Policy Review and Development Panel

Grand Jury Room, Town Hall

30 September 2008 at 6:00pm

The Policy Review Panel deals with
reviewing policies and issues at the request of the Cabinet or Portfolio Holder, or pro-actively identifying issues that may require review; dealing with those issues either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, monitoring progress of these Groups and assessing their final reports.

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Terms of Reference

Policy Review and Development Panel

- To review strategies and policies at the request of the Cabinet either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups, and to make recommendations back to Cabinet for decision.

- To review issues at the request of a Portfolio Holder either directly or by establishing Task and Finish Groups and to make recommendations back to the Portfolio Holder for decision.

- To monitor progress of Task and Finish Groups and assess their final reports prior to their submission to either the Cabinet or the Portfolio Holder.

- To proactively identify issues that may require review and improvement and to seek Cabinet's agreement as to whether and how they should be examined.

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
30 September 2008 at 6:00pm

Members

Chairman	:	Councillor Young.
Deputy Chairman	:	Councillor Barlow.
		Councillors Bentley, Davies, Hardy and Knight.

Substitute Members	:	All members of the Council who are not Cabinet members or members of this Panel.

Agenda - Part A
(open to the public including the media)

Members of the public may wish to note that Agenda items 1 to 6 are normally brief and the last Agenda Item is a standardone for which there may be no business to consider.

Pages

1. **Welcome and Announcements**

   (a)   The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

   (b)   At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

   - action in the event of an emergency;
   - mobile phones switched to off or to silent;
   - location of toilets;
   - introduction of members of the meeting.

2. **Substitutions**

   Members may arrange for a substitute councillor to attend a meeting on their behalf, subject to prior notice being given. The attendance of substitute councillors must be recorded.

3. **Urgent Items**

   To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

   The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal

interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

5. Have Your Say!

(a) The Chairman to invite members of the public to indicate if they wish to speak or present a petition at this meeting – either on an item on the agenda or on a general matter not on this agenda. You should indicate your wish to speak at this point if your name has not been noted by Council staff.

(b) The Chairman to invite contributions from members of the public who wish to Have Your Say! on a general matter not on this agenda.

6. Minutes   1 - 5

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2008.

7. Town Centre Management Arrangements   6 - 9

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration

8.   Home/Remote Working Policy   **10 - 69**

See report by the WWW Programme Manager

9.   Work Programme 2008/09   **70 - 75**

See report by the Head of Corporate Management

10. Exclusion of the public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL
20 AUGUST 2008

Present:-   Councillor J. Young (Chairman)
Councillors Barlow, Bentley, Davies, Hardy and Knight.

6.   Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Policy Review Panel held on 14 May and 16 June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record.

7.   Have Your Say! The Principle of Zero Waste

James Watson, a resident of Attlee Gardens, addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), explaining that he was continuing to experience problems in respect of the recycling collections in his neighbourhood. He confirmed that paper was being regularly collected but that plastics were being missed. The Chairman confirmed that these problems would be referred to the Council's Waste Services Team for their attention.

Councillors Bentley, (in respect of his involvement with Colne Housing Society Limited) and J. Young (in respect of her spouses' Chairmanship of Colchester Borough Homes) declared their personal interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3).

8.   Review of Colchester's Housing Strategy Statement

The Panel received details of the Housing Strategy, its priorities and Action Plans and was invited to review their contents prior to consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting in October 2008.

Lindsay Barker, Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration and Richard Hughes, Housing Strategy and Research Co-ordinator, attended the meeting to assist members in their discussions.

The Strategy's overall vision for Housing in the Borough was to make Colchester a place where people choose to live in a decent, safe home which meets their needs at a price they can afford and in locations and neighbourhoods that are sustainable and desirable and to balance the housing market so that supply of housing meets market demand and housing need.

The Strategy was split into the following chapters:

- Delivering market and affordable housing to meet housing need and demand;
- Managing and Improving existing private sector homes;
- Managing and Improving council and housing association homes;
- Preventing and Tackling homelessness;
- Housing with Support;
- Sustainable Communities.

It was suggested to the Panel members that their consideration of the Strategy might be assisted by use of the following questions:

- Are the priorities identified the correct ones?
- Will the Action Plan be achieved?
- What are the risks to achieving the Action Plans?
- What could be done to minimise the risks?
- To what extent has the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Local Area Agreement prioritised Housing issues?

The Panel sought further information in relation to the following issues:

- Whether the reduction in homelessness applications and acceptances was a trend to be welcomed and what happened to those applicants who were not accepted. It was explained that this trend was largely as a consequence of successful prevention strategies, particularly in the private sector, whilst a number of applicants were given support to enable them to take up their rights to housing elsewhere;
- The impact of the Credit Crunch on the provision of Affordable Housing. It was explained that the implications of the current economic situation were as yet unclear. Work was being undertaken to prevent repossessions whilst there had been a small trend in developers offering housing to Housing Associations but also no evidence yet to indicate that rents were increasing;
- Colchester Borough council is committed to working with the Homes and Communities Agency, the successor to the Housing Corporation;
- The Greater Haven Gateway sub regional choice based lettings scheme is due to be launched in January to enable applications from tenants from across the 8 authorities in the sub region;
- The extent of joint working between officers and partners involved in Housing, Planning Policy and Development Control services;
- The number of council owned dwellings quoted in the report as remaining non-decent was 1,389 but it was emphasized that this was estimate that was required to be published for audit purposes and work was still being undertaken to determine a completely accurate figure;
- The method used to ascertain the number of tenants in the private sector was to use the responses to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment questionnaire and it was considered that this was a robust source from which to accurately determine numbers.

The following changes to the Strategy were suggested by the Panel:

- A reference in the Action Planning section making reference to architectural design issues;
- A clear statement relating to the accessibility of employment opportunities and shopping facilities;
- The chapter on Sustainable Communities to be amended to include a reference to the need to provide for alternative forms of transport, other than the car;
- An amendment to the Action Planning sections to reflect the need to investigate different and marketable models of provision for older people, possibly including Retirement Villages.

RESOLVED that, subject to amendments being made to reflect the changes suggested in respect of architectural design, accessible employment and shopping, the provision of alternative forms of transport and provision for older people, the Strategy be commended to the Cabinet for approval.

Councillors Bentley, (in respect of his former Directorship of Colchester Town Partnership) and Barlow (in respect of his membership of the Castle Neighbourhood Action Panel) declared their personal interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3).

9.   Night-Time Town Centre for All

The Panel considered a report by Executive Director, Ian Vipond, inviting the Panel to consider the best way to deliver an initiative which would provide Colchester with a Town Centre that feels safe and welcoming to all in the evening.

Adrian Coombs, Acting District Commander, Colchester Police, addressed the Panel, pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1), explaining that a number of individual groups existed which were involved with night time economy issues but that he was of the view that a strategic group needed to be set up to oversee the work being undertaken by groups individually. The Chairman thanked Mr Coombs for his contribution and indicated that she would very much welcome any further contributions he would be able to make in the context of a potential Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group.

The report explained that Essex Police, in partnership with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had developed a Town Centre Tasking Group to co-ordinate the roles of partners in making the town centre safer. This group brought together, as appropriate, representatives from:
- CBC / Police Licensing;
- CBC Street Services;
- Transport;
- Club / Pub Watch;
- CBC Anti-Social Behaviour Team;
- CBC Environmental Services;
- Neighbourhood action Panel;
- Neighbourhood watch;
- Resident Group;
- Club and Pub Owners / Operators;
- Members of the Youth Forum.

The report proposed the setting up of a Task and Finish Group with the following terms of reference:

To investigate, with a view to determining short, medium and long term objectives,:

- The causes of the perception that in the evening the town centre is an unwelcoming place to many people;
- Concerns about a predominance of certain types of bars and clubs, yobbish behaviour and a grubby environment;
- How to bring about a change in the public's perception of the evening town centre atmosphere.

To consider a range of proposals, including:

- Bulk review of Licenses;
- Award Scheme for trade premises that change their approach;
- More visible night time cleansing;
- Night time street wardens;
- Enforcement of industry code on point of sale promotions;
- Physical improvements to design out crime;
- More varied offer in evening venues;
- (Enforcement) 'Action Nights'.

The Panel gave particular consideration to the following issues:

- The need for representatives from the business community to be included in any future discussions;
- The possibility of reviewing the work previously undertaken in connection with the Strategy to Tackle All Night time Disorder in Colchester (STAND) initiative;
- The possibility of seeking advice from Local Authorities who had successfully changed the perceptions of their town centres (such as Coventry or Birmingham) or nearby Local Authorities of a similar size;
- The possibility of creating a recreation / leisure park in another part of the town to divert activities elsewhere;
- The possibility of working with Licensing colleagues in relation to the options available to either concentrate or disperse clubs and pubs to certain parts of the town centre;
- The need for the town to host a healthy mix of venues with appeal to a variety of age groups;
- The option to take proactive action, such as Orders restricting an individual's movements and prosecution of establishments serving alcohol to under age customers and customers who are already drunk;
- The possibility of issuing or selling night-time passes in order to purchase drinks in the town centre.

Councilor T. Young, the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel, explaining that he and the Chairman of the Licensing Committee had undertaken a tour of the town centre on a Saturday night with the Council's Licensing Officers and, whilst the night had been a relatively quiet one in terms of incident, he would not have been able to describe the experience as a pleasant one. In his opinion, there was a need for a radical change in emphasis in to deal with the night time issues and he welcomed the opportunity to participate in a Task and Finish Group.

Councilor Spyvee, the Deputy Mayor, attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Panel, explaining that Colchester was a safe town with town centre residents and people who travel into town being adversely affected by people who are in the town although not necessarily doing anything 'anti social'.

RESOLVED that –

(i)   Copies of the Final report from the STAND initiative be circulated to members of the panel and the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services;

(ii)   A Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group be set up comprising six members of the

Council with Terms of Reference, proposals to be considered and invitations to act as expert witnesses as identified above;

(iii)   The Task and Finish Group be set up over the Autumn with a view to a final report being formalized by the end of the year.

11.   Historic Town Centre Improvement

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration giving details of the process now required to take forward the Historic Town Centre Improvements Project which would include enhancements to the pedestrian experience in the Town Centre, together with other environmental and transportation improvements.

Funding of £100,000 had been secured from the Department of Communities and Local Government for the year 2008/09, with provisional additional funding of £700,000 for 2009/10.

A number of key short term outcomes had been established for the period to the end of 2008:

- The appointment of a project manager to manage and provide leadership for the process who would additionally be required to seek further funding for the ongoing projects from external sources;

- The creation of a Project Team and Project Board which would include Colchester Borough and Essex County Council Members as well as other key partners such as English Heritage;

- The definition of a vision for the Town Centre Core, i.e. what will define a successful, safe and economically vibrant town centre;

- The Development of a realistic Implementation Plan with some key milestone projects in the short, medium and longer term;

- The delivery of some of the short term "quick win" projects which would start to make a difference to the High Street in particular.

RESOLVED that the strategy to be adopted to progress the project to deliver Colchester Historic Town Centre Improvements, including the establishment of a Project Board, which has been developed in partnership with Essex County Council be noted.

12.   Work Programme 2008/09

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Corporate Management giving details of the work programme for 2008/09 which had been updated to reflect the areas of work identified by the Panel at its previous meeting.

It was explained that the scheduling of the Educational Attainment item needed to be changed to the meeting on 3 November 2008.

RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of a Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group as agreed at minute no. 10 above, the amended Work Programme for 2008 /09 be noted.

