



Walsall Council

Personnel Committee

Monday 5 December 2022 at 6.00 pm

At the Council House, Walsall

Public access to meeting via: www.WalsallCouncilWebcasts.com

Membership:

Councillor M. Bird (Chair)
Councillor A. Andrew (Vice-Chair)
Councillor S. Elson
Councillor A. Garcha
Councillor N. Gultasib
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor C. Towe
Councillor J. Whitehouse

Quorum:

Three Members

Agenda

Part 1 – Public Session

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended):

To agree that, where applicable, the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
4. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2022 – Copy **enclosed**, (page 5 to 7).
5. Family Friendly Policy (Fostering Policy) – Copy **enclosed**, (page 8 to 54).
6. Soulbury Pay Scales for Educational Psychologists – Copy **enclosed**, (page 55 to 58).
7. Chief Officers and Chief Executive, Additional Days Annual Leave – Copy **enclosed**, (page 59 to 60).
8. Customer Focused Ways of Working – Copy **enclosed**, (page 61 to 86).
9. Pay Policy 2022/23 amendment - Implementation of Government Guidance in respect of Special Severance Payments – report **to follow**

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

**Personnel Committee
Conference 2, at the Council House, Walsall**

Thursday, 25 October September 2022 at 6.00p.m.

Committee Members present:

Councillor M. Bird (Chair)
Councillor S. Elson
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor C. Towe
Councillor J. Whitehouse

In attendance:

Michele Leith – Director (Human Resources, Organisational Development (HR, OD) and Administration & Business Support)
Reena Farmah - Democratic Services Officer
Helen Owen - Democratic Services Officer

59/22. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor A. Andrew, Councillor N. Gultasib and Councillor A. Garcha.

60/22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

61/22. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended):

There were no items to be discussed under a private session.

62/22. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October, 2022, a copy having been sent to each member of the committee, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

63/22. Schools Model Pay Policy and the Unattached Teachers Pay Policy

The Director, HR OD and Administration, Mrs M. Leith, presented a report which sought approval of the updated policies.

(see annexed)

Mrs Leith responded to questions from members, during which time she confirmed that academies were allowed to either set their own policy or alternatively adopt the model policy. She also gave assurance that full consultation with representatives of recognised unions and professional associations had been conducted.

Resolved

That the Schools Model Pay Policy and the Unattached Teachers Pay Policy be approved

64/22 Employee Benefits and Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) to the LGPS

The Director, HR OD and Administration, presented a report which described the proposed benefits package covering a range of employee benefits and salary sacrifice options which aimed to improve recruitment, retention, and to support employee recognition and reward

(see annexed).

In presenting the report, Mrs Leith pointed out that the recommendation at paragraph 2.6 did not require approval from the Corporate Management Team.

Mrs Leith responded to questions from members, during which time, she confirmed that there were various discounts available via the benefits platform which may include internet service providers. She also confirmed that there was normally no initial cost to set up the platform.

Members welcomed the employee benefits package commenting that the package would have a positive impact on recruitment and retention making Walsall Council an employer of choice.

A Member asked whether Councillors would be included in the discounts package available to staff. The Director responded that this option could be explored.

Resolved

- 1. To approve the introduction of an employee benefits package supplied via partnering with an external provider to deliver a fully managed service covering a range of employee benefits and salary sacrifice options including a car lease scheme and Shared Cost AVCs. As set out in section 3.8 of the report.**
- 2. To approve the implementation of a Shared Cost AVC pension arrangement for LGPS members.**
- 3. To approve that earnings related payments, such as overtime, pay increases, contractual allowances, occupational maternity pay, occupational sickness pay and redundancy are calculated on the notional salary before applying the salary sacrifice reduction for Shared Cost AVCs. As set out in paragraph 3.8.5 of the report.**
- 4. To approve the inclusion of a new discretion in the Council's LGPS Discretionary Pension Policy Statement to permit LGPS staff to participate in a Shared Cost AVC scheme. As set out in paragraph 3.8.6 of the report.**
- 5. To approve the implementation of a Shared Cost AVC scheme for members of the Teachers and NHS Pension Scheme, subject to the necessary changes being made to the regulations to allow these staff to participate.**
- 6. To approve the implementation of a benefits platform that incorporates both lease cars and Shared Cost AVCs as salary sacrifice benefits and that any further decisions regarding the detail of the employee benefits platform be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation, including the appointment of a provider, subject to council procurement rules.**

Personnel Committee – 5 December 2022

Family Friendly Policy (Section 11 Fostering Friendly Policy)

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To gain Personnel Committee approval for the revised Family Friendly Policy (Appendix 1) endorsed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) at its meeting of 17 November 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the Family Friendly Policy as attached in appendix 1.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Family Friendly Policy was last reviewed in 2019 to align it to the priorities of the council, including PROUD, reinforcing the council's standards and behaviour framework and aligning it to the other employment policies. This policy is usually updated to ensure legislative compliance, with the last change being in April 2020 due to the introduction of statutory parental bereavement leave.
- 3.2 The revised Family Friendly Policy has been drafted in response to a request from Children's Social Care to amend Section 11 in relation to foster care leave for employees. Foster care leave was introduced in the Family Friendly Policy in 2016.
- 3.3 Walsall Council is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, children are supported to live with their birth parents or their extended family. Where this has not been possible and children become looked after, it is preferable that they are placed within a family setting. It is the aim of the council that wherever possible this will be with foster carer/s home approved by Walsall rather than through commissioning an external placement outside of the Borough. The rationale for this is two-fold; evidence suggests local family-based environments are more likely to improve outcomes for children, and secondly the huge cost differentials between children's home placements and foster care provision.
- 3.4 To address this, Walsall Council needs to be ambitious, bold and determined in its pursuit to increase the number of suitable Foster Carers who live in the Borough. We believe that there is an untapped potential to support this growth from our own internal workforce. By enhancing the current offer to employees backed with a strong promotional campaign, in which we can champion that the Council is a Fostering Friendly Employer, this could lead to an uptake in the recruitment for Foster Carers from within our own existing workforce.
- 3.5 The Fostering Network's Fostering Friendly employers' scheme helps employers to support and recognise the roles of their employees who foster and involves no direct costs for accreditation. Members of the scheme agree to put in place a

fostering friendly policy for all foster carers in their employment offering foster carers flexible working and paid time off for training and settling a new child into their home.

- 3.6 Although the council already operates a Family Friendly Policy which makes provision for employees being foster carers, with additional paid leave each year, to support the overall strategy regarding the recruitment of more foster carers and to provide greater support to those employees who are already Foster Carers, it was considered necessary to strengthen and improve this offer.

Aim

- 3.7 The aim is for the council to become accredited with The Fostering Network as a Fostering Friendly employer. Once accredited the council will be working with other large businesses across Walsall to also support them in working with us to secure Foster Friendly accreditation and to recruit further foster carers from across their workforce.

