focused letting practices		Launch revised Conditions of Tenancy Induction pack for tenants Establish a policy on accompanied viewings with clear criteria Develop guidance on post	Apr 2005 May 2005 Oct 2004 Oct	Uniform customer focused service provision		HBS	HBS JR

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		tenancy follow ups Establish a digital picture library of properties to aid MCIL scheme	2004 May 2004 and on going	Report detailing current performance of void numbers and turn around times	Report produced. Improvement in void performance	£5,000 ( MCIL budget)	CHP Manager T.Oyetunde JR
4. Manage tenancy in line with both statutory requirements and local policies		CHP Board members groups to identify EMCS priority  Review and update the management manual to ensure all appropriate requirements and policies are incorporated.	Sep 2004  Apr 2006	Updated manual agreed and in use and monitored	Improved management – greater customer satisfaction	£500	CHP Manager J.Evans HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Train staff and check compliance	Apr 2006 & onwards				
5. Deal swiftly and sensitively with neighbour disputes, using mediation and other techniques as appropriate, in accordance with the published procedures for tackling anti-social behaviour		Continue to use independent mediation as appropriate  Set up ASB team Joint poster campaign in liaison with other agencies/depts  ASB Policy	Dec 2004  Aug 2004  Dec 2004	Training plan revised and agreed.  Clear guidance for training for EM staff and audit trail  Number of staff trained	High levels of tenant satisfaction with Council dealing with disputes.  Swifter resolution of neighbour disputes.  Number of ASBOs ABCs  Policy in place and published		HBS
6. Develop strong links at a neighbour		Review and identify areas that may benefit from joint working protocols	Sept 2004				HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
Good level between housing management and other service providers to promote community cohesion		Job specifications changed to reflect community leadership role  Set up joint working protocols where appropriate – audit trail Continue to implement Neighbourhood Management Projects/plans	May 2004  Ongoing  Ongoing	Progress monitored at 1:1s  Community Action Plan	Greater level of community cohesion.  Mainstream area of work into the regeneration service to support the Town Centre regeneration		JR  CHP Managers NMs  TD/JG
7. Prevent, reduce and respond rapidly and appropriately to incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour		Develop suitable project plans for all the concierge schemes and monitor their progress.	May 2004	New schemes in operation  Lower reported levels of crime and antisocial behaviour	Tenants satisfied with Council's actions in dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour.  Tenants	Service Charge  Capital funded £3.25m	CHP Managers

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timeline	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Use of environmental improvement budgets for safety/security works		Maintain and improve estate environments	report that they feel safer Raise pride in living in the borough and culture of changing anti social behaviour		CHMs
<b>Key Outcome 2: Ensure effective management of estates and their environments</b>							

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
8. Involve tenants in setting and measuring performance targets and ensure that service standards are clear, set from a tenant's perspective and are communicated effectively both internally and externally		Agree a clear system for performance monitoring and reporting of standards by the CHPs  Publicise performance	Sep 2004  Apr 2004 & onwards	Monitoring system agreed and in operation.  Service performance reported to every CHP meeting	Higher level of satisfaction with service performance.  Tenant involvement in review and management of services		HBS and CHP Managers  CHMs
9. Ensure a safe, clean and attractive estate environment for tenants and visitors, working		Improve joint working between NCS/EM  NCS team leaders to attend CHP meetings.	Apr 2004	Uniform way of recording information in place.  Related issues analysed and reported to	Improved level of tenant / visitor / agency satisfaction with estate environment.		CHP Manager and DB  DB

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
closely with other Council departments and outside agencies		Set up system to identify work completed	Apr 2005	CHPs. Formal communication process agreed and operating.	Audit trail in place		JR DB
		Security improvements using £1.5m allocated from the capital programme	March 2005	Security systems installed and dog patrols utilised as necessary	Schemes/projects delivered	£1.5 million	CHMs
10. Achieve the most appropriate balance for the delivery of estate-		Survey tenants for views following introduction of new Caretaking service and monitor satisfaction.	Oct 2004	Annual status survey	Value for money estate-based service attains high satisfaction levels with	£10,000	HBS



Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
based services, locally and/or from the centre, based on a full understanding of the costs and benefits of providing those services and following appropriate consultation with tenants in service planning		Develop and implement action plans to address areas of concern with NCS	June 2004	Reports on progress	tenants.		DB
		Consult with tenants/CHPs on future service planning.	Dec 2004	Consultation complete and report produced			DJC
		Review of Landlord Structure	May 2004	Cost/benefit analysis completed and report produced.	Service rated 2* by 2004, 3* by 2006	From within current budget	JR
		Implement Structure including setting up of Business Services division	Aug 2004				JR
		Review structure	March 2005	Scheme development on target for completion	Local estate management presence		JR
		New office Bevan Ave	Nov 2004		Improved access to	Mixed funding	CHM A.Alexander

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Continue to link future developments to Customer First plans	Ongoing		services	Customer First budget	JR/JD
11. Manage and monitor estate-based work		Train and develop staff following the implementation of the new voids procedure and other new policies  Implement action plan to meet agreed PSA target on voids ( see 32)  Training plan for NCS staff introduced.	Aug 2004  2006  Apr 2004	Compliance with policy  Reports on progress	PSA target achieved	PSA funding (£26,000)  £10,000	AJD  DB
<b>TP</b>							
<b>Key Outcome 1 :Develop effective arrangements for tenant consultation and participation</b>							
12. Work with tenants to develop, implement and review the local Tenants Participation Compact and other		Work with Compact Development & Monitoring Group (CDMG) to review and update compact  Incorporate outcomes of PWC/ Pathway review/Health-check  Liaise with Community	Dec 03 – Apr 04  May 04  Apr 04	Draft compact produced	Compact agreed which meets ODPM guidance and local needs		HBS  HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead	
compacts as applicable		Development re.other compacts		amended as appropriate	accessible and well publicised		HBS	
		Consult on draft with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHPs</li> <li>• TRAs</li> <li>• tenants at large</li> <li>• staff</li> <li>• Members</li> </ul>	May/June 04	Comments incorporated as appropriate	Improved levels of awareness among tenants (Target 25% 2004 35% 2005)		HBS	
		Compact agreed, published and circulated	June/July 04	Compact signed & distributed		£3,500	HBS	
		Accessible summary produced and staff trained	July 04	Compact published & on website		£1,500	HBS	
		Compact launched/publicised	July 04				HBS	
		CMG regularly monitor progress of action plan		Quarterly	Regular progress reports to CHPs.Publis hed articles			HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Regular publicity of progress	Ongoing			Spotlight	HBS
		Independent Healthcheck	2005			£1,500	HBS
13. Continuously improve tenant participation in all aspects of housing management.		Review role & function of CHPs	June 2004	Report agreed	Increased decision making by CHPs	External consultants £4,600	HBS
		Review structure supporting CHPs, including role of CHMs	May 2004	Structure agreed	CHPs more outcome focused	Within existing budgets	HBS
		Implement new structures	Aug-Nov 2004	Structure fully implemented	CHPs play more active role in performance monitoring		
		Produce plan, in full consultation with tenant organisations, for TP/CHIP development for coming year to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporate findings</li> </ul>	Oct 2004	Plans agreed	Priorities i/d through CHPs are fed into planning arrangements		HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		<p>of PWC review and Healthcheck.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include training needs/proposals</li> <li>build on existing Action Plan 2004</li> <li>Ensure all plans for tenant involvement/empowerment are consistent and complement each other</li> </ul>			Improved satisfaction with opportunities for participation in management & decision making (target 55% 2004; 60% 2005)		
		Regularly monitor progress against plan	Quarterly	Progress reported to CHP boards			HBS
		Develop training manual and introduce PDPs for all board members	Oct 2006	Training manual PDPs	Board members better able to carryout responsibilities		HBS
		Work with CHP boards and tenants groups to improve		Improved performance			HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		quality and effectiveness of PI data provided More residents trained to participate in recruitment	Dec 2004	information provided		£3,000	HBS
		Monitor success of CHPs against agreed PIs and report to CHPs on progress towards targets	Sep 2004 onwards	Report to CHPs			HBS
		Achieve Beacon status for CHPs	Sep 2004	Bid submitted in round 6 'Getting closer to communities'	Beacon awarded		HBS
14. Publish the service standards that have been set and publicise ongoing performance against		Ensure key standards are agreed as part of the compact Put in place mechanisms to monitor them	From May 2004 Apr 2004	All key service standards are included in factsheets and compact Regular monitoring	.		HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress reports	Outcome	Resources	Lead
them, making this available in a range of languages and suitable formats		Publicise results Include firm proposals for reviewing in conjunction with tenants	Quarterly June 2005	Articles/reports on performance Review group established & firm proposals/timescales agreed Comprehensive set of standards agreed and publicised Performance against them regularly monitored and improving Improved involvement and tenant		Spotlight    £40,000	CHP Managers    HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
15. Seek innovative ways to broaden the range of communication and consultation with tenants		Evaluate effectiveness of past initiatives  Develop communication plan (linked to Futures plan and including communication with staff)  Agree and implement plan	Aug 2004  July 2004  July 2004	satisfaction Evaluation report produced  Communication plan developed and progress regularly monitored  Variety of communication methods tried	Raised awareness of CHPs (target 30% by 2004; 50% by 2005)  Increased level of satisfaction with information provided (target 70% by 2004; 75% by 2005)	HBS  HBS/WA  HBS/WA	HBS  HBS/WA  HBS/WA
16 Promote an inclusive view of diversity, seeking out the views and participation of groups perceived to be hard-to-reach		Develop plan to address issues identified through consultation with BME groups  Implement plan and regularly monitor progress	Start Apr 2004  Jan 2005	Plan developed  Progress reports on implementation	Gap in satisfaction levels/involvement between BME/non BME groups reduced.	HBS  HBS	HBS  HBS



Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Work with tenants to develop E&D pack for tenant reps	July 2004	Pack produced and circulated	CHP boards/tenant reps etc are representative of community	£2,000	HBS
		Launch pack	Aug 2004				
		Undertake equalities and diversity impact assessments	March 2005	Assessment reports	Services delivered fairly to all groups		All managers
		Develop initiatives to target other groups such as young people and families	Jan 2005	Outcome of initiatives evaluated and reported to CHP	Improved participation/satisfaction levels among targeted groups		HBS
		Monitor effectiveness of initiatives	Annual Status survey				HBS

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
<b>Rent Service</b>							
<b>Key Outcome 1: Maximise the collection of rent due</b>							
17 Have a clear rent setting policy		Develop clear rent-setting policy in consultation with customers and Housing and Health  Ensure policy written in such a way that it is clear and of interest to stakeholders	Apr 2005	Policy agreed and implemented. Annual (or more frequent) publicity material produced	Rents set consistently  High level of tenant understanding of how rents are set		JR
		Formal communication plan	May 2005		Input from stakeholders and clear understanding of the policy		JR
18 Involve tenants, Members and other stakeholders in shaping the rent collection service and relevant service standards		Develop challenging standards through consultation (see 17 above)  Programme to publish details on performance (see 17 above)	March 2005	Standards designed and consulted upon  Programme/schedule should evolve from 16 above	2 further smart targets established  Include in publicity mention at 17 above		Rents and Benefits Manager (RBM)

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
and ensure they are clear about how the service works							
19 Maximise benefit take-up, including housing benefit, to help prevent increases in rent arrears and other debt		<p>Link into Benefits Improvement plan on benefit take up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address Non English speakers</li> <li>Design of range of leaflets</li> <li>Surgeries or presence at Community forums</li> <li>Closer working with CHP boards</li> </ul> <p>Recruit and train Housing Support Officers(HSO)</p> <p>Provide training and software to enable HSOs to give advice on full range of benefits</p>	<p>Aug 04</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Dec 04</p> <p>Oct 04</p> <p>Apr 2004</p> <p>July 2004</p>	<p>See BFI improvement plan</p> <p>Number of community meetings on Benefits held.</p> <p>Leaflets produced and circulated.</p> <p>Benefits Officer in attendance at Community Forums</p> <p>Benefits</p>	<p>Improved take-up of benefit from tenants.</p> <p>Number of Tenants claiming benefit improved to 60%</p>		<p>RBM</p> <p>CHIMs</p> <p>CHIMs</p>

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
20 Ensure that there is effective planning and liaison with the housing benefits service in order to prevent and minimise arrears.		Revisit procedures Link to Benefits Improvement plan  Establish a business orientated approach with Housing (SLAs, costings, etc)	Dec 04  Apr 05	Officer liaison with CHP established. Part of BFI improvement plan  Clear costings framework to be established between Revenue services and Housing	Further improvement to existing working practices  SLA in place		RBM  Head of Revenue Services (HORS)
21 Work closely with external agencies, for example the CAB and debt collection		Recruit Debt Co-ordinator post to focus on relationship building internally and externally  Produce report to ensure debt collection work in line	Sept 04  Ongoing	DC in post.  Report produced	Improved working relationship between Council, CAB and debt collection agencies.		RBM  Customer Debt

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
agencies, in order to make the most of their contribution to minimising and preventing arrears.		with corporate strategy on funding Voluntary organisations and obtaining value for money		and recommendations agreed. Work plan in place and operational.	Lower levels of arrears and fewer evictions.		Coordinator
22 Ensure that rent IT accounting systems are functional and fit for purpose.		Review performance data and reports currently being received  Incorporate into the specification for Revenues IT replacement project	Oct 04	Recommendations for improvement made	Develop new reports		Rents Collection Manager (RCM)

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
23 Make the best use of the most cost-effective rent collection methods, taking into account tenant preferences		Enhancement to IT system required to widen choice of D/D payment frequencies ( see 22 above)  Track payment options and take up  Develop Publicity plan on how to make payments (i.e. D/D campaign)	Sept 04  Sept 05  Sept 04	Review of progress made produced. Articles in press, Citizen etc produced..	High level of tenant awareness of different payment methods.  Increase in numbers paying by DD (target 20%)D	£2.2 million	RCM
24 Have a clear rent arrears recovery policy that reflects the priorities of the authority's corporate debt policy and that has explicit links with other relevant corporate policies		Establish procedure/protocols for working with Homelessness, Housing Advice and Estate Management (see 11)  Develop a Corporate Debt Policy	Apr 05  Apr 05	Policy agreed  Procedure agreed and operational.  Policy written	10% reduction in number of evictions 04/05 (= approx 12)  Policy in place		RCM  NADR Mgr

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
such as those on homelessness and social inclusion							
25 Set targets for keeping rent arrears to a minimum (and cascade these targets to front line staff).		Review procedures for FTA Raising awareness amongst Housing Staff on Rent issues	Apr 05 Apr 05	Procedure updated Training sessions for Estate staff	5% Reduction in rent arrear write offs		Income and Collection Mgr
26 Develop, in conjunction with tenants, councillors and other stakeholders, a policy on former tenant arrears.		Develop targets in consultation with tenants Produce FTA policy	Sept 05 Apr 05	CHP board / Forum minutes See 25	See 25		ICM





Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>							
<b>Key Task 1 : Improving Services to Residents</b>							
28 Set up additional monitoring systems necessary to measure progress towards performance targets		Put in place arrangements for ongoing telephone surveys of residents who have moved into relet void properties recently, and monitoring of results  Analyse customer satisfaction and complaints monitoring data with the aim of feeding findings into service improvements. This should be published to tenants. (BVI)	March 2003 - ongoing  March 2004	Surveys carried out and results reported to CHP's  Trend identification in place	Increase in customer satisfaction  Tenants perception of Service improved		B'Ok  MG/KL
		Find out what tenants really think and want from the service. Some consideration should be given to the use of an independent facilitator to assist in this. (BVI)	Dec 2003 and ongoing	Number of tenants contacted.  Number of responses received.  Analysis of responses	User views on the service		B'Ok

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Put in place arrangements for satisfaction surveys of residents who have had major works to their homes.		Number of surveys conducted Client post created			KW
		Develop more sophisticated mechanisms to measure the quality of repairs received by tenants			Increase in quality of repair work and greater customer satisfaction		JM
29 Obtain Charter Mark		Undertake initial assessment of current performance against CharterMark requirements and develop a detailed action plan to progress	Dec 2004	Action plan produced and implemented	Charter Mark achieved		B'Ok



Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		those produced by the CHP Managers'					
		Publicise strategic and operational objectives, revised responsibilities, priorities and timescales to all residents	Jan 2004	Leaflet/press release/ Citizen article etc produced.			Thames Accord
		That as soon as practically possible literature advertising all aspects of the service should be revised to incorporate key and up to date information about the repairs service; with particular emphasis on opening hours; emergency number; the appointment system and accurate information about the different priority time scale for various jobs. (BVI)	Feb 2004	Leaflet produced awaiting print	Leaflet produced and circulated		DWC
32 Publish clear standards		Relet standards - What repairs should be done before the new	Feb/Mar 2004	Void policy produced	Clear standards in place that		MG/KL

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
for void relets to all residents		<p>tenant moves in and what can be left until the new tenancy has started</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timescales (including timescale for applicants to accept/refuse offers and for new tenants to move in)</li> </ul>			<p>staff and public are aware of. Improvements in void turn around times and increase in revenue collection</p>		
		Implementation of new IT to support changes to the void process	July 2004	New IT in place.	Management Information etc available		CHM Manager A.Alexander
		Publicise revised standards and timescales to all residents and applicants for Council housing, including information on when outstanding repairs will be completed	Feb/Mar 2004	Standards publicised in Spotlight	Raised awareness and application of standards by tenants and staff alike		MG/KL
		Ensure that all staff	Feb/ March	Staff briefings			MG/ KL

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		understand and apply the agreed standards	2004	complete			
33 Involve tenant and residents reps in estate inspections		Involve tenant reps in estate block inspections, both to identify communal and other types of repairs, and to monitor progress.	Jan 2004	Number of inspections completed with reps involved. Progress monitored and reported to CHP boards	Higher satisfaction of tenants with estate management / inspection process, Greater feelings of ownership?		CHP Managers
		<i>Whilst this element is complete, a review of the process to gauge level of tenant involvement and effectiveness will be carried out</i>	Dec 2004	Review of CHP underway during which the estate inspections will be reviewed			HBS
<b>Key Task 2: Resident Involvement in Planning &amp; Management of Repairs.</b>							
34. Encourage		Introduce procedure for consulting with all residents	July 2004	Consultation procedure in	Increased ownership by		KW

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
and empower resident involvement in the planning and management of the repairs and maintenance function; increase choice (of fittings, finishes etc) available to residents		affected by major works, to ensure that they have as much information and choice as possible and have a contact point in all cases to which they can go if there is a problem		place. Number of residents consulted.	tenants in repairs management and planning.  Satisfaction of residents with major repairs process  Satisfaction of residents with major repairs outcome.		
<b>Key Task 3: Tenant and Resident Involvement and Access to the service</b>							
35. Ensure T & R are involved in the service provision and made aware of development		Take steps to improve communication to all residents about the work being carried out by MRA programme, with particular reference to works that have been delayed in order that they can be incorporated into the programme	Dec 2003	Customer care initiatives revised and implemented.  Strategy approved and implemented	Tenants clear about works to be carried out. Reduction in complaints. Tenant input and greater choice. Reduction in complaints		KW

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timescale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		<p>Appoint external consultants MACE in place to revise customer care initiatives</p> <p>Develop strategy for Notifying affected tenants if major work to communal area is planned.</p> <p>Publicise new appointment arrangements to all tenants</p> <p>Take steps to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of appointments for repair visits is equally available at where the repair is reported; if repair appointments are not available then the public should be told.</li> <li>• Repair request receipts are issued for all tenants who report repairs and not just to those who report the repairs to the</li> </ul>	<p>Jan 2004</p> <p>Aug 2004</p> <p>Apr 2004</p>	<p>Leaflets / article / PR produced</p> <p>Staff skilled in project management</p> <p>Improved involvement from tenants/res</p> <p>% of residents receiving compensation for visits not kept.</p>	<p>Increase in availability of appointments</p>	<p>£760,000</p>	<p>KH</p> <p>KH/ Mace</p> <p>JR/Thames Accord</p> <p>Thames Accord</p>



Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		<p>call centre (BVI)</p> <p>Offer compensation to residents if appointment not kept; publicise this in conjunction with reminder to tenants that the Council expects them to keep to appointments too</p>	Sep 2004	Research under way of good practice by other providers			Thames Accord

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Increase public awareness of language line through use of posters/leaflets in appropriate languages and articles in Spotlight	Feb/Apr 2004	Posters in all reception areas. Reports have been presented to all CHP boards	Increased awareness of language line.		MW DJC
		Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on how to use language line facility: more active promotion of this facility should be undertaken with residents. (BVI)	Feb 2004	Training programme in place	Staff confident with use of language line.		B'Ok/ JR
<b>Key Task 4: REDUCE RESPONSIVE/INDIRECT COSTS</b>							

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Timeline	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
36. Emergency Repairs		Set standards for emergency repairs so that unnecessary work is not carried out; And take immediate steps to reduce the proportion of emergency repairs carried out. (BVI)	July 2003	Standards agreed and implemented.  Lower % of repairs carried out as "emergencies"	Reduced repair costs.		B'Ok
37. Improve control of order costs		Appoint Client Officer to ensure improved monitoring  Investigate a sample of dayworks repairs to establish whether they have been correctly ordered; identify any underlying problems and take action as appropriate  Monitor level of dayworks orders regularly to ensure that average level is no more than 5%	Feb 2004  Feb 2004 and ongoing  Feb 2004 and ongoing	New client officer post in place.  Dayworks sample analysed and improvements recommended  Monitoring completed.  Monitoring	Low levels of variations.  Reduced repair costs.  Daywork orders below 5%		KL  KL  KL

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
		Investigate a sample of varied orders to establish the level of variations		completed			
38.Enforce tenant repair (and Notice) responsibilities		Incorporate revised tenant repair responsibilities into Tenancy Agreement/Handbook	May 2005	Revised handbook produced and circulated	Improved tenant awareness of own repair responsibilities. Reduced number of tenant responsibility repairs reported?		HBS/KL
<b>Key Task 5 : Capital Improvements</b>							
39.Develop plans to show how high rise blocks will meet the decent homes standard		Appoint consultant to carry out survey of properties and report on findings.	May 2004	Surveys completed Recommendations produced and fed into Housing Futures plans	Council able to make informed judgement about future of high rise blocks		PF/ External consultants