5

		Item
	Policy Review and Development Panel	**7**
	30 September 2008	

Report of	**Head of Strategic Policy & Regeneration**	**Author**	**Nigel Myers**
			☎ **282878**
Title	**Town Centre Management Arrangements**		
Wards affected	Castle		

> **This report concerns** – This briefing paper sets out the current position regarding Town Centre Management Arrangements and the progress of the consensus building process with key partners in the business community

1. Decision(s) Required

1.1 Note the arrangements in place to deliver the Christmas Lights and Colchester in Bloom together with the work being undertaken to build a business consensus in the town centre following the closure of the Colchester Town Partnership on March 31st 2008.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

2.1 The retail sector is an important sector in the economy of the Borough with over 11,000 employees and more than 800 firms. The recent CACI Retail Footprint Survey of UK Retail Centres ranked Colchester as 43rd with an annual expenditure of £570m (York was 42nd and Bath was 41st). The expenditure grew in 2007/08 by 13%. Colchester is ahead of competitors Ipswich and Chelmsford although the latter experienced a growth in expenditure in 2007/08 of 31%. The Town Centre is the main engine for retail expenditure in the Borough.

2.2 It is important that members are aware of and informed of the current arrangements in the Town Centre in respect of the impact on the retail sector and the wider economic vitality of the Borough. The retail sector is forecast to create over 2,000 new jobs in the period to 2021.

3. Town Centre Management

Prior to April 2008 the Colchester Town Partnership (CTP) was responsible for delivering activities in the town centre to increase footfall and enhance the reputation of the Colchester offer. These activities included the Christmas Lights and Colchester in Bloom. CTP was also charged with recruiting members and obtaining sponsorship from companies operating in the town centre. The CTP employed a Town Centre Manager and support staff who were responsible for delivery of the above. Colchester Borough Council provided annual funding of £70k to the CTP.

3.2 In November 2007 businesses in the town centre voted against the introduction of a Business Improvement District (BID). The 'No' vote put into sharp focus the lack of business consensus on the best way forward for town centre activities. This in turn informed the decision taken by the Administration in December 2007 to cease all Council funding for the CTP. The CTP Board subsequently took the decision on January 18th, 2008 to close down the CTP.

3.3   Following the closure of the CTP on March 31st 2008 responsibility for the delivery of the Christmas Lights and Colchester in Bloom were transferred to Colchester Borough Council and specifically to the Enterprise Team. The contract for the supply and installation of the Christmas Lights will run for the agreed period to 2009.

3.4   The costs of up to £50,000 for delivering the Christmas Lights and Colchester in Bloom are included in the revenue budget 2008/09 and cover contractual obligations, contingency and project management. The costs and delivery was agreed on the 10th March, 2008 following the submission of the Portfolio Holder Report on the same.

4.   Building a new business consensus

4. 1   Following the closure of the CTP in March 2008 the Business Portfolio Holder and the Council sought to build a new consensus in the town centre between the key representatives of the business community. This included the Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Colchester Retailers Association, Colchester Business Against Crime, 2020 Business & Employment lead and representatives from key sectors such as large retail and the night time economy. The new consensus would also incorporate the existing town centre management arrangements at Lion Walk and Culver Square.

4.2   The first business consensus meeting was held on April 2nd 2008 and was externally facilitated by Mick Lowe. Mick Lowe was formerly Assistant Chief Executive of the London Borough of Sutton and a Director of the Association of Town Centre Managers. Mick Lowe met with all of the key representatives ahead of the meeting to draw out all of the issues and agree the rules of engagement. The objective of the first meeting was to get all of the issues out on the table and to agree to draw a line between what had previously happened with the CTP and BID and moving forward. The meeting also considered what practical actions could be taken to improve the town centre. The meeting was generally regarded by all of the participants as constructive and purposeful. All of the representatives agreed to continue with the consensus building process and attend future meetings.

4.3   The second meeting on May 14th took as its starting point the actions needed to improve the town centre and then move this discussion to how this could be delivered. A continuum of delivery options were presented to the meeting for consideration. The outcome of the meeting was that there was a polarisation of views on the best way to deliver projects in the town centre ranging from an informal network of existing groups through to a formally constituted group with contractual agreements.

5.   Alternative Options

        Given this impasse the following options were considered in terms of the next steps:

5.1   To take no action and accept that projects may come forward from different parties which would be then need to be considered on their merits.

5.2   For the Resources & Business Portfolio Holder and the Enterprise Team to work independently with the business organisations in the town centre on existing projects, such as enhancing the Christmas Lights, requiring them to deliver specific components

of the overall project. This work would also look to develop and implement new projects based on pooled resources and securing of funding streams.

5.3   In conjunction with 5.2 to work with 2020 and the lead for Business & Employment to broker a consensus building on the agreement that does exist about what actions/improvements would bring about a more vibrant and prosperous town centre. This is consistent with the 2020 role in setting the direction for Colchester's long term prosperity - lobbying and bringing together others to translate this leadership into action.

6.   Next Steps

6.1   Given the need to continue to develop an economically vibrant town centre taking no action is clearly not an option. Colchester's retail position, particularly in relation to its main competitors, needs to be maintained and improved. The basis for this ambition is a business community that is cohesive and willing to work together on activities that will deliver mutual benefits in terms of growing the footfall, retail expenditure and reputation of Colchester's retail offer. The Portfolio Holder for Resources & Business and the Enterprise Team together with the appropriate Council Officers will continue to work with all of the key business organisations in the town centre, and any other interested parties, to build the consensus for future town centre activities.

6.2   A further meeting of all the key business organisations has now been convened by CBC and 2020 on September 24th 2008 to be facilitated by David Ralph Chief Executive of the Haven Gateway Partnership. Opportunities for joint working and delivery of activities that will improve footfall and enhance the Colchester offer will be actively sought and considered.

6.3   One of the key priorities in the Economic Prosperity Strategy 2007 to 2010 is to support the development of a vibrant town centre. There is an ongoing commitment by the Enterprise Team to broker greater integration of key partners to support retail initiatives and to have a shared vision for the development of Colchester Town Centre. The consensus building process will continue at group and organisation level in order to help deliver this key priority. This is evidenced by the Christmas Lights Business Group Meeting held on September 15th 2008 a sub group of which is currently organising a fund raising event for the Christmas Fair on November 14th 2008. The Christmas Lights Business Group will continue to meet in the lead up to the Christmas Lights 'switch on' and reconvene in January 2009 to coordinate activities for the 2009 Christmas Lights.

7.   Strategic Plan References

7.1   Realise Colchester's potential as a preferred destination for visitors, businesses, location and investment.

7.2   One of the key aims to delivering quality services is better co-ordination of our and our partners' resources to meet business needs.

8.   Consultation

8.1   Ongoing consultation will take place with business and retail representative groups by Colchester Borough Council.

8.   Publicity Considerations

8.1   A communication/media plan is in place to maximise positive publicity for the projects.

9.   Financial Implications

9.1   As mentioned in 3.4 a revenue budget of up to £50k is in place to cover the delivery of projects. In addition sponsorship is actively being sought from town centre businesses to further supplement the Christmas Lights.

10.   Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

10.1   No implications identified at this stage.

11.   Community Safety Implications

11.1   No implications identified at this stage

12.   Health and Safety Implications

12.1   No implications identified at this stage

13.   Risk Management Implications

13.1   A risk register has been compiled for the delivery of the Colchester Lights and Colchester in Bloom projects.

Policy Review and Development Panel

30 September 2008

Report of	**WWW Programme Manager**	**Author**	**Georgina Blakemore** ☎ **01206 282284**
Title	**Home/Remote Working Policy**		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

> **This report concerns the draft Home/Remote Working Policy that requires endorsement by the Policy Review and Development Panel prior to its implementation.**

1.   Decision(s) Required

1.1   To agree the draft Home/Remote Working Policy.

2.   Reasons for Decision(s)

2.1   We require the endorsement of the Policy Review and Development Panel for the Home/Remote Working Policy prior to implementation by managers and staff across the Council.

3.   Alternative Options

3.1   This key policy is required to enable and support managers in the implementation of flexible working practices as part of the Way We Work Change programme.   One alternative would be the amendment of the existing policy 'Right to Request Flexible Working'; however, this is legislative policy and is therefore considered to be more suitable as stand alone and cross referenced with this proposal.

4.   Supporting Information

4.1   A copy of the Policy is attached.

4.2   A copy of the Flexible Working – Guidance for staff and managers is attached. This guidance refers to supporting policy, strategy and best practice and is a comprehensive guide to working flexibly.

4.3   The Flexible Working strand of the Way We Work change programme includes Policy development as a key milestone for the project. The guidance document has been on display within the Flexible Working Laboratory area in Rowan House and feedback is being gathered. The guidance is also in use within the former Enterprise and Communities service area who are piloting flexible working.

5. Proposals

5.1 The Policy includes:

- A policy statement on home/remote working
- The objectives of the policy
- Guidance on the assessment of the suitability of posts for home/remote working
- The Council's health and safety obligations under the policy
- Variation of terms of conditions to reflect the change of working practices
- Management responsibilities under the policy
- Information and data security
- Insurance/liabilities.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 The Flexible Working programme of which this Policy is a component of will support the Council's current strategic priorities particularly in terms of Customer Excellence and accessibility to services.

7. Consultation

7.1 This Policy has been developed by the Flexible Working project group and has been widely consulted on with the Senior Management Team, Unison and the Flexible Working pilot group.

8. Publicity Considerations

8.1 There is an internal communications plan in place to support the Flexible Working strand of the WWW change programme. The intention is to brief GMT Managers as a group and use HR Business Partners to brief managers and staff within services. We will also be using the Managers Network to enable managers to discuss and share how they intend to implement the policy within their teams.

8.2 External communication is managed via the accommodation project board and the accommodation project team. Surplus accommodation is an outcome of working more flexibly and formal decisions taken are accompanied by external (and internal communications).

9. Financial Implications

9.1 A budget has been agreed for the ICT Strategy which includes the shift to working more flexibly. No additional budget implications arise from this policy.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

10.1 Flexible working will fully support our equality and diversity priorities across all the equality strands. The programme aims to support work-life balance and suit the particular needs of customers and staff. By introducing more flexible ways of working we can improve access to Council services and employment opportunities for existing and new employees. This will enable our employees to balance and utilise their personal circumstances, responsibilities and interests more effectively with their employment opportunities.

10.2 The implementation of the Policy will not involve a breach of human rights.

10.3 The Policy clearly states home/remote working is on a voluntary basis.

11.   Community Safety Implications

11.1 Not applicable.

12.   Health and Safety Implications

12.1 Colchester Borough Council has a statutory duty to apply the same health and safety standards to people working away from the workplace as for staff working in Council offices. The Policy provides details of how the Council intends to discharge its Health and Safety duties and protect staff working remotely and from home.

13.   Risk Management Implications

13.1 By not having an agreed Home/Remote Working Policy in place there is a risk that there will be a lack of consistency in the way that managers manage and support their teams through the flexible working programme.

Background Papers

The documents that have been used to formulate the report include:

1. Home/Remote Working Policy
2. Flexible Working – Guidelines for Staff and Managers

Work-Life Balance
Home/Remote Working Policy
Guidance Notes for Managers

Work-Life Balance
Home/Remote Working Policy

Purpose of Document

This document is intended for use by managers to provide policy guidance on managing a team in a flexible environment.