Know

- 3.8 The changes to this policy are limited to Section 11 as outline below:
- Section title changed from Foster Care Leave to Fostering Friendly Policy so that it can be used as an independent document for the purposes of Foster Friendly accreditation (if required).
 - Insertion of introductory two paragraphs on the Council's commitment to supporting foster carers.
 - Clarification on entitlement to foster care leave (section 11.1).
 - Increasing the maximum days paid leave per year from 5 to 7 days, with additional time off to attend the statutory 6 monthly meetings (section 11.2).

Our Council Plan priorities

- 3.9 The policy is directly aligned to the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focused, effective, efficient and equitable and helps embed the behaviours and values expected of all employees as part of the Behaviour and Standards Framework.

Response

- 3.10 Subject to approval, HR will finalise all associated guidance/forms (where relevant) and prepare a workforce communications and implementation plan ready for publication.

Review

- 3.11 Employment policies will usually be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, unless legislation or internal organisational need prompt a review earlier.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The financial implications associated with the amendment of the policy are in relation to the increase in paid leave from 5 to 7 days per year, plus leave to attend the statutory 6 monthly reviews. However, any paid leave and associated costs for cover arrangements, where necessary, will be picked up by existing service area budgets.

5. Legal Considerations

5.1 There are no anticipated legal issues arising from this report.

6. Risk Management

6.1 An equality impact assessment is attached (Appendix 2).

7. People

7.1 Employment policies include a scope section (where applicable) and in each policy it clearly sets out who the policy applies to and who it does not (Appendix 1 section 2).

7.2 There is a direct and positive impact on our residents as a result of this policy, where by being recognised as a Fostering Friendly employer more employees opt to become foster carers supporting Walsall's looked after children.

8. Consultation

8.1 Specific collaboration has taken place with colleagues from Children's Social Care to aid the revision of the Foster Care Leave section prior to a draft version going out to consultation.

8.2 As the amendments are only to section 11 of the Family Friendly Policy this section (now entitled Fostering Friendly Policy) was formally consulted upon with senior managers and trade unions colleagues across the council between 2 and 11 November 2022.

8.3 Feedback on the changes from senior managers has all been positive with no issues being raised.

8.4 Feedback from trade union colleagues raised no issues or comments that needed addressing.

Author

Nic Rickhuss

HR Manager – Strategy & Planning

Human Resources

☎ 655617 ✉ nicola.rickhuss@walsall.gov.uk

Family Friendly Policy



Walsall Council

Version Control

Document title	Family Friendly Policy		
Owner	Human Resources	Status	Draft
Version	5.0	Approved on	TBC
Effective from	TBC	Review date	TBC
Last updated	02/11/2022	Last updated by	HR Strategy and Planning
Purpose	To detail all of the procedures relating to family friendly provisions (maternity, adoption, paternity, maternity support shared parental leave, ordinary parental leave and foster care leave).		

This policy links to:

- Our Council Plan
- Walsall Proud
- Leave and Time Off Policy
- Organisational Development Strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- Behaviour & Standards Framework

This list is not exhaustive.

For further advice or guidance on this policy, or if you would like this information in another language or format please contact:

HR Operational Services Team on

Telephone 01922 655671

Text phone 01922 654000

Email hrdoperationalervices@walsall.gov.uk

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	5
2.0	Scope	5
3.0	Principles.....	6
4.0	Accountabilities	7
5.0	Maternity Policy	8
5.1	Announcing pregnancy	8
5.2	Manager’s responsibilities following pregnancy announcement.....	8
5.3	Antenatal provisions.....	9
5.4	Maternity Leave.....	10
5.5	Maternity Pay	11
5.6	Other entitlements and requirements	12
6.0	Adoption Policy.....	19
6.1	Pre-adoption provision	19
6.2	Statutory adoption leave	20
6.3	Adoption pay	22
6.4	Other entitlements and requirements	24
6.5	Specific adoption cases	24
7.0	Paternity Policy.....	26
7.1	Entitlement to Paternity Leave	26
7.2	Eligibility for Statutory Paternity Pay	26
7.3	Notice required for Paternity Leave and Pay.....	26
8.0	Maternity Support Policy.....	27
8.1	Eligibility for maternity support leave.....	27
8.2	Period of leave	27
8.3	Maternity Support Leave & Paternity Leave.....	27
9.0	Shared Parental Leave Policy	28
9.1	Maternity Leave & Shared Parental Leave.....	28
9.2	Eligibility for Shared Parental Leave (SPL)	28
9.3	Eligibility for Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)	29
9.4	Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) entitlement.....	29
9.5	Notice requirements for SPL and ShPP	30
9.6	Requesting shared parental leave.....	30
9.7	Right to retain a job	31

9.8	Shared Parental Leave in touch (SPLIT) days	31
9.9	Shared parental leave in adoption and surrogacy	31
10.	Ordinary Parental Leave Policy	32
10.1	Eligibility for OPL.....	32
10.2	OPL entitlement.....	32
10.4	Applying for a period of unpaid OPL	33
10.5	Postponement of OPL.....	33
10.6	Rights on return to work after OPL.....	33
10.7	Pay and benefits during OPL	34
10.8	Pension.....	34
11.0	Fostering Friendly Policy	35
11.1	Entitlement to foster leave	35
11.2	Foster care leave	35
11.3	Expectations of managers and employees	37
11.4	Requesting foster care leave	37
11.5	Record of foster care leave.....	37
	Appendix 1 – Maternity Key Stages / Accountabilities	38
	Appendix 2 – Summary of Maternity Entitlement	39