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
40. Develop plans to show how the Council is dealing with housing conditions in high rise blocks		Capital Investment report to Executive  Implement interim programme	Feb 2004  Apr 2004 – March 2006	Report agreed by the executive for interim 2 year capital programme  Monitoring Reports	High rise blocks improved		KH  KH
<b>Access and Customer Care</b>							
<b>Key Task 1:</b>							
41. Ensure compliance with CF reception area audit		All service area reception offices to attain 3 star rating by 31/3/04	31/3/04	3 star rating achieved	High level of customer satisfaction with reception areas		MW/CHMs
42. Ensure compliance with Access Audit		Report to Executive detailing capital programme for improvements  All housing office reception offices to meet requirements of recently carried out access audit	July 2004		Compliance with DDA Greater public accessibility		DLES

Improvement Required	Priority	Key Actions	Time scale	Outputs Demonstrating progress	Outcome	Resources	Lead
43 Improvements to 2 & 90 Stour Road		Report to Executive July 2004. Implement agreed proposals	July 2004	Awaiting decision by the Executive May/June 2004	Greater public accessibility		A.Odunsi
44. Charter Mark application for Housing Services		Undertake initial assessment of current CharterMark requirements and develop a detailed action plan to progress application for CharterMark	Apr 2006	Action plan produced and implemented	Charter Mark achieved		HBS

Appendix 1

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<b>Provide effective tenancy management</b>			
<p>1. Ensure service standards are effectively communicated to tenants and are available in a range of appropriate languages and formats</p>	<p>Service standards, developed in conjunction with ACPs, consulted on for clarity and published in Citizen Jan 04 (translations/other formats offered) Also on website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Agreed service standards published in plain language/ provided to tenants</li> <li>o Translations available</li> <li>o Available in Braille/large print/on tape</li> <li>o Info. on web</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure all areas have appropriate service standards.  Involve the CHPs in the measuring of performance against the standards.  Involve residents when standards are reviewed.</p>
<p>2. Ensure tenants are aware of their obligations under their tenancy agreements and leases and ascertain their compliance with the terms of these</p>	<p>Enforcement role of estate management set out in specification  Regular rolling programme of tenancy audits  Tenants' information pack (issued at sign-up)  Leasehold handbook and copy of ODPM booklet issued  Leaflets and factsheets available in reception areas (translations offered)  Information on website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Explicit tenancy conditions that are enforced by housing staff</li> <li>o Conditions of tenancy/lease in plain language and explained at sign up/purchase</li> <li>o Regular proactive property and tenancy checks</li> <li>o Wide range of information displayed in estate offices</li> </ul>	<p>Develop effective monitoring and reporting of the tenancy audit, including key information on tenant profiles.  Make sure all CHPs use the same sign up process.  Update the tenancy pack and Landlord Services leaflets in general once new conditions of tenancy agreed.  Develop tenancy induction package, including an audio-visual presentation available in</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>3 Undertake customer-focussed letting practices to include, for example, the provision of comprehensive information packs (in community languages and multiple formats as necessary), accompanied viewings and post-tenancy follow up visits</p>	<p>Conditions of tenancy (CoT) recently reviewed and being consulted on</p> <p>Tenants' information pack (issued at sign-up)</p> <p>Accompanied viewings in some areas in accordance with guidance in void procedure</p> <p>Post tenancy follow ups ad hoc</p>	<p>Comprehensive welcome pack for new tenants</p>	<p>main community languages.</p> <p>Launch new conditions of tenancy.</p> <p>Develop guidance on post tenancy follow ups.</p> <p>Introduce new induction pack (see 2).</p>
<p>4 Manage tenancy matters (such as succession and assignment) in line with both statutory requirements and local policies</p>	<p>Local policies in addition to statutory requirements</p> <p>Decisions on tenancy succession/ transfer devolved to managers (not checked for compliance/consistency)</p>	<p>Up to date housing management manual</p>	<p>Work with tenants to review estate management priorities and standards.</p> <p>Review and update the management manual.</p> <p>Train staff and monitor compliance.</p>



Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
5 Deal swiftly and sensitively with neighbour disputes, using mediation and other techniques as appropriate, in accordance with the published procedures for tackling anti-social behaviour	EM staff try to mediate, but independent mediation seldom used – pilot project on use of external mediation undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Independent mediation agencies used</li> </ul>	Provide information/ training to EM staff on use of trained mediators.
6 Develop strong links at a neighbourhood level between housing management and other service providers (such as benefit, educational, social and health services and the police) to promote community cohesion	<p>Successful Neighbourhood Management projects in two areas</p> <p>Good links with other agencies e.g. police, but varies between offices</p> <p>Work undertaken on joint resolving of complaints between EM and HCS but complaints show need to improve joint working/information sharing in some areas</p>		<p>Develop proposals to mainstream Neighbourhood Management projects.</p> <p>Review areas that may benefit from joint working protocols.</p> <p>Follow joint working protocols – monitor effectiveness.</p>
7 Prevent, reduce and respond rapidly and appropriately to	Firm stance on anti-social behaviour, reflected in revised CoT. Acceptable behaviour contracts/ASBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Responds vigorously to residents' concerns around ASB</li> </ul>	Develop plans for additional concierge schemes.

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour (including racial harassment and domestic violence) using legal and other remedies, and liaise effectively with other agencies in accordance with the council's anti-social behaviour strategy</p>	<p>being pursued and publicised Effective legal action on pirate radio stations Initiatives such as security patrols/additional concierge schemes Strong link with corporate community safety team Community safety officer working with police Hotline for public to report ASB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o ASB policy consistently applied and effectively monitored</li> <li>o Effective partnership arrangements/communications on channels with other agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Develop ASB policy and establish dedicated team to implement/monitor.  Continue to publicise action on ASB.</p>
<b>Ensure effective management of estates and their environments</b>			
<p>8 Involve tenants in setting and measuring performance targets and ensure that service standards are clear, set from a tenant's perspective and are communicated effectively both internally and externally</p>	<p>See 1  Working party drawn from CHPs looking at services we provide and use of EMS computer system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Residents closely involved in development and monitoring of service standards</li> <li>o High standards set on key service delivery areas and majority of key standards and targets met.</li> </ul>	<p>Involve CHPs in reviewing priorities and service standards and setting performance targets.  Review and further develop performance monitoring by the CHPs.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>9 Ensure a safe, clean and attractive estate environment for tenants and visitors, working closely with other Council departments and outside agencies</p>	<p>New neighbourhood caretaking service established – includes specialist cleaning teams</p> <p>Regular estate inspections/'walks' with tenants established</p> <p>Budgets delegated to CHPs for security improvements</p> <p>Effective work dealing with contaminated land (won award)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Work undertaken to improve physical environment of estates and residents view outcomes as positive</li> <li>o Resources earmarked to tackle tenant identified environmental improvements</li> </ul>	<p>Improve communication/working between caretaking/estate management teams.</p> <p>Review success of estate inspections/walks and agree standardised approach across CHPs.</p>
<p>10 Achieve the most appropriate balance for the delivery of estate-based services, locally and/or from the centre, based on a full understanding of the costs and benefits of providing those services and following appropriate consultation with tenants in service planning</p>	<p>CHPs brought services locally, but area rather than estate based.</p> <p>Delivered from 3 area offices – plans for a fourth</p> <p>New neighbourhood caretaking service (centralised)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Access to services provided through network of well maintained local housing offices providing payment facilities for rents and other charges.</li> </ul>	<p>Monitor satisfaction levels following the introduction of the new caretaking service.</p> <p>Open new office for CHP area 4.</p> <p>Review structure of Landlord services.</p> <p>Develop area service plans in consultation with CHP boards.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>11 Manage and monitor estate-based work including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minor repairs</li> <li>• voids servicing</li> <li>• caretaking, cleaning</li> <li>• grounds</li> <li>• maintenance and</li> <li>• litter/waste collection</li> </ul>	<p>Voids service decentralised</p> <p>New voids procedure launched to deliver challenging PSA target</p> <p>Neighbourhood caretaking service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fast track procedure for voids</li> <li>○ Reward for tenants leaving property in clean tidy state</li> <li>○ Use specialist cleaning contractor</li> <li>○ Allow tenancy to commence part way through week</li> </ul>	<p>Train staff on new void procedure and monitor effectiveness.</p> <p>Implement training plan for caretaking staff.</p>
<p>12 Ensure that common parts are kept clean and tidy and that repairs to these areas are undertaken within locally agreed time limits</p>	<p>See 9</p>		<p>See 9</p>
<p>13 Effectively deal with abandoned cars, graffiti and other such nuisances</p>	<p>Successful initiatives on abandoned vehicles and graffiti, but still felt by tenants to be serious problems (STATUS 03).</p> <p>Wheel clamping initiatives developed</p> <p>Excellent graffiti removal service provides service to private sector</p>		<p>Identify best practice on abandoned vehicles and implement.</p> <p>Publicise good work of graffiti team.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
14 Effectively manage garages, sheds and other buildings and sites (including, where appropriate, commercial premises	Plan developed in response to large number vacant garages Performance regularly reported to CHPs Applications to rent garages can be made on website		Continue to implement plan.
<b>Develop effective arrangements for tenant consultation and participation</b>			
15 Work with tenants to develop, implement and review the local Tenants Participation Compact and other compacts as applicable	TP Compact 2000/01 – low levels of awareness of compact, tenants felt compact had made little appreciable difference and that Council had not kept commitments made in compact. Compact reviewed and updated with input from working party of residents	Local TPC developed with tenants TPC includes service standards TPC includes implementation plan and proposals for monitoring/reviewing TPC publicised and available in range of languages/formats Staff/Members clear about compact/involvement arrangements Compact properly monitored and reviewed	Agree and publicise updated compact. Produce accessible summary document Both versions on website Regularly monitor and report on performance
16 Continuously improve tenant participation in all aspects of housing management, in line with commitments made in the Tenant Participation Compact, including the	Dedicated staff and budgets for CHP/TP development and promotion CHP boards established Constitution includes delegated budgets & monitoring of services Training programmes TP manual Proposals to align TP/CHP development	Involvement activity has clearly stated aim and direction Adequate budget/resources for tenant involvement and participation Boards and committees are not unduly formal and do not discourage participation of	Review role & function of CHPs. Review structure supporting CHPs, including role of CHMs. Produce plan, in full consultation with tenant organisations, for TP/CHP development for

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Actual/Evidence</b>	<b>Ideal/best practice</b>	<b>Gap/Improvement Required</b>
<p>setting and monitoring of published service standards</p>	<p>Key proposals/standards set out in compact            Tenant resource centre            Futures empowerment strategy/ITA            Improvement in satisfaction BV 75 (opportunities for participation) up 4%            Levels of awareness of CHPs/TPC low (19%)            72% tenants feel council takes account of their views (higher than similar question asked of general population)            Tenants felt they had limited influence on decision making (2002)            PWC assessment of CHPs and review of partnerships            Independent healthcheck of CHPs/TP undertaken 2004            Set of PIs to monitor effectiveness of CHPs agreed</p>	<p>'ordinary' tenants            Compact includes proposals for improving both number and mix of tenants participating            Range of Innovative initiatives carried out &amp; evaluated            Implementation plan in TPC monitored and delivered            Tenant involvement in recruitment processes            Tenants actively involved in setting and monitoring of service standards</p>	<p>coming year incorporating findings of PWC review and Healthcheck. This will include training needs/proposals and build on existing Action Plan 2004.            Ensure all plans for tenant involvement/ empowerment are consistent and complement each other.            Work with CHP boards and tenants groups to improve quality and effectiveness of PI data provided.            Monitor &amp; report on CHP PIs and standards in compact.            Consider applying for Beacon status.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>17 Publish the service standards that have been set and publicise ongoing performance against them, making this available in a range of languages and suitable formats</p>	<p>TP standards developed and set out in TP Compact/on website/translations &amp; other formats available Performance regularly reviewed and reported. 2002 survey high levels of satisfaction, but low response rate PIs for CHPs recently agreed</p>	<p>Agreed service standards published Regular information on performance against standards published Translations available Available in Braille/large print/on tape Info. on web</p>	<p>Publicise performance against standards.  Review standards and targets in consultation with residents.</p>
<p>18 Establish mechanisms to allow tenants to actively participate in the management of the housing service and to scrutinise performance against agreed service standards</p>	<p>Regular performance reports to CHP boards Spending directed at issued identified locally Residents contributed to this and repairs reviews through Critical Friend Groups Training/briefings for tenant reps.</p>	<p>Evidence of responding to issues that have been identified as a problem/priority for tenants Tenant reps. on BV steering groups Tenants have sufficient information to enable them to judge how the Council is performing Well informed and influential tenant board members</p>	<p>Work with CHP boards and tenants groups to improve the quality and effectiveness of PI data provided.</p>
<p>19 Ensure that, as a minimum, all statutory requirements for consulting leaseholders regarding repair and improvement work are met through</p>	<p>Leaseholder consultation on repairs has been problematic in past – consultation now led by dedicated leasehold team Leasehold team strengthened, training available Publicise via handbook/spotlight Regular surveys + focus groups Conference in conjunction with L/hold Advisory Service</p>		<p>Continue to raise awareness among staff in other teams of leasehold issues.  Improve satisfaction levels.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>arrangements which enable the identification of issues specific to leaseholders</p> <p>20 Seek innovative ways to broaden the range of communication and consultation with tenants</p>	<p>Leaseholders included on CHP boards</p> <p>Informal meetings with leasehold reps.</p> <p>Roadshows (CHPs)</p> <p>Exhibit at Town Show</p> <p>Spotlight/In Partnership newsletters</p> <p>TP conference</p> <p>Annual report</p> <p>Poster campaigns</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Benchmarking group to share good practice</p> <p>Tenant participation manual (also on website)</p> <p>Leaflets</p>	<p>Comprehensive communications/consultation strategy in place and regularly evaluated</p> <p>Tenants aware of key issues/initiatives</p> <p>High levels of satisfaction with opportunities for participation</p> <p>Handbook offering practical advice for residents wanting to set up an association</p> <p>Information on TP in tenants handbook</p>	<p>Evaluate effectiveness of past initiatives.</p> <p>Communication plan (linked to Futures plan and including communication with staff)</p>
<p>21 Promote an inclusive view of diversity, seeking out the views and participation of groups perceived to be hard-to-reach</p>	<p>TP Officer designated to work with minority groups</p> <p>Work with 20 community groups to identify barriers – action plan developed</p> <p>Events during Black History Week</p> <p>Open day held</p> <p>‘Bar and Bus’ project</p> <p>Status action plan targeting families</p> <p>TIS contract/translations</p>	<p>Council has effective E&amp;D strategy and conforms to Level 3 of the Equality Standard</p> <p>Little difference in levels of satisfaction with opportunities for participation between minority groups &amp; mainstream</p> <p>Has targets for involving hard to reach groups</p>	<p>Continue to implement action plan to address issues raised by BME groups.</p> <p>Develop equalities and diversity pack for tenants.</p> <p>Implement plans to increase participation of targeted groups (families &amp; young people).</p> <p>Monitor effectiveness.</p>



Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
	<p>BV75 shows no significant difference for BME groups</p> <p>CHP boards representative in terms of ethnicity</p> <p>Healthcheck stated that participants felt TP strategy encouraged and promoted equal opportunities</p> <p>BVI comments in repairs report raise concerns at low level of input from BME/hard to reach groups</p>		
<b>Maximise the collection of rent due</b>			
<p>22 Have a clear rent setting policy which puts rents in line with the Government's rent restructuring proposals and which has been consulted upon with tenants and leaseholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council agreed a points based rents system 26 Nov 98 (House Rents Working Party minutes)</li> <li>• Consultation with tenants 14 Dec 2000 on proposed rent increase (note)</li> <li>• Rents 2002/03 report to executive 15 Jan 2002 and note to Labour group.(Agreed minute number 293)</li> <li>• Note 1 March 2002 confirming adoption of Government Green Paper on Rents</li> <li>• Rents 2003/04 report to executive 14 January 2003. (agreed minute number 271)</li> <li>• Leaflets to tenants for consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of Government proposals on rent setting.</li> <li>• Existing and Prospective tenants/leaseholders understand how rents and service charges are set and are made aware of any agreed future policies for these areas of service</li> </ul>	<p>Review rent setting policy in consultation.</p> <p>Develop and implement formal communication/consultation plan.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
	<p>(99/00)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government leaflet Fair and Affordable rents dispatched with annual statement</li> <li>• Housing Business Plan provides current position and context (page 13)</li> <li>• Consultation on Service Charges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape Up</li> <li>• expansion of concierge services to other blocks. Minute 131 17/9/02</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Since 99/00 there has been little formal consultation with tenants on rents.</li> <li>• Spotlight and Citizen Magazine, provides a source of info.</li> </ul>		
<p>23 Involve tenants, Members and other stakeholders in shaping the rent collection service and relevant service standards and ensure they are clear about how the service works</p>	<p>Standards published in Citizen – translation/other formats offered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit payments made at the Post Office to your rent account within 4 working days</li> <li>• Let you know within 10 days if you miss a payment</li> <li>• Send you a new payment card (if you need one) within 10 working days</li> <li>• Let you pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly by direct debit</li> <li>• Take action to end your tenancy if you are more than 4 weeks in arrears with your rent</li> <li>• Rent statements sent half yearly</li> </ul>	<p>There are clear service standards and all stakeholders are actively involved in setting these</p>	<p>Develop challenging standards through consultation. Publish details on performance.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
24 Provide information to all tenants that clearly describes how the authority's rent-setting system works, how rent and service charges are calculated and how they are collected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details available on Website including provision to pay rent</li> <li>• Government booklet on rents dispatched in March and also handed to all new tenants on sign up</li> <li>• Procedure for sign ups</li> <li>• Consultation re service charges</li> </ul>	There are clear service standards and all stakeholders are actively involved in setting these	Part of communication/consultation plan (22).
25 Maximise benefit take-up, including housing benefit, to help prevent increases in rent arrears and other debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Support Officers in each CHP area</li> <li>• Participate in North East London Joint Working Group on Revenues</li> <li>• See correspondence with Ombudsman below</li> <li>• Awaiting publication of BFI of Benefits (since received)</li> <li>• Claimant support Initiative procedure (held electronically)</li> </ul>	There is early access to the service and information is provided in appropriate formats and other languages as necessary.	<p>Link into Benefits Improvement plan on benefit take up.</p> <p>Address needs of non English speakers.</p> <p>Design of range of leaflets.</p> <p>Surgeries or presence at Community forums.</p> <p>Closer work with CHP boards.</p> <p>Further develop work of Housing Support officers.</p>
26 Ensure that there is effective planning and liaison with the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence with Ombudsman confirming happy (and complimentary) with LBBB procedures</li> </ul>	There is effective planning and liaison with the housing benefit services in order to minimise	<p>Revisit procedures.</p> <p>Link to Benefits improvement</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>housing benefits service in order to prevent and minimise arrears.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Recovery procedure held electronically</li> <li>• HB and Rents in same department</li> <li>• Evictions for 2003/04 down on previous years.</li> <li>• Team of Housing Benefit liaison Officers</li> </ul> <p>Examples of joint working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly meeting between Head of Revenue Services (HRS) and Head of Landlord Services</li> <li>• HRS attends Landlord Services management team meetings</li> <li>• Revenue Services' staff well represented in this review</li> <li>• Reciprocal arrangements for access to computer systems</li> </ul>	<p>arrears</p>	<p>plan.</p> <p>Develop SLAs between departments.</p>
<p>27 Work closely with external agencies, for example the CAB and debt collection agencies, in order to make the most of their contribution to minimising and preventing arrears.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with CAB - minute 9 Apr 03</li> <li>• Leaflet of providers of independent advice (produced by CAB)</li> <li>• Meeting with Romford County Court</li> <li>• A Debt Co-ordinator post established</li> <li>• Quality Mark accreditation gained December 2003</li> <li>• When existing welfare team come across debt problems beyond rent and council tax they insist upon independent advice</li> </ul>	<p>There is close work with external agencies, for example CAB, in order to make the most of their contribution to minimising debt.</p>	<p>Develop debt Co-ordinator role to focus on relationship building (internally and externally)</p>
<p>28 Ensure that rent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• System in place for reconciliation with</li> </ul>	<p>No guidance</p>	<p>Review performance data and</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>accounting systems are well integrated with housing management and benefit systems, providing staff with accurate and timely information about tenants' accounts and managers with appropriate performance monitoring information.</p>	<p>HB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous printouts received daily / weekly / monthly to inform staff.</li> <li>• Local indicator for 13+ weeks outstanding rent</li> <li>• Housemark data down loaded for 2002/3 and report produced</li> </ul>		<p>reports currently being received. Incorporate into the specification for Revenues IT replacement project.</p>
<p>29 Make the best use of the most cost-effective rent collection methods, taking into account tenant preferences and their ability to access services, and provide accurate and timely information about rent accounts to tenants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Options exist i.e. D/D, S/O, cash at counter and post office giro.</li> <li>• Table of D/D received monthly (held electronically)</li> <li>• Rent statements sent at least 6 monthly, and also on demand. (see section 2)</li> <li>• Internet access</li> <li>• Various methods of advice through correspondence (copies held)</li> <li>• Rent Accounts procedure (held electronically)</li> </ul>	<p>The cost effectiveness of the service takes into account tenant and leaseholder preferences and their ability to access services, and provides accurate and timely information about accounts to customers</p>	<p>Enhancement to IT system required to widen choice of D/D payment frequencies.</p> <p>Track payment options and take up.</p> <p>Publicity plan on how to make payments (i.e. D/D campaign).</p>
<p>30 Have a clear rent arrears recovery policy that reflects the priorities of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless Strategy 2003 published on Website.</li> <li>• Preventative action to maintain tenancies covered by restructure in</li> </ul>	<p>No guidance</p>	<p>Establish procedure/protocols for working with Homelessness, Housing Advice and Estate Management.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>authority's corporate debt policy and that has explicit links with other relevant corporate policies such as those on homelessness and social inclusion</p>	<p>Revenue Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of Housing Support &amp; Welfare Officers in each CHP.</li> <li>• Procedure to deduct £2.75 from benefit to avoid court action (memo 14 Jan)</li> <li>• Community Cohesion Strategy</li> </ul>		<p>Develop corporate policy on debt.</p>
<p>31 Set targets for keeping rent arrears to a minimum (and cascade these targets to front line staff), implement measure to prevent arrears growing and take swift action to control and recover, including former tenant arrears.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong focus on keeping arrears to a minimum. Working practices are to chase arrears vigorously</li> <li>• BVPI 66a proportion of rent collected top quartile for London</li> <li>• Local PIs;-</li> <li>• % of payments made using cheapest methods</li> <li>• Arrears as % of total rent debit</li> <li>• % of rent owing 13+ weeks</li> <li>• Monthly performance tracked and analysed</li> </ul>	<p>The target setting process and implementation of the rent and service charge collection procedures keeps arrears to a minimum.</p>	<p>Review procedures for FTA. Raising awareness of Housing Staff on Rent arrears.</p>
<p>32 Help tenants in arrears to stay in their homes by providing advice and assistance on debt management and pursuing debt collection strategies that sensitively balance the pursuit of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team of Housing Benefit liaison Officers</li> <li>• 750 visits made in December</li> <li>• Claimant support Initiative procedure (held electronically)</li> <li>• Rent recovery procedure held electronically</li> </ul>	<p>No guidance</p>	<p>See 25, 26, 27 above.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p>debt against the needs of vulnerable tenants</p> <p>33 Seek possession on rent arrears only as a last resort, once all other reasonable steps have been taken and after tenants have been offered referral to independent debt advisers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debtors encouraged to approach CAB for independent advice. (see 6)</li> <li>• Housing welfare Officers in CHPs</li> <li>• Housing Advice also deals with such enquiries</li> </ul>	<p>No guidance</p>	<p>Debt Co-ordinator post already established. (This post will focus on relationship building internally and externally)</p>
<p>34 Develop, in conjunction with tenants, councillors and other stakeholders, a policy on former tenant arrears that includes the methods used to collect such arrears and the factors to be taken into account when writing off these debts, and monitor its implementation.</p>	<p>Rent recovery procedure held electronically</p>	<p>No guidance</p>	<p>Review procedures for former tenant arrears.</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
35 Know how much the service costs, including the split between collection, recovery of arrears and debt counselling	Overall cost per property & no. properties per employee for rent collection lowest in London (Housemark)	Has the organisation evaluated value for money	Carry out a full review of costs.
36 Monitor and manage service delivery and demonstrate to tenants and other stakeholders that policies are being implemented, targets are being achieved and the service is being delivered efficiently and effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is provided to CHP boards.</li> <li>• 68% tenants feel rent they pay is good vfm (2% increase on 2000)</li> </ul>	The performance of the services is widely reported	Part of communication plan (22).  Develop low cost insurance scheme for tenants.
37 Comply with all statutory requirements regarding service charge notification and collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent Accounts procedure</li> <li>• Councils Condition of Tenancy</li> <li>• All court proceeding pass through the Council's Legal services Team</li> <li>• Private Solicitors provide advocacy for Council cases at court</li> <li>• Staff training done in house with assistance of legal services and private solicitors as required</li> <li>• See information on leasehold services (19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service provided complies with all statutory requirements in relation to rents, service charges and any legal action taken</li> <li>• Do staff know and comply with the statutory requirements</li> </ul>	Review training programme.  Management action plan on audits with performance reported to CMG and CHPs.  Improve liaison between leasehold team and income section.



Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
<p><b>Engage effectively with tenants about the maintenance of their homes</b></p>			
<p>38. Building on the principles of the local Tenants Participation Compact, engage with tenants (particularly hard-to-reach groups) on the most appropriate methods for delivering the Council's repairs and maintenance service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation undertaken during repairs review – Critical Friend Group</li> <li>• Regular reports from Thames Accord to CHP boards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation strategy</li> <li>• Use of focus groups</li> <li>• Input from T&amp;R directly in the monitoring of the services e.g Tenant Inspectors</li> </ul>	<p>Establish Repairs focus group</p>
<p>39. As part of the business planning process, develop effective and open engagements with tenants on decision-making, the setting of service standards and the selection and monitoring of contractors<sup>2</sup> and building materials and components</p>	<p>Consultation on business plan Training course for tenants on how to choose contractors. Tenants were involved in the appointment of Accord.</p>		<p>Plans to further develop decision making by CHPs</p>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
40. Empower tenants so they can help to prioritise repairs budgets (for both responsive and planned repairs)	Not happening at present.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production of defined list of repairs and agreed by CHPs</li> </ul>
41. Involve tenants in performance monitoring, and provide them with comparative information on service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly PIs are part of the CHP meeting agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide benchmarking data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See above</li> </ul>
42. Measure tenant satisfaction with all parts of the service, analysing and acting on feed back, including complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant satisfaction measuring being done</li> <li>Status survey</li> </ul>	Range of customer satisfaction monitoring arrangements in place Feedback used to inform service development Customer satisfaction improved in all areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trend tracking</li> <li>Feed back to T&amp;R and CHP board</li> </ul>
<b>Run efficient and effective responsive repairs services</b>			

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
43 Ensure tenants' interests are recognised through easy access to the service, suitable arrangements for out-of-hours repairs ordering, written confirmation of repairs requests and the making and keeping appointments	Repairs can be requested by phone/in person/e-mail Extended hours for call centre % repairs where appt. made & kept improving (88%)	Appointment system meets needs of all tenants & I/holders. Communicated to residents and staff so that they are able to understand and administer effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about appointments</li> <li>• Better performance on appointments</li> </ul>
44 Implement systems to monitor the quality of the workmanship and the conduct of contractors	Quality of work criticised in previous BV re-inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower customer complaints</li> <li>• Quality systems in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit procedure by client (LBBD)</li> <li>• Thames Accord QA procedure</li> </ul>
45 Ensure the accuracy of repairs diagnosis at the point of reporting	Staff taking repairs request trained and monitored through quality checks	Adequate diagnostic tools for repair reporting	
46 Ensure repairs are carried out effectively first time and on time and deal with service failures where they occur	Contractor (Thames Accord) KPIs in place and monitored		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service monitored by client side</li> </ul>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
47 Have a cost-effective and coherent approach to repairs on void properties, setting a lettable standard that ties in with the Business Plan	Void manual developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, well publicised policies</li> <li>• Void procedure does things in parallel rather than in sequence to speed up process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define standard for voids including MRA</li> <li>• Pruction of void standard and published</li> </ul>
48 Reduce the overall level of responsive work (to at most 40% of revenue repairs spend) and ensure that responsive repairs are appropriately categorised	Significant reduction in emergency work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with Government guidelines</li> </ul>	
49 Control extras and secure discounts for work that has a long lead time or involves empty properties	Competitive contract in place with Thames Accord, with defined set budget		

Criteria	Actual/Evidence	Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
50 Improve performance monitoring by prioritising post-inspection and make better use of tenant feedback (for example, through satisfaction surveys and complaints systems)	Regular customer satisfaction surveys in place Thames Accord quality assurance system		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaint and satisfaction surveys trends monitored</li> </ul>
<b>Improve performance management and procurement</b>			
51 Know how much the commissioning of the service costs and whether it provides value for money	Cost known Benchmarking data in place		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular use of benchmark data and benchmarking clubs</li> </ul>
52 Ensure staff, partners and suppliers know their roles and how the overall service operates	New depot brought together all repairs staff under one roof. BV review of reapers commented favourably on the informed view of the staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular partnership meetings in place</li> <li>All staff briefings</li> </ul>
53 Minimise the number of items on any Schedule of Rates in line with best practice, develop multi-skilled working amongst contractors/ employees, and reduce the incidence of bonus-driven work schedules	Thames Accord have minimal use of schedule of rates	Clear well defined schedule of rates	Thames Accord to ensure that schedule of rates adheres to good practice and VFM to be checked by client team

Criteria	Actual/Evidence		Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
54 Encourage competition and cost-effectiveness of all parts of the service, including overheads and internal fees, by packaging work to maximise interest from contractors				
55 Work towards partnering and Egan compliance to improve both service delivery and productivity	The Client Planning Team will have a range of procurement options to implement. There will be a partnering arrangement with the consultant. Partnering is the way this authority is moving forward in building & construction. see comments above		Innovative partnering contracts show benefits in terms of cost and quality of works	
56 Track investment in terms of benefits to tenants, impact on stock condition data, energy ratings, future lettable, community safety and, ultimately, the Business Plan	% of homes non-decent 55% annual change in decency 8.65% (both middle quartile)  SAP rating up			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape UP outcomes put through NBA survey</li> </ul>
57 Improve performance monitoring by developing key management information on services	Range of performance information regularly monitored.  Use of this information is developed			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports/ Trends to be analysed by the client team</li> <li>• Reports to CHP board</li> </ul>

Criteria	Actual/Evidence		Ideal/best practice	Gap/Improvement Required
58 Focus and support performance management by concentrating time spent with contractors on major irregularities and improvements; and by supporting contractors in improving their own internal performance management systems		Client team to be strengthened  Regular partnering meetings in place with Thames Accord		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client team in place and functioning</li> <li>• MACE in place to build internal capacity</li> </ul>

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# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



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## **1. Introduction**

This procedure follows the guidance contained within the ACAS Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (September 2000). Its purpose is to enable staff to raise issues with management about their work, including decisions taken by managers or the actions of their colleagues that may affect them.

The procedure is not intended to punish staff, but to try and resolve any grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible, at the lowest appropriate level in the organisation and to avoid minor issues developing into more serious matters.

## **2. General**

The procedure applies to all staff employed directly by the Council and is commended to schools as "Best Practice".

Grievances should be progressed incrementally starting with the line manager (or if the grievance concerns them, the next senior manager). Grievances at the Formal Stage 2 will be considered by the Director or Head of Service with the authority to deal with issues at that stage.

The Departmental Human Resources Service will support and advise managers through the procedure as appropriate. They will also monitor the process to ensure that all grievance issues are dealt with fairly and consistently in accordance with the procedure, employment legislation, best practice, equalities and diversity.

Staff are entitled to be represented by a trade union representative or a work colleague at any stage of the formal procedure.

Note: There is a separate procedure for dealing with grievances of a sensitive sexual or racial nature or harassment, etc and also, for raising concerns as to any wrongdoings in the workplace e.g. fraud or corruption, unlawful acts or dangers to health and safety, etc (whistle-blowing). Such matters should be dealt with under either The Dealing with Bullying and Harassment at Work or Whistle-blowing Procedures, as appropriate.

## **3. Informal Procedure**

It is in everyone's interest for routine complaints to be dealt with on an informal basis, through discussion between the member of staff and their line manager wherever possible. This should allow for a speedy resolution of the problem in most cases. Both managers and staff may find it useful to keep written notes of informal discussions.

When grievances cannot be resolved informally, they should be dealt with under the formal procedure.

#### **4. Formal Procedure.**

Managers must seek advice from the Departmental Human Resources Service when grievances are raised under the formal procedure.

If the manager fails to respond within the specified timescale (or the agreed date if this has been extended) at formal Stages 1 and 2, the member of staff may progress the grievance to the next stage. In this situation, the manager/panel considering the grievance will not have the option of referring the matter back to the previous stage.

As best practice, full notes must be taken of all meetings under formal Stages 1 and 2 of the procedure and these should be made available to the member of staff. If the member of staff disagrees with the notes of the meeting they can ask for their version to be attached.

##### **Formal Stage 1**

Where the grievance cannot be dealt with informally, staff should write to their manager using the pro-forma at 4.2 (or where the grievance concerns the line manager, the next senior manager in the department). They should outline clearly the reason for the grievance with details of any events/actions (including dates, times and any witnesses), that triggered the complaint and how they would like it resolved.

The manager should reply to the grievance in writing within 10 working days of it being received and arrange a meeting. If it is not possible to respond within 10 working days, the manager must write to the member of staff to explain the reason for the delay and give an indication of when a response will be expected. The Manager will be allowed a further 10 working days (i.e. up to a maximum 20 working days from the date the grievance was received).

If the member of staff is either dissatisfied with the outcome or they do not receive a response within 5 working days, (or the agreed date if this has been extended), they will be entitled to progress to Stage 2 of the Procedure.

##### **Formal Stage 2**

If staff are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, they should write to the Director or Head of Service (using the pro-forma at 4.2), within 10 working days of receipt of the decision, setting out the grievance along with details of any events/actions that triggered the complaint and the reason(s) they do not agree with the response at the previous stage.

The Director or Head of Service will contact the member of staff within 10 working days of receipt of the written statement to arrange a meeting to discuss the grievance. If this is not possible, they must write to the member of staff to explain the reason for the delay, and give an indication of when they will meet. The Director or Head of Service will be allowed a further 10 working days (i.e. up to a maximum 20 working days from the date the grievance was received).

The Director or Head of Service will notify the member of staff of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the meeting, although this timescale may be extended (for a further maximum 10 working days) when there is a need to interview witnesses, etc.

If the member of staff is either dissatisfied with the outcome, or they do not receive a response within 5 working days (or the agreed date if this has been extended), they will be entitled to progress to Stage 3 of the procedure.

### **Formal Stage 3**

If staff are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 they should write to the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations (using the pro-forma at 4.2) within 10 working days of receipt of the decision, setting out their grievance along with an explanation of why they consider the Director or Head of Services' response unsatisfactory. A Personnel Board (Members appeal hearing) will then be arranged to consider the matter.

The Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations' representative is responsible for arranging the Personnel Board and will attend in an advisory capacity. The Personnel Board will be arranged as soon as possible although due to the formality of this stage it is unlikely to be convened as quickly as meetings in the previous stages.

The member of staff will be formally notified in writing of the arrangements for the Personnel Board including their right to produce documentation and to be represented, etc subject to the following:

- i) No new evidence i.e. evidence that was not raised and entered previously at Stage 2, can be presented.

Where a member of staff has new evidence they wish to be considered they must write to their Departmental Head of Human Resources: -

- Detailing the nature and relevance of the new evidence
- Explaining why this was not raised previously

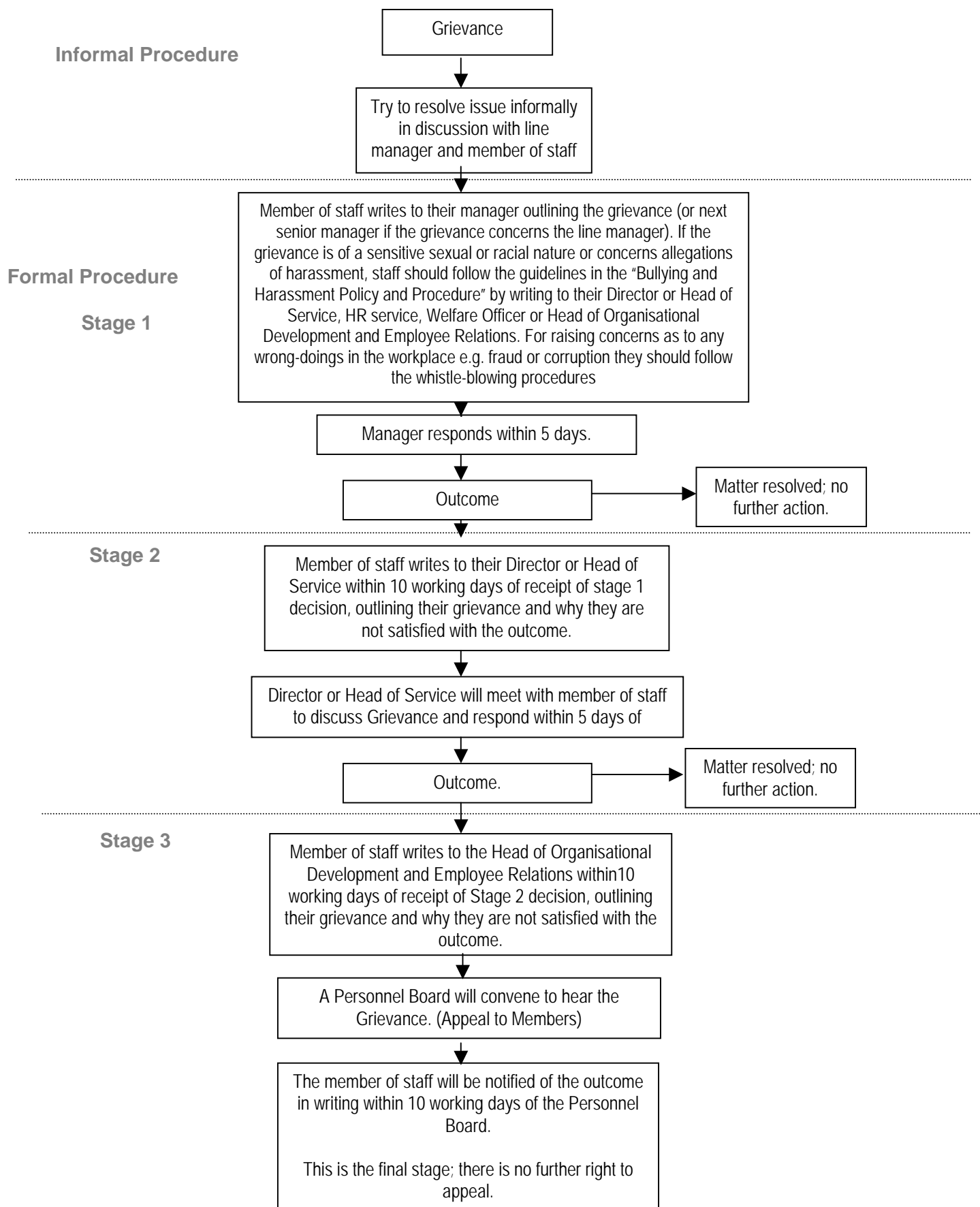
The Departmental Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Director or Head of Service will then make a decision as to whether to admit the new evidence and if so, at what stage of the process i.e.

- To refer this back to the director or head of service at Stage 2, or
- To proceed to Stage 3

- ii) The member of staff is responsible for arranging their witnesses and notifying them of the time and date of the meeting.

The Personnel Board's decision will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days of the Hearing. This is the final stage; there is no further right to appeal.

#### 4.1 Grievance Procedure - Flowchart.



## 4.2. Grievance Pro-forma

### Grievance Form

#### Section 1: Employee Details

Name: ..... Contact No:.....

Post: ..... Location:.....

Department ..... Section/Service.....

#### Section 2: Employee Representative Details

Please detail the name of your representative. (You are entitled to be represented by a trade union representative or a work colleague at any stage of the formal procedure).

Name: ..... Contact No: .....

Name of trade union (if applicable):.....

#### Section 3: Grievance/Appeal

Please detail your grievance overleaf giving full details of dates, incidents, parties involved, witnesses, circumstances, etc. Additionally, where possible, please ensure that you include or reference the following specific details:

- The date that this issue commenced
- Whether this is a one-off issue, or part of a sequence of events
- Which policies, procedures or employment terms do you believe have been breached
- What action/steps you have taken to resolve the issue, when and who with?
- Copies of any relevant documentary information  
Note: No new evidence i.e. evidence that was not raised and entered previously at Stage 1 or 2 can be presented (Please see page 5 for details)
- What you are looking for as a satisfactory outcome

**Please note that the procedure is not intended to punish staff, but to try and resolve any grievances as quickly and as fairly as possible, at the lowest appropriate level in the organisation and to avoid minor issues developing into more serious matters. It is not to be used to pursue petty or malicious complaints and to do so may be considered a disciplinary matter.**

#### Appeals

Where you are appealing against the outcome at Stage 1 or 2 of the procedure, please ensure that you detail the specific reason(s) why you are dissatisfied with the manager's response.

**A) Please state your grievance (and reasons for appealing against the outcome at Stage 1 or 2 of the procedure as appropriate):**

(Please continue onto a separate sheet if necessary)

**B) Please state what you are seeking as a satisfactory outcome to your grievance**

---

**Signed:**..... **Date:**.....

**Name (Please Print):**

.....



## **5. Guidance for Managers**

### **General**

The Grievance Procedure is intended to resolve any work place issues that arise as quickly and as fairly as possible and at the lowest possible level in the organisation.

Managers and staff are expected to try and resolve issues as they arise and only if this is not possible, should they resort to the formal stages of the procedure. Staff also need to be realistic about their expectations as to how to grievances should be resolved, especially when there may be genuine misunderstandings or differences of opinion.

Staff should not use the procedure to pursue frivolous/vexatious matters, or to frustrate legitimate management action or instructions and to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

### **Grievance Procedure**

The Procedure (which is recommended to schools as “Best Practice”), is available to all Council staff who have problems or concerns as to their work, except in the following circumstances: -

- A matter over which the Council has no control as to its statutory duties as an employer.
- Where the relevant member of staff has left the Council's employment unless it is raised within 3 months of their termination date.
- To delay proceedings once the member of staff has been notified of any formal investigation or hearing under the Disciplinary, Capability or Grievance procedure, etc.
- To restart the procedure within 12 months of the completion of action in respect of the same or a similar grievance (unless agreed recommendations have been broken or ignored).
- Any issues for which there is a separate appeal procedure e.g. grading, disciplinary or redundancy.
- Any personal matter not directly related to the member of staff's employment or conditions of service over which The Council has no control.
- Complaints about the Council's statutory responsibilities as an employer.
- Collective disputes or matters, which are properly the subject of collective bargaining between the Council and trade unions, e.g., pay issues.
- To pursue petty or malicious complaints (To do so may be considered a disciplinary matter)

### **Conciliation**

There are occasions where the airing of a grievance with an ‘outside party’ (eg. someone from another department or outside the Council) present may help to resolve the matter before it reaches the formal stages.