Policy Statement

We are committed to establishing a more flexible workforce to enhance the service that we can provide to our customers by being more accessible and extending our availability to reflect our customers needs.

At the same time we recognise that the Council and our staff would benefit working more flexibly including the hours they work, how they work and increasingly where they work. By introducing more flexible ways of working we can improve employment opportunities for our employees.

We are working towards getting the best out of our existing, and new, employees and providing an excellent service. We are also assisting our employees to balance their personal circumstances, responsibilities and interests more effectively with their employment commitments. The home/remote working policy is a step towards supporting the wider work-life balance agenda.

Flexible working will transform they way that we work. We fully understand that managers and staff will need to be supported through this change programme. The focus will be on implementing learning and development solutions that will help staff to get the best out of new technologies to work in new ways and to develop managers to manage teams and individuals that are working remotely and to deal with the challenges that may arise.

Aim of the policy

The aim of the policy is to support flexible ways of working, improve the customer experience, increase efficiency and improve recruitment and retention of staff. It aims to support work-life balance and suit the particular needs of all parties and services concerned.

Objectives

The policy supports our commitment to equality and diversity and our flexible working practices.

We aim to make improvements through new ways of working. Flexible working will also support other Council initiatives:

- **Customer excellence:** improving service delivery and using technology to help deliver services provides possibilities for new and changing options.

- **Accommodation strategy:** home and remote working will help to reduce accommodation needs and make more effective use of buildings.

- **Sustainability:** home-working can lead to fewer car journeys, reduced congestion at peak times and reduced pollution.

- **Recruitment and Retention:** Different working practices will help us to recruit, and keep, highly trained and skilled employees.

Flexible working will benefit our customers, our staff and the Council in the following ways:

For customers

- Extended times that our customers can contact services
- Greater efficiencies achieved through the use of ICT potentially reducing response times
- Easier and improved access to Council services.

For the Council

- Different working practices will help us to recruit, and keep, highly trained and skilled employees.
- Increased access to jobs for a broader range of employees
- Increased productivity
- Reduction in absence
- Increase in employee satisfaction and morale at work
- Increased flexibility in service provision
- Better utilisation of office space.

For staff

- Improved work life balance
- Improved commitment to the organisation
- Feeling more valued and trusted
- Improved motivation and morale
- More choices on how and when to use free time
- Potential reduction in travel time and associated cost
- Greater choice about when and where we work
- Ability to remain in work because work life balance has been achieved.

Introduction

The council has introduced a matrix of working options for how staff can work. Please refer to *Flexible Working – Guidance for Staff and Managers* for further information.

These new work styles will enable some jobs to be delivered without being tied to a building location. Work will be seen as an activity that can be done from any location, including the community, customer sites, on the move, touchdown points or home. And whilst it is accepted that not all jobs or employees may be suitable for such arrangements, each situation will be considered on its merits.

The different options are:

- **Permanent home working:** These employees can deliver their responsibilities to the same standard or higher from home and the home environment is suitable for work.

- **Permanent mobile/home worker:** There is a mobile element to the role where work can be delivered to the same standard or higher out of the office and the home environment is suitable for work.

- **Permanent mobile/office:** There is a mobile element to the role where work is delivered out of the office but there is some requirement for office presence.

- **Fixed home working pattern:** The role demands some office presence and the home is suitable for working on specific days.

- **Ad hoc home working:** The role demands office presence for the majority of the time but the role can be delivered to the same standard by introducing an element of flexibility.

- **Roaming Office:** The role demands an office presence but not a fixed location.

- **Full time owned desk:** The role requires a static position so face to face contact is easy and time efficient.

- **Workplace not office – location based working:** Face to face service delivery out of office environment.

Suitability of Posts

Staff will not have an automatic entitlement to flexible working arrangements. Similarly, staff will not be forced into accepting flexible working methods as the option will be given on a voluntary basis. There is legislation in place that gives parents the right to request flexible working in order to balance their childcare and caring responsibilities with their work commitments. In these instances you should refer to the *Right to Request Flexible Working Policy.*

However, we hope to encourage our people based within our offices to work in a different way and benefit from the opportunities that flexible working can offer. The first stage in establishing whether an individual can undertake some form of flexible working is to consider whether the role will deliver enhanced customer and/or service performance or to the same standard as in the office environment.

The next stage would be an assessment of whether the individual's home environment is conducive to home working. It is Important that consideration is given for how the home/remote worker will be affected by the arrangement. In order to assess suitability for the role it may be useful to consider the following;

- Ability to resolve problems and concerns at a distance with the line manager (by telephone/email)
- Ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, and to function as part of a team, while operating remotely
- Ability to be self-motivated and to work to agreed deadlines without close supervision and in relative isolation from colleagues
- Ability to ensure own health and safety in the home environment
- Ability to manage time and organise work effectively and with self-discipline
- Flexibility in work management and approach
- IT skills and self-sufficiency
- Ability to cope with reduced social contact with colleagues
- Ability to create an appropriate separation between work and home life (and knowing when to stop working)
- Ability to arrange family commitments to provide a suitable working environment, without disruption (when work is being carried out in the member of staffs own home).

Health and Safety

Colchester Borough Council has a statutory duty to apply the same health and safety standards to people working away from the workplace as for staff working in Council offices. Where work will be carried out at home, anyone who works for more than two days a week at home, either on an ad-hoc or fixed pattern basis, will be considered a home worker and will require a separate and safe area to work in.

There are some minimum standards in place for home work area requirements. Any staff working at home for any period of time will be required to conduct a VDU assessment. You and your Manager will agree as to the suitability and viability of your home for undisturbed work. Any issues identified by the assessment will need to be addressed by the manager / other authorised CBC person and arrangements made with you to visit your home to ensure the assessment is correct any agreed action has been completed.

Staff who require special adaptations at their workstation in the office will be provided with the same special adaptations at home.

The IT hardware supplied will operate the appropriate configuration for remote working. IT support will be available and training will be provided. This training will be agreed between you and your manager prior to any work arrangements being changed.

Colchester Borough Council will arrange the installation of a dedicated telephone line and connectivity solution for permanent home working and should the role demand the connectivity in other instances. Costs of the telephone line and connectivity solution will be met corporately.

Please refer to Flexible Working – Guidelines for Staff and Managers for further guidance on Health and Safety requirements, home office standards and a VDU assessment checklist.

Setting up a work area at home

Time should be planned for the setting up of practical home and mobile working arrangements. This process includes:

- the ordering and installation of the appropriate IT solution, any furniture, a dedicated phone line if the role permits, IT connectivity solution; and
- the provision of any necessary Health and Safety assessment/training and IT training

Procedures for reporting and resolving problems (eg equipment failures, accidents) need to be agreed and fully understood by all parties concerned. A period of adaptation is often required for home working arrangements to bed down successfully. This period will also allow you time to obtain any necessary clearances from mortgage lenders/landlords, home insurance companies etc. and to make any other relevant changes to domestic arrangements.

Variation of Terms and Conditions

Following all the checks, and if both parties have agreed to the introduction of some home / remote working, a change in work pattern will represent a temporary variation to the substantive

terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanent change in service provision. In practical terms once the individual and manager have agreed the new arrangement then the Manager will need to complete a Contract Amendment Form and send it to the HR Service Centre. The HR Service Centre will confirm the agreed variation in contractual terms in writing which will set out the arrangements applying to the new work pattern.

Unless there are changes to working hours, which will mean for example that salary and annual leave entitlement are calculated on a pro-rata basis, all other contractual terms will remain the same. Staff will still be required to follow existing procedures for example in reporting sickness and requesting holiday.

Pay

Salary levels will not be altered by the change from office working to mobile/remote working. Any allowances or special payments will continue provided the agreement to work away the workplace does not invalidate the reason for payment.

Management Responsibilities

The change to some form of flexible working will require careful management including:

- Monitoring performance and output in accordance with agreed standards
- Maintaining managerial control as appropriate during working hours
- Ensuring there is regular contact and communication with the employee. It is advisable to agree with the employee a minimum frequency of visits to their work base and council premises
- Arranging any further training that may be required
- Monitoring and addressing health and safety issues
- Regularly reviewing the arrangement
- Liaising with the HR Service Centre if the working arrangement ceases to arrange for contracts to be varied and records updated.

Performance management

In line with the Council's Performance Management Guidance, regular reviews will be essential both to ensure the arrangements are working satisfactorily on both sides and clear agreed SMART objectives with suitable targets and performance measures to work towards are in place. Emphasis should be placed on defining measurable outputs for the post before working in a new way begins.

At least two performance review meetings each year are required to evaluate work completed in addition to regular feedback. This will include a mid-year and year-end review. Performance reviews will focus on outputs, objectives achieved and staff development.

Communication and contact

Managers will have the same responsibilities for ensuring that they are in regular contact with team members who work away from the office. Managers will need to ensure that a clear structure is in place to maintain communication, share information, offer management support and to avoid any sense of isolation. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that home/remote workers receive information at the same time as office-based staff.

Staff will continue to be required to attend meetings or other functions as necessary in one of the Council offices. This should be an understood and accepted part of working in a new way.

Care should be taken to ensure that communication with customers and stakeholders is maintained to the same standards as for office based staff

Security

Physical security of the proposed home office area forms part of the health and safety assessment procedure.

It is the joint responsibility of managers and staff to ensure any adaptation required is completed before any work at home begins. The ongoing responsibility for following security procedures diligently rests with the employee.

Council technology and paperwork should be secured. All parties should be aware of the increased risks (eg of theft or criminal damage to CBC owned equipment and data, and risks to personal safety) associated with mobile working and should take all practicable steps to minimise these.

It is the home/remote workers responsibility to ensure all normal data protection requirements are complied with, there are no breaches of confidentiality within the domestic environment and there is no inappropriate personal use of CBC supplied equipment (including the telephone line).

In particular, CBC owned IT equipment must not be used by anyone other than the employee (including family members). All CBC Human Resource Policies and Procedures apply equally to new ways of working and any infringements will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as for staff working in CBC offices.

Further information can be found in the ICT Security policy. As we move to new ways of working there will be an increase in mobile technology being used away from the office environment. Sensible precautions should be taken to ensure that ICT hardware and data remains secure.

Change of Circumstances

All working arrangements should balance the requirements of the employee, customer and the Council.

If circumstances change, the arrangement will need to be reviewed. Line managers should be informed immediately if circumstances are likely to change in any significant respects in order for the future impact on the working arrangement to be considered and assessed.

A review would be appropriate if:

- the needs of the organisation/customer changed, eg the nature of the job changes and it is no longer suitable for working away from the workplace
- there is a change within the team which requires a review of each member's role
- there are performance related issues

- the employee intends to move house (the suitability of the proposed new premises must be assessed)
- the home becomes unsuitable for working, for example, a change in family circumstances.

In the event that the employee resigns or the new working arrangements cease, any furniture and ICT equipment owned by CBC remains the property of CBC and must be returned. A mutually convenient time for the collection of any CBC property will be arranged. Collection of such property will be at CBC's cost. All reasonable costs incurred in removing the property from your home will be reimbursed.

Any loss, damage or injury will be covered by the Council's insurance policies, except in cases of wilful misconduct where liability may rest with the employee.

Mobile/Remote Worker Working At or From Home

The employee's home becomes their contractual work base for each day they are required to work from home. On these days:

- Any home to office (secondary contractual work base) mileage incurred will not be reimbursed
- Travel from home to other work sites will be reimbursed in full.

For example, travel from home to secondary contractual work base for a team briefing will not be reimbursed. But travel from home to other council work sites will be reimbursed.