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Walsall Council is PROUD. We are proud of our past, our present and for our future. The council is committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring all potential is maximised and its employment policies, procedures and guidelines are designed to support this vision and deliver the council's priorities.
- 1.2 The council is committed to creating an environment that provides opportunities for all individuals and communities to fulfil their potential. This policy provides a framework in which employees will be supported to deliver the council's priorities in line with the council's expected behaviours and values; professionalism; leadership; accountability; transparency and ethical.
- 1.3 The council's values and behaviours will be at the core of everything the council deliver and through a culture of continuous improvement the council will increase performance, efficiency and champion the design of services to meet the needs of customers. As a digital by design council, employees will be empowered to deliver new ways of thinking and new ways of working, encouraging innovation and creativity in a learning environment. The council is committed to technological investment to deliver transformation in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its services, both internally and externally.
- 1.4 This policy framework promotes the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable, and helps embed the behaviours and values expected of all employees as part of the Behaviour and Standards Framework.
- 1.5 This policy details the processes in place for employees and managers regarding requests for taking leave, work arrangements and pay in relation to family friendly provisions.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all Council employees,
- 2.2 With the exception of;
 - 2.2.1 School based employees where the governing body has delegated authority and for whom separate arrangements apply.
 - 2.2.2 Agency workers, contractors or external consultants.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 This policy outlines employee statutory and occupational entitlements in respect of leave and pay, as well as the processes that should be used to assist and support employees during the following circumstances;
- Maternity
 - Adoption
 - Paternity
 - Maternity support
 - Share parental leave (SPL)
 - Ordinary parental leave (OPL)
 - Foster care leave.
- 3.3 The law entitles employee who are pregnant to:
- Paid time off to attend antenatal care
 - A period of maternity leave (26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave and 26 weeks' additional maternity leave)
 - The first two weeks of leave (following childbirth) is compulsory leave during which new mothers are prohibited from working.
 - The right to return to the same job held before the start of maternity leave on the same terms and conditions, unless after ordinary maternity leave this is not reasonably practicable, then a suitable alternative job on no less favourable terms and conditions must be found.
- 3.4 The provision for adoption leave mirror that of maternity leave rights.
- 3.5 Most employees will qualify for the appropriate statutory pay (maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental). Eligibility is laid down in legislation.
- 3.6 New fathers/partners and adoptive parents who are eligible are entitled to take either one or two weeks paternity leave.
- 3.7 Shared parental leave and pay gives parents more flexibility in how they share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption.
- 3.8 Employees who have responsibility for a child are entitled to ordinary parental leave, up to 18 weeks unpaid leave per child with a maximum of 4 weeks in any one year.
- 3.9 Employees have the right not to be dismissed or subject to detrimental treatment on grounds of pregnancy, childbirth, maternity or for taking a statutory entitlement to leave (maternity).
- 3.10 Separate arrangements apply other leave and time off such as emergency time off for dependents, carers leave, and other compassionate leave (see the leave and time off policy).

4.0 Accountabilities

4.1 Managers are accountable for the following;

- Applying this policy and procedure consistently, fairly and objectively in accordance with the council's aim and priorities and clearly demonstrate the council's management behaviours and values, seeking further advice and guidance from HR where necessary;
- Taking responsibility for monitoring and managing their employees' attendance and absence;
- Completing the appropriate risk assessments, especially with regard to new and expectant mothers.

4.2 Employees are accountable for the following;

- All employees should support the delivery of the council's aim and priorities, clearly demonstrating the council's behaviours and values;
- Actively engage in employment practices and processes in which they are involved and ensure they understand this procedure, seeking further advice and guidance from managers where necessary;
- To submit notifications and leave requests to their line manager and Payroll as appropriate.
- Comply with the requirements of this policy and procedure.

5.0 Maternity Policy

Maternity key stages and the employees' and managers' accountabilities overview can be seen in appendix 1.

5.1 Announcing pregnancy

A pregnant employee must notify their manager in writing, as soon as possible but no later than the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) of:

- the pregnancy;
- the expected week of childbirth, this must be confirmed by providing a medical certificate (MATB1);
- the date she plans to start her maternity leave via a Maternity Leave request form.

5.2 Manager's responsibilities following pregnancy announcement

Conduct a workplace risk assessment

Managers have a legal obligation to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pregnant employees as soon as they are aware that they are pregnant and until six months after childbirth, or until the employee stops breastfeeding, whichever is later.

Managers need to complete a workplace risk assessment (or review an existing risk assessment) and review as necessary throughout the pregnancy and post pregnancy (as relevant). A model new and expectant mother risk assessment can be found on the Health and Safety pages of the HR intranet.

Managers should explore with employees any temporary measures required to support the employee, this may include; limiting external travel, reassessing work spaces to ensure equipment provides adequate support, utilising the flexi-time scheme to agree later start times etc. Guidance and support documentation can be found within the Safety Management Standards.

Where an unacceptable risk is identified and cannot be avoided, managers may:

- Alter the employees working conditions or hours - or if this is not reasonable, offer suitable alternative employment.
- Offer suitable alternative employment (or failing that paid leave) if the employee works at night and they produce a medical certificate which states that their health and safety is at risk from this.

Where there is a medical room available, this can be used by expectant mothers to rest and in the absence of a medical room alternative arrangements should be arranged in conjunction with the manager.

Support discussions

Employees and managers are encouraged to discuss the following in order for appropriate support to be provided:

- Provision of any emergency contact details.
- What sort of contact employees would like to have whilst on maternity leave and the best methods for this.
- Annual leave entitlement and how this might be taken.

5.3 Antenatal provisions

5.3.1 Mothers

Pregnant employees have a right to paid time off for antenatal care appointments. These appointments should be made where ever possible at either the start or end of the working day or when less disruption is caused to the service. Paid time off for parent classes or similar is only granted when these courses are prescribed by a medical practitioner.

Employees using the Flexi-time Scheme, whose appointments are scheduled during normal working hours, are entitled to a credit up to their normal standard hours.

Apart from the first appointment employees may be asked to produce evidence of the appointments and a copy of the last page of the pregnancy notes will usually suffice. Employees should however try and give their manager as much notice as possible of these appointments.

5.3.2 Fathers to be and partners

Fathers to be and partners (including same sex partners) of pregnant women are entitled to paid time off to attend up to two antenatal care appointments (not exceeding 6.5 hours each) that have been made on the advice of a medical practitioner. This excludes parental classes or similar appointments that have not been prescribed by a medical practitioner.

5.3.3 Parents in surrogacy cases

Both intended parents in a surrogacy case who meet certain criteria set out under the Human Embryology and fertilization Act 2000 will have the right to unpaid leave to attend up to two antenatal appointments (not exceeding 6.5 hours each) that have been made on the advice of a medical practitioner. Where the intended parent is the biological father they are entitled to paid time off to attend up to 2 appointments (this

is a maximum of 2 appointments, not 2 as the biological father and 2 as the parental order parent).

5.4 Maternity Leave

Duration

Pregnant employees can take up to 52 weeks maternity leave made up of 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave (OML) followed by 26 weeks of additional maternity leave (AML), regardless of length of service. Employees are entitled to all contractual benefits, except pay, for the full 52 weeks of maternity leave.

New mothers must take a minimum of 2 weeks maternity leave (compulsory period) following the birth of the baby.

Mothers can choose to share their maternity leave (once they have taken the compulsory period) with their partner / co-parent by ending their period of maternity leave and instead taking shared parental leave (refer to section 8).

Start date

The earliest a woman can start her maternity leave is 11 weeks before the EWC. The latest a woman can start her maternity leave is her expected due date. Employees must give their manager at least 28 days notice in writing of the date they would like their maternity leave to commence. The employee may request to change this date after giving notice and they should give their manager as much notice as possible if they wish to do this.

If the baby is born earlier than the date which the employee had planned to commence maternity leave then the period of maternity leave will commence automatically. In this situation the employee should inform their manager of the baby's date of birth as soon as possible and the manager should notify HR Payroll Services.

If the employee is absent from work with a pregnancy-related illness, within 4 weeks of their due date, maternity leave will start automatically, even if they had intended to start their maternity leave later.

Returning to work

Employees are under no obligation to tell their manager of their intentions to return to work before they commence their maternity leave. Any discussions at this point are not binding and employees are not required to finalise any arrangements at this time.