This is completely voluntary and requires the agreement of the member of staff, the person(s) against whom the grievance has been raised and a senior manager with no prior involvement. If either party would like to try to resolve the grievance through conciliation, they should contact their Departmental Human Resources Service.

### **Investigating Grievances**

Grievances should be investigated by the relevant line manager or senior officer as appropriate, provided they have not been directly/indirectly involved with the case i.e. they are not the person subject to the grievance, a witness, or have had any involvement that may bring into question the integrity of the process.

The manager will decide the appropriate way to investigate complaints, in accordance with the circumstances of the case and consultation with the member of staff. This may involve separate or joint discussion, consideration of written submissions by either side, questioning of background facts, interviewing witnesses and commissioning reports, etc. A copy of the notes of meetings should be given to the staff concerned.

Both parties should be allowed to produce copies of documentation they consider relevant, but secret recordings of meetings or telephone conversations will not be regarded as admissible evidence. Witnesses must be informed that they may be required to attend at any hearing and that their statements, which should be signed and dated, will be made available to the other party.

If the grievance concerns staff from another department, the manager may ask that department to investigate the matter and provide them with a written response. If during the course of the investigation it is found that a disciplinary offence may have been committed, any further action should be taken in accordance with that procedure.

Possible outcomes at the formal stages include:

- Training
- Action under Disciplinary Procedure
- Mediation
- Suspension
- Temporary relocation
- Transfer

Managers may find the suggested letters detailed in **Appendix 2** helpful when arranging meetings, etc during the formal stages of the procedure.

**Note:** Managers must keep the staff involved informed as to the process of the grievance during the formal stages. In some cases, it may be necessary to temporarily remove one or both parties to other duties for the duration of the investigation. (After first discussing this with the aggrieved person)

### **Staff Representation**

ACAS recommends that most complaints are best resolved informally and that the first stage should allow the line manager to try and resolve the grievance without the involvement of any representative.

Staff have a statutory right to be accompanied at a grievance hearing by a single companion who is either a fellow worker or a full time or lay trade union official. This will apply to all meetings under the formal stages.

### **Records**

Records should be kept detailing the nature of the grievance, the management response, as well as any action taken and the reasons for this. Records should be confidential and kept in accordance with the requirements of the procedure and the Data Protection Act 1998. The employee should receive copies of any meeting records although in certain circumstances e.g. the protection of a witness, some information may be withheld.

### **Advice**

Any concerns as to the interpretation of the procedure must be referred to your Departmental Human Resources Service. **If in doubt take advice.**

**Appendix I**

Draft letter acknowledging receipt of grievance

Personal  
NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Mr/s

**Re: Grievance Procedure - Formal Stage (DETAIL STAGE)**

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of (DETAIL DATE OF GRIEVANCE) detailing your grievance and to invite you to attend a meeting at;

(DETAIL THE DATE OF THE MEETING)

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss your grievance. You are welcome to be accompanied by either a trade union representative or work colleague and to bring along any documentation that you wish to be considered as well as details of potential witnesses it may be helpful to see later.

If you wish to invite any witnesses or bring any paperwork/evidence to this meeting could you inform me of their name(s) and send me the relevant documents no later than 3 working days before our meeting (please do not bring along witnesses to the meeting unless you have informed me beforehand).

Please can you complete and return the attached copy of this letter after you have signed and dated the endorsement to advise of your attendance at the time detailed

Yours sincerely

(Manager/Director/Head of Service)

Cc: HR, Director or Head of Service

-----  
Endorsement

I have received the original of this letter and will/will not\* be attending the meeting as detailed.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

\* If your chosen trade union representative or work colleague cannot attend at the time specified, you may offer an alternative date as long as it is reasonable and falls within 5 working days of that detailed in this letter.

**Appendix II**

Draft letter to staff (complained about) with arrangements for a meeting

Personal  
NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Mr/s

**Re: Grievance Procedure**

I am writing to notify you that I have received a complaint concerning (BRIEFLY OUTLINE NATURE OF GRIEVANCE) as detailed attached.

I am carrying out an investigation, in accordance with formal stage (DETAIL STAGE) of the procedure, and as part of this process I would like to meet with you to discuss the grievance, at; (DETAIL THE DATE OF THE MEETING)

The purpose of the meeting is to give you the opportunity to respond to the allegations.

You are entitled to be accompanied by either a trade union representative or work colleague and to bring along any documentation that you wish to be considered as well as details of potential witnesses it may be helpful to see later. (Please do not bring along witnesses to the meeting unless you have informed me beforehand). I have enclosed a copy of the grievance procedure for your information.

Please can you complete and return the attached copy of this letter after you have signed and dated the endorsement to advise of your attendance at the time detailed.

Yours sincerely

(Manager/Director/Head of Service)

Cc. Departmental Human Resources Service  
Director/Head of Service

-----  
Endorsement

I have received the original of this letter and will/will not\* be attending the meeting as detailed.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

\* If your chosen trade union representative or work colleague cannot attend at the time specified, you can offer an alternative date as long as it is reasonable and falls within 5 working days of that detailed in this letter.

### **Appendix III**

#### Draft letter to potential witnesses

Personal  
NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Mr/s

I am carrying out an investigation into a grievance raised by (ENTER NAME), and your name has been put forward as a potential witness.

I think it would be helpful to meet with you to discuss the grievance and whether there is any additional information you can provide to clarify the situation and help me with my investigation. In view of this, please can we arrange to meet at;

(DETAIL THE DATE OF THE MEETING)

If you are unable to attend at this time, can you telephone me so we can make alternative arrangements to meet.

You are welcome to be accompanied at the meeting if you wish, by either a work colleague or a trade union representative.

Yours sincerely

(Manager/Director/Head of Service)

cc: Departmental Human Resources Service  
Director or Head of Service

## **Appendix IV**

Draft Outcome letter - Formal Stage 1 and 2.

Personal  
NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Mr/s

### **Re: Grievance Procedure - Stage (DETAIL STAGE)**

I am writing to inform you of the outcome at formal stage (DETAIL STAGE) of the Procedure in relation to your grievance concerning (DETAIL NAME OR COMPLAINT).

After considering the matter and all the evidence provided, my decision and recommendations are as follows (DETAIL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WHERE APPROPRIATE AND THE SPECIFIC REASONS FOR THE DECISION).

You have the right to appeal to the next stage of the procedure and if you wish to do so, you must notify (ENTER NAME OF RELEVANT CHIEF OFFICER) in writing within 10 working days setting out the detail of the grievance, and why the attempts to resolve it have been unsatisfactory. If an appeal has not been received within the specified deadline the grievance will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Finally, I have enclosed a copy of the notes of the meeting of (DATE OF MEETING) for your information and retention.

Yours sincerely

(Manager/Director/Head of Service)

Cc. Departmental Human Resources Service  
Director or Head of Service  
Staff subject of the grievance (as appropriate)

## Appendix 3

### Grievance Procedure

#### Guidance to Staff

#### General

The Grievance Procedure is intended to resolve any issues that arise at work, as quickly and as fairly as possible and at the lowest appropriate level i.e. with your colleagues or line manager/supervisor.

You are expected to try and resolve any grievances as they arise with your line manager/supervisor, and only where that is not possible is there access to the formal stages of the Grievance Procedure. You should be realistic in what you expect the outcome of a grievance to be, especially where there may be genuine misunderstandings or differences of opinion.

If the grievance concerns your line manager, you should contact your next senior manager. If the grievance is of either a sensitive, sexual or racial nature or concerns allegations of harassment, you should follow the guidance contained within the "Dealing with Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure". Alternatively, you may progress the matter by writing to your Director or Head of Service or contacting your Departmental Human Resources Service, the Staff Welfare Officer or the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations. The process to be followed is detailed in the attached flowchart (Appendix 6.I)

Note: There is a separate procedure for dealing with grievances of a sensitive sexual or racial nature or harassment, etc and also, for raising concerns as to any wrongdoings in the workplace e.g. fraud or corruption, unlawful acts or dangers to health and safety, etc (whistle-blowing). Such matters should be dealt with under either The Dealing with Bullying and Harassment at Work or Whistle-blowing Procedures, as appropriate.

If you require any advice or are unclear as to the process you should contact your Departmental Human Resources Service.

#### Grievance matters

The Grievance Procedure is available to all staff who have problems or concerns as to their work except in the following circumstances:

- A matter over which the Council has no control.
- If you have left the Council's employment, unless it is raised within 3 months of your termination date.
- To delay proceedings of any formal investigations or hearings under the Council's formal Procedures (e.g. disciplinary, capability, etc).
- To restart within 12 months of the completion of the procedure in respect of a similar Grievance. (Unless agreed recommendations have been broken or ignored).
- A grading, disciplinary or redundancy issue. (There are separate procedures for these).
- If the grievance is about a personal matter and not a work issue.
- Complaints about the Council's statutory responsibility.



## Conciliation

There may be occasions where discussing the grievance with someone other than your line manager (e.g. someone from another department or outside the Council) may resolve the matter before it reaches the formal procedure, if this is the case, your line manager will ask for your agreement and arrange a meeting date.

## Right to be represented.

You have the right to be represented at each stage of the formal grievance procedure by a work colleague, or a trade union representative.

## Process

To initiate any stage under the formal procedure you must write to the appropriate manager/senior manager using the pro-forma attached, and outline clearly the reason for your grievance with details of any events/actions (dates, times and any witnesses should also be included) that triggered the complaint and how you would like this resolved.

The manager will decide the appropriate way to investigate your complaint, in accordance with the circumstances of the case and in consultation with you. This may involve separate or joint discussion, consideration of written submissions by either side, questioning of background facts, interviewing witnesses and commissioning reports, etc. A copy of the notes of meetings should be given to you.

Possible outcomes at the formal stages may include:

- Mediation.
- Training.
- Action through the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Transfer.
- Suspension.
- Temporary Redeployment.

If you are requesting action under Stages 2 or 3 of the formal procedure, you should also explain the specific reason(s) why you do not agree with the outcome of the previous stage.

**Note:** The procedure is not to be used to pursue petty or malicious complaints and to do so may be considered a disciplinary matter.

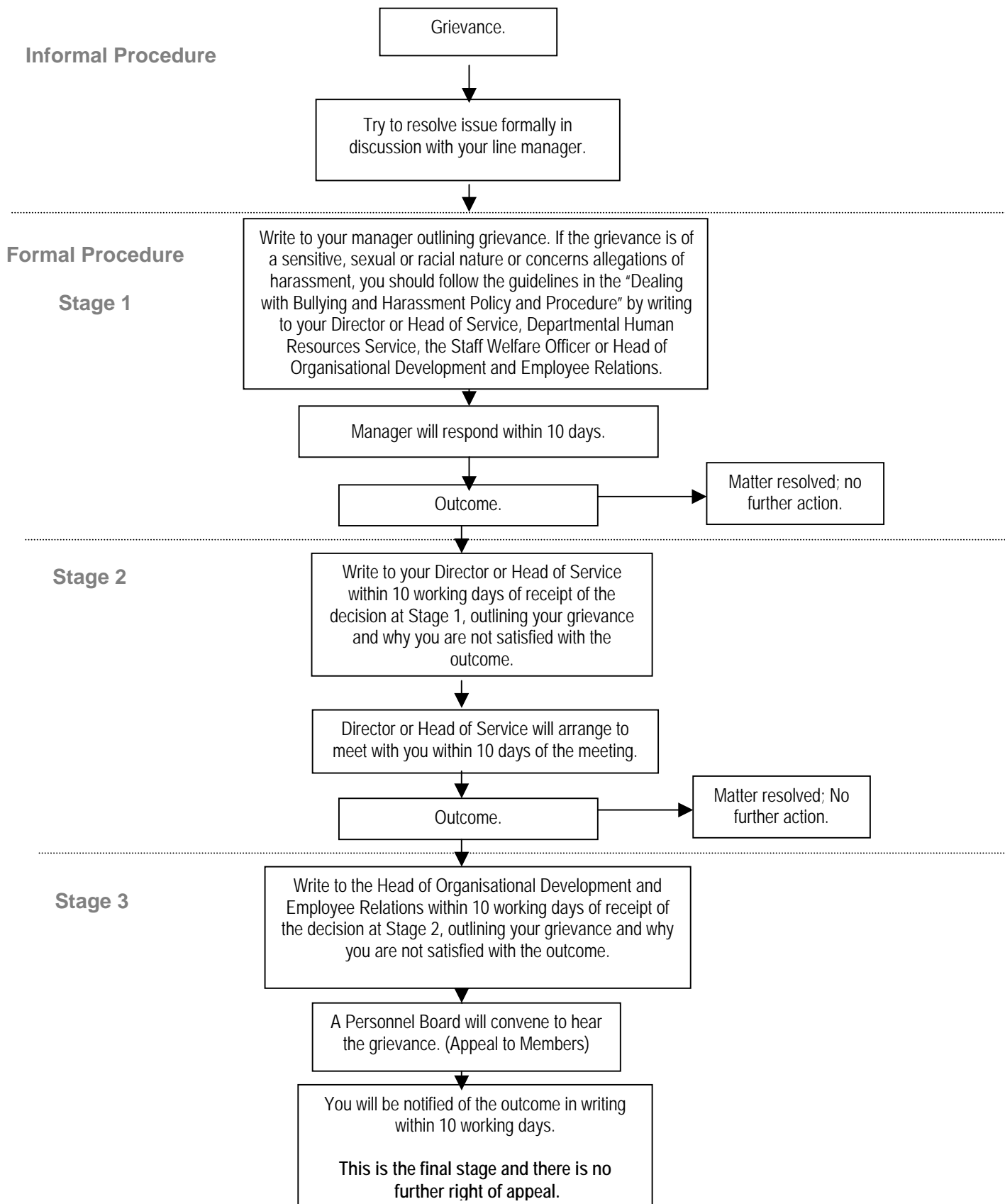
## Complaints against staff

If a grievance is taken out against you, your manager will meet with you in order to discuss the matter and to hear your version of events or response to any allegations. (You are entitled to be accompanied at any meetings under the formal stages of procedure by a work colleague or a trade union representative at the meeting).

Your manager will notify you of the outcome of the investigation and may arrange a further meeting with those concerned to explain their findings and recommendations.

**Appendix I**

**Grievance Flowchart.  
Guidance for Staff**





# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## The Right to Request Flexible Working



**Section 1**

**The Right to Request  
Flexible Working**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Parents of children aged under six or a disabled child aged under 18 have the statutory right to apply to work flexibly. The Council's Policy aims to provide parents with the opportunity to balance work and family life, whilst being compatible with and beneficial to its business efficiency.

## **2.0 General**

This applies to all staff, (except those based in schools where separate procedures apply), who have been employed by the Council continuously for 26 weeks at the date the application is made and who:

- Have a child under 6 or disabled child under 18.
- Make the application not later than two weeks before the child's 6th birthday or 18th birthday in the case of a disabled child.
- Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- Are making the application to enable them to care for the child.
- Have not made another application to work flexibly under the right during the past 12 months.

Line managers and staff need to jointly consider flexible working patterns and find a solution that suits them both. Staff need to think carefully about their desired work pattern when making an initial application.

## **3.0 TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Eligible staff will be able to request:

- A change to the hours they work.
- A change to the times when they are required to work.
- To work from home, in accordance with an appropriate risk assessment.

This should cover a variety of working patterns such as flexitime, job-sharing, shift work, term time working, staggered hours, home working, annualised hours, etc. Applications for a change in working patterns may not always require a significant alteration, e.g. a parent may simply want to start work half an hour later to take their child to school and make up the time later in the day.

### **3.1 Applications for flexible working**

Only one application per year may be made under this right. Staff who wish to apply should apply in writing to their line manager after considering carefully:

- The most appropriate working pattern that will help them care best for their child.
- The financial implications in cases where the desired working pattern will involve a drop in salary.
- The effect that the desired working patterns will have on the Council's business and how it will be accommodated within their area of work.

The line manager will arrange to meet with the member of staff within **28 days** of receipt of the application to explore the desired work pattern and to discuss how it may be best accommodated within the service. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to discuss and consider other alternative working patterns if there are any problems in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in the application. Staff may be accompanied by a work colleague or TU representative at the meeting.

The line manager, following consultation with the Department Human Resources Service, will write to the member of staff within 14 days of the meeting to either agree to a new work pattern and a start date, or to provide a clear statement of the business grounds as to why the application cannot be accepted. If the line manager needs further time to consider the request they should advise the member of staff within 14 days of the meeting as to when a decision can be expected.

Any complaints against the line manager's decision or the application of the Procedure will be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.



# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Adoption Leave



## Section 1

### Definitions of Terms

**Additional Maternity Leave (AML)** is the additional 26 weeks leave entitlement available for staff with at least 26 weeks continuous service with the Council by the beginning of the 14th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

**Adopter** refers to a person who has been matched with the child for adoption.

**Adoptive Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its adopter after the placement and it may be taken within a period of 56 days from the placement of the adopted child.

**Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)** is the week in which the baby is due to be born as certified by the mother's doctor or midwife on the Maternity Benefit Certificate (MATB1).

**MATB1 Certificate** is the Maternity Benefit Certificate given to a pregnant woman by the doctor or midwife; it states the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

**Maternity Allowance (MA)** is paid by the Benefit's Agency to women who do not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay.

**Matching Certificate** is issued by the adoption agency to verify that a child has been successfully matched with adopter parents, it includes basic information on matching and expected placement dates.

**Maternity Leave** is the period of time away from work due to maternity.

**Maternity Pay Period (MPP)** is the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable to eligible staff. It may start at any time from the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth, if members of staff are employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and last up to 26 weeks. The actual start date of the Maternity Pay Period depends on when members of staff began their maternity leave.

<b>If the member of staff</b>	<b>The MPP will start on</b>
works up to the birth	the day following the date of birth
is absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness, on or after the start of the 4 <sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due.	the day following the first day on which the member of staff is absent
is absent on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related	a date notified by the member of staff, or from the day following the date of birth, whichever is earliest.



**Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)** is the statutory 26 week maternity absence entitlement for all pregnant staff.

**Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)** is the additional amount paid by the Council to make up the half pay element of your maternity pay.

**Qualifying Week (QW)** is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay purposes.

**Parental Leave** is the period of time away from work taken in accordance with the Parental Leave Regulations for the purposes of caring for a child.

**Partner** is defined as a person (whether of a different sex or the same sex) who lives with the mother, or main carer, and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not a relative of the mother, or main carer, i.e. a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.

**Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its mother after the birth and it may be taken at any time from the birth of a child within a period of 56 days.

**Paternity Pay Period (PPP)** is the period during which Statutory Paternity Pay is payable to an eligible member of staff. The length of the Paternity Pay Period will depend on whether the member of staff chooses to take one or two weeks' leave and is or can be linked to paid Maternity Support Leave.

**Placement** is when the child actually starts living with their new family. Formal adoption takes place later.

**Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL)** A member of staff can take paternity leave in order to care for their new baby or to support the mother of the baby if they have or expect to have responsibility for their baby's upbringing. They must be either or both the biological father of the baby or the mother's husband or partner.

**Self-Certification** is a completed declaration from the member of staff given to the employer as evidence of their entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Leave; it should include their eligibility and details of leave.

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** is payable to **eligible** staff. SMP, less tax and National Insurance (NI) Contributions, if applicable, will be paid via the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Maternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

Rate	When payable	Amount Payable
Higher	First 6 weeks of the MPP	90% of the member of staff's weekly earnings
Standard	For a further 20 weeks	£100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week, whichever is lower)

**Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)** is payable to eligible members of staff. Statutory Paternity Pay, less tax and NI Contributions, if applicable, will be paid in line with the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Paternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

## Section 2

### ADOPTION LEAVE

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Adoption Leave is available where a member of staff has been newly matched with a child or where a child has been placed with them for adoption. Where a couple are adopting jointly they must decide which one will take adoption leave and which one will take paternity leave.

It is anticipated that staff considering applying for adoption would take time to discuss the possible implications of this (particularly in cases of overseas adoptions) in good time with their line manager/departmental Human Resources section.

## **2.0 General**

This applies to staff who have been employed by the Council continuously for 26 weeks leading into the week in which they are notified of being matched with a child for adoption and who:

- Are the child's adopter.
- Have notified the adoption agency that they agree that the child should be placed with them and on the date of placement.

## **3.0 Terms and Conditions**

### **3.1 Adoption leave Period**

The entitlement to adoption leave is similar to that of maternity leave. Staff will be entitled to up to 26 weeks OAL which normally starts on the day they specify in the notice. (Leave can start on any day of the week).

Staff taking ordinary adoption leave (OAL) are also entitled to AAL unless the OAL ended prematurely. AAL is a further unpaid period of 26 weeks, providing 52 weeks leave in total.

### **3.2 Commencement of leave**

Staff can choose to start their adoption leave on:

- The date the child is placed; or
- A predetermined date no more than 14 days before the date the child is expected to be placed and no later than that date.

*Only one period of leave will be available irrespective of whether more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement.*

### **3.3 Pay during adoption leave**

Staff are entitled to 6 weeks full pay followed by 20 weeks SAP which is £100 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings whichever is less.

### **3.4 Notice**

Staff must give written notice of their intention to take adoption leave within 7 days of the date they were notified of being matched, or as soon as reasonably practicable. The notice must specify the date that the:

- Child is expected to be placed with them for adoption; and
- Member of staff wants their leave to begin.

Staff must also provide one or more documents from the adoption agency which shows the:

- name and address of the agency.
- date the member of staff was notified of being matched with the child/matching certificate.
- expected date of placement.

Line managers have 28 days to respond to the request for adoption leave and will notify staff in writing, having liaised with departmental Human Resources of the date on which they expect them to return to work if the full entitlement to adoption leave is taken.

### **3.5 Placement falls through or is disrupted**

If after starting their leave, staff are notified that the child will not be placed or after the placement the child dies or is returned to the adoption agency, the adoption leave will end 8 weeks after the end of the week in which the disruption occurred. There is no extension of AAL if disruption occurs with less than 8 weeks to the end of the leave period.