Non-contribution of Costs

The employee will be responsible for the following costs:

- Any additional costs incurred in terms of energy and other utilities at their home
- Any existing and ongoing rental on equipment belonging to them such as the phone line for access to internet
- Any additional costs in home insurance.

Security of Information/Data Protection

The Data Protection Act has implications on home/remote working. If the council does not comply with the act it could be fined directly by the Information Commission for any serious breach of the Data Protection Act. So it is essential employees are aware of the implications surrounding:

- Ownership of data
- Access to data by family members and others
- Electronic data at home and transferring this
- Paper data/equipment and transferring/transporting this.

Employees are also responsible for ensuring that information (hard copy or electronic version) and equipment are kept securely. When handling information they should follow good practice including:

- Treating all information in a confidential manner such as protecting information by passwords or encryption

- Not routinely storing paper files at home. These should only be stored at home whilst they are being worked on and securely filed when not in use
- Having security measures in place for dealing with document waste and the locking of their home, office and computer
- Storing equipment so that it is not a risk to the home-worker or others visiting their premises.

Insurance, mortgages and tenancy agreements

The home/remote worker should ensure their building/contents insurance is not invalidated by the use of the premises as a place of work, or by the use of CBC equipment.

Colchester Borough Council will remain responsible for any loss of or accidental damage to officially-supplied equipment and furniture, provided that it does not result from negligence on the part of the staff member or their family members, and that security procedures have been complied with (see below).

Home/remote workers must not have meetings with colleagues/customers/clients in their home and should arrange any meetings at a suitable alternative location instead. A member of staff may not be covered for accidents to other colleagues/customers/clients entering their house on business and should check this point with their insurance company.

The home/remote worker should write to their mortgage provider or landlord to inform them they will at times be working from home to ensure that the occupation of the home is not subject to terms and conditions or covenants which will prevent any work being undertaken in the home.

If significant structural work is envisaged to adapt the home for remote working, planning permission may be required from the local authority. This would be the staff member's responsibility and CBC would not contribute to any costs incurred.

Linked Policies and Guidance

The reading the policy it might be helpful to refer to other policies including;

1. Flexible Working – Guidelines for Staff and Managers
2. Health and Safety Policy
3. Equality and Diversity Policy
4. Flexible Working Policy
5. IT Security Policies.

All these policies provide further and more detailed information on issues that will influence flexible working.

Permanent home working

Mobile working

Fixed pattern home working

Ad hoc home working

Shared desk

Fixed desk

Location based working

Flexible Working

Guidelines for Staff and Managers

Flexi time

Part time working

Shift pattern work

Job sharing

Term time working

9 day fortnight

Annualised hours

Task and finish

Compressed Hours

Session hours

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Flexible working guidelines
A staff guide

Introduction

This guidance has been produced to keep you updated on how to work flexibly at the Council.

The corporate change programme 'Way We Work' recognises there are opportunities where working in a more flexible way would deliver benefits for our customers, the Council and you (our people).

Across the Council there are many services already being delivered outside the 9-5 working pattern to meet the needs of our customers. The extent to which more staff can work flexibly will be determined primarily by their job role, however we want to ensure we fully embrace flexibility and make best use of technology and new ways of working across the organisation.

The opportunities to work in a more flexible way are enabled by continued investment in technology. The ICT Strategy has been given funding to deliver many different types of technology solutions to help people work in different ways. However we have also recognised that to work differently may require support, development and training. The priority areas within the People Strategy clearly support flexible working ensuring our people are managed, trained, developed and ultimately well rewarded for their good work.

Anyone currently working flexibly will agree it is a two-way process. Managers can enable you to have a more flexible way of working but you will need to be adaptable where necessary to ensure that the needs of the service are not compromised – if this is achieved then flexible working will be a positive experience for you, your manager and your customers.

Only some of the options in this guidance are new and there are already many examples of different ways of working across the Council. You are encouraged to read the information in this guide and consider how your way of working could be adapted to offer you an improved work life balance in line with service provision.

What is flexible working?

Flexible working is achieving your outcomes in a different way than the established ways of working. This may mean working at a different time or in different places to help you achieve an improved work life balance and help the Council achieve more flexibility in the services it provides.

There are many different types of flexible working identified within this guide both in terms of hours and places of work. This list is not exhaustive and we would encourage you, in agreement with your manager to add or adapt them to best meet your individual needs and the requirements of the service you provide.

We encourage the sharing of good practice so if you have a way of working that could benefit others in the organisation please email the 'flexible.working@colchester.gov.uk' mailbox so that it can be made available across the council.

What are the benefits of flexible working?

There are many benefits to working more flexibly for customers, the Council and for you. Here are some examples:-

For customers

- Extended times that our customers can contact some services
- Greater efficiencies achieved through the use of ICT potentially reducing response times
- Easier access to Council services.

For the Council

- Enhanced recruitment and retention
- Increased access to jobs for a broader range of employees
- Increased productivity
- Reduction in absence reporting
- Increase in employee satisfaction and morale at work
- Increased flexibility in service provision
- Better utilisation of office space.

For staff

- Improved work life balance
- Improved commitment to the organisation
- Feeling more valued and trusted
- Improved motivation and morale
- More choices on how and when to use free time
- Potential reduction in travel time and associated cost
- Greater choice about when and where you work
- Ability to remain in work because work -life balance has been achieved.

Examples of the way we work flexibly

Flexi time - employees are required to work within essential periods but outside 'core times' they often get flexibility in when they work their hours

Part time working – employees are contracted to work for anything less than the normal full-time hours

Shift pattern work – a pattern of work in which one employee replaces another on the same job within a 24hour period

Job sharing - typically, two employees share the work normally done by one employee

Term time working - an employee on a permanent contract takes paid / unpaid leave during school holidays

Annualised hours - this is a system which calculates the hours an employee works over a whole year. The annual hours are usually split into 'set shifts' and 'reserve shifts' which are worked as the demand dictates

Task and finish – this means that all instructions, routes or duties must be completed on the working day that they are allocated on even if this takes the working day past the average finish times

Compressed Hours - employees work their total agreed hours over fewer working days – for example, a five-day working week is compressed into four days

Permanent home working – employees work from their home for the majority of their working hours

Mobile working – employees work out in the community (on site, partner sites, other CBC locations, customer premises as examples) and use either their home or a Council office shared desk when they need to use desk space

Fixed pattern home working – employees work at home on set days and in the office on a shared desk for the remaining time

Ad hoc home working - employees work in the office on a shared desk for the majority of their time and occasionally at home

Roaming office - employees work in the office on any shared desk that is available

Fixed desk – employees work in the office at the same desk

Location based working – employees working for example on a reception, in an activity centre, in the Town Hall or at Leisureworld.

See Appendix B for the Matrix of Working Options. This will show you the options around where you work and the ICT that supports that way of working.

Flexible working and legislation.

Under the Employment Rights Act 2002, parents have the right to request to work flexible working in order to balance their childcare responsibilities with their work commitments. This right was extended to employees with caring responsibilities under the Work and Families Act 2006. For more details please refer to the Right to request flexible working policy which is available either on the Hub or from the

HR Service Centre on 01206 282112 or e-mail
HRServiceCentre@colchester.gov.uk

This guidance also outlines the opportunities for other staff to work flexibly who are not covered under the above legislation. Our aim is to promote flexible working providing the arrangement supports the needs of our customers and Colchester Borough Council.

Working in the office environment

Flexible working is a different way of working. We hope to encourage our people based within our office space to work in a different way and take some of the opportunities working more flexibly could offer. If you are unable, or choose not, to work more flexibly you will still experience changes within the office environment. Council office space will no longer be set up to support traditional working patterns and behaviours. Although services will still work in areas the link between one person one desk will be removed in most cases. The new layout will support new ways of working incorporating a mixture of space for example quiet areas and informal seating.

We will always provide a layout and space for work to continue in a healthy and safe environment.

Working away from a Council location.

This section of the guidance focuses on working away from Council locations (which could include working on a customer site, working in your home, working out in the community) and uses examples of people who are already working flexibly to help you think about things that may be relevant to you.

This guidance encourages you to think about work as something you *do*, not somewhere you *go*. Whilst technology will enable many more opportunities for working away from the workplace there are other considerations that need explanation to ensure people are supported and trained to perform both effectively and safely.

Variation of Terms and Conditions

No employee will have an automatic entitlement to flexible working arrangements. Similarly, employees will not be forced into accepting flexible working methods, as they will remain voluntary.

Any flexible working arrangements outside of the legislation, as agreed between manager and an employee will constitute a temporary variation to the employee's substantive terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanent change in service provision. If the flexible working arrangement ceases the original substantive terms and conditions will apply.

In practical terms once you and your Manager have agreed a new arrangement and your SMART objectives are in place, the HR service centre will confirm the agreed variation in contractual terms in writing which will set out the arrangements applying to the new work pattern.

Unless there are changes to working hours, which will mean for example that salary and annual leave entitlement are calculated on a pro-rata basis, all other contractual terms will remain the same. You will still be required to follow existing procedures for example in reporting sickness and requesting leave.

Pay

Your salary will remain unchanged if you are moving from an office base to working away from the workplace. If you are in receipt of any allowances or special payments, these allowances or payments will continue provided the agreement to work away the workplace does not invalidate the reason for payment.

Suitability of home

Colchester Borough Council has a statutory duty to apply the same health and safety standards to people working away from the workplace as for staff working in Council offices. Where work will be carried out at home, anyone who works for more than two days a week at home, either on an ad-hoc or fixed pattern basis, will be considered a home worker and will require a separate and safe area to work in. Please see appendices C and D for further information on home work area requirements.You and your Manager will agree as to the suitability and viability of your home for undisturbed work (see Appendix C). Your home would need to be safe, suitably lit and well ventilated with sufficient space available for the installation of ICT kit and a Health and Safety compliant work area.

Any staff working at home for any period of time will be required to conduct a VDU assessment (Appendix E). Any issues identified by the assesment will need to be addressed by the manager / other authorised CBC person and arrangements made with you to visit your home to ensure the assessment is correct any any agreed action has been completed.

For staff working at home for two days or less a week the minimum requirements will be a laptop rest for staff who require a laptop (EG of laptop rest) that raises the laptop screen to a reasonable height and a separate keyboard and mouse. For those staff that use a PC of their own or supplied by CBC, the PC should be set up to the VDU standard (appendix E).

Staff who require special adaptations at their workstation in the office will be provided with the same special adaptations at home.

The IT hardware supplied will operate the appropriate configuration for remote working. IT support will be available and training will be provided. This training will be agreed between you and your manager prior to any work arrangements being changed.

Colchester Borough Council will arrange the installation of a dedicated telephone line and connectivity solution for permanent home working and should the role demand the connectivity in other instances. Costs of the telephone line and connectivity solution will be met corporately.

Please see Appendix D for recommended furniture that conforms to health and safety standards.

Setting up a work area at home

Time should be planned for the setting up of practical home and mobile working arrangements. This process includes:

- the ordering and installation of the appropriate IT solution, any furniture, a dedicated phone line if the role permits, IT connectivity solution; and
- the provision of any necessary Health and Safety assessment/training and IT training.

Procedures for reporting and resolving problems (eg equipment failures, accidents) need to be agreed and fully understood by all parties concerned. A period of adaptation is often required for home working arrangements to bed down successfully. This period will also allow you time to obtain any necessary clearances from mortgage lenders/landlords, home insurance companies etc, and to make any other relevant changes to domestic arrangements. See all Appendixes for more details.