For statutory maternity pay (SMP) purposes, employees who are not returning after the birth should not resign from their post until the end of their maternity leave. They should just indicate that they do not wish for the occupational maternity payment to be made to them and resign in writing giving their contractual notice.

5.5 Maternity Pay

Types of maternity pay and qualifying criteria

1. **Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)** – to qualify for OMP employees need to have completed a minimum of 1 year's continuous service by the 15th week before the EWC.
2. **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)** – to qualify for SMP employees need to have completed a minimum of 26 weeks continuous service with Walsall Council by the 15th week before the EWC and their average weekly earnings must not be less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
3. **Maternity Allowance (MA)** – employees who are not eligible for SMP may instead be eligible for maternity allowance. Employees in this category should contact Payroll who will provide further advice regarding how maternity allowance should be claimed from the Department of Work and Pensions.

Maternity pay entitlement is calculated by Payroll on receipt of a completed Maternity Leave and Pay Provisions Application Form and the submission of a MATB1 form. The MATB1 is issued by a doctor or midwife at around week 20 – 24 of pregnancy. The original of the MATB1 is required in order to receive maternity pay. Additional copies of the MATB1 certificate should be made if required as it cannot normally be re-issued.

Once maternity pay entitlement has been calculated, HR Payroll Services will contact employees providing details of pay entitlement and significant dates. The statutory entitlement is based on the salary at the qualifying week (15th week before EWC) and OMP is based on salary at the commencement of maternity leave.

Employees who are not entitled to OMP, SMP or maternity allowance will still be entitled to 52 weeks unpaid maternity leave.

Maternity pay entitlement

Maternity leave period	Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)	Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)
Weeks 1 - 6	90% of employees average weekly earnings	90% of employees average weekly earnings (pay offset against any payments made by way of SMP or MA)
Weeks 7 - 18	SMP standard rate Where employees normal earnings are lower than SMP, they will receive 90% of normal earnings instead of SMP rate	Half normal weekly pay This will be in addition to SMP standard rate or MA (providing the total does not exceed normal pay)
Weeks 19 – 39	SMP standard rate Where employees normal earnings are lower than SMP, they will receive 90% of normal earnings instead of SMP rate	n/a
Weeks 40 - 52	n/a	n/a

A summary of entitlement can be found in appendix 2.

Payments are based on an employee's current salary and will be adjusted to reflect any pay increases during the maternity leave period.

Employees are required to return to work for a minimum of 12 weeks at the end of their maternity leave period to qualify for half pay OMP. If employees do not return for the required time then any half pay OMP paid to them will be claimed back. If employees are unsure of their intentions to return, they can elect to have their half pay OMP deferred and paid usually in a lump sum at a later date.

If an employee has more than one contract of employment with the Council and only returns to one of these contracts, they will not be required to pay back any half pay OMP, provided they complete 3 months service in at least one of their contracts.

Employees are not required to pay back any SMP received, even if they do not return to work.

5.6 Other entitlements and requirements

5.6.1 Contractual status whilst on Maternity Leave

On maternity leave employees are still employed by Walsall Council and should not enter into any other form of contractual employment (paid or otherwise) during this time. They may however, undertake training courses. Employees may move to another employer during maternity leave but leave is not transferable from the Council. If an employee commences work with a non local government / modification order employer

(having followed procedure for resigning from their post), maternity leave will cease and any outstanding SMP / half pay OMP will not be paid. Any half pay OMP paid before this time would be reclaimed. If however an employee takes up employment with another recognised body (such as a local authority) their service will be considered continuous and SMP / half pay OMP will not be reclaimed under these circumstances.

If the employee has completed 26 weeks of continuous employment with Walsall Council by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and earns enough to qualify for SMP, the employee will still be entitled to statutory maternity pay if they voluntarily leave employment, as long as it is on or after the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.

5.6.2 Minimum contact

Whilst on maternity leave employees should expect to receive a reasonable level of contact with their manager to keep them informed of any changes or information, including:

- Payslips
- Current vacancies specifically relating to the immediate department
- Details of any 'Team Days' or training courses
- Details of any restructures / organisational changes that affect the employee
- Any other documentation relating to a consultation process

The manager may make reasonable contact with the employee to discuss plans to return to work, or any other changes that the employee may wish to make, such as working hours or pattern. This should be at a time that is mutually convenient to both parties.

5.6.3 Keeping in touch (KIT) days

Keeping in Touch (KIT) days allow an employee to do some very limited work under the terms of their contract without losing SMP for the week in which the work is done. This is limited to a maximum of 10 days (with the legal exception of 2 weeks after the birth) and must be agreed between the employee and their manager. Neither side is able to insist that KIT days are worked. Any days or sessions worked do not extend maternity leave – it remains at 52 weeks.

Examples of this include attendance at team 'away days' / training sessions or time with the team prior to returning from maternity leave. Specific project work may also be considered suitable for KIT days. The 10 days do not have to be taken as a whole day and can be worked on an hourly basis – working for any part of a day will count as a full day for KIT purposes.

Payment for these days is at an employees' normal contractual pay rate for the number of hours worked during that day and any SMP due is offset against this payment.

Where the period of time worked generates a payment less than the SMP rate, no payment will be made.

Employees working KIT days should claim for this via an overtime form within 28 days. It is normally paid in the next pay cycle – subject to payroll requirements. Alternatively an employee can opt to have a KIT day credited to their TOIL entitlement.

Health and Safety implications must be considered if undertaking any KIT days and a risk assessment should be completed prior to these days commencing.

Outside of KIT days employees are welcome to visit the team whilst on maternity leave though they should check with the manager that the visit is at a convenient time – especially if the employee is bringing their baby in to work.

5.6.4 Annual leave and bank holidays

Employees accrue annual leave throughout normal and additional maternity leave. If an employee returns to work on a part-time basis, leave will be accrued pro rata from the date the contract is changed. The contract should not change until the employee returns to work.

It is normally advised that individuals take their annual leave entitlement for the year before maternity leave starts, but this should be agreed with the manager. As far as possible, leave should be taken in the current leave year. However, where this isn't possible, outstanding leave can be carried over.

Any outstanding annual leave can be paid to an employee during the maternity leave period – whilst in a period of nil pay (after week 39 of AML). This payment should be requested direct from the manager by the employee in writing during maternity leave.

Subject to approval with the manager annual leave can sometimes be taken in the first weeks back at work, effectively extending the maternity leave period. However, any such period of annual leave will be subject to operational requirements.

Bank Holidays and other statutory days are accrued whilst the employee is on maternity leave on a TOIL basis, this leave can be taken at any time and is not subject to any carry over restrictions.

5.6.5 Pension

If the employee is a member of the local government pension scheme, pension contributions will be deducted from the maternity and contractual pay entitlement whilst on maternity leave, unless indicated otherwise by the employee. This period will count as service for pension purposes in the normal way. When maternity pay runs out and the employee goes into nil pay, the employee can choose whether to make contributions.