### **3.6 Return to work before end of AAL**

If staff wish to return to work before the end of the AAL period they must give 28 days notice of their return. If they fail to give sufficient notice the line manager can postpone the return so that the 28 days notice is received, but not beyond the end of the AAL period. If staff insist on working despite the line manager's postponement they will not be paid.

If the member of staff's adoption leave has been cut short due to the disruption of the placement they must still give 28 days notice of their intention to return early.

### **3.7 Effect on Terms and Conditions**

During OAL members of staff will be entitled to all the terms and conditions which would have applied had they not been absent, except for wages/salary. Staff will continue to be bound by their contractual obligations unless they are inconsistent with their right to take adoption leave.

### **3.8 Terms and Conditions on Return to Work**

Members of staff returning to work after taking OAL are entitled to return to the same job in which they were employed before the leave began.

On returning to work after taking AAL or Parental Leave of more than 4 weeks staff are entitled to return to the same job.

Staff returning to work from adoption Leave must be treated no less favourable than they would have been if they had not been absent.

### **3.9 Protection from Detriment and Dismissal**

Staff will be protected from suffering unfair dismissal or detriment for reasons related to taking, or seeking to take adoption leave, or if they fail to return after additional adoption leave where the line manager had not notified them when that period would end. A dismissal for these reasons would be automatically unfair.

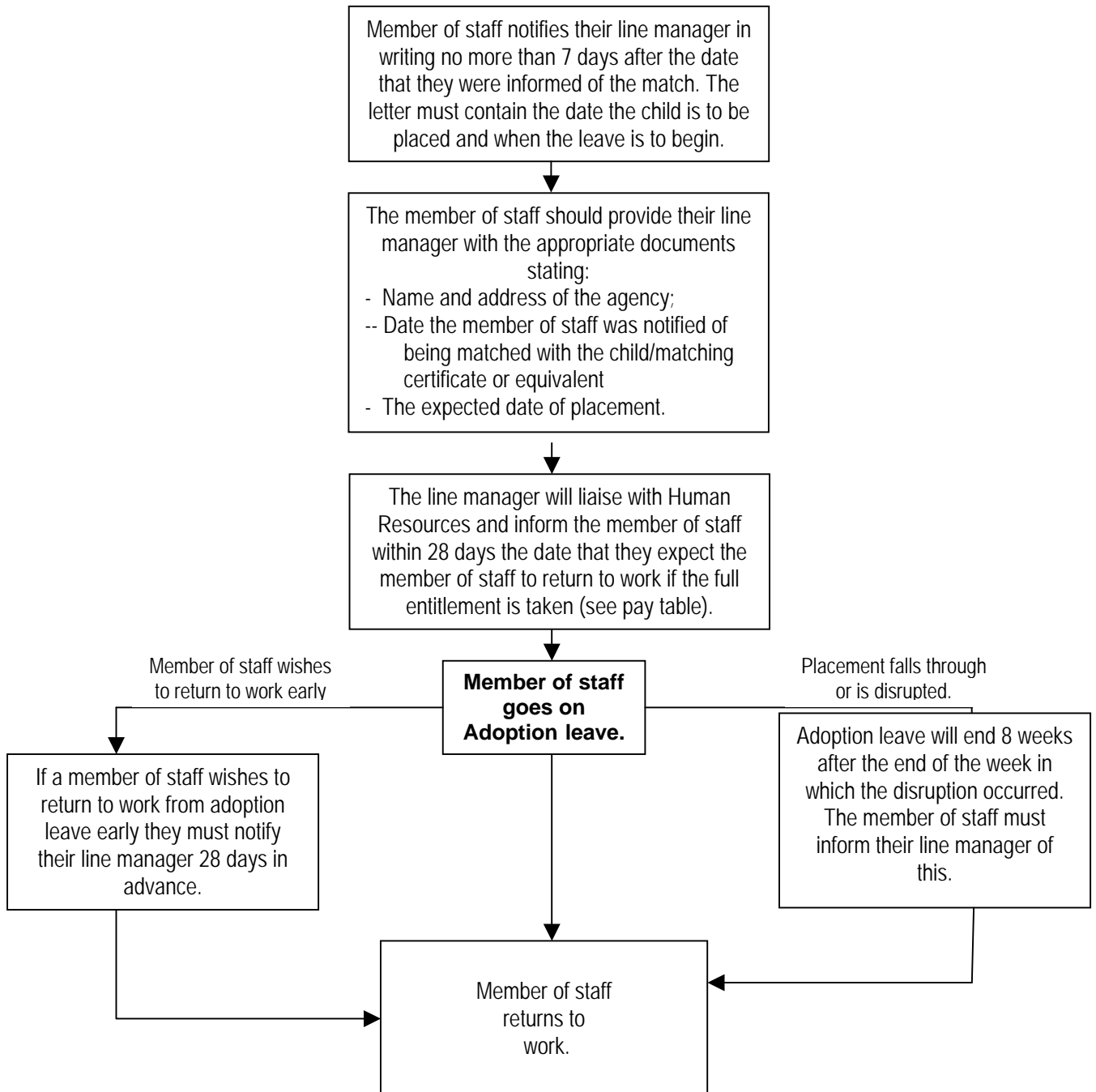
### **3.10 Redundancy during Adoption Leave**

As with maternity leave, where a member of staff's post becomes redundant during OAL or AAL they are entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy before the end of the old contract to take effect immediately on its expiry.

The work must be suitable in relation to the member of staff and appropriate for them to do in the circumstances and in accordance with the Council's redeployment Procedure.

## Appendix 1 Adoption Leave Flowchart

The information in this flow chart relates only to Adoption leave, for details regarding pay arrangements, refer to the attached table.



**Appendix 2**

**Application for Adoption Leave/Pay**

- a) This form must be returned within 7 days of the notification of being matched, or as soon as is reasonably practicable. Members of staff must give **as much notice** as possible of absence dates proposed (28 days as a minimum).
- b) Complete this form and send it to your line manager for approval. He/she will discuss with the Departmental Human Resources team as appropriate and will give them a copy of your request for record keeping purposes. Any changes to this request should be updated on both your copies.
- c) Please attach a copy of matching certificate form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of placement: \_\_\_\_\_

**When will be the first day of your Adoption leave?**

**A predetermined date, please specify:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**On the day the child is placed.** \_\_\_\_\_

*If you decide to change the date that you wish your leave to commence please inform your line manager at least 28 days before the first date of your leave.*

If you have indicated that you intend to return to work after the duration of your Adoption leave, you will be required to do so for a period of no less than 3 months. If you do not return to work you will be required to pay back the 12 weeks half pay awarded to you.

Signed (member of staff) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed(Manager) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Pay and Leave Entitlements. Pay Entitlements

	Maternity Pay SMP = Statutory Maternity Pay			Adoption Pay	Paternity/Maternity Support Pay	Parental Leave. (Unpaid)	
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	More than 1 years service (not returning to work)				
	No Pay Entitlement	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 Full Pay	Week 1 Maternity Support (Full Pay) Week 2 Paternity Pay (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	13 Weeks per child (18 if child is disabled) can be taken in weekly blocks (to a maximum of 4 per year) when necessary or as one 13 week block after pregnancy if necessary. (The parent taking leave must give 28 days notice.)	
		Weeks 7 - 20 SMP entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	Weeks 7 - 26 SMP entitlement	Weeks 7-26 Statutory Adoption Pay entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)			
			Weeks 19-26 SMP entitlement.				
	<b>Week 27 – 52 - Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave - No Pay Entitlement.</b>						

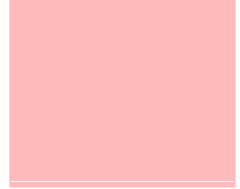
\* This is without deduction except to the extent that the half pay plus SMP or MA and any dependants allowances (if a member of staff is not eligible for SMP) exceeds their normal pay.

\*\* Half Pay + SMP will only be given if the member of staff returns to work for a minimum period of 3 months.

### Leave Entitlements

	Maternity Leave		Adoption Leave	Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave	Parental leave. (Unpaid)
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC			
	26 Weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	Up to 52 Weeks (26 OML + 26 Additional Maternity Leave (AML))	26 Weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) a further 26 Weeks Additional Adoption Leave (AOL).	2 Weeks Leave to be taken as 1 week, or 2 consecutive weeks within 56 days of the child being born.	13 Weeks per child until the child is 8 or 18 Weeks per child until the child is 18 if they have a disability.
		More than 1 years service			





# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Carers Leave



## **Section 1**

### **Carers Leave**

At present, there are no specific arrangements for staff with caring responsibilities to take time off to look after and/or care for their dependants.

Arrangements for Carers Leave will be considered with the review of flexible working practices during 2004/5, as part of the process towards establishing Work/Life Balance policies and procedures.

In the meantime, managers are expected to sympathetically consider requests from staff with caring responsibilities for:

- time off;  
and
- to vary their hours and/or times of duty.



# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Emergency Time Off For Dependants



## **Section 1**

### **Emergency Time off for Dependants**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Staff have the right to take a reasonable amount of time off in order to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. The Council's Policy is to inform staff as to their rights to take reasonable time off to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies and to make longer-term arrangements involving a dependant.

## **2.0 General**

This applies to all staff employed by the Council, (except those based in schools where separate procedures apply). It is intended to help alleviate any anxiety caused by unforeseen problems where the nature of the circumstances require that the member of staff to be present.

## **3.0 Definitions**

A dependant is defined as a spouse, child or parent of a member of staff, or someone who lives in the same household as the member of staff, such as a partner or elderly relative. It may also include someone who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance or to make arrangements when that person is ill, injured or assaulted. It does not include those who live in the same household as a member of staff as a tenant, lodger or boarder.

The entitlement is to a "reasonable" amount of time-off to cover the time needed to deal with the immediate problem and to arrange alternative longer-term care where applicable. The amount of time-off will vary according to the circumstances but in most cases time off should not normally exceed 1 or 2 days. For time-off to be "justifiable", the member of staff's presence or attendance must be crucial to resolving the problem or where the incident affects someone other than the member of staff, to the welfare and/or recovery of that person.

## **4.0 Examples of Where Time Off May Be Necessary**

- To provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- To make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- Upon the death of a dependant;
- Due to unexpected disruption or termination of the arrangements for the care of a dependant;
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving the member of staff's child during school hours;
- Any other cases where it is necessary to deal with any unexpected or sudden emergency involving a dependant.

When a dependant dies, staff can take time-off to make funeral arrangements as well as to attend a funeral, in accordance with the details for compassionate leave. If the funeral is overseas, the line manager and member of staff will agree a length of absence, which is reasonable in the circumstances and in line with other agreed leave entitlements i.e. annual, flexi, special leave, etc.

Any illness or injury involving a dependant need not necessarily be serious or life threatening and may be mental or physical or the result of a deterioration of an existing condition. The right to time-off only involves short-term leave ie staff are not entitled to take two weeks leave to look after a sick dependant.

## **5.0 Terms And Conditions**

### **5.1 Notice**

As this is intended to cover unforeseen circumstances it will not normally be possible to provide advance notice but staff must inform their line manager as soon possible of the absence, the reason for it and how long they expect to be away from work. Where, in exceptional circumstances, staff return to work before it was possible to contact their line manager; they must inform them immediately on returning to work the reason for their absence.

### **5.2 Return to work**

On returning to work staff must complete a "Time Off for Dependants Authorisation Form" and ask their line manager to sign it. (Staff may be asked to provide evidence that an emergency justifying time off has occurred or of their relationship to the dependant). The completed form should then be forwarded to the Departmental Human Resources Service, and the absence recorded on the member of staff's Absence Record/Annual Leave card.

### **5.3 Entitlement**

Emergency leave will normally be granted without pay for up to a maximum of 2 days dependent on the member of staff's personal involvement, the nature of the emergency situation and any other relevant information. As an alternative, or in addition to paid absence, short periods of unpaid leave up to a maximum of 10 days per year, may also be granted with the approval of the Head of Service.

The right to time-off applies to unforeseen matters involving dependants only. If staff know in advance that they require time off they should use their annual leave or, if the reason relates to their child, they may be entitled to leave under the Parental Leave provisions. Staff are not entitled to time off for other domestic emergencies e.g. failed central heating. In those cases time off is at the line manager's discretion and will be deducted from the annual/flexi leave entitlement.

## **6.0 Complaints**

Any complaint concerning the line manager's decision or the application of the Procedure should be dealt with through the Council's Grievance Procedure. Staff found to be abusing the Policy will be subject to action under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

## Appendix 1

### Emergency Time off for Dependants – Authorisation Form

This form is to be used to seek authorisation for time off from work to deal with urgent matters or emergencies connected with dependants. Please complete and return the form to your line manager for approval when either:

- a) It was necessary for you to take time-off at short notice for such reasons (please complete section 2)
- b) You propose to take time off at short notice for such reasons.

In the case of (a) above, you must complete the form as soon as possible on your return to work.

Do not use this form for sick leave authorisation or for routine requests such as medical or dental appointments.

#### SECTION 1 - Period Of Absence (give working days only)

Date(s) absent/hours (from - to): \_\_\_\_\_

Total (in working days and hours): \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION 2 - Notification Of Absence (for (a) above only)

State below the date and time you advised your absence to your line Manager.

\_\_\_\_\_

SECTION 3 - Reason for Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION 4 - Treatment of Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

I request approval for the above absence, and that it be treated, as follows (insert no. of days/hours): \_\_\_\_\_ unpaid time off work for dependants and I accordingly authorise the appropriate deduction of pay from my salary.

Name (Block Capitals) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Checked and approved by Line Manager

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notified by Departmental Human Resources \_\_\_\_\_

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# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Maternity Provisions



## **Introduction**

The Council is committed to enabling its members of staff to achieve a balance between their family life and their life at work.

As part of the Employment Act 2002, the Government increased and extended the existing statutory entitlements to Maternity Leave and Pay and introduced new rights to paid adoption and paternity leave along with a right for parents to apply for flexible working.

These together with the existing entitlements to parental leave and time off for dependants, will provide parents with more opportunities than ever before to balance their work and family life, whilst being compatible with and beneficial to the business efficiency of the Council's services.

## Section 1

### Definitions of Terms

**Additional Maternity Leave (AML)** is the additional 26 weeks leave entitlement available for staff with at least 26 weeks continuous service with the Council by the beginning of the 14th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

**Adopter** refers to a person who has been matched with the child for adoption.

**Adoptive Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its adopter after the placement and it may be taken within a period of 56 days from the placement of the adopted child.

**Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)** is the week in which the baby is due to be born as certified by the mother's doctor or midwife on the Maternity Benefit Certificate (MATB1).

**MATB1 Certificate** is the Maternity Benefit Certificate given to a pregnant woman by the doctor or midwife; it states the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

**Maternity Allowance (MA)** is paid by the Benefit's Agency to women who do not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay.

**Matching Certificate** is issued by the adoption agency to verify that a child has been successfully matched with adopter parents, it includes basic information on matching and expected placement dates.

**Maternity Leave** is the period of time away from work due to maternity.

**Maternity Pay Period (MPP)** is the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable to eligible staff. It may start at any time from the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth, if members of staff are employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and last up to 26 weeks. The actual start date of the Maternity Pay Period depends on when members of staff began their maternity leave.

<b>If the member of staff</b>	<b>The MPP will start on</b>
works up to the birth	the day following the date of birth
is absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness, on or after the start of the 4 <sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due.	the day following the first day on which the member of staff is absent
is absent on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related	a date notified by the member of staff, or from the day following the date of birth, whichever is earliest.

**Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)** is the statutory 26 week maternity absence entitlement for all pregnant staff.

**Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)** is the additional amount paid by the Council to make up the half pay element of your maternity pay.

**Qualifying Week (QW)** is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay purposes.

**Parental Leave** is the period of time away from work taken in accordance with the Parental Leave Regulations for the purposes of caring for a child.

**Partner** is defined as a person (whether of a different sex or the same sex) who lives with the mother, or main carer, and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not a relative of the mother, or main carer, i.e. a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.

**Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its mother after the birth and it may be taken at any time from the birth of a child within a period of 56 days.

**Paternity Pay Period (PPP)** is the period during which Statutory Paternity Pay is payable to an eligible member of staff. The length of the Paternity Pay Period will depend on whether the member of staff chooses to take one or two weeks' leave and is or can be linked to paid Maternity Support Leave.

**Placement** is when the child actually starts living with their new family. Formal adoption takes place later.

**Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL)** A member of staff can take paternity leave in order to care for their new baby or to support the mother of the baby if they have or expect to have responsibility for their baby's upbringing. They must be either or both the biological father of the baby or the mother's husband or partner.

**Self-Certification** is a completed declaration from the member of staff given to the employer as evidence of their entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Leave; it should include their eligibility and details of leave.

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** is payable to **eligible** staff. SMP, less tax and National Insurance (NI) Contributions, if applicable, will be paid via the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Maternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

Rate	When payable	Amount Payable
Higher	First 6 weeks of the MPP	90% of the member of staff's weekly earnings
Standard	For a further 20 weeks	£100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week, whichever is lower)

**Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)** is payable to eligible members of staff. Statutory Paternity Pay, less tax and NI Contributions, if applicable, will be paid in line with the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Paternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

## Section 2

### Maternity Provisions

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## **1.0 Introduction**

This procedure is intended to explain the benefits and entitlements available to pregnant staff. It applies to all staff employed directly by the Council and is commended to schools as "Best Practice".

## **2.0 General**

The departmental Human Resource service is responsible for notifying staff of their entitlements to maternity leave and pay and for ensuring they fully understand their rights.

Human Resources will notify Payroll when staff are due to go on maternity leave. Payroll will then confirm whether SMP is payable and if not, issue the relevant SMP1 form.

## **3.0 Procedure**

Staff should notify their line manager in writing once they have received medical confirmation that they are pregnant and no later than the 15th week before the EWC. Staff should notify the line manager of the EWC and the date on which they want/expect to commence maternity leave. They will be required to present form MATB1 to confirm the expected baby's due date, when available from their GP or Midwife.

On receipt of the MATB1 form, Departmental Human Resources will advise the member of staff within 28 days whether she is eligible for ordinary maternity or additional maternity leave and when that period will end, they will also advise in writing, the member of staff's line manager.

This will be either 26 or 52 weeks from the start of the leave depending on whether they are entitled to OML and/or AML. The Council will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that any risk to the member of staff's health and safety arising from her work will be avoided.

All pregnant members of staff are entitled to ordinary maternity leave of up to 26 weeks and must take a minimum leave period of two weeks from the date of childbirth; this applies regardless of length of service. Staff who have completed 26 weeks continuous service at the beginning of the 15th week before the EWC are entitled to an additional period of maternity leave which will start immediately after ordinary maternity leave finishes and continue for up to a further 26 weeks.

Staff may also be entitled to a maximum of 13 weeks (unpaid) parental leave for each child until the child is eight years of age or where the child is disabled, to a maximum entitlement of 18 weeks' parental leave up to the date of the child's 18th birthday. (See the Parental Leave Provisions).

### **3.1 Ante-Natal Care**

Expectant mothers will be entitled to paid time off during working hours for the purpose of antenatal care. They will be required to produce an appointment card or some other document confirming all appointments other than the first.

### **3.2 Health and Safety**

The Council is under a general obligation to review those risks within the work environment that relate to women of child bearing age. The special health and safety protection also extends beyond the time when the member of staff is pregnant, to when she is a "new mother".

As soon as notification is received that an individual is pregnant, the line manager, in conjunction with the Departmental Health and Safety Officer will carry out a risk assessment, and action will be taken as appropriate. Staff are prohibited from working during a period of two weeks from the date of childbirth.

### **3.3 Childbirth**

The definition of childbirth is the birth of a child:

- Either living
- Or stillborn (after 24 weeks of pregnancy). A member of staff who suffers a stillbirth after this time will be entitled to maternity leave and pay in line with her length of service.

A member of staff who miscarries before the 25th week of pregnancy will not be entitled to maternity leave and pay, but will be entitled to sick pay.

## **4.0 Maternity Leave & Pay**

### **4.1 Entitlement to Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)**

All pregnant members of staff are entitled to up to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave, regardless of length of service, provided they have complied with the notice requirements.

Staff must notify the Council by the 15th week before her EWC of the intended start date (this can be amended to a different date provided 28 days written notice is given). Staff can commence ordinary maternity leave at any time from the 11th week before the EWC.

If maternity leave commences unexpectedly because of the birth of the child, staff must notify their line manager as soon, as is reasonably practicable. The line manager will advise Departmental Human Resources.

### **4.2 Staff With Less than 26 Weeks Service By The 15<sup>th</sup> Week Before the EWC**

Staff with less than 26 weeks' service by the 15th week before the EWC are not eligible for SMP. Payroll will provide staff with an SMP1 form, which details the reasons for not paying SMP, within 7 days of that decision being taken. Staff may then be eligible to claim Maternity Allowance (MA) from the DSS. MA is paid directly by the local Benefits Agency, not through payroll.

### **4.3 Staff With More than 26 Weeks Service By The 15<sup>th</sup> Week Before the EWC**

#### **4.3.1 Entitlement to Additional Maternity Leave (AML)**

Staff who have completed 26 weeks' continuous service with the Council by the beginning of the **15th** week before the EWC will be able to take additional unpaid maternity leave. If taken, additional maternity leave will start immediately after ordinary maternity leave finishes and lasts for up to 26 weeks (i.e. 52 weeks leave in total).

### 4.3.2 Eligibility for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

To be eligible for SMP, staff must:

- have been continuously employed by the Council for at least 26 weeks in the 15th week before the EWC, Qualifying Week (QW).
- have average weekly earnings in the 8 weeks prior to the QW not less than the N.I. Contributions Lower Earnings Limit.
- still be pregnant at the QW, or have given birth by that time.
- notify the line manager of her intention to take maternity leave by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before her EWC, (which is a minimum of 28 days notice) unless this is not reasonably practicable and tell them: that she is pregnant. the week her baby is expected to be born (EWC).when she wants her maternity leave to start.