Performance management.

In line with the Council's Performance Management Guidance, regular reviews will be essential both to ensure the arrangements are working satisfactorily on both sides, and there are clear agreed SMART objectives with suitable targets and performance measures to work towards. Emphasis should be placed on defining measurable outputs for the post before working in a new way begins.

At least two performance review meetings each year are required to evaluate work completed in addition to regular feedback. This will include a mid-year and year end review. Performance reviews will focus on outputs; objectives achieved and staff development. You will be accorded the same opportunities for training and career and personal development as other members of staff.

V5 – Unison, EandC pilot

Communication and contact.

You and your Manager have the same responsibilities whether you work away from the workplace or are based in the office. You and your manager will need to ensure you have a clear structure in place to maintain communication and support links as necessary and to avoid any sense of isolation.

You will continue to be required to attend meetings or other functions as necessary in one of the Council offices. This should be an understood and accepted part of your working in a new way.

Care should be taken to ensure that communication with customers and stakeholders is maintained to the same standards as for office based staff

Health and Safety.

Health and safety is an important issue, whether you work in a standard office environment or in a new workplace. Colchester Borough Council is committed to ensuring that employees are safe wherever they work. The Health and Safety Advisor will provide you with advice and support to help you work in new ways. You should read appendix C and complete appendix E. Appendix E is a questionnaire designed to assess the proposed workplace, furniture and equipment to ensure that it will be suitable for working at home or remotely. Once assessed, it will be necessary to set up an inspection visit of the remote working site to either further assess or address areas of uncertainty.
You will need to attend any relevant training on health and safety awareness.

Security.

Physical security of the proposed home office area forms part of the health and safety assessment procedure.

It is the joint responsibility of you and your line manager to ensure any adaptation required is completed before any work at home begins. The ongoing responsibility for following security procedures diligently rests with you.

Council technology and paperwork should be secured when you are not present. All parties should be aware of the increased risks (eg of theft or criminal damage to CBC-owned equipment and data, and risks to your personal safety) associated with mobile working and should take all practicable steps to minimise these.

It is your responsibility to ensure all normal data protection requirements are complied with, there are no breaches of confidentiality within the domestic environment and there is no inappropriate personal use of CBC supplied equipment (including the telephone line).

In particular, CBC owned IT equipment must not be used by anyone other than you (including family members). All CBC Human Resource Policies and Procedures apply equally to new ways of working and any infringements will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as for staff working in CBC offices.

Please refer to the HUB for information on ICT security (link to <u>ICT Security</u>). As we move to new ways of working there will be an increase in mobile technology being used away from the office environment. Sensible precautions should be taken to ensure you are safe and the kit remains in service.

What if things change?

All working arrangements should balance your requirements, those of the customer and the Council.

If you or your teams' circumstances change, the arrangement will need to be reviewed. Your line manager must be informed immediately if circumstances are likely to change in any significant respects in order for the future impact on the working arrangement to be considered and assessed.

A review would be appropriate if:

- the needs of the organisation/customer changed, eg the nature of the job changes and it is no longer suitable for working away from the workplace
- there is a change within your team which required a review of each member's role
- your performance required discussion, for example, performance related issues
- you intend to move house and you work at home at all (the suitability of the proposed new premises must be assessed)
- you work from home at any time and your home becomes unsuitable for working, for example, a change in family circumstances.

If you leave the employment of the Council or stop working in a flexible way, any furniture and ICT equipment owned by CBC remains the property of CBC and must be returned. You agree a mutually convenient time for the collection of any CBC property from your home. Collection of such property is at CBC's cost. All reasonable costs incurred in removing the property from your home will be reimbursed.

Is there a notice period?

If you resign or take up a role that is solely office based, arrangements will be made with you to remove any CBC furniture and equipment that may be in your home.

Case Studies –

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A Managers guide

Introduction

''Flexible working and finding the balance between work and home life can be a powerful tool for all concerned……………''

This guidance is for managers to use in conjunction with the staff guidance and looks to help you as a manager make best use of the opportunities flexible working has to offer.

As a great place to work the Council wants to offer flexible ways of working, where possible, to employees who qualify for and who are outside current legislation. This guidance encourages you to think positively about the scope for flexibility in the widest possible range of circumstances to enhance your workforce as well as looking at new ways of working for yourself.

There is no doubt that our customers have rising expectations and this continues to put pressure on service delivery. Having a more flexible work force who work smarter and more efficiently will help us as we redesign services to meet our customer's expectations within the financial constraints that exist.

Having a more flexible workforce will require different management skills, new learning, changes to our office environment, changes to how we communicate and strong change management and leadership skills. As a Council we are committed to supporting our managers through this exciting time and would like your feedback on how effective this guidance is for you.

This list below sets out the main elements of flexible working:

1. Service delivery must never be compromised
2. Hours of work can be anytime as long as they do not contravene the Working Time Directive
3. Core hours will be removed
4. Where applicable flexi sheets will remain the method for recording time worked
5. Flexible working must be appropriate to the role and reflect the needs of the customer and the arrangement must be by agreement between the staff member, the manager and the line manager
6. Solutions should be cost effective and in line with current legislation
7. Flexible working applies to all levels of staff.

The flexible working laboratory

We feel it is important to give flexible working a base, a point of reference within the organisation, whilst we ask you as a manager to make plans for your team to work in new ways and look at how roles could be delivered differently.

''Where do you go for information? Who do you talk to? What is everybody else doing? What is a matrix of working options?''

To help managers we have created an area on the 1st floor of Rowan House called the ''Flexible working lab''. This lab will have some of the new technology for you to familiarise yourselves with, you can look in some detail at the different ways of working and begin to apply the criteria to the roles within your teams.
You can share information with other colleagues via chat forums and talk to the flexible working lead officer about experiences other services are having.
The flexible working lab will also be located next to the former Enterprise and Communities service area. This service is the pilot service for flexible working at the Council and will be working in new ways and in a new look office environment with shared desks, quiet work space, informal meeting space to name a few of the accommodation changes that will support flexible working.

The lab is an area for information exchange, communication and also for consultation. We want you and your teams to use it, come and work in it, and feedback how useful it is to you as you manage your team through this change.

An insight:-

A post-pilot survey of a benefits assessment team where 25% of the team worked permanently at home revealed:

- 100% of survey respondents said their Working Environment was better when working from home
- 83% - Work Efficiency or Productivity was better
- 79% - Job Satisfaction was better
- 67% - Stress Levels were better
- 63% - Time Management (at work) was better
- 38% - Sick Leave was better
- 100% - Relationship with their Manager, and their Commitment to their team/Council had not become worse during the pilot.

What are the choices in new ways of working?

The choices around where you and your team work are outlined in Appendix E the matrix of working options. These comprise of:-

Permanent home working – employees work from their home for the majority of their working hours.

Mobile working – employees work out in the community (on site, partner sites, customer premises as examples) and use either their home or a Council office shared desk when they need to use desk space.

Fixed pattern home working – employees work at home on set days and in the office on a shared desk for the remaining time.

Ad hoc home working - employees work in the office on a shared desk for the majority of their time and occasionally at home.

Roaming office - employees work in the office on any shared desk that is available.

Fixed desk – employees work in the office at the same desk

Location based working – employees working for example on a reception, in an activity centre, in the Town Hall or at Leisure World.

What about my team?

How would you and your team benefit from working more flexibly?

So far we have looked at how the organisation and employees could benefit but what about your own team? How would you and your staff benefit from working in a new way?

Ask yourself these questions:

How many of your team would like to work fewer days due to other commitments outside of work but cannot due to financial reasons?
Possible solution: Could they work longer hours over nine days and take the tenth day off?

Does anybody in your team have a long journey to work or travel at peak time?
Possible solution: work from home – less travel and associated cost, less strain on the environment OR work different hours OR a combination of both

Do you have people in your team who work outside of the office for some of the time, such as an inspection role where they continually come back and forth to the office to update systems with information?
Possible solution: is there technology that will support the employee whilst they are away from the office? This would reduce the need to keep returning saving time, effort and travel.

Case studies

Here is a selection of Colchester Borough Council real life flexible working examples:-

Financial Services

There is a group accountant working from home two days a week. This arrangement helps Darren balance work life commitments. After six months there was a general review of the working arrangement and customers, managers and the accountant himself shared views on how the trial period had gone.

Here is a selection of comments from customers:

- "You are not involved in meetings here and appear to be more available"
- "A good example of how this type of arrangement can work successfully"
- "Extremely quick and dedicated response to queries when working from home as not off to meetings etc"
- "Level of support has remained constant"
- "I think it has helped us use the time together more productively. I feel that I know as much if not more than I did before… I think you have been more productive"
- "It has enabled me to understand in practice how flexible working can be applied without impacting on the service delivered".

Here is Darren's full list of feedback at the six month review point:-

What has been good?
- The flexibility I now enjoy both in terms of being able to do the school-run, but also in still being able to attend meetings at times of the day that fit in with this.
- I feel I am much more productive as there are less disturbances then you experience in the office.
- I don't feel as if I have missed out on "office-life" by home-working 2 days a week, which has been helped by my colleagues' attitude towards me and the interaction I still enjoy even though sometimes based at home.
- I feel much more motivated as my work-life balance has been greatly improved. I am enjoying the benefit of spending quality time with my son, which in turn makes me more determined to make home-working succeed and to be as flexible a possible as I consider it a benefit which is not to be taken for granted and which I do not want to lose.
- The support from my manager, colleagues within and outside of financial services.

What has not been good/remedies?
- There could be a tendency to feel cut-off from the rest of the office and that you are missing out. This has been helped by not home-working 2 days in a row.
- You can feel that there is a suspicion around the concept of home-working and that staff could treat it as a "day-off". It is quite hard to overcome this and I think it will be quite a cultural change for the organisation to embrace it fully. It is very much based on trust.
- People who ring you up while you are home-working and apologise for calling you!! I have endeavoured to make it clear to people that I am still at work, just based in a different place. This happens less and less now as people have become used to the change.

General Observations

- Access to IT systems has been vital for the role I undertake – without them it would have been very difficult to carry out my job on an ongoing basis.
- I have experienced very few IT problems – only a couple of times have I had difficulty accessing folders but the SERCO helpdesk has been able to resolve them (usually by switching off then on again!). This was more of a PC problem so probably not a direct result of home-working.
- For the programs I use, access speeds has been very good, being only slightly slower than when based in Rowan House in most instances (very large spreadsheets eg 60MB, can be slow to save, but my use of these are not very frequent).
- I feel that you need a separate designated area of work, away from the distractions of the rest of the house. I am able to work in an upstairs spare bedroom so therefore this has not been a problem for me.''

Planning, Protection and Licensing

This is feedback from a Protection Manager within one week of being issued with a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA).

Pest control
Pre-PDA process.

1) Pest Control Officer finds that a customer's rat problem originates from another area of land.
2) Pest Control Officer passes it to the Animal Control Manager to inspect, investigate and enforce that the rats are dealt with.
3) If the land belongs to a food premises the Animal Control Manager then passes it to the Food and Safety Team for enforcement.

   The Minimum time for this process was 2 days.

Now that PDA photos of the area can be taken and emailed directly to the Animal Control Manager or the Food and Safety Team the minimum process time has been reduced from **days to hours**.

Recently a complaint was received about rats in Tiptree which involved a food premises and the process time was **50mins**. In this case the food premise manager was emailed a copy of the photos so that he could direct his pest control contractors to the right area.