The employee will be offered the opportunity to pay for the missing service at the end of their maternity break.

If the employee does not pay any contributions during this time, the period will not count as service for pension purposes.

5.6.6 Redundancy

Maternity leave counts as continuous service for redundancy purposes and does not affect the right to a redundancy payment.

5.6.7 Car parking permits

Whilst on maternity leave, an employee can opt to retain their staffing car parking permit and continue to use the parking facility whilst on maternity leave, however payments will continue to be taken during the leave period. Alternatively permits can be surrendered back to the car parks office and payment ceased.

5.6.8 Strike action

Calculation of maternity pay entitlement is unaffected by Industrial Action. Pregnant employees and those on maternity leave are normally requested to be exempt from strike action. There are also rules regarding lone working for pregnant employees during a period of industrial action.

5.6.9 Returning to work

Employees may take as much of their 52 week entitlement as they wish. To simplify notice procedures, it is now assumed that all employees will take their 52 week entitlement.

If an employee wishes to return early, at any point before the end of the 52 week period, they should give the manager at least 8 weeks' notice in writing of their intention to return. If an employee is intending to make any changes to their working pattern, this should have been raised with the manager before this time. The manager must contact the employee to confirm this date and to make arrangements for the employees return.

If correct notice is not given, the manager can delay the employees return but not beyond the end of the 52 weeks.

If an employee wishes to return at the end of the 52 week period, then no notice is required and they should simply return at the start of the following week, this date is confirmed to the employee at the time of going on maternity leave.

A notification of return to work form should be completed for Payroll, to put the returning employee back onto payroll on return from maternity leave, if there are any changes

or this is before the 52nd week. If no form is received the employee will be re-instated on the same terms at the end of the 52 weeks maternity leave.

5.6.10 Working arrangements

As part of a planned return to work, the employee should meet with the manager to discuss their return, prior to the minimum notice periods required. This can be classed as a KIT day if there is still an outstanding allowance of KIT days. This discussion should cover any flexible working requests, using annual leave on return to work or other arrangements which can be put in place to support the employee returning.

5.6.11 Not returning from maternity leave

Not returning from maternity leave constitutes a resignation so there will be no statutory right to return to work if the employee changes their mind. Employees are encouraged to think carefully about this decision and discuss all the options with the manager.

If employees have received Occupational Maternity Pay they will need to repay the 12 weeks at half pay.

Employees will then receive a final payment which will also take into account any outstanding annual leave, flexi or TOIL. This will be treated as a normal leaver from the Council and arrangements will be made for the collection of any personal possessions and the return of any ID, car park pass or any other council property.

Should the employee be unable to return to work at the end of the period of maternity leave due to sickness then this absence should be reported as per the normal sickness reporting process. This only applies after the agreed return to work date.

5.6.12 Flexible working

Once the employee has given notice of their intention to return to work, there are a number of things to consider.

In the normal course of employment, the employee has a right to return to the job in which they were employed under the original contract of employment. If changes have taken place the employee is entitled to be offered suitable alternative employment. Specific circumstances (e.g. redundancies) could, of course, affect this.

The employee will also have a statutory right to request flexible working such as changing/reducing contractual hours which the Council will consider. The employee does not have an absolute right to return to work on different terms, as the right to return after maternity leave relates to the position held before the leave began. However, if an employee thinks they may like to change their hours (or other conditions), they should discuss the matter with their manager as soon as possible before the date of return.

Returning part time does not affect an employee's entitlement to retain 12 weeks OMP, providing the employee returns to work for the minimum period of 3 months.

5.6.13 Breastfeeding

Should an employee wish to continue with breastfeeding and need to feed or express breast milk once they have returned to work, they will be supported with time away from work and a facility for this. Managers should discuss this with the HR Team in the first instance as the facilities available will depend upon work location.

Any required nursing breaks are paid at full pay and managers should be advised of times in advance, where possible.

5.6.14 Following a return to work

Once the employee has returned to work, the manager should complete another risk assessment as a returning mother. This will take into consideration any adaptations that now have to be made. This normally happens at the return to work meeting on the employee's first day back. Other sections of this procedure may also become relevant such as unpaid ordinary parental leave.

5.6.15 Maternity rights

Unfair treatment and dismissal

During pregnancy, whilst on maternity leave and on return from maternity leave, employees have a right to be protected from unfair treatment or dismissal which is connected to pregnancy. During maternity leave, employees must be consulted with over any restructures or redundancies.

Returning from maternity leave

Employees returning from maternity leave, have a right to return to work on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied, had the employee not been absent.

If a post is made redundant, or there are other exceptional circumstances, for example a reorganisation/ restructure during maternity leave, employees are entitled to be offered a suitable alternative vacancy, where this exists.

5.6.16 What if something goes wrong?

Whilst it is hoped that a pregnancy goes according to plan, the Council will support employees as much as possible if anything goes wrong. The Employee Assistance Programme may be able to help with any concerns, though any non work related

issues should be raised with the GP/Midwife. Counselling support is available for employees 24/7 on 0330 380 0658.

If an employee suffers a miscarriage or the baby dies before 24 weeks of pregnancy the employee will be eligible for sick pay and/or possibly special leave according to the circumstances.

If the baby is stillborn or dies after 24 weeks of pregnancy an employee will still be entitled to maternity pay / leave. The employee will also be entitled to parental bereavement leave (see the leave and time off policy).

If the baby is born before 30 weeks and survives, the Council will consider requests for extended leave on an individual basis. Provision can be made for maternity leave to be 'paused' until the baby leaves hospital or a time the employee requests. Maternity leave can also be extended beyond the normal leave periods in certain cases. This is an exceptional circumstance and the manager should contact the HR Operational Team in this situation.

6.0 Adoption Policy

Adoption leave and pay will be available to employees who meet the eligibility criteria and are matched with a child for adoption or have a child through a surrogacy arrangement.

Adoption leave and pay will be available to one member of a couple who adopt jointly. This individual is classed as the “main adopter”. The partner of an individual who adopts, or the “secondary adopter”, may be entitled to paternity leave and pay or shared parental leave. This is regardless of gender.

6.1 Pre-adoption provision

Statutory pre-adoption provision

Employees are entitled to take paid time off work to attend adoption meetings:

- Time off must be taken in the period between being notified of match with the child and the date the child joins the family.
- Single adopters are entitled to paid time off to attend up to 5 adoption meetings
- In the case of dual adopters, the main adopter (who plans to take the adoption leave) will be entitled to paid time off to attend up to 5 meetings, and the other adopter (who may take paternity leave) is entitled to paid time off to attend up to 2 meetings

Documentary evidence should be provided by the employee for approval of time off with pay.

Occupational pre-adoption provision

To support the adoption process the council will also allow employees up to 5 days paid leave to attend an adoption preparation course (usually 4 days plus 1 day follow up 3 months later) before being matched with a child.

In the event of both adopters being employed by the council, they will both be entitled to the above. This leave is available to all employees regardless of length of service.