### 4.3.3 Table of benefits

Service	Weeks	Entitlement
Staff with 26 weeks and less than 1 years service in the 11 <sup>th</sup> week before the EWC	1-6	6 weeks at the higher rate of SMP (90% of the member of staff's weekly earnings)
	7-26	20 weeks at the standard rate of SMP (£100 per week or 90% of average earnings, whichever is lower)
Staff with minimum 1 years service at the 11 <sup>th</sup> week before the EWC	1-6	6 weeks at 90% of weekly pay (offset against SMP or MA payments)
	7-18	12 weeks ½ pay <b>only when staff return to work for at least 3 months.</b> This is without deduction except to the extent that the combined ½ pay and SMP or MA exceeds the normal full pay
		12 weeks at the standard rate of SMP when not intending to return to work
	19-26	8 weeks at the standard rate of SMP

### 4.3.4 Staff Not Entitled to SMP

A member of Staff may not qualify for SMP if she:

- fails to give the Council at least 28 days notice of her intention to cease work.
- fails to inform her line manager, by the 15th week before her EWC, that she is pregnant, what the EWC is and when she wants her maternity leave to start.
- is outside the European Economic Area during the first week of her Maternity Pay Period.
- is held in legal custody at any time during the first week of her MPP.
- does not have 26 weeks service in the QW.

Staff not entitled to SMP may be eligible for a Maternity Allowance.



#### **4.3.5 Maternity Pay Period (MPP)**

The Maternity Pay Period (MPP) starts at any time from the 11th week before the EWC and can continue for up to 26 weeks, if employed for 26 weeks in the 15th week before the EWC. If staff satisfy the qualification criteria for SMP but cease employment for any reason between the QW and the 11th week before the EWC they will still be entitled to SMP.

Please note that:

- i) if staff work up to the birth, the MPP will commence the day following the date of birth.
- ii) if staff are absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness, on or after the start of the fourth week before the baby is due, the MMP will commence the day following the first day of absence.
- iii) if staff are absent from work on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related, the MMP will commence on the date notified by staff, or from the day following the date of birth, whichever is the earlier.

#### **4.4 Changing Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)**

The departmental Human Resources service will write to the member of staff within 28 days of receipt of the notification, confirming the intended start date of OML and the date on which the OML period will end, and if they are entitled to both OML and AML, the date on which the AML period will end.

*Staff may give 28 days notice of a change to the commencement of OML leave and will receive written confirmation from their departmental Human Resource service amending the end of her OML or AML as applicable.*

#### **4.5 Notification of Return**

Staff returning to work on the expiry of ordinary or additional maternity leave period do not need to give notice, unless they wish to return early.

Staff who intend to return to work earlier than the end of the ordinary maternity or additional maternity leave period, must give 7 days written notice, (21 days if entitled to AML), of the date they intend to return.

If staff try to return to work earlier than the end of a maternity leave period without giving sufficient notice (i.e. 21 days). The Council may postpone the return to a date that will secure the 21 days notice, or until the end of the maternity leave period if this is sooner.

#### **4.6 Job on Return to Work**

Staff returning to work after ordinary maternity leave are entitled to return to the same job and in the same capacity, on terms and conditions of employment no less favourable than those at the commencement of the OML period and to any improvements implemented in their absence.

Staff returning to work after additional maternity leave or parental leave of more than 4 weeks, are entitled to return to the job they were employed in before the absence. Or, if it is not reasonably practicable for the Council to allow them to return to that job, to another which is both suitable and appropriate for them to do in the circumstances. Staff

are entitled to retain their seniority, pension rights and similar rights on terms and conditions no less favourable than which would have applied had they not been absent.

If staff request to return from ordinary or additional maternity leave on a part-time basis, the Council shall try and accommodate the request and will not unreasonably refuse permission. Requests will be treated in accordance with staff's right to apply to work flexibly under the Flexible Working Regulations.

#### **4.7 Postponement of Right to Return to Work**

The period of maternity leave (ordinary or additional) cannot be extended in any circumstances. If staff are ill at the end of the maternity leave period the normal sickness rules shall apply. However, staff have the right to apply to take parental leave at the expiry of maternity leave. For further details see the Council's Guide to Parental Leave.

#### **4.8 Failure to Return**

If staff fail to return after the maximum period of maternity leave, and to notify the Council of their absence, disciplinary action may be taken, provided the individual was notified of the date when the maternity leave period would end.

They will be required to repay the 12 weeks half pay.

#### **4.9 Resignation**

Should members of staff decide that they no longer wish to return to work after their period of maternity leave they will need to effectively resign from the Council's employment. Staff should write to their departmental Human Resources service giving their notice and official date of leaving the Council's employment.

### **5.0 Rights During and After Maternity Leave**

#### **5.1 Benefits**

The Departmental Human Resources team will inform staff of the benefits they are specifically entitled to during their ordinary maternity leave, and additional maternity leave (where appropriate).

#### **5.2 Continuous Service**

Staff will be given full continuous service for purposes of redundancy calculation and all other service related benefits provided they return to work at any time on or before the expiry of their maternity leave entitlement, or the end of any other approved leave/absence.

#### **5.3 Annual Salary Review**

If an annual salary review falls during a period of maternity absence, staff will be notified of the reviewed salary at the same time as other members of staff. The reviewed salary will then be paid on their return to work. (any backdated increases will be taken into account when calculating SMP.)

#### **5.4 Paid Holiday Entitlement**

Staff will continue to accrue contractual holiday entitlement during ordinary maternity leave. During any additional maternity leave the member of staff will accrue statutory holidays only (i.e. four weeks per annum).

#### **5.5 Car Allowance**

Staff will be entitled to continue to be paid any essential car allowance during the ordinary maternity leave period at the full amount for the first 18 weeks and then at a half rate for up to 12 weeks.

#### **5.6 Pension Scheme Benefits**

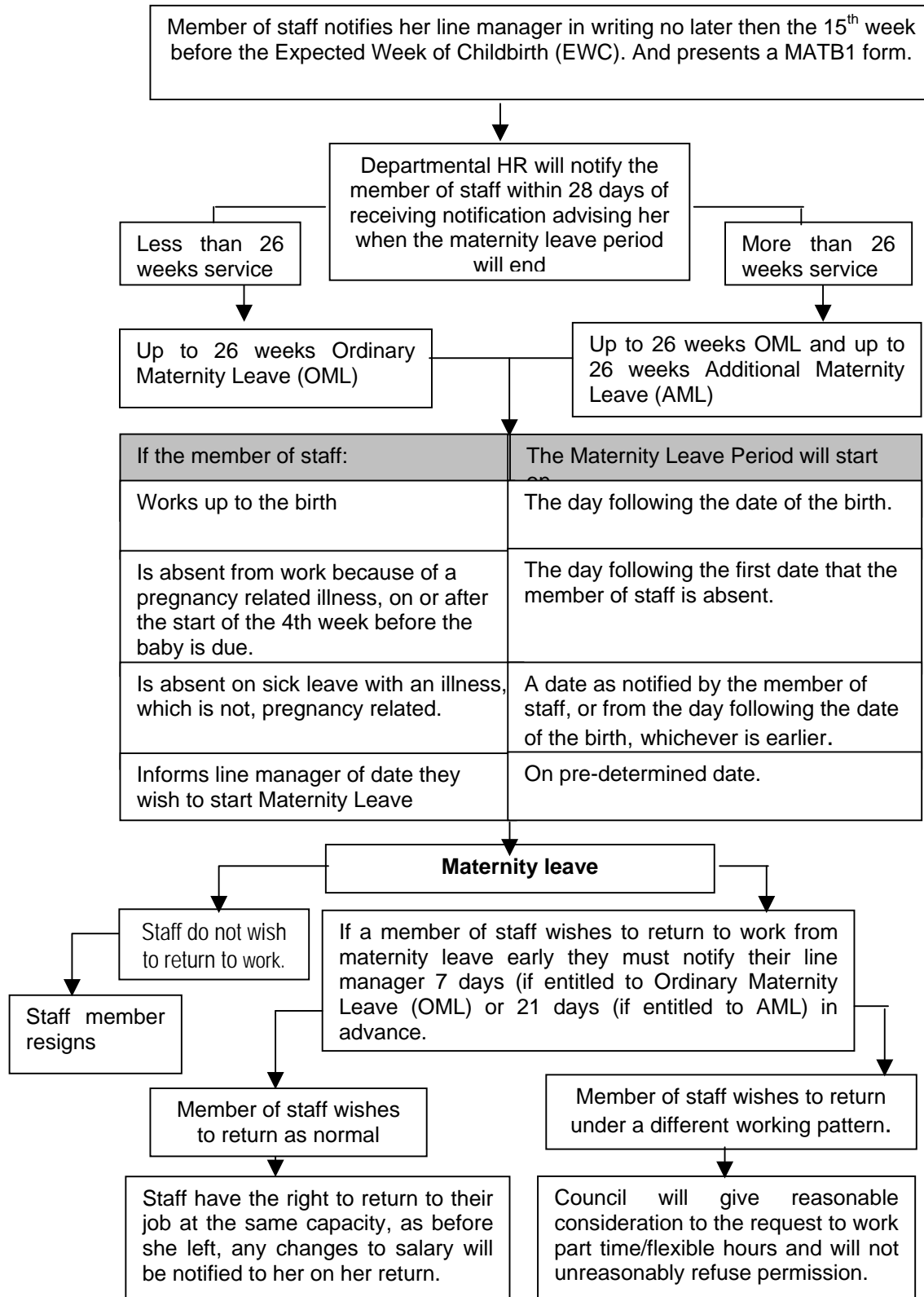
Staff will remain in the Council Pension Scheme whilst on maternity leave. For full details of the options available please refer to the Pension Team who will be able to give individual advice. On return to work, staff will be given full continuous service for pension purposes.

### **6.0 Grievances Related to Maternity Rights**

Staff should notify their line manager immediately in writing if they have concerns as to decisions made in respect of their maternity rights. Any complaints concerning the application of the Process should be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.

**Appendix 1  
Maternity Leave - Flowchart.**

The information in this flow chart relates only to Maternity leave, for details regarding pay arrangements, refer to the attached table on page 14.



**Application for Maternity Leave/Pay.**

- a) This form must be returned by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), or as soon as is reasonably practicable. Members of staff must give **as much notice** as possible of absence dates proposed (28 days as a minimum).
- b) Complete this form and send it to your line manager for approval. He/she will discuss with the Departmental Human Resources team as appropriate and give them a copy of the request for record keeping purposes. Any changes to the request should be updated on both your copies.
- c) Please attach your MATB1 form (When available).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected week of childbirth (EWC): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter the Sunday at the start of the week the doctor/agency has advised)

**When will be the first day of your Maternity leave?**

**A predetermined date, please specify:** \_\_\_\_\_.

**On the day the baby is born:** \_\_\_\_\_

*If you decide to change the date that you wish your leave to commence please inform your line manager at least 28 days before the first date of your leave.*

If you are absent from work due to a pregnancy-related illness until the date of birth your Maternity leave/pay will commence from your first day of absence.

If you qualify for OML and have indicated that you intend to return to work after your maternity leave, you will be required to do so for a period of no less than 3 months. If you do not return to work you will be required to pay back the 12 weeks half pay awarded to you. If you wish to defer the payment of 12 weeks half pay awarded to you, please notify Departmental Human Resources.

Signed (member of staff): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Manager): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Pay and Leave Entitlements. Pay Entitlements

	Maternity Pay SMP = Statutory Maternity Pay			Adoption Pay	Paternity/Maternity Support Pay	Parental Leave. (Unpaid)
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	More than 1 years service (returning to work)			
	No Pay Entitlement	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 Full Pay	Week 1 Maternity Support (Full Pay) Week 2 Paternity Pay (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	13 Weeks per child (18 if child is disabled) can be taken in weekly blocks (to a maximum of 4 per year) when necessary or as one 13 week block after pregnancy if necessary. (The parent taking leave must give 28 days notice.)
		Weeks 7 - 20 SMP entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	Weeks 7 - 26 SMP entitlement	Weeks 7-26 Statutory Adoption Pay entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)		
			Weeks 19-26 SMP entitlement.			
	<b>Week 27 – 52 - Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave - No Pay Entitlement.</b>					

\* This is without deduction except to the extent that the half pay plus SMP or MA and any dependants allowances (if a member of staff is not eligible for SMP) exceeds their normal pay.

\*\* Half Pay + SMP will only be given if the member of staff returns to work for a minimum period of 3 months.

### Leave Entitlements

	Maternity Leave		Adoption Leave	Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave	Parental leave. (Unpaid)
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC			
	26 Weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	Up to 52 Weeks (26 OML + 26 Additional Maternity Leave (AML))	26 Weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) a further 26 Weeks Additional Adoption Leave (AOL).	2 Weeks Leave to be taken as 1 week, or 2 consecutive weeks within 56 days of the child being born.	13 Weeks per child until the child is 8 or 18 Weeks per child until the child is 18 if they have a disability.



# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Parental Leave



## Section 1

### Definitions of Terms

**Additional Maternity Leave (AML)** is the additional 26 weeks leave entitlement available for staff with at least 26 weeks continuous service with the Council by the beginning of the 14th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

**Adopter** refers to a person who has been matched with the child for adoption.

**Adoptive Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its adopter after the placement and it may be taken within a period of 56 days from the placement of the adopted child.

**Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)** is the week in which the baby is due to be born as certified by the mother's doctor or midwife on the Maternity Benefit Certificate (MATB1).

**MATB1 Certificate** is the Maternity Benefit Certificate given to a pregnant woman by the doctor or midwife; it states the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

**Maternity Allowance (MA)** is paid by the Benefit's Agency to women who do not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay.

**Matching Certificate** is issued by the adoption agency to verify that a child has been successfully matched with adopter parents, it includes basic information on matching and expected placement dates.

**Maternity Leave** is the period of time away from work due to maternity.

**Maternity Pay Period (MPP)** is the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable to eligible staff. It may start at any time from the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth, if members of staff are employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and last up to 26 weeks. The actual start date of the Maternity Pay Period depends on when members of staff began their maternity leave.

<b>If the member of staff</b>	<b>The MPP will start on</b>
works up to the birth	the day following the date of birth
is absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness, on or after the start of the 4 <sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due.	the day following the first day on which the member of staff is absent
is absent on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related	a date notified by the member of staff, or from the day following the date of birth, whichever is earliest.



**Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)** is the statutory 26 week maternity absence entitlement for all pregnant staff.

**Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)** is the additional amount paid by the Council to make up the half pay element of your maternity pay.

**Qualifying Week (QW)** is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay purposes.

**Parental Leave** is the period of time away from work taken in accordance with the Parental Leave Regulations for the purposes of caring for a child.

**Partner** is defined as a person (whether of a different sex or the same sex) who lives with the mother, or main carer, and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not a relative of the mother, or main carer, i.e. a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.

**Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its mother after the birth and it may be taken at any time from the birth of a child within a period of 56 days.

**Paternity Pay Period (PPP)** is the period during which Statutory Paternity Pay is payable to an eligible member of staff. The length of the Paternity Pay Period will depend on whether the member of staff chooses to take one or two weeks' leave and is or can be linked to paid Maternity Support Leave.

**Placement** is when the child actually starts living with their new family. Formal adoption takes place later.

**Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL)** A member of staff can take paternity leave in order to care for their new baby or to support the mother of the baby if they have or expect to have responsibility for their baby's upbringing. They must be either or both the biological father of the baby or the mother's husband or partner.

**Self-Certification** is a completed declaration from the member of staff given to the employer as evidence of their entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Leave; it should include their eligibility and details of leave.

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** is payable to **eligible** staff. SMP, less tax and National Insurance (NI) Contributions, if applicable, will be paid via the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Maternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

Rate	When payable	Amount Payable
Higher	First 6 weeks of the MPP	90% of the member of staff's weekly earnings
Standard	For a further 20 weeks	£100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week, whichever is lower)

**Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)** is payable to eligible members of staff. Statutory Paternity Pay, less tax and NI Contributions, if applicable, will be paid in line with the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Paternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

## **Section 2**

## **Parental Leave**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Parental leave is the right to take unpaid time off to look after a child or make arrangements for a child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.

## **2.0 General**

This applies to staff who have been continuously employed for a year or more; and who:

- Is the parent (named on the birth certificate) of a child born on or before 15 December 1999 who is under 8 years old;  
or
- Has adopted, on or after 15 December 1999, a child under the age of 18 (the right lasts for 8 years from the date on which the child is placed for adoption; or until the child's 18th birthday, whichever is soonest)  
or
- Has acquired formal parental responsibility for a child born on or after 15 December 1999 who is under 8 years old.

Parental Leave is also available to those who have been granted parental responsibility, but who do not fall under the legal definition e.g. foster parents, adoptive parents prior to placement, step parents, grandparents with a significant parenting role, etc.

From 10 January 2002 the right to parental leave was extended for children born or adopted on or after 15 December 1994 up until 14 December 1999. Parents who apply can take their entitlement to parental leave up until 31 March 2005. In cases of disabled children, leave may be taken up until the child's 18th birthday.

## **3.0 Terms and Conditions**

### **3.1 Purpose of Parental Leave**

The purpose of parental leave is to care and look after the welfare of a child and can include making arrangements for the good of a child. This does not necessarily mean being with the child 24 hours a day and the leave may be used to enable parents to spend more time with young children eg:

- To spend more time with a child in the early years.
- To accompany a child during a stay in hospital.
- Checking out new schools.
- Settling a child into new childcare arrangements.
- To enable a family to spend more time together, for example, taking the child to stay with grandparents, etc.

### 3.2 Amount of Parental Leave

Staff are entitled to a total of 13 weeks **unpaid** leave in respect of each child. Parents of disabled children for whom a Disability Living Allowance has been awarded are entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave. The leave may be taken.

- As a single block of 13 weeks, (or 18 weeks for a disabled child).
- As a number of shorter periods, of a minimum of half a day.
- In patterns which provide a part time or reduced hours working arrangement for a period of time equivalent to taking 13 weeks leave as a single block (or 18 weeks for a disabled child).

**Note:** One weeks parental leave is equal to the length of time that staff are normally required to work in a week e.g. A weeks leave for a member of staff who only works on Mondays & Tuesdays will be 2 days, etc.

### 3.3 Notice of Leave

Staff should give up to 21 days written notice to their line managers of their intention to take parental leave with a minimum of 7 days notice in writing before the day on which they propose to take leave.

In special circumstances the line manager may use their discretion to grant parental leave to a member of staff who has not given the required notice. Advice in such circumstances should be obtained from the Departmental Human Resources Team.

### 3.4 Postponement of Leave

The line manager may postpone the request for leave where the absence would unduly disrupt the Council's service eg;

- Where the work is at a seasonal peak;  
or
- A significant proportion of the services workforce applies for parental leave at the same time;  
or
- The staff's role is such that their absence at a particular time would unduly harm the Council's service;  
or
- The notice given is insufficient to plan for the member of staff's absence.

Every attempt will be made to avoid postponement and in any event leave will not be postponed for more than three months, except in exceptional circumstances.

There can be no postponement where staff request Parental Leave:-

**Following Maternity Support Leave**, the unpredictability of the time of childbirth will also have implications for notice. Therefore, staff expecting to take maternity support leave should also discuss with their line manager their likely requirements for parental leave.

**Following Maternity Leave**, where a mother takes a period of parental leave following on from a period of maternity leave

**At the Time of Adoption**, where the parent is required to be at home by the adoption process or following adoption leave.

### **3.5 Return to Work**

Staff have the right to return to the same job in which they were employed before the leave began provided they did not take more than 4 weeks leave. If staff take more than 4 weeks leave, they are entitled to return to the same job or, if that is not reasonably practical, to another job which is suitable and appropriate for them to do in the circumstances.

**Please note**, that where parental leave is taken as a full time block of leave following maternity leave, staff will not be required to repay the 12 weeks half pay if they return to local authority employment for a period of at least 3 months **after the end of the parental leave period** ie Parental Leave does not count towards **the required 3 month period**.

Line managers are encouraged to discuss with staff prior to their return individual requirements for training and a flexible return to work if required following parental leave.

### **3.6 Terms and Conditions during Parental Leave**

Time taken as parental leave is treated as continuous service for the purpose of calculating the entitlements under the sickness scheme and for annual leave

Staff who fall sick during a period of parental leave and who give the Council the relevant appropriate notification shall be entitled to pay under the Sickness Scheme. This period shall not count towards their parental leave entitlement, should they provide a certificate to reinstate pay. All other terms and conditions will remain the same.

### **3.7 Pay**

There is no entitlement to pay during Parental Leave.

**Application for Parental Leave**

**To be completed and handed to your line manager 28 days in advance or as soon as is practicably possible.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Payroll No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

First Day \_\_\_\_\_ Last Day \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of days required \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days taken within the last 12 months \_\_\_\_\_

Member of staff's comments \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (employee) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Once this form has been completed, please pass it to your line manager.

-----  
Number of days taken as annual leave/unpaid special leave \_\_\_\_\_

Managers Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Manager) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date Payroll notified by HR \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to your departmental HR service



# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Paternity/Maternity Leave Support Provisions



## Section 1

### Definitions of Terms

**Additional Maternity Leave (AML)** is the additional 26 weeks leave entitlement available for staff with at least 26 weeks continuous service with the Council by the beginning of the 14th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth.

**Adopter** refers to a person who has been matched with the child for adoption.

**Adoptive Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its adopter after the placement and it may be taken within a period of 56 days from the placement of the adopted child.

**Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC)** is the week in which the baby is due to be born as certified by the mother's doctor or midwife on the Maternity Benefit Certificate (MATB1).

**MATB1 Certificate** is the Maternity Benefit Certificate given to a pregnant woman by the doctor or midwife; it states the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

**Maternity Allowance (MA)** is paid by the Benefit's Agency to women who do not qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay.

**Matching Certificate** is issued by the adoption agency to verify that a child has been successfully matched with adopter parents, it includes basic information on matching and expected placement dates.

**Maternity Leave** is the period of time away from work due to maternity.

**Maternity Pay Period (MPP)** is the period during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable to eligible staff. It may start at any time from the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth, if members of staff are employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth and last up to 26 weeks. The actual start date of the Maternity Pay Period depends on when members of staff began their maternity leave.