Working flexible hours with no core hours:

Louise works in the Environmental Control Team, investigating nuisance complaints – most of which happen outside normal working hours. Louise needs to visit complainants in their homes to try and witness the noise that they are being disturbed by. This used to mean working a normal day using flexi-time and then having to arrange an evening visit to be able to be available for the customer when they needed us. Sometimes this was rewarded by overtime payment but this was rarely available and usually Louise accrued Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) but this became yet another system to record hours worked and using it up was proving difficult! Louise would also put herself on call for the customer but there was no system at all to record this.

Sometimes there just wasn't the cover in Louise's team to be able to visit the customers out of hours and this was resulting in delays resolving the cases or obtaining the vital evidence to get the offenders in court.

Something had to change….. and it did, Louise's team started working in a new way. They have stopped using core hours. They still record their time using a flex sheet but it covers a 24/7 period and means they can work much more freely and in line with their customers needs. Now Louise works a morning, then breaks until the evening when she starts work again, meaning that she is available for visits to the customer at the times when the noise is happening. Customers can also have the difficult, often personal telephone calls with her from their own home in the evening rather than trying to fit them in at work.

"I have a far less stressful time because I don't have to rush to get into work for 9.30am (meeting core hour rules) when I have been working late witnessing noise the night before. The break in the afternoon gives me the time to do my housework and be home for the children when they get home from school. It's a much better arrangement for me and I feel much happier".

Louise's manager also has positive feedback – "Customers are amazed that we are speaking to them at 7pm, at a time that suits them and their life – they are even more amazed when we arrange to visit them in the evening so that we can work towards quickly resolving their problem. It's also good to be part of a system that allows staff to respond to customer needs without onerous paper recording systems and also importantly balance the needs of their lives so that they are happy and enthusiastic about working for Colchester. The service can only improve as we bring in technology that means we can access information away from the office. It will make us more informed before we get to site and we can also update the system without having to return to the office, saving our time, less pollution from travel and increases the flexibility of how we work even more".

Enterprise and Communities

Term Time Working

Term time working has enabled the Research Co-ordinator to gain a great work/life balance. At first it was not always easy as the work had to be planned very carefully to make sure that customers did not lose out and work colleagues didn't shoulder an extra burden. Luckily the type of work fitted the way of working perfectly and now (a year or so later) the workload is managed more confidently. The individual appreciated the agreement from her manager to work term time only which was very progressive at the time and also the ability to spend time with her children as they grew up.

The practicalities

Before working in a new way can be embraced there are some practical steps that need to be taken.

Everyone needs to be clear that there is a balance between the customer, the employee and the organisation (in this case you the Manager). The arrangements need to be acceptable to all parties.

Under the Employment Rights Act 2002, parents have the right to request to work flexible working in order to balance their childcare responsibilities with their work commitments. This right was extended to employers with caring responsibilities under the Work and Families Act 2006. For more details please refer to the Right To Request Flexible Working Policy which is available either on the Hub or from the HR Service Centre on 01206 282112 or e-mail HRServiceCentre@colchester.gov.uk

Management Challenges

Although there are many advantages of flexible working there will undoubtedly be some challenges in introducing and managing a flexible workforce. These are:

Challenge 1

Deciding whether a role is right for flexible working

Solution

Complete the suitability questionnaire at appendix A and use as a basis for discussion with your manager and the post holder. The questionaire is only a starting point, a generic document that is intended to encourage thinking and discussion – with roles being quite diverse across the council it is not practical to complete a tick box exercise and have a conclusive answer on role suitability however the questions will stimulate thought around key areas for consideration e.g customer contact.

Challenge 2

Deciding whether the individual is right for flexible working

Staff who struggle to perform in the workplace may continue to struggle if working away for the workplace. In addition personal and home circumstances might mean that home working may not be suitable.

Staff working away from the workplace are likely to need skills in a number of key areas including:

- time management and self discipline
- motivation
- self-sufficiency
- communication
- technology
- ICT.

 Where a skills requirement and learning need is identified you should record in the Personal Development Plan and agree how the learning need will be addressed.

Challenge 3

Managing a team with different and varied work patterns and ensuring the customer needs continue to be met .

Solution

Effective workforce planning to ensure work patterns worked reflect customer requirements.

Challenge 4

Managing remotely and assessing performance.

Solution

Agree SMART objectives and clear deadlines for particular tasks. Keep a close eye on how well the targets are being met and give feedback promptly and sensitively if things go wrong.

Challenge 5

For staff who work alone, a sense of isolation may mean that flexible working may be challenging.

Solution

Ensure that formal management systems are in place to ensure staff continue to feel part of the team eg

- frequent 1-2-1s and two way feedback sessions about work and work-related issues
- regular scheduled visits to the workplace
- inclusion in social activities
- clear procedures in place to follow and people to contact if things go wrong
- consider exploring ICT options to share information and to facilitate regular communications.

Challenge 6

When discussing and implementing flexible working for the first time' the list below will help to ensure that the basic questions are discussed at an early stage.

Ref	Item	Y/N	Comments
1	Is the job suitable for home working or mobile working? (Work through appendix 'A' and 'B' to establish the options)		
2	Does the employee want to work at home?		
3	Does the manager agree that the employee can work from home? (Look at appendix 'B' and 'C')		
4	Does the employee have a suitable area for a workstation in their home? (Work through appendix 'C')		
5	Has a VDU assessment been done? (Work through Appendix 'E')		
6	Are there any unresolved issues from the assessment?		
7	Are the issues in 6 above resolvable?		
8	Have the issues in 6 been resolved to the satisfaction of the manager and the employee?		
9	If 'Yes' to 8, how have they been resolved?		
10	Are there any special adaptions required?		
11	Has the manager and the employee worked through the guidance together?		
12	Are there any items that need to be addressed from 11 and what are they?		
13	Have all issues from 12 been resolved? if yes, how?		

Solution

If your team member wants to work more flexibly but does not qualify or chooses not to follow the flexible working legislative route please follow these steps:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Informal discussion between manager │
│   and employee exploring options     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Consider whether the role is       │
│   appropriate for flexible working   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Consider whether flexible working is│
│    appropriate for the individual    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   If home working is there an        │
│   appropriate work area available    │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Agreement between manager and      │
│   employee to work in a new way      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Option to trial new flexible working│
│             practice                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Formal variation of contract letter │
│     issued outlining agreement       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Communicate to the rest of the team│
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Order ICT and arrange training if  │
│             applicable               │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Identify and agree any learning and │
│  development needs and develop a     │
│         plan to address              │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

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          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │   Order any furniture as required │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │   Arrange Health and Safety       │
          │   assessments and implement the new│
          │   arrangement                      │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
          │   Review at regular interviews and full│
          │   review at 6 months to include    │
          │   customer feedback, manager and   │
          │   employee                         │
          └─────────────────────────────────┘
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Performance management

''Work is something you *do*, not somewhere you *go*. We are an outcome-based organisation''

This is one of the outcomes from Way We Work – our corporate change programme. It is one of the key measures of success of the flexible working strand as we move away from managing by *time served* toward managing by *results achieved*.

As an organisation we are continually measuring how we perform against targets and performance indicators. We need to be sure this is also carried out across the organisation so that we can understand how our people are contributing to the performance of the team they work in, and in turn the high level objectives of the Council.

Performance management is particularly important when flexible working means that your teams could be working in new ways and often away from you, their manager.

In line with CBC's Performance Management Guidance regular reviews will be essential both to ensure the arrangements are working satisfactorily on both sides, and there are clear agreed SMART objectives with suitable targets and performance measures to work towards. Emphasis should be placed on defining measurable outputs for the post before working in a new way begins.

At least two performance review meetings each year are required to evaluate work completed in addition to regular feedback. This will include a mid-year and year-end review. Performance reviews will focus on outputs; objectives achieved and staff development. As a Manager you must ensure the same opportunities for

training and career and personal development are available to people working in a flexible way as other (more office based) members of staff.

Terms and Conditions

No employee will have an automatic entitlement to flexible working arrangements. Similarly, employees will not be forced into accepting flexible working methods, as they will remain voluntary.

Any flexible working arrangements outside of the legislation, as agreed between manager and an employee will constitute a temporary variation to the employees' substantive terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanent change in service provision. If the flexible working arrangement ceases the original substantive terms and conditions will apply.

Tips on how to work through barriers

Treat people as individuals, not as collective groups. What works for one may not work for another.

Case studies indicate that in addition to employees blocking flexible working, managers may also resist more unconventional ways of working.

Managers need to be objective and fair when discussing flexible working conditions with staff.

Control may be perceived to be lost by managers as staff work more flexibly.

Remember this is a two-way process, it's mutual agreement and as a manager you must ensure the needs of the customer, the member of staff and the Council are taken into consideration.

The introduction of flexible working represents a significant change in culture for CBC. For further information on managing change please follow the link to the hub Colchester Learning Academy - Communication and Change Management.

Implementation arrangements

Flexible working arrangements may be initiated either by management as part of a proposal to revise working arrangements and improve service delivery, or by employees to create balance between work and home life.

Where flexible working is to be introduced on a voluntary basis, the employee or group of employees, must agree with the line manager any variation in working hours or working practices before such commencement and such variations will be subject to an agreed trial period (minimum of three months), except where changes are agreed in accordance with legislation. After the trial period, it is recommended that the service carry out a review to ensure the arrangements are meeting the requirements of the customer, the employee and the organisation.

Before recruitment an analysis of whether a vacant post should be treated as potentially suitable for flexible working will be conducted. If a vacant post is suitable for a certain working pattern only, this should be clearly indicated when the post is advertised.

Policy

Throughout this guidance for both staff and managers you will have seen references to policy and a link to the HUB to access the policy documents. Please use them for up to date policy information.

Frequently asked questions

1. Will my tax be affected if I work from home?
You may be entitled to apply to the Inland Revenue for limited tax relief where a room in your main residence is set aside exclusively for working at home. However, by designating a room as exclusively for business purposes, you may also render yourself liable to payment of a higher rate of Council Tax, and to Capital Gains Tax on a proportion of the proceeds in the event of sale of the property.

You are encouraged to obtain further information and advice from your local tax office or a personal financial adviser, should you have any questions regarding taxation issues associated with working away from the workplace. CBC will not be responsible for any costs associated with seeking such advice.

2. Do I need to tell my landlord, mortgage or insurance provider if I work from home?
You should ensure your building/contents insurance is not invalidated by the use of your home as a place of work, or by the use of CBC equipment in your home, although there will usually be no additional cost.

Colchester Borough Council will remain responsible for any loss of or accidental damage to officially-supplied equipment and furniture, provided that it does not result from negligence on your part or your family members, and that security procedures have been complied with (see below).

You must not have meetings with customers in your home and should arrange any meetings at a suitable alternative location instead. A member of staff may not be covered for accidents to other colleagues/customers/clients entering their house on business and should check this point with their insurance company.

You should write to your mortgage provider or landlord to inform them you will at times be working from home (see standard letter Appendix D) to ensure that the occupation of the home is not subject to terms and conditions or covenants which will prevent any work being undertaken in the home.

3. Where can I find out more?

 You can download information regarding flexible working and related policies on the Hub.

Managers should contact their HR Business Partner for advice.