Employees may also request time off as part of the introduction to the child (usually 1-2 weeks depending on the age of the child). Employees are expected to use annual/flexi leave for this purpose, and managers should ensure that where possible requests for this leave are granted as the timing is dependent upon the adoption agency.

6.2 Statutory adoption leave

Adoption leave is a 'day 1 right' meaning employees do not need to have a qualifying period of service to qualify for Statutory Adoption leave (SAL), however they must meet certain eligibility criteria, which differs for UK and overseas adoptions;

UK Adoptions	Overseas Adoptions
Qualifying criteria	Qualifying criteria
An employee qualifies for SAL if they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) have been matched to a child to be placed with them by a UK adoption agency 2) have notified the agency that they agree the child should be placed with them and agree the date of the placement 3) have given the Council the correct notice (see below) 	An employee qualifies for SAL if they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) have received official notification from the relevant UK authority (usually the Department of Health) of their eligibility to adopt a child from overseas. <p>The notification confirms either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) that the authority is prepared to issue a certificate to the overseas authority dealing with the adoption of the child, or; b) that the authority has issued a certificate and sent it to the overseas authority 2) have provided the correct notification of the overseas adoption 3) have given the Council the correct notice (see below)

UK Adoptions	Overseas Adoptions
Notice	Notice
Within 7 days of being matched with a child, the employee must tell the council; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much leave they want • the date on which they want their adoption leave to start (giving at least 28 days notice, unless the time between the child being matched and placed is less than that) • the date of placement (i.e. the expected date or actual date the child is placed with them) 	Within 28 days of getting the notification, the employee must tell the council the date of their 'official notification' and the expected date the child arrives in the UK. <p>Within 28 days of the child arriving in the UK, the employee must tell the council the actual date of arrival.</p> <p>The employee must tell the council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much leave they want • the date on which they want their adoption leave to start (giving at least 28 days notice, where reasonable practicable)

Employees must notify the council, by completing the adoption leave and pay application form, at least 28 days before they want the adoption leave and statutory adoption pay to start, or as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Employees will be able to change their mind about the date on which they want their leave to start providing they tell the council at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

Employees will not qualify for adoption leave (or adoption pay) if they:

- arrange a private adoption
- become a special guardian or kinship carer
- adopt a family member or stepchild
- have a child with the help of a surrogate mother, where the intended parents are not eligible for a Parental Order or where they meet the conditions but do not intend to apply for a Parental Order.

Duration

The statutory adoption leave (SAL) period is made up of 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave (OAL) followed by 26 weeks' additional adoption leave (AAL), regardless of length of service. Employees are entitled to all contractual benefits, except pay, for the full 52 weeks of adoption leave.

The main adopter can choose to share their adoption leave with their partner / secondary adopter by ending their period of adoption leave and instead taking shared parental leave. They must take at least 2 weeks of adoption leave before starting any shared parental leave.

Adoption leave will end if the placement does not take place or breaks down. The employee must inform their manager if this occurs.

Start Date

Adoption leave can start:

- on the date the child starts living with the employee or up to 14 days before the expected placement date (for UK adoptions only)
- when an employee has been matched with a child to be placed with them by a UK adoption agency
- on the date the child starts living with the employee or up to 14 days before the expected placement date providing that the child has arrived in the UK (for overseas adoptions).

- the day the child is born or the day after (for parents in surrogacy arrangements)

Returning to work

Employees are under no obligation to tell their manager of their intentions to return to work before they commence their adoption leave. Any discussions at this point are not binding and employees are not required to finalise any arrangements at this time.

For statutory adoption pay (SAP) purposes, employees who choose not to return should not resign from their post until the end of their adoption leave. They should just indicate that they do not wish for the occupational adoption pay (OAP) to be paid to them and resign in writing giving their contractual notice.

6.3 Adoption pay

To qualify for adoption pay employees must:

- give the Council the correct notice (see above, the notice is same as that required for statutory adoption leave)
- give the Council proof of the adoption, and
- meet the employment qualifying criteria

The employee must declare that they are the main adopter and are therefore taking adoption leave and/or pay, not paternity leave and/or pay (see the adoption leave and pay application form).

Proof of the adoption

UK Adoptions	Overseas Adoptions
<p>The evidence must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and address of the adoption agency and employee • date the child was matched, e.g. the matching certificate • the expected or actual date of placement, e.g. a letter from the agency 	<p>The evidence must show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name and address of the adoption agency/authority and employee • the relevant UK authority's 'official notification' • the date the child arrived in the UK, e.g. plane ticket

Employees should ask their adoption agency for a matching certificate (or 'official notification' for overseas adoptions) which will includes basic information on matching and expected placement dates.

Employment qualifying criteria

UK Adoptions	Overseas Adoptions
STATUTORY ADOPTION PAY (SAP)	
To qualify for SAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service with Walsall Council by the week in which they were notified of having been matched with the child (i.e. the 'matching week'), and their average weekly earnings must not be less than the earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.	To qualify for SAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service with Walsall Council by the week that they receive official notification of adoption, or by the time they want to start their SAP to begin, whichever is later, and their average weekly earnings must not be less than the earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
OCCUPATIONAL ADOPTION PAY (OAP)	
To qualify for OAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 1 year's continuous service by the week in which they were notified of having been matched with the child (i.e. the 'matching week'). The matching week starts on a Sunday and ends on a Saturday.	To qualify for OAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 1 year's continuous service by the week that they receive official notification of adoption, or by the time they want to start their SAP to begin, whichever is later.

Employees who are not eligible for SAP may be eligible for other welfare benefits and should contact their adoption agency or local Job Centre Plus office.

Adoption pay entitlement

Adoption leave period	Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)	Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP)
Weeks 1-6	90% of employees average weekly earnings	90% of employees average weekly earnings (pay offset against any payments made by way of SMP or MA)
Weeks 7-18	SAP standard rate Where employees normal earnings are lower than SAP, they will receive 90% of normal earnings instead of SAP rate	50% of employees average weekly earnings This will be in addition to SAP standard rate or MA (providing the total does not exceed normal pay)
Weeks 19-39	SAP standard rate Where employees normal earnings are lower than SAP, they will receive 90% of normal earnings instead of SAP rate	n/a
Weeks 40-52	n/a	n/a

A summary of entitlement can be found in appendix 2.

Payments are based on an employee's current salary and will be adjusted to reflect any pay increases during the adoption leave period.

Employees are required to return to work for a minimum of 12 weeks at the end of their adoption leave period to qualify for OAP. If employees do not return for the required time then any OAP paid to them will be claimed back. If employees are unsure of their intentions to return, they can elect to have their OAP deferred and paid usually in a lump sum at a later date.

If an employee has more than one contract of employment with the Council and only returns to one of these contracts, they will not be required to pay back any OAP, provided they complete 12 weeks service in at least one of their contracts.

Employees are not required to pay back any SAP received, even if they do not return to work.