<b>If the member of staff</b>	<b>The MPP will start on</b>
works up to the birth	the day following the date of birth
is absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness, on or after the start of the 4 <sup>th</sup> week before the baby is due.	the day following the first day on which the member of staff is absent
is absent on sick leave with an illness which is not pregnancy related	a date notified by the member of staff, or from the day following the date of birth, whichever is earliest.



**Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)** is the statutory 26 week maternity absence entitlement for all pregnant staff.

**Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)** is the additional amount paid by the Council to make up the half pay element of your maternity pay.

**Qualifying Week (QW)** is the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Pay purposes.

**Parental Leave** is the period of time away from work taken in accordance with the Parental Leave Regulations for the purposes of caring for a child.

**Partner** is defined as a person (whether of a different sex or the same sex) who lives with the mother, or main carer, and the child in an enduring family relationship, but is not a relative of the mother, or main carer, i.e. a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle.

**Paternity Leave** is the period of time away from work to care for a new child and/or its mother after the birth and it may be taken at any time from the birth of a child within a period of 56 days.

**Paternity Pay Period (PPP)** is the period during which Statutory Paternity Pay is payable to an eligible member of staff. The length of the Paternity Pay Period will depend on whether the member of staff chooses to take one or two weeks' leave and is or can be linked to paid Maternity Support Leave.

**Placement** is when the child actually starts living with their new family. Formal adoption takes place later.

**Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL)** A member of staff can take paternity leave in order to care for their new baby or to support the mother of the baby if they have or expect to have responsibility for their baby's upbringing. They must be either or both the biological father of the baby or the mother's husband or partner.

**Self-Certification** is a completed declaration from the member of staff given to the employer as evidence of their entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay and Statutory Paternity Leave; it should include their eligibility and details of leave.

**Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** is payable to **eligible** staff. SMP, less tax and National Insurance (NI) Contributions, if applicable, will be paid via the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Maternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

Rate	When payable	Amount Payable
Higher	First 6 weeks of the MPP	90% of the member of staff's weekly earnings
Standard	For a further 20 weeks	£100 per week (or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week, whichever is lower)

**Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)** is payable to eligible members of staff. Statutory Paternity Pay, less tax and NI Contributions, if applicable, will be paid in line with the normal payroll arrangements. Statutory Paternity Pay is payable only for complete weeks.

## Section 2

### Paternity/Maternity Support

#### Leave Provisions

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Council's Paternity provisions are intended to help working parents achieve a better balance between work and family life and to ensure staff are aware of the benefits and entitlements available to them.

## 2.0 General

The Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations are applicable to staff who:

- have been continuously employed by the Council for 26 weeks in the 15th week before the baby is due (EWC) or date of placement if adopted; and
- have a child placed, or received notification of placement and
- have or expect to have responsibility for a child's upbringing (born/adopted); and
- be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner; or the adopter's spouse or partner, or nominated carer (the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child).

### 2.1 Types of Paternity Leave

- **Paternity Leave** - the entitlement to leave from work for the purpose of caring for a child or supporting the mother following birth.
- **Adoptive Paternity Leave** - the entitlement to leave from work for the purpose of caring for an adopted child or supporting the adopter.

### 2.2 Childbirth

The definition of childbirth is the birth of a child either living or stillborn, after 24 weeks of pregnancy. A father whose baby is stillborn after this time will be entitled to paternity leave and pay.

### 2.3 Early Birth

Staff will be entitled to paternity leave if the baby is born earlier than the 14th week before the EWC, if he would have satisfied the eligibility criteria, and was still employed, in the 15th week before the EWC.

### 2.4 Multiple Births

The entitlement to paternity leave will not be increased by the birth, expected birth, or placement of more than one child as a result of the same pregnancy or placement.

### 3.0 Amount Of Statutory Paternity Pay

<b>TABLE OF BENEFITS – PATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY</b>	
<b>Paternity Leave</b>	<b>Paternity Pay</b>
Up to 2 weeks (5 days paid as Maternity Support Leave)	£75 per week until April 6 2003, when it will change to £100 per week, (as of April 6 2003), or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100per week.**
Up to 2 weeks (5 days paid as Maternity Support Leave)	Statutory rate £100 per week (as of April 6 2003), or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week.**
<b>TABLE OF BENEFITS – ADOPTIVE PATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY</b>	
<b>Paternity Leave</b>	<b>Paternity Pay</b>
Up to 2 weeks	Statutory rate £100 per week or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than £100 per week.
** Subject to staff earning more than the lower earnings limit	

**For further details please refer to Payroll.**

### 4.0 Entitlement

Staff are entitled to choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks paternity leave within the period from the day the baby is born, or placed, and until 56 days later.

Where a child is born prematurely i.e. before the first day of the EWC, the leave must be taken within 56 days of the EWC. This allows partners of children who are very premature to take leave when their child is brought home from the hospital.

#### 4.1 Maternity Support Leave

A period of 5 days is normally granted with pay to staff who are the father of a child or the partner or nominated carer (the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child) of an expectant mother at or around the time of birth. The process for applying is the same as for paternity leave.

Staff who qualify for both paternity leave (including same sex partners) and maternity support leave will be entitled to 1 weeks leave on full pay and 1 weeks leave paid at the standard rate of paternity pay as detailed previously.

### 5.0 Notice Requirements

#### 5.1 Paternity Leave

Staff must give written notice of their intention to take leave in, or before, the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC, or if that is not possible as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The notice must specify the:

- EWC.
- length of leave the member of staff has chosen to take.
- date on which they want their leave to begin.

Staff must notify their line manager of the actual date of birth as soon as is reasonably practicable afterwards.

Leave will only be granted upon presentation of a copy of the MATB1 form.

## **5.2 Adoptive Paternity Leave**

Staff must give written notice of their intention to take adoptive paternity leave within 7 days of being notified of a match with a child, or if that is not possible as soon as reasonably practicable. The notice must specify:

- The date when the child is to be placed.
- The length of leave they wish to take.
- The date on which they want their leave to begin.
- The Matching Certificate

Note: Staff may vary the specified start date for Paternity/Adoptive Paternity Leave by giving 28 days notice, or if this is not possible as soon as is reasonably practicable. The same entitlement to pay as Paternity leave will apply.

Leave will only be granted upon presentation of a copy of the appropriate matching certificate or equivalent.

## **6.0 Self - Certification**

Staff must complete a self-certification form as evidence of their entitlement to paternity leave and pay (See Appendix 1). Staff must sign a declaration that they meet the eligibility criteria and provide the information specified; they will not need to hand in a separate letter of notification.

## **7.0 Start Date Of Paternity Leave**

Staff may choose from the following options:

1. The date on which the child is born.
2. A number of days after the birth date as specified by the member of staff.
3. A predetermined date (provided that they comply with the 28 days notice requirement and this date is confirmed by the 15th week before EWC), which is later than the first day of the expected week of the child's birth.
4. Where the baby is not born around the predetermined date, staff can vary their leave by confirming a new date giving as much notice as is possible.
5. The date on which the child starts living with the adopter.
6. A number of days after the date on which the child starts living with the adopter as specified by the member of staff.
7. A predetermined date which is later than the first day of the expected date on which the child will start living with the adopter.

## **8.0 Contractual Arrangements During Paternity Leave**

Staff on Paternity Leave will continue to be employed by the Council. They are entitled to all the terms and conditions of their employment that apply as if they were not absent, with the exception of remuneration, unless the contract of employment confirms otherwise. Staff will continue to be bound by their contractual undertakings to the Council.

## **9.0 Return to Work After Paternity Leave**

- Staff are entitled to return to the same job as before, on remuneration and benefits no less favourable than if they had not been absent, if :
  - their period of paternity leave was an isolated period.
  - their return from paternity leave is followed immediately by a period of parental leave of no more than four weeks.
- If staff were to take more than four weeks parental leave following their paternity leave they would return to the same job unless this was not practicable. In this situation they would be given a job which has the same or equivalent status and terms and conditions as their original job.

## **10.0 Failure to Return**

If staff fail to return after a statutory period of absence, and to notify the Council of their absence, disciplinary action may be taken.

**Application for Paternity, Maternity Support or Adoptive Paternity Leave.**

- a) This form must be returned by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC, or as soon as is reasonably practicable. Staff must give **as much notice** as possible of absence dates proposed (28 days as a minimum).
- b) Complete this form and send it to your line manager for approval. He/she will discuss with the Departmental Human Resources team as appropriate and will give them a copy of your request for record keeping purposes. Any changes to this request should be updated on both your copies.
- c) Please attach a copy of any required documentation to support your request.

**PART 1**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of leave requested: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Maximum of 2 consecutive weeks, starting with the day the child is born/placed and within 26 weeks of the birth/placement)

Total number of days absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2**

**Expected week of childbirth/week of placement: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**(Enter the Sunday at the start of the week the doctor/midwife or agency has advised)**

**PART 3**

Please state what type of leave you are you applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate state start date for Maternity Support/Paternity/Adoptive paternity leave and pay:

- On the day the baby is born/placed
- A set number of days after the baby is born/placed, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- A predetermined date after the baby is born/placed, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

*If you decide to change the date that you wish your leave to commence please inform your line manager at least 28 days before the first date of your leave.*

Signed (member of staff) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Manager) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Payroll notified \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary of Pay and Leave Entitlements. Pay Entitlements

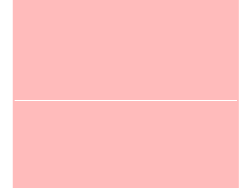
	Maternity Pay SMP = Statutory Maternity Pay			Adoption Pay	Paternity/Maternity Support Pay	Parental Leave. (Unpaid)
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	More than 1 years service (not returning to work)			
	No Pay Entitlement	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 90% weekly pay (Offset against SMP or Maternity Allowance (MA) Payments)	Weeks 1-6 Full Pay	Week 1 Maternity Support (Full Pay) Week 2 Paternity Pay (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	13 Weeks per child (18 if child is disabled) can be taken in weekly blocks (to a maximum of 4 per year) when necessary or as one 13 week block after pregnancy if necessary. (The parent taking leave must give 28 days notice.)
		Weeks 7 - 20 SMP entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)	Weeks 7 - 26 SMP entitlement	Weeks 7-26 Statutory Adoption Pay entitlement (£100 a week or 90% pay whichever is lower)		
<b>Week 27 – 52 - Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave - No Pay Entitlement.</b>						

\* This is without deduction except to the extent that the half pay plus SMP or MA and any dependants allowances (if a member of staff is not eligible for SMP) exceeds their normal pay.

\*\* Half Pay + SMP will only be given if the member of staff returns to work for a minimum period of 3 months.

	Maternity Leave		Adoption Leave	Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave	Parental leave. (Unpaid)
	less than 26 weeks service at the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC	Between 26 weeks - 1 year service at 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC			
	26 Weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	Up to 52 Weeks (26 OML + 26 Additional Maternity Leave (AML))	26 Weeks Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL) a further 26 Weeks Additional Adoption Leave (AOL).	2 Weeks Leave to be taken as 1 week, or 2 consecutive weeks within 56 days of the child being born.	13 Weeks per child until the child is 8 or 18 Weeks per child until the child is 18 if they have a disability.





# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



# ANNUAL LEAVE & SPECIAL LEAVE PROVISIONS



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## 1. Introduction and Aims

These provisions set out the principles to be followed in relation to the granting of a leave of absence from work. It is intended to ensure that absence is arranged and monitored in a consistent way that is fair to all, in accordance with the Council's Equalities and Diversity in Employment Policy and in line with best personnel practice.

## 2. General

This applies to all staff employed by the Council, (except those employed on; Soulbury; youth workers; lecturers and teachers conditions of service and those based in schools where separate arrangements apply), and covers all requests for leave of absence whether paid or unpaid.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Line managers are responsible for authorising all requests for paid or unpaid absence, in consultation where appropriate with the Head of Service e.g. when dealing with exceptional periods of leave of absence. The line manager should also ensure that staff are aware that they should take their full annual leave entitlement within the leave year.

The Departmental Human Resource Service is responsible for receiving copies of all documentation relating to a member of staff's absence via the regular receipt from the department's managers/supervisors of their teams weekly absence returns. They will also, following advice/confirmation from the line manager/supervisor, be responsible for advising the Payroll Section of any instances of paid or unpaid leave.

## 4. Annual Leave

### 4.1 Annual Leave Entitlement

The Annual Leave year runs from the 1 April through to 31 March. Staff must take their entitlement during the leave year in periods of up to 3 consecutive weeks (see 4.8 for applications for extended leave). The entitlements are detailed below.

Previous continuous local government service should be taken into account when calculating the entitlement to annual leave. When staff reach 5 years continuous service, the new entitlement will be calculated from the 1st day of the following month, on a pro-rata basis according to how many months are left in the annual leave year.

<b>Annual Leave Entitlement (Including 2 extra statutory days)</b>		
<b>Pay - spinal point</b>	<b>Annual Leave Entitlement</b>	<b>Annual Leave Entitlement after 5 years service</b>
Up to and including 21	22	27
Points 22 – 28 inclusive	25	28
Points 29 – 31 inclusive	26	29
Point 32 and above (inc LSMR posts)	27	30
Chief Officers and other JNC Officers	29	32

#### 4.2 Annual Leave during First Six Months Of Service

New staff may take annual leave during their first six months of service. If granted, staff must be made aware that they will be required to repay any amount outstanding, should they leave the Council before the end of the 'leave year'.

#### 4.3 Calculation of Annual Leave

To ensure consistency in apportioning annual leave for new starters, transfers between leave bands and leavers, the calculation shown in Paragraph 42 (c) of the former Purple Book should be used (see table below). Only complete calendar months should be counted when making the calculation, (e.g. from 15 April to 15 June will count as one month, May), which should be rounded up to the nearest half day.

Where transfers between leave bands take place mid month, the lower leave band will apply for that month.

	Month of entry	Completed months of service by end of March Year A	Leave entitlement during leave year ending 31st March Year A
<b>Year A</b>	March	More than 12	Full
	April	11	11/12ths
	May	10	10/12ths
	June	9	9/12ths
	July	8	8/12ths
	August	7	7/12 <sup>th</sup>
	September	6	6/12 <sup>th</sup>
	October	5	5/12 <sup>th</sup>
	November	4	4/12 <sup>th</sup>
	December	3	3/12 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Year B</b>	January	2	2/12 <sup>th</sup>
	February	1	1/12 <sup>th</sup>
	March	Nil	Nil
This refers to the position of those members of staff entering the service after the first working day of each month.			

#### 4.4 Leave for Part Time Members of Staff

##### Part-time staff working 5 days per week

Staff working over 5 days should receive their full annual leave entitlement as detailed in 4.1 above, as each day taken will be paid at their part time working hours e.g. for staff working 25 hours per week over 5 days, a days leave would be 5 hours.

### **Part-time staff working other than 5 days per week**

Staff working less than 5 days a week should receive annual leave and bank holidays calculated on a pro-rata basis as detailed: -

P/T hours per week x Leave entitlement  
= ... days leave x 7 = ... hours F/T working week

e.g. Member of staff on s.c.p. 30 with 7 years service, working 17½ hours per week, Tuesday - Thursday

17½ x 29 = 14½ days x 7 = 101½ hours leave per annum 35

### **Bank Holidays**

Where staff only work certain days each week, i.e. Monday and Tuesday, they are entitled to receive an additional payment if a bank holiday falls on one of their non-working days, i.e. Good Friday during the Easter period. This payment should be calculated by dividing the number of hours worked per week by 5 (days of the week).

Example: Member of staff works 15 hours per week, divide by 5, equalling 3. The member of staff is entitled to receive 3 extra hours of pay in respect of the bank holiday. These hours should be paid at flat rate. An appropriate claim form will need to be submitted in these circumstances.

### **4.5 Carry Over of Annual Leave**

Staff may apply to their line manager to carry over a maximum 5 days annual leave from one year to the next. If the line manager is not able to agree the request, staff may appeal to their Head of Service for approval. Any request to carry over more than 5 days annual leave for a special reason e.g. to visit relatives abroad should also be referred to the Head of Service.

Any other outstanding leave will be forfeited, although in exceptional cases, staff who are prevented from taking their full annual entitlement as a result of the Council's requirements may make arrangements with their line manager for annual leave to be carried over for a period of three months beyond the end of the annual leave year.

### **4.6 Additional Unpaid Leave**

Additional leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of the line manager in consultation with the Head of Service. Directors may grant up to 10 days leave without pay; any unpaid leave in excess of that would require the approval of the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations.

1 days pay will be deducted for each days unpaid leave. Where the period of unpaid leave includes a weekend or scheduled rest day, (eg unpaid leave on a Friday and Monday), 1 days pay will be deducted only for each day that the member of staff would have worked as part of their normal working week.

A day's pay is 1/12 of annual salary divided by the numbers of days in that particular month. (Where staff take unauthorised absence, including industrial action, the deduction will be 1/5 of a weeks pay).

#### **4.7 Notification**

Requests for leave should be submitted to the line manager on the Annual Leave Request Form giving a minimum 2 days notice. The leave should be recorded on the Absence Record /Annual Leave Card and Payroll notified where appropriate (e.g. to effect salary deductions for unpaid leave).

Staff should not make any holiday arrangements and/or bookings until their request has been formally approved by their line manager. The Council will not be liable for any costs incurred by staff who make arrangements prior to leave being granted.

#### **4.8 Approval of Annual Leave**

While every effort will be made to meet a leave request, line managers have the right to refuse or adjust the dates of an intended holiday.

The Council reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to subsequently withdraw approval should the needs of the business warrant it e.g. to ensure it is able to carry out it's statutory functions and/or to continue to provide a service. Where this is necessary, every effort will be made to minimise the inconvenience and cost to the member of staff. Where staff on annual leave are called on to return to work, they will be paid as normal for that day and their leave re-instated to be taken at a later date.

Any member of staff who takes annual leave, which has not been previously approved, may be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

#### **4.9 Extended Leave**

Applications for extended periods of leave i.e. in excess of 3 weeks should be made well in advance of the leave being required. Where the Head of Service is unable to grant an extended period of leave, they will notify the member of staff concerned within 5 working days of the request.

#### **4.10 Late Return from Annual Leave**

If for any reason staff will be late returning from an agreed holiday they must notify their line manager as soon as possible. Failure to do so may render staff liable for disciplinary action for unauthorised absence.

#### **4.11 Sickness during Annual Leave**

Staff who fall sick during annual leave shall be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a doctor's certificate. Annual leave will not be re-instated unless a doctor's certificate is produced.

The balance of the leave may be taken at a later date after their return to work. Staff must take the balance before 31 March, unless they have obtained approval to carry over a maximum of 5 days leave until the next year. **Please note:** that medical certificates issued outside of the EU do not count towards the payment of SSP

#### **4.12 Prolonged Sickness during Leave Year**

Staff who have been absent due to sickness for the majority of the leave year and return to work having a full annual leave entitlement should, time permitting, take the leave before 31 March. If there is insufficient time they may carry over up to 5 days and be paid for the outstanding amount.

Staff who are absent due to sickness for the whole or latter part of the year, and have a full or substantial leave entitlement, but do not return to work by 31 March should be allowed to carry forward 5 days and be paid for the outstanding amount.

**Note:** Staff who are on sick leave and have exhausted their entitlement to sick pay will still accrue annual leave during this period. Staff are entitled to apply to take annual leave whilst absent due to sickness and must notify their manager when they want the leave to commence. Where staff are on nil pay, their pay will be re-instated whilst on annual leave.

#### **4.13 Payment of Outstanding Leave**

Managers should ensure that their staff take any outstanding annual leave prior to their last day of service.

The Council has agreed that payments in lieu of outstanding annual leave may only be made:

- In cases where the member of staff has been unable to take the leave due to redundancy.
- In cases where the Director or Head of Service has requested the member of staff to work for the exigencies of the service.
- On the termination of their service.
- There has been pro-longed sickness during the leave as in 4.12 above.



## 5. Compassionate Leave

Line managers may grant up to 3 days leave with pay to staff in the case of the serious/sudden illness or death or funeral of a near relative and up to 1 day for the funeral of a fellow member of staff. They may also approve up to 10 days unpaid leave of absence in consultation with the Head of Service.

Normally 1 days leave would be granted to attend the funeral of a near relative with up to 3 days where the member of staff is making the arrangements, if appropriate. This entitlement can also be linked to the "Emergency Time off for Dependants Leave" if necessary.

Where staff need time off for compassionate reasons at the end of the leave year (February/March) first consideration should be given to using any outstanding annual leave in excess of 5 days. As detailed in paragraph 4.5, staff may only apply to carry over 5 days annual leave into the next year.

**Note:** A near relative includes: parents, grandparents, parents in law, partner, children, brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters in law, sons and daughters in law, grandchildren and a person standing "in loco parentis" to the member of staff or to whom the member of staff stands in relation.

## 6. Medical Screening

Necessary paid leave will be granted to staff for the purpose of medical screening on production of the appropriate notification of appointment if requested.

## 7. Leave For Elective Surgery

Staff who choose to undergo "elective" surgery which is not required for medical reasons (*e.g. cosmetic surgery, corrective eye surgery (laser treatment etc), implants, removal of tattoos, etc.*) should use their annual leave or request unpaid leave. Paid special leave will not be granted in such cases.

Note: The absence does not constitute sickness and the provisions of the Council's sick pay schemes do not apply.

## 8. Medical, Dental and Optical Appointments

### 8.1 General

If staff require urgent optical, dental or other medical treatment, they will be allowed reasonable time off subject to the line manager's approval and production of the appointment notification.

Where possible, such appointments should be arranged outside normal working hours or at the beginning or end of the working day or during the lunch break. Staff may be asked to make up lost time if the number of appointments is deemed to be excessive; each case will be considered on its merits *e.g.*; whether it is related to a condition that comes under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act or post operative recovery, etc.

In the event of a medical, dental or optical appointment taking up a full workday, the Council reserves the right to treat this as sickness absence.