Refer to the following useful websites:

Download the guide on the right to request and the duty to consider flexible working from the DTI website – http://www.dti.gov.uk

Read the guide to changing patterns of work at the ACAS website – http://www.acas.org.uk

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Appendix A - Job Suitability Questionnaire

Employee details

Name:

Current post:

Please tick if you are the:

Post holder ☐

Manager ☐

Job description

Please provide a summary in your own words of the main tasks and responsibilities of this role.

| |
| |

Managing others

1. Is the job holder managing other people? If so, how many?

    1. None ☐

    2. One person ☐

    3. 2- 4 people ☐

    4. 5 or more people ☐

    5. more than 10 ☐

2. What percentage of the job holder's time is spent managing others apart from the rest of your workload?

1. None ☐

2. 10% ☐

3. 20% ☐

4. 33% ☐
5. Over 50% ☐

Dependency on others

3. Who mainly controls the job holder's workload and priorities?

1. They do ☐

2. The customer ☐

3. The supervisor/manager ☐

4. Determined by tasks and processes ☐

4. How frequently does the job holder need to liaise with the manager/supervisor to report or for direction?

1. Weekly or less ☐

2. Several times a week ☐

3. Once a day ☐

4. Continually throughout the day ☐

5. How frequently does the job holder need to liaise with colleagues?

1. Weekly or less ☐

2. Several times a week ☐

3. Once a day ☐

4. Continually throughout the day ☐

Time management

6. How much of the work needs immediate attention as opposed to long–term deadlines?

1. Majority is longer term ☐

2. Approximately one-third is immediate ☐

3. About half is immediate ☐

4. Majority is immediate ☐

7. Does the post need to be covered when the job holder is absent?

1. No ☐

2. Yes, if more than a week ☐

3. Yes, even after a few days ☐

4. Yes, always would need to be covered ☐

8. Who would do the job holder's work in their absence?

1. A colleague ☐

2. The supervisor/manager ☐

3. No one ☐

Duplicated skills

9. Are other people in the section doing a similar function to the job holder?

1. Yes, lots of people doing exactly the same job ☐

2. Yes, a few people doing exactly the same job ☐

3. Yes, a few people doing a similar job with different clients and other tasks ☐

4. Nobody has a similar job ☐

10. How much of the work in this job can be done by someone else?

1. All ☐

2. Most ☐

3. Some ☐

4. None ☐

Workplace dependent

11. Is the equipment needed to do this job only available in the workplace?

1. No, rarely uses such equipment ☐

2. Yes, sometimes uses the equipment ☐

3. Yes, often uses the equipment ☐

12. Does the job holder need access to files and other paperwork only held in the workplace?

1. Rarely ☐

2. Sometimes ☐

3. Often ☐

Confidentiality

13. Is this work highly confidential/sensitive?

1. No ☐

2. Yes ☐

Workflow

14. Does the job holder have control over the flow of their work?

1. Yes they have main control ☐

2. Some control ☐

3. Minimum control ☐

4. No control ☐

15. Is the job holder able to predict how busy they will be?

1. Most of the time ☐

2. Sometimes ☐

3. No, it varies a great deal ☐

16. Does the job holder know when peak periods in this job are going to happen?

1. Always, busy periods are always at the same time ☐

2. Usually ☐

3. Some of the time ☐

4. Rarely, unpredictable ☐

17. When there is a peak period how long does it usually last?

1. A few hours ☐

2. A couple of days ☐

3. Up to a week ☐

4. Several weeks or longer ☐

Availability

18. Can the job holder be contacted by colleagues/manager when away from the workplace?

1. Usually ☐

2. Sometimes ☐

3. Rarely ☐

4. Never ☐

19. What percentage of the job holder's time is spent in meetings?

1. Less than 10% ☐

2. About a quarter ☐

3. About one- third ☐

4. More than a half ☐

5. Most of the time ☐

20. Does the nature of the work mean they sometimes will be unable to be contacted?

1. Never ☐

2. Rarely ☐

3. Sometimes ☐

4. Often ☐

Customer relations

21. Does the job holder have to respond to customer demand immediately or is it longer-term?

1. Most longer term ☐

2. About a third immediate ☐

3. About a half immediate ☐

4. About three-quarters immediate ☐

5. Most immediate ☐

22. Is the work with the customer short or longer term?

1. Always longer term ☐

2. Mostly longer-term ☐

3. Mostly short term ☐

4. Always shorter term ☐

23. Is the work undertaken for the same customers on a repeat business?

1. No ☐

2. Yes, occasionally ☐

3. Yes, sometimes ☐

4. Yes, usually ☐

24. Is it important for the job holder to know the customers well?

1. Not essential ☐

2. Sometimes ☐

3. Definitely ☐

25. Does most of the communication with customers take place:

1. Mostly in writing ☐

2. Both in writing and verbally ☐

3. Mostly verbally by phone ☐

4. Mostly in person ☐

Transfer the numerical scores on to the grid by putting a tick in the appropriate box.

Question	Job specification	Score					Comments/action
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
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15.							
16.							
17.							
18.							
19.							
20.							
21.							
22.							
23.							
24.							
25.							

The scoring system is based on a rating of 1 – 5 (1 being the highest)
Mainly 1-2 score for each question – likely to be suitable for flexible working arrangement
Some 3, 4 and 5s - there may be ways to find solutions to support flexible working, eg relocation of work, delegation etc.
Mainly 4 – 5 – more likely to be unsuitable for flexible working arrangement.

NB: The results of the questionnaires will form a basis for discussion. It will help to clarify each other's perception of the post and provide a clearer understanding of why a particular job may or may not be suitable for flexible working arrangements.

Appendix B - Matrix of working options for where you work

Options	IT and desk requirements	Main qualification criteria
Permanent home working	• IPSEC VPN • Laptop and docking station • No office desk	• role can be delivered to the same standard or higher from outside a corporate office environment • the home environment is suitable for work • there is broadband connection available in the home area
Permanent mobile/home working	• PDA • Laptop / tablet • SSL or IPSEC VPN • 3G card • No office desk	• there is a mobile element to the role where work is delivered out of office • role can be delivered to the same standard or higher • the home is a suitable environment for working in • there is broadband and or 3G connection available in the home area
Permanent mobile/office	• PDA • Laptop / tablet • 3G card • Shared desk	• there is a mobile element to the role where work is delivered out of office • there is a requirement for office presence • the home is not a suitable environment for working in • there is no broadband or 3G connection available in the home area • the mobile element of the role is closer to the office than to the home
Fixed home working pattern	• Shared desk • Laptop and/or SSLVPN • PDA • 3G card	• role demands some office presence • role can be delivered to the same standard or higher • the home is a suitable environment for working in on specific days • there is broadband connection available in the home area

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Ad hoc home working	• Shared desk • SSLVPN or laptop • 3G card • PDA or mobile phone	• role demands office presence for the majority of the time • role can be delivered to the same standard or higher by introducing an element of flexibility in work place • The home is a suitable environment for working in • there is broadband connection available in the home area
"Roaming" office	• Shared desk	• role demands office presence • the home is not a suitable environment for working in • there is no broadband connection available in the home area
Full time "owned" desk – Fixed desk	• Desk top • Phone	• the business requires a static position so face to face contact is easy and time efficient • require specialist IT for role • require specialist HandS equipment that is not easily transferable from workstation to workstation • static desk eases access to stored material / information that cannot be scanned
Workplace not office – location based working	• Reviewed on a site by site basis	• work outside of corporate office environment • face to face service delivery

For Managers.
When looking to match roles against this matrix please ensure that all three of these elements have been considered - the needs of our customers, our people and the Council.

For our People.
If you are looking to place your role into this matrix you must consider the needs of your customer, your own needs and those of the Council.

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Appendix C – Work place suitability assessment

Work area

Any staff working at home for any period of time on a PC or laptop will be required to conduct a VDU Workstation Checklist. Please complete and return Appendix E to your line manager. Any subsequent changes to the work area which would make it less secure or less suitable for home working must be reported to the line manager, in the first instance and further advice sought from the Health and Safety Advisor.

Any issues identified by the aassessment will need to be addressed by the manager / other authorised CBC person and prior arrangements made with you to visit your home to ensure the assessment is correct and any agreed action has been completed.

Working more than two days a week at home.
There will need to be a dedicated and physically separate work area within the home. If this is not possible, the working area should be a "fit for purpose" area for the installation of an appropriate workstation which is as good as or better than that supplied a the office where there is little risk of interruption from other members of the household.

Storage

Work papers and files for use at home will be kept secure and organised so as to keep storage requirements to a minimum. Efforts must be made to avoid duplication of files and other materials in the home and main offices. Any confidential material or data protection sensitive material must not be left in view when the work area is unoccupied, such material must be locked away when not in use and disposed of securely in the main office, when no longer required.

Office equipment

A chair, workstation/desk and lockable filing cabinet will be provided by CBC were required. The furniture will remain CBC property. Arrangements will be made via your line manger for the supply and installation of the IT hardware with the necessary IT and communications equipment. Your manager must ensure that an up to date inventory is maintained of all equipment provided. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that it is kept in good working order and to report any faults promptly to Serco.

Home security

In order to safeguard the materials and equipment provided to you, it is recommended you take the following precautions.

- Security bolts or devices of a similar security standard should secure all external doors.
- All accessible windows are secured.
- Make sure confidential files are stored out of sight, and preferably secured in a locked cupboard or drawer whilst not in use.

NB: Please inform your insurance company that you spend time working at home (see Appendix F for pro forma letter).

Your working environment

- Remember to maintain a comfortable temperature in your workplace.
- Also try to separate your work area/routine from your home life. You need to be able to have a break away from the workstation.

Electricity in the home

Before you use any electrical equipment supplied for work, you should check signs for:

- The notice that ensures the equipment has been tested under the 'Portable Appliance Testing' (PAT) scheme.
- Over-heating damage/cracked or loose casing to equipment and plugs.
- Faulty damaged flexible leads.
- Faulty or loose connections.
- Make sure you do not have to use multiple adapters and extension leads.
- If you have any doubts about the safety of your wiring we advise you not to work from home until you have it checked by a qualified electrician.

Fire

Please ensure that:

- The work area is kept tidy with regular disposal of waste paper.
- Electrical equipment is safe (see above).
- A clear exit route is available in an emergency.
- We advise that a fire blanket is readily available and that a smoke detector/s is installed.

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Appendix D – Recommended Furniture Package

Although the selection of furniture for the home office may be dictated, to some extent, by space considerations, some basic principles must always be respected.

Desk – the desk should be large enough for all computer equipment, plus enough layout space for documents. This does not mean on one level. It must also have a low-reflectance surface and facilitate a comfortable position. Desk legs must not obstruct the seated posture and there must be sufficient clearance on the underside to allow users to bring themselves into the desk.

Chair – the chair must have a five star-base, have a seat that is adjustable for height, together with a separately adjustable backrest, to provide good lumbar support. Any arm rests must also be height-adjustable.

Footrest – there may be a need for a footrest if your feet are not on the floor after the chair and work surface is adjusted for you. A footrest will be provided to ensure your comfort.

Please refer to Appendix E – VDU Workstation Checklist for further information on working safely.

Appendix E – VDU Workstation Checklist

The assessment sheet below is required under present Display Screen Equipment Regulations. Please complete it for your home workstation and return it to your line manager who will discuss (with advice from the Health and Safety Adviser as necessary) with home workers any issues coming out of the assessment.

DRAFT

VDU WORKSTATION CHECKLIST

Workstation location and number (if applicable): ....

User: ....

Checklist completed by: ....

Assessment checked by: ....

Date of assessment: ....

Any further action needed? YES/NO

Follow-up action completed on: ....