6.4 Other entitlements and requirements

Those taking adoption leave are also entitled to the same protections as those on maternity leave. Please see section 3.5 for other related entitlements and requirements. Where maternity is mentioned adoption should be substituted, likewise SMP/OMP with SAP/OAP.

6.5 Specific adoption cases

Foster carers who adopt

Ordinarily foster carers are not eligible for adoption leave and pay. However, the main prospective adopter who has a child placed with the under section 22C of the Children Act 1989 with a view to them adopting that child (sometimes referred to as "fostering for adoption"), are entitled to adoption pay and leave from when the child comes to live with them (initially for fostering). The partner or secondary adopter may be entitled to paternity leave and pay.

Adoption through surrogacy

The main intended parent in surrogacy arrangement, where they are eligible for and intend to apply for a Parental Order making them legal parents of the child, are entitled to adoption pay and leave.

To qualify for adoption leave:

- employees will have to give the Council a 'statutory declaration' (i.e. written declaration signed by the individual in the presence of a qualified person, such as a solicitor) confirming they intend to apply for a parental order in the 6 months after the baby's birth
- employees have to tell the council at least 15 weeks before the due date, when the baby is due and when they want their adoption leave to start.

To qualify for adoption pay:

Statutory Adoption Pay	To qualify for SAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 26 weeks continuous service with Walsall Council by the 15th week before the baby is due and their average weekly earnings must not be less than the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.
Occupational Adoption Pay	To qualify for OAP employees need to have completed a minimum of 1 year's continuous service by the 15 th week before the baby is due.

The partner or second Parental Order parent may be entitled to paternity leave and pay or shared parental leave.

Where the Parental Order is refused by the court the adoption leave will end 8 weeks later or at the end of the 52 weeks, whichever is earlier.

Both intended Parental Order parents are entitled to take unpaid leave to accompany the surrogate mother to up to 2 for her antenatal appointments (up to 6.5 hours for each appointment) that have been made on the advice of a medical practitioner. Where the parental order parent is the biological father they are entitled to paid time off to attend up to 2 appointments (this is a maximum of 2 appointments, not 2 as the biological father and 2 as the parental order parent).

7.0 Paternity Policy

Employees may be entitled to Paternity Leave where their partner is having a baby, where they are adopting a child or having a baby through surrogacy arrangements. Whilst this will normally apply to fathers, same sex partners may be entitled providing they meet the eligibility criteria.

7.1 Entitlement to Paternity Leave

Fathers to be / adoptive fathers (or same sex partners) are entitled to take one or two week's paternity leave at or within 56 days of the birth (or placement for adoption). Leave cannot start before the birth or in adoption cases the date of placement. Employees can choose to take one week or two weeks as leave, however this must be as one block of leave not as separate weeks.

Only one period of leave is provided per pregnancy/adoption process regardless of the number of children.

To be eligible for Paternity Leave, employees must be:

- The biological father, or are married to the mother, or are a partner of the mother (or main adopter), or are the intended parent (if having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement), and;
- Will be taking leave to care for the child and / or support the mother, and;
- Have 26 weeks continuous service with Walsall Council by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due (or by the 'matching week' in adoption cases), and;
- Have been employed continuously from the 15th week before the baby is due until the actual date of birth (qualifying week).

7.2 Eligibility for Statutory Paternity Pay

Employees who qualify for Statutory Paternity Leave will also qualify for Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) provided they are earning at least the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance at the end of the Qualifying Week.

Fathers to be / adoptive fathers (or same sex partners) are entitled to one week at full pay and one week at Statutory Paternity Pay when taking Paternity Leave.

The rate of Statutory Paternity Pay will be the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay.

7.3 Notice required for Paternity Leave and Pay

To receive SPP and take paternity leave the employee must provide the following information in writing to the manager by the end of the 15th week before EWC;

- the date of EWC.

- the length of leave requested
- the date the leave is intended to start

Employees are required to complete a Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave Application Form.

8.0 Maternity Support Policy

Maternity Support Leave (MSL) of 5 days with pay is provided under the NJC Conditions of Service for Local Government Services (the Green Book). It is special leave which may be granted in addition to annual leave to employees to support an expectant mother. Some employees may also be eligible to apply for Paternity Leave, and they should select the Scheme which is most suitable for them.

Employees should complete the Paternity Leave/Maternity Support Leave Application Form.

8.1 Eligibility for maternity support leave

The Scheme applies to all employees irrespective of their length of service with the Council. In most cases this will be the child's father or co-parent. However, in certain circumstances the mother may need to nominate an alternative person to be the primary provider of care or support on or around the time of the birth, for example, if the father is in the forces abroad. This individual is called the "nominated person" and is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of birth. In all cases the employee applying for MSL will be expected to produce the original MATB1 which confirms the mother's expected date of childbirth.

8.2 Period of leave

Employees applying for maternity support leave will be granted 5 days leave with pay at or around the time (within 56 days) of birth. Leave cannot start before the birth or in adoption cases the date of placement.

8.3 Maternity Support Leave & Paternity Leave

An employee may be eligible for both Maternity Support Leave and Paternity Leave. Those employees who qualify for both will be entitled to:

- 5 days MSL at full pay (MSL offset by SPP);
- the second week as paternity leave at the SPP rate

Employees do not need to take both weeks, but where they do this must be as one block of leave not as separate weeks.

9.0 Shared Parental Leave Policy

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is designed to give parents more choice and flexibility in how they share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption.

SPL allows mothers, fathers, partners and adopters to choose how to share a period of leave between them after their child is born or matched / placed for adoption. This could include both parents being off work at the same time and/or taking it in turns to have periods of leave to look after the child.

9.1 Maternity Leave & Shared Parental Leave

Mothers will continue to be entitled to 52 weeks maternity leave, however SPL allows them flexibility as to whether to take all 52 weeks as maternity leave or share some of their maternity leave with their partner.

Mothers must take two weeks compulsory maternity leave then following this the remaining leave can be taken either as maternity leave or as SPL, provided the mother (or main adopter) has opted out of her maternity leave and both parents meet the required eligibility criteria for SPL.

Fathers / partners will continue to be entitled to two weeks paternity leave immediately after a child's birth, following which they will be able to apply for SPL, provided the mother (or main adopter) has opted out of her maternity leave and both parents meet the required eligibility criteria for SPL.

Parents can choose to opt into SPL at any point providing that there is some untaken maternity leave left to share.

The combined leave taken by both parents in total must not exceed 52 weeks (including any maternity leave or adoption leave).

9.2 Eligibility for Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

To qualify for SPL;

- the mother must have ended her period of maternity leave or returned to work;
- and both parents (birth / adoptive parents) must be working and individually meet the following criteria:
 - both parents must have / expect to have main caring responsibilities for the child
 - 26 weeks continuous service with Walsall Council by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) or the notified week of adoption;
 - still be employed in the week before SPL is due to start;

- have given the required notice (see notice requirements - SPL section 8.5);
- have provided any evidence requested;
- the employee's partner must also satisfy the economic activity test (see www.gov.uk), which at the time of writing requires the partner to;
 - have worked for any 26 weeks out of the 66 weeks before the EWC (or the 'matching week' in adoption cases), and;
 - earned at least £390 in total in any 13 of the 66 weeks

Each parent must qualify for SPL in their own right.