## **8.2 Blood Donors**

Managers will grant reasonable time with pay for blood donors to attend local donation centres.

## **8.3 Gender Reassignment**

Requests for time off to attend medical appointments will be treated sympathetically, and may be taken as sick leave or special leave, in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 8.1 above, depending on the individual circumstances of the case.

## **8.4 Fertility Treatment**

Requests for time off to attend medical appointments will be treated sympathetically, and may be taken as sick leave or special leave, in accordance with the provisions set out in paragraph 8.1 above, depending on the individual circumstances of the case.

## **9. Time Off For Rehabilitation, Assessment or Treatment**

The Council is required to make "reasonable adjustments"\* to avoid discriminating against disabled members of staff. (\* Further details are obtained within the "Managers Guide to Employing Disabled People").

This may include allowing the disabled member of staff to work flexible hours, to enable additional breaks to be taken to overcome fatigue, or changing the disabled member of staff's hours to fit in with the availability of a carer.

If staff become disabled, the department must consider allowing the person more time off during working hours than would normally be allowed to non disabled staff e.g. to receive physiotherapy, psychoanalysis or to undertake employment rehabilitation, etc. A similar adjustment would be to allow for occasional treatment.

The length of time necessary will vary from case to case and all requests should be dealt with in a flexible, supportive and sensitive manner, and advice sought from the Departmental Human Resources Service as appropriate. Line managers should note that there is not a specific entitlement to extended absence from work owing to incapacity and in these cases the procedures relating to the management of sickness absence and capability should be followed.

## **10. Ante-Natal Care**

All pregnant members of staff, irrespective of the hours worked or length of service have the right to paid time off for ante-natal care and must produce evidence of such appointments if requested.

## **11. Adoption, Parental and Paternity And Maternity Support Leave**

Please refer to the separate procedures for details of the entitlements for time off for these purposes.

## **12. Service In Non-Regular Forces**

The Council's permission should be sought before staff volunteer for service in non-regular forces. Up to 2 week's leave with pay may be granted for the purpose of attending an annual training camp/course, any extra period should be taken as leave without pay or as part of annual holiday entitlement. Line managers may cancel leave for military service where this affects the operational requirements of the business having first taken advice from their Departmental Human Resources Service.

## **13. Election Leave**

Staff who are required to assist the Chief Executive with Parliamentary, European and Council elections within this borough will be granted leave with pay.

## **14. Jury Service**

Staff who are required to attend for jury service must give as much notice as possible. In normal circumstances, the Council will agree to a leave of absence to attend. Staff will continue to receive their appropriate salary rate on the basis that they re-imburse the Council any allowances that can be claimed up to the maximum rate paid by the relevant authorities to the individual. Staff must obtain the prior approval of their line manager and forward a copy of the completed jury service form (available direct from the court) to Payroll.

## **15. Public Appointments**

Staff who wish to fulfil a public appointment should first discuss this with their line manager to ensure that the timing of any duties that they might have to fulfil does not interfere with their normal employment duties. Approval will be required from the line manager prior to staff accepting the public appointment and time off to attend meetings or carry out work on behalf of the public body shall be limited to a maximum of 12 days per year. In the case of magisterial duties, the Council's practice is to grant 18 days or 36 half days per year. Time off is granted with pay for these purposes.

Categories of public appointments, which may qualify for time off under this section, include, but are not limited to, the following:-

Justice of the Peace, Member of a local authority, Member of a statutory tribunal, Member of a police authority, Member of a board of prison visitors or a prison visiting committee, Member of a relevant education body, including school boards, Member of the Environment Agency or Environment Protection Agency.

Staff must register these interests under the Code of Conduct.

**Note:** Section 10 of the Local Government and Housing Act (1989) makes it unlawful for a Local Authority to allow a member of staff paid time off in excess of 208 hours for Councillor duties. The Act also restricts the political activities of certain staff (Politically Restricted Posts). Please see the guidance in the "Quick Guide to Managing People".

## **16. Religious Festivals**

Where possible, leave for religious festivals should be accommodated within the existing annual leave or flexible working arrangements. If this is not possible, the line manager should grant staff unpaid leave.

Further guidelines as to religious observance, etc. may be found on the HR intranet site.

## **17. Study Leave**

Staff may be allowed paid leave of absence for all approved courses as follows:

- The day/half day on which the examination falls.
- Two days of study leave per course in any 12-month period.

Additional leave of absence may also be granted at the discretion of the line manager, depending upon the discipline being studied in conjunction with the member of staff's entitlement to flexible working, annual leave, etc.

## **18. Longer Term Unpaid Leave of Absence**

All applications should be submitted to the line manager detailing the reason(s). The line manager will consider each case on its merits and decide what will best accommodate the member of staff and the Council's needs prior to referral, if necessary, to the Head of Service. In all cases staff will be notified in writing by the line manager of the amount of unpaid leave if any, which has been granted. The Payroll Section must be kept informed of all granted unpaid leave in order to make the appropriate necessary deduction(s).

## **19. Time For Other Reasons**

There are separate arrangements for time off to attend urgent domestic situations etc as detailed in the Family Friendly Provisions.

## **20. Unauthorised Absence**

All unauthorised absence is without pay and is a disciplinary offence.





**Application for Special Leave.**

**To be completed and handed to your line manager 28 days in advance or as soon as is practicably possible.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Payroll No: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

First Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of days required: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of staff's comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Member of Staff): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Once this form has been completed, please pass it to your line manager

-----

Number of days taken as annual leave/unpaid special leave: \_\_\_\_\_

Managers Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Manager): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please send the completed form to your Departmental Humans Resources Service*

Date Payroll notified by Departmental Human Resources: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Manager) \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to your departmental HR service



# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



# MARKET SUPPLEMENTS



## Market Supplements

The Council's Job Evaluation Scheme does not take into account external factors such as the current job market and labour shortages etc. Therefore, there may be occasions when the evaluated grade is not sufficient to attract suitable candidates. Where this is the case, market supplements may be considered.

The actual use of market supplements will be for the individual department's determination and may vary according to their needs and available resources. The Departmental Head of Human Resources will review all applications to ensure that they are in accordance with the Council's Policies and Procedures and make recommendations as to the appropriate supplement. They will determine: -

- Whether a market supplement is appropriate
- How much the supplement will be
- That appropriate funding has been identified and set aside for this purpose
- The impact of this on any other posts within the department/Council

Directors will have delegated authority to approve market supplements of up to £5,000 per annum (and notify the Executive where these have been approved). The Executive must approve any payment in excess of £5,000.

The process for determining market supplements etc should be clear and easily understood in order to avoid causing any resentment amongst staff not in receipt of the payment and to protect the integrity of the Job Evaluation Scheme. For this reason and to avoid any misunderstanding, market supplements will be: -

- Distinct from actual salaries and gradings.
- Attached to the specific post(s) and not to individual members of staff.
- Temporary, up to a maximum period of three years but can be extended in exceptional circumstances up to 5 years.
- Reviewed annually in conjunction with the Head of Organisational Development and Employee Relations or with any restructure/job evaluation/recruitment initiative.
- Not be protected or absorbed into the salary; and also,
- Details included in the annual recruitment report to the Corporate Monitoring Group.

Note: The payments are liable for income tax and National Insurance and are pensionable.



The circumstances leading to the application of market supplements should be kept under regular review with staff so they are aware of when the payment is to stop; this should be in sufficient time to give staff two months notice). Depending on the circumstances and to avoid losing staff on the termination of the payment, consideration may be given to a transitional “retainer” of up to 50% of the supplement for a period of up to twelve months.

The Departmental Head of Human Resources will maintain an up to date record of all posts in receipt of market supplements. They will also retain the relevant documentation for six months after the termination of the payment, in order to be able to respond to any complaint of unfair treatment to an Employment Tribunal.

## Procedure

### Approval

Where there are difficulties recruiting to posts, managers will need to provide evidence of the following: -

- Similar jobs outside the Council being paid at a significantly higher salary than the evaluated grade (including salary surveys, benchmarking and a range of adverts from the local press and/or professional journeys).
- An acknowledged labour shortage in that area.
- Any action taken to date to recruit staff to the post(s).

The Departmental Head of Human Resources will then review the situation to ensure that all other options have been considered. This may include: -

- Job evaluation – have the posts recently being evaluated and are they graded appropriately in comparison to other Boroughs.
- Linked grades – has making the post a career/linked grade been considered.
- Recruitment – is this being targeted effectively.
- Non-financial – has training and/or flexible working arrangements etc been inducements considered/offered.

Directors have delegated authority to approve market supplements of up to £5,000 per annum. The Executive must approve payments above £5,000.

### Funding

Managers will need to provide details of the money available for this purpose and over what period, (including any local or central government initiatives and/or funding arrangements for recruiting to these areas). Allowance will need to be made for the Employers National Insurance and pension on-costs.

## Calculating the Market Supplement

The appropriate supplement will depend on the merits of the case and the funding available. As a general guide, this should be comparable to the difference between the evaluated grade and the market rate for the job but less than the cost of using agency staff.

Supplements should be paid at flat rate in multiples of £500, up to a maximum £5,000 per annum, with provision to increase this where the post has been unsuccessfully advertised. Examples are detailed in the table overleaf.

Difference between evaluated grade and market rate	Suggested Market Supplement (£ per annum)	
		(where previously advertised)
Up to 500 per annum	Up to 500	500 -1,000
500 - 1,000	1,000	1,500 - 2,000
1,000 - 1,500	1,500	2,000 - 2,500
1,500 - 2,000	2,000	2,500 - 3,000
2,000 - 2,500	2,500	3,000 - 3,500
2,500 - 3,000	3,000	3,500 - 4,000
3,000 - 3,500	3,500	4,000 - 4,500
3,500 - 4,000	4,000	4,500 - 5,000
4,000 - 4,500	4,500	5,000 *max
4,500 - 5,000	5,000 * max	
<b>*Any payment in addition to this will need to be approved by the Executive</b>		

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# PEOPLE MATTER

The Organisational Development Plan



## Review of Bicycle Allowance



# Review of Bicycle Allowance

## Bicycle Allowance

### Summary

The current Bicycle Allowance of £38 per year (73p per week) was agreed by Members in 1978 and has not been reviewed since that time.

The purpose of this Report is to review the provisions, in comparison with that offered by other London Boroughs, and make recommendations as to the appropriate re-imbursment to staff who are required to use their bicycles for official business and to promote cycling as a healthier alternative means of transport.

### Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- Raise the Bicycle Allowance to £200 per annum (£3.84 per week) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003, for staff who are required to use their bicycle on official business.
- Apply to become a Corporate Affiliate of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC). The fee for a non-commercial organisation is £1200 + VAT per annum.
- Offer interest free loans of up to £500 repayable over 3 years to staff to cover the cost of their bicycle and any safety equipment, (instead of claiming casual, essential or pool user allowances).
- Agree that the Bicycle Allowance should in future be reviewed annually at the same time as car user allowances.

## 1. Existing arrangements.

The Bicycle Allowance is payable to staff who are required to use their bicycle for official business and contains an element to re-imburse staff for the cost of insuring their own bicycle, (on the basis that they cannot then claim ex-gratia payments for lost or damaged bicycles). In addition to the Bicycle Allowance, the Council provides bicycle racks and shower facilities.

Staff claiming the Allowance will be required to have LCC or suitable comparable insurance.

## 2. Arrangements in other boroughs

A survey was carried out to compare our provisions for cyclists with those of other Boroughs.

Of the respondents:

- 7 Boroughs offer staff a flat rate allowance similar to the Council. The mean average is approximately £2.60 per week.
- 5 Boroughs pay staff according to their actual mileage, at their lowest rate of car mileage allowance.

**Note:** It is impossible to provide an estimate of the comparable cost as cycle mileage is not recorded but the information will be collected for a full comparison at the next review. This is however likely to be significantly higher than the proposed allowance. In addition, the car mileage allowances take into account the higher expenditure on petrol etc.

- 4 Boroughs offer staff an interest free loan of up to £500 to purchase a bicycle and safety equipment.
- 1 Borough offers staff an interest free loan, up to the value of their annual season ticket loan, (approximately £800), to purchase a bicycle and safety equipment.
- 2 Boroughs offer their staff a combination of a cycle allowance and loans.

A detailed summary of the arrangements is attached at Appendix 1.

## 3. London Cycling Campaign

The London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is an organisation that promotes the use of cycling as an alternative to travelling by car, or public transport. As well as campaigning for cycles to be used as an alternative form of transport. The LCC also have member benefit schemes in place for Corporate Affiliates and personal users.

The benefits available to a Corporate Affiliate include, organisational advice in becoming a "cycle friendly" employer, free access to all LCC publications (cycle guides, fact sheets etc.), publicity through the LCC web site and a 10% discount on the personal membership fee for all employees. The cost to join the Corporate Affiliation Scheme will be approximately £1,500 per annum. (This is a discounted rate for non-commercial companies with 8,000-9,000 employees).

The benefits of personal membership include: free 3<sup>rd</sup> party and theft insurance, discount prices at some cycle shops, access to cycling events, free "cycle-friendly" legal advice and a bi-monthly magazine. The cost to employees is £27.50 per annum (£25.75 with 10% discount). Details of the LCC are attached as Appendix 2.

#### **4. Other issues**

- The Cycle Allowance has remained unchanged since 1978. If the Allowance had been increased annually in line with inflation it would now be £145.35 per annum (£2.80 per week).
- There are currently only 3 members of staff claiming the Cycle Allowance, although the Bicycle Users Group (BUG) estimates 20-30 staff use their bicycle for official business and 100 members of staff cycle to and from work.
- Most Council buildings either have showers located inside the building or are situated near a sports centre where showers can be used by bicycle users.

#### **5. Cost Implications**

- The estimated cost of increasing the Cycle Allowance to £200 per annum is £6,000 per annum (based on the estimated 30 "users") This would restore the Allowance to its original 'value' in real terms and provide an incentive for staff to cycle instead of driving.
- The cost of Corporate Affiliation of the LCC, is £1,500 per annum.
- The provision on interest free loans will be self-financing (repayable through the member of staff's salary).



## Appendix 1

### Arrangements in other boroughs

A recent survey of the arrangements in London Boroughs produced 19 responses as detailed.

Authority	Cycle Allowance		Other provisions
	Mileage Allowance.	Flat Rate Allowance.	
Bexley	-	92.11 per day (£4.60 per week)	-
Barking and Dagenham	-	£38 per annum (73p per week)	-
Camden	25p per Mile (Same as casual car user allowance)	-	-
Croyden	24p per Mile (Same as casual car user allowance)	-	-
Ealing	-	-	-
Enfield	-	-	£500 interest free loan, repayable over 3 years.
Greenwich	-	£72.18 per annum (£1.39 per week)	-
Hammersmith and Fulham	-	£6 per month (£1.38 per week)	-
Harrow	-	£18.47 per quarter. (£1.42 per week)	-
Havering	-	-	-
Hillingdon	-	-	-
Kensington and Chelsea	-	-	Offer loans to pay for cycle - Equal to price of an annual Zone 1-2 Travel card. (£780)
Kingston	24p per mile (Equal to lowest rate of casual car user allowance.)	-	-
Lambeth	-	£9.17 per month (£2.12 per week)	£500 interest free loan repayable over 3 years,
Lewisham	Under review, (will be similar to lowest rate of casual car user allowance.)	-	-
Redbridge	-	-	-
Richmond Upon Thames	-	-	-
Southwark	-	£10 per month (£2.31 per week)	-
Sutton	36.4p per mile (lower rate of car allowance)	-	£500 interest free loan repayable over 2 years)
Waltham Forest	-	£5 per week. (Under review, will pay staff a mileage rate)	-



## Corporate Affiliation Scheme

- Why become an LCC Corporate Affiliate  
How both employer and employee benefit
- What is the LCC?  
What do we do and what are our successes
- How to become an LCC Corporate Affiliate

### **London Cycling Campaign**

Unit 228, 30 Great Guildford Street, London SE1 OHS

tel: 020 7928 6112 fax: 020 7928 2318

[office@lcc.org.uk](mailto:office@lcc.org.uk)

[www.lcc.org.uk](http://www.lcc.org.uk)



## Why become a Corporate Affiliate of the LCC?

### **Cycling is the way forward for a healthy, profitable workforce...**

*Are your employees and colleagues always late?*

*Do they blame public transport?*

*Are they grumpy or listless because they have been squashed sardine-like into a smelly tube train, or frustrated due to a long wait for a bus?*

Then cycling might be for them!

650,000 people already cycle regularly in London – with over 100,000 people commuting by bike every day. Evidence shows that not only are these people likely to be healthier, fitter and more alert than their non-cycling colleagues, but, if they travel for work on their bikes as well, then they are also much quicker between meetings.

**“Building ...cycling into daily life is much more likely to be sustainable over the long term than gym based...schemes”**

Dr Douglas Carnall, *Cycling & Health Promotion*, British Medical Journal April 2000

**“Activities of moderate intensity such as ... cycling, offer the greatest potential of health gain for most of the population”**

Physical Activity Task Force, *The Health of the Nation*, Dept. of Health 1995

Moreover, **cycling improves the quality of life for everyone in London** – reducing air and noise pollution, and congestion, and contributing to making London a green and pleasant place.

Encouraging people to cycle can form an integral part of your company's green travel plan – enticing people out of their cars onto more sustainable forms of transport.

### **So, what can you do?**

London Cycling Campaign has the answer. We have been promoting cycling in London for 25 years, and have over 8,500 members. We have worked with many employers across London to help them become more cycle-friendly.

By becoming an Corporate Affiliate your company will buy more than a membership: your money will *especially* be supporting the LCC and its work and show that you are engaged in environmental solutions. You will be supporting your employees and colleagues, helping them to get fitter and travel in a more sustainable way. By joining the LCC on the discounted Corporate Affiliate rate employees have free third party insurance, access to free cycle-friendly legal advice, discounts in bike shops, theft insurance at competitive rates, the *London Cyclist* magazine six times a year, rides and social events and the opportunity to join our local and London-wide campaigns.

As part of our Corporate Affiliation Scheme, LCC is providing even more employers with the information they need to become cycle-friendly and encourage people to cycle. For an annual fee LCC will provide you with cycle maps, guidelines on becoming a cycle-friendly employer, regular copies of our magazine and we will also publicise your support on our website.

Roger Madelin, Chief Executive of LCC Corporate Affiliate Argent plc, says **“We want our employees to feel good about coming here. That in turn helps to keep them, and I'm sure it gives us the edge in recruiting too.”**

## Corporate Affiliation Scheme – the benefits...

... for Employers:

- Most importantly – you support the work of the largest urban cycling campaign in its work to make London a better place.
- Advice on becoming a cycle-friendly employer
- 10% discount on individual membership for your employees
- Free copies of *London Cyclist* bi-monthly magazine - all the news affecting people who cycle in London plus features, reviews, maintenance sessions, rides, offers.
- A complete set of cycle route maps covering all of Greater London
- Access to all our publications free of charge - including an *All Ability Cycling Guide to London, Get Cycle-friendly* etc.
- Access to our library on the cycling universe and comprising fact sheets on cycle hire, cycle training etc.
- Publicity for your affiliation through our website

... for Employees:

Your employees can become individual members of the campaign for £24.75 (that's 10% off the normal fee) and gain the extra benefits of

- Free third party insurance - offering cover of up to £1 million if the member injures someone or damages their property while cycling
- Theft insurance - the London Cycling Campaign offers access to competitive new-for-old insurance and members get additional personal accident benefits with the scheme.
- Free *London Cyclist* bi-monthly magazine - all the news affecting people who cycle in London plus features, reviews, maintenance sessions, rides, offers.
- Leisure rides, social events, campaigns - in and around your borough with your local LCC group, and throughout London through the 'LCC Rider' e-group.
- Discounts in bike shops – these range from 5-15% in over 75 bike shops Londonwide.
- Access to free cycle-friendly legal advice.



## What is the LCC?

- The LCC is the **world's largest urban cycling organisation** with over 8,500 members
- **Founded in 1978**, we have been campaigning for 25 years for better conditions for people who cycle in London
- We have **local groups in every London Borough** bringing together some 600 volunteers. These groups lobby and work with local councils and business and effect real change – from increased cycle parking and more cycle routes, to being involved in the planning of new developments so cyclists' needs are considered.
- Local groups also organise **leisure rides and bicycle maintenance** courses and workshops
- The LCC produces a bi-monthly magazine – the *London Cyclist*
- The LCC arranges **many benefits for its members** – free third party insurance, access to competitive theft insurance, advice on collisions etc.
- LCC encourages cycling not only as a solution to transport problems but also as a way of **increasing health, community regeneration and involvement, and caring for the environment.**
- The LCC is **independent and non-party political**, although we work with all political parties.
- The LCC is **financially independent** – over half our funding comes from our members and corporate affiliates. This means we can be objective and non-biased. **Your participation into our Corporate Affiliation Scheme enables us to work towards making cycling easier and safer for everyone.**

### The LCC scores successes every week in making cycling safer, and more popular. Here are a few :

- In Spring 2002 , as part of LCC's partnership with Transport for London and the Mayor's office, we helped publish free **cycle maps** to cover the whole of London
- LCC and its local groups organise the **largest number of cycling events for Bike Week** in the UK – over 130 in London
- We are an integral partner with the Greater London Authority in the increasingly successful and fun **Car Free Day**
- The LCC **Community Cycling Project** supports and launches community initiatives and gives tens of thousands of pounds to them through its **Community Cycling Awards**. These initiatives give everyone the chance to try cycling.
- The LCC successfully lobbied in the consultation of the new **Mayor's Transport Strategy** which now consistently mentions cycling as a solution to congestion, pollution and health problems
- The LCC successfully lobbied and campaigned to **save the £8 million cycling budget** in the Mayor's 2002/3 budget
- **Local Groups** continually and successfully work for improvements. **New routes, crossings and facilities** continue to open because of our lobbying. Among our higher profile successes are:
  - Permanent **cycle routes in Kensington Gardens**
  - The **cyclists toucan crossing at Hyde Park Corner.**

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