This checklist can be used as an aid to risk assessment and to help comply with the Schedule to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

Work through the checklist, ticking either the 'yes' or 'no' column against each risk factor:
- 'Yes' answers require no further action.
- 'No' answers will require investigation and/or remedial action by the workstation assessor. They should record their decisions in the 'Action to take' column. Assessors should check later that actions have been taken and have resolved the problem.

Remember the checklist only covers the workstation and work environment. You also need to make sure that risks from other aspects of the work are avoided, for example by giving users health and safety training, and providing for breaks or changes of activity. Advice on these is given in the main text of the guidance.

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RISK FACTORS	Tick answer		THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
	YES	NO		

1 Display screens

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Are the characters clear and readable?			Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are made available Check that text and background colours work well together	
Is the text size comfortable to read?			Software settings may need adjusting to change text size	
Is the image stable, ie free of flicker and jitter?			Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker, eg darker background and lighter text If problems still exist, get the set-up checked, eg by the equipment supplier	
Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?			For example intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to small details may require large display screens	
Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?			Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times	
Does the screen swivel and tilt?			Swivel and tilt need not be built in, you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism However, you may need to replace the screen if • swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory, • work is intensive and/or • the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position	
Is the screen free from glare and reflections?			Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of reflections Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections	
Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?			Check that blinds work Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help	

RISK FACTORS	Tick answer		THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
	YES	NO		43

2 Keyboards

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?			This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (eg where there is a need to use a portable).	
Does the keyboard tilt?			Tilt need not be built in.	
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?			Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists. Users of thick, raised keyboards may need a wrist rest.	
Does the user have good keyboard technique?			Training can be used to prevent: • hands bent up at wrist; • hitting the keys too hard; • overstretching the fingers.	
Are the characters on the keys easily readable?			Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read, the keyboard may need modifying or replacing. Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	
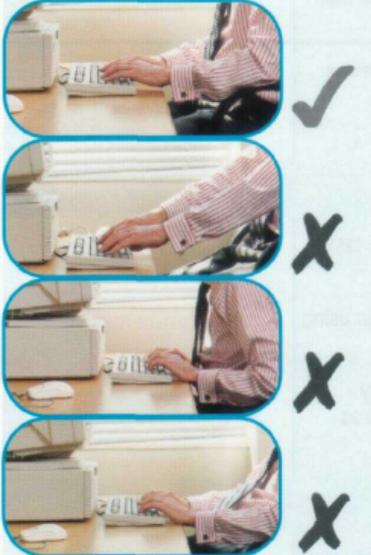
3 Mouse, trackball etc

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?			If the user is having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general-purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Alternative devices such as touchscreens may be better for some tasks (but can be worse for others).	
Is the device positioned close to the user?			Most devices are best placed as close as possible, eg right beside the keyboard. Training may be needed to: • prevent arm overreaching; • tell users not to leave their hand on the device when it is not being used; • encourage a relaxed arm and straight wrist.	
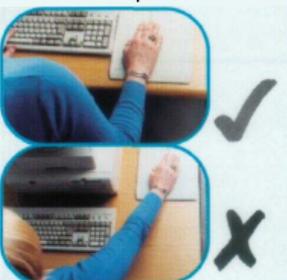
RISK FACTORS	Tick answer		THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
	YES	NO		
Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?			Support can be gained from, for example, the desk surface or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help. The user should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device.	
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?			See if cleaning is required (eg of mouse ball and rollers). Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.	
Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?			Users may need training in how to adjust device settings.	

4 Software

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Is the software suitable for the task?			Software should help the user carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly. Check users have had appropriate training in using the software. Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.	

5 Furniture

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc?			Create more room by moving printers, reference materials etc elsewhere. If necessary, consider providing new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved. There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.	
Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?			Rearrange equipment, papers etc to bring frequently used things within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements.	
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?			Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.	
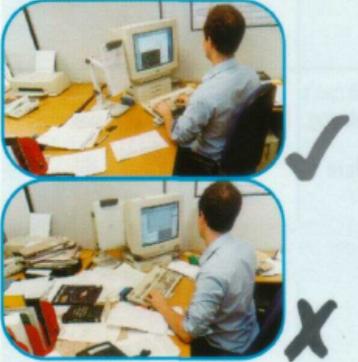
44

RISK FACTORS	Tick answer		THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
	YES	NO		
Is the chair suitable? Is the chair stable? Does the chair have a working: • seat back height and tilt adjustment? • seat height adjustment? • swivel mechanism? • castors or glides?			The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.	
Is the chair adjusted correctly? 			The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. Consider training the user in how to adopt suitable postures while working. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.	
Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?			The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the VDU?			Adjust the chair height to get the user's arms in the right position, then adjust the VDU height, if necessary.	
Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?			If not, a foot rest may be needed.	

RISK FACTORS	Tick answer		THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
	YES	NO		

6 Environment

RISK FACTORS	YES	NO	THINGS TO CONSIDER	ACTION TO TAKE
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?			Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget. Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions. Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard	
Is the lighting suitable, eg not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?			Users should be able to control light levels, eg by adjusting window blinds or light switches. Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting, eg desk lamps (but make sure lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).	
Does the air feel comfortable?			VDUs and other equipment may dry the air. Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help. Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.	
Are levels of heat comfortable?			Can heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air-conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can users be moved away from the heat source?	
Are levels of noise comfortable?			Consider moving sources of noise, eg printers, away from the user. If not, consider soundproofing.	

7 Final questions to users...

- Ask if the checklist has covered all the problems they may have working with their VDU.

- Ask if they have experienced any discomfort or other symptoms which they attribute to working with their VDU

- Ask if the user has been advised of their entitlement to eye and eyesight testing.

- Ask if the user takes regular breaks working away from VDUs.

Write the details of any problems here:

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Eye and eyesight tests

Eye and eyesight tests are available for employees working away from a council location under the same conditions as those working from an office. See the HUB for details.

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Appendix F – pro forma letter (mortgage, landlord, insurance)

May also be used for home workers insurance company and other relevant bodies with interest in home workers' premises.

[Date]

Dear Sir/Madam

As a result of new working practices introduced by my employer, Colchester Borough Council, it is proposed that I use my home for working from [date]. I have been advised to notify you of this change.

I would stress that the official business of Colchester Borough Council remains at:

Town Hall, High Street, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1LZ

I believe no increase in insurance cover is required since any office furniture or equipment will remain the property of the CBC who will carry the associated insurance risks.

No substantial structural changes will be made to the premises and so mortgage costs should be unaffected as well.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and let me know if you require any further information.

Yours faithfully

[Name]

		Item
Policy Review and Development Panel		**9**

30 September 2008

Report of	Head of Corporate Management	Author	Amanda Chidgey ☎ 282227
Title	Work Programme 2008/09		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

> This report sets out the current Work Programme 2008/2009 for the Policy Review Panel.

1. Decision Required

1.1 The Policy Review Panel is asked to consider and confirm, as appropriate, the Panel's work programme for 2008/09, as attached.

2. Introduction

2.1 At each meeting of the Panel, the opportunity can be taken for the work programme to be reviewed and, if necessary, amended according to current circumstances and in the light of any new requests.

3. Current Situation

3.1 At its meeting on 10 September, the Cabinet considered a report concerning a request from Councillor Smith for the Policy Review and Development Panel to undertake reviews of two issues:

- 20mph speed limits within the urban areas of the Borough and
- Certain issues relating to the Mayoralty.

and, bearing in mind, the work programme already agreed by the Panel, to provide the Panel with an indication of the priority order to be allocated to each review to be undertaken.

3.2 Cabinet agreed to the Panel being requested to undertake, by means of Task and Finish Groups, these two reviews in addition to that on Night Time Economy and once the first of these reviews was completed, the review by a Task and Finish Group of the Historic Town Centre Improvements could commence. In addition, Cabinet stipulated that arrangements be put in place to ensure that the conclusions of the reviews were reviewed after an appropriate period of time.

3.3 The Panel was due to receive an update at this meeting on the Equality and Diversity Policy. However it is has not been possible to comply with this arrangement and the topic will need to be rescheduled once more information is published by the Government. A new Equality Standard was announced over the summer which differs from that previously worked towards by Local Authorities. This issue is now subject to a public consultation exercise, the outcomes of which are not expected until much later in the year.

3.4   The Work Programme has therefore been updated since the meeting of the Panel held on 20 August 2008 to reflect the necessary rescheduling of reports and the inclusion of Task and Finish Groups agreed by the Panel and Cabinet.

3.5   A draft Project Brief for the Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group based on the issues agreed at the last meeting of the Panel has been prepared and is attached to this report.

4.   Alternative options

4.1   This function forms part of the Panel's Terms of Reference and, as such, no alternative options are presented.

5.   Standard References

5.1   There are no specific strategic plan references or financial, equality, diversity and human rights, community safety, health and safety, publicity and risk management implications in this matter.

NIGHT TIME ECONOMY
TASK AND FINISH GROUP (POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL)
Chairman: T.B.C.

DRAFT PROJECT BRIEF

Terms of Reference:
To investigate, with a view to determining short, medium and long term objectives,:   • The causes of the perception that in the evening the town centre is an unwelcoming place to many people;   • Concerns about a predominance of certain types of bars and clubs, yobbish behaviour and a grubby environment;   • How to bring about a change in the public's perception of the evening town centre atmosphere.   To consider a range of proposals, including: • Bulk review of Licenses;   • Award Scheme for trade premises that change their approach;   • More visible night time cleansing;   • Night time street wardens;   • Enforcement of industry code on point of sale promotions;   • Physical improvements to design out crime;   • More varied offer in evening venues;   • (Enforcement) 'Action Nights'.
Desired Outcomes:
Recommendations to be made by the Task and Finish Group to the Policy Review and Development Panel before being submitted to Cabinet.

PROCEDURE GUIDE

Witnesses	Who / Why
• CBC / Police Licensing; • CBC Street Services; • Transport; • Club / Pub Watch; • CBC Anti-Social Behaviour Team; • CBC Environmental Services; • Neighbourhood action Panel; • Neighbourhood watch; • Resident Group; • Club and Pub Owners / Operators; • Members of the Youth Forum.	

Documents / evidence / research / site visits (what/where/why/who)	Information to be gathered
STAND report	
Site visits/engaging public/partners (where/why)	Information to be gathered
Proposals to be put to the group as appropriate	
Other information	
Completion Date	March 2008

Policy Review and Development Panel
WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

	16 June 2008	18 August 2008	30 September 2008
Policy Initiatives		Night-time Economy - briefing paper to include the Annual Partnership Plan and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group; Historic Town Centre Improvement - briefing paper to include pedestrian improvements and the town centre environment and possibly determination of Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Group;	Town Centre Management - briefing paper on future arrangements.
Review of Corporate Policies		Housing Strategy - final review prior to resubmission to Cabinet	Flexible Working - review of corporate policy;
Task and Finish Groups			20mph speed limits within the urban areas of the Borough Certain issues relating to the Mayoralty. Night Time Economy

	3 November 2008	19 January 2009	2 March 2009
Policy Initiatives	Secondary Education - Educational Attainment in the Borough with invitation to guest speakers. Neighbourhood Working - briefing paper.	Secondary Education - Outcome of initial discussions; Climate Change / Sustainability Issues	To be determined
Review of Corporate Policies	Waste and Recycling Review - result of Options Appraisal		
Task and Finish Groups			

Items to be scheduled: Equality and Diversity - review of corporate policy.
Historic Town Centre Improvements Task and Finish Group