For the mother to qualify for SPL she must be entitled to statutory maternity leave (SML) and have curtailed that leave.

For the father/partner to qualify for SPL, the mother must be entitled to SMP/maternity allowance/ SML, and have curtailed that pay/allowance/leave.

9.3 Eligibility for Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

To qualify for ShPP;

- the employees' average salary for 8 weeks before the 15th week before the EWC must be at least the lower earnings limit (the current limit can be checked on www.gov.uk).
- The employee must have 26 weeks continuous service with Walsall Council by the end of the 15th week before the EWC.
- Have given the required notice (see notice requirements - ShPP section 8.5).

Each parent must qualify for ShPP in their own right.

9.4 Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) entitlement

ShPP entitlement is equivalent to SMP entitlement and is paid at the same rate.

Shared Parental Leave period	Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)
Weeks 3 - 6	90% of employees average weekly earnings This will be the average weekly earnings of the employee who is on leave during that particular week
Weeks 7 - 39	SMP standard rate Where employees normal earnings are lower than SMP, they will receive 90% of normal earnings instead of SMP rate

Weeks 1-2 will be compulsory maternity leave for which the mother will receive SMP. Total statutory pay will not exceed 39 weeks combined. Adopters must take at least two weeks adoption leave to be able to access shared parental leave.

9.5 Notice requirements for SPL and ShPP

Mothers/Adopters are required to provide written notice in order to end their maternity/adoption leave before being eligible for SPL.

Employees are required to provide at least 8 weeks written notice of their intention to take SPL prior to SPL commencing (unless the child is born early and this has not been possible). This first notification should include an indication of the expected pattern of leave they will be taking; however the pattern of leave is not binding at this stage. Form SPL1 details the information which must be provided when informing the Council of the intention to take SPL.

Both parents have to notify their employers.

Employees are required to provide at least 8 weeks written notice of each period of shared parental leave they will be taking. Any notice given to take SPL is binding once submitted, unless notice was given before the birth, in which case employees can change their mind up to 6 weeks after the birth. If a mother revokes her notice following the birth she will be able to opt into SPL at a later date.

Employees are able to notify the Council up to a maximum of three times to request periods of leave and/or any changes to the leave periods they have requested (the original notification and up to two further notifications or changes). Any change requests to previously notified arrangements which are mutually agreed as changes between the Council and the employee can be made as long as both parties agree and these will not count towards the maximum of three notifications allowed.

9.6 Requesting shared parental leave

Once employees have provided written notice of their entitlement and intention to take SPL, they must book each period of leave, providing at least 8 weeks written notice before the start of each period of leave using Form SPL2. Employees can submit up to three separate notices (including any change requests for previously booked periods of leave – where change requests are mutually agreeable they do not count towards the maximum of 3 requests that can be submitted).

Each notice can be for a block of continuous leave, or the notice may request a pattern of discontinuous leave involving different periods of leave.

Requests for a continuous block of leave will be granted. The Council may attempt to discuss and seek agreement to modify a continuous leave requests, however employees are under no obligation to accept any modifications to a continuous leave request.

Requests for a discontinuous block of leave will be considered in line with the needs of the service. The outcome which, will be provided within 14 calendar days of the request being received, may be anyone of the following;

1. That the request for a discontinuous block of leave is granted
2. That an alternative pattern of either discontinuous or continuous leave (as appropriate to the service) is proposed by the Council and agreement sought with the employee
3. That the discontinuous leave request be refused

Where the outcome is either option 2 or 3 the employee can withdraw their request on or before the 15th day after the request was originally made and it will not count as one of their three requests. If the employee does not withdraw their request, they must take the total amount of leave they had requested in one continuous block. The employee can choose when this leave period will begin within 19 days (i.e. 5 days after the 14th day) of the date the request was given to the employer but it cannot start sooner than the initially requested start date. If the employee does not request an alternative start date within the 19 day period, the leave will begin on the starting date stated in the original request.

9.7 Right to retain a job

If the period of leave does not exceed 26 weeks, the employee has the right to return to the same job. This will apply whether or not the leave is taken continuously. If the period of leave exceeds 26 weeks, the employee has a right to return to the same job or, if not reasonably practicable, a similar job.

9.8 Shared Parental Leave in touch (SPLIT) days

Each employee may take up to 20 in-touch (SPLIT) days during a period of shared parental leave without it bringing the leave to an end. These 20 days are in addition to the 10 'Keeping In Touch' (KIT) days that are available to those on maternity or adoption leave.

SPLIT days follow the same principles as KIT days.

9.9 Shared parental leave in adoption and surrogacy

Shared parental leave will also be available to adoptive parents and intended parents through surrogacy. The following points apply:

- Adopters will have the same rights as other parents to maternity leave and pay and if eligible, will be entitled to share parental leave.
- Surrogate parents who meet the criteria to apply for a Parental Order will be eligible for statutory adoption leave and pay and shared parental leave and pay again if they meet the qualifying criteria.

10. Ordinary Parental Leave Policy

Ordinary parental leave (OPL) is separate to shared parental leave (SPL) and entitles eligible employees the right to take 18 weeks unpaid time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the welfare of a child.

OPL is available to both male and female employees, irrespective of any current working arrangements or previous applications. OPL is granted per child born or adoptee, and not per employee, so in the case of twins or multiple adoptions (i.e. twins or siblings adopted at the same time) parents' entitlement is per child.

Employees remain employed during any period of unpaid parental leave and are not permitted to use their parental leave to take up any other employment.

Employees can use their OPL for a variety of reasons, such as;

- To spend more time with a child
- To support a child whilst in hospital
- To investigate nurseries or schools or to make other caring arrangements

10.1 Eligibility for OPL

To qualify for OPL the employee:

- Must have at least 1 year's continuous service;
- Must be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate, or have/expected to have parental responsibility for a child, and;
- The child is under 18 years of age

Foster parents are not eligible for OPL unless they have secured parental responsibility through the courts.

10.2 OPL entitlement

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave in total for each child. Leave can be taken at any point once the child is born or matched / placed for adoption, up to the child's 18th birthday. The limit on how much OPL each employee can take in a year is 4 weeks per child.

OPL may be taken as:

- A single block of up to 4 weeks in any one year, or;
- A number of shorter blocks of leave that must be taken in multiples of a week, unless the child is disabled, in which case the leave can be taken in individual days.

Employees who work part time will have their OPL allowance on a pro-rata basis. Therefore a week's leave will be equal to the length of time that employee normally

works during a week, i.e. 5 days for an employee who works Monday through to Friday or 2 days for an employee who works Tuesday and Wednesday only.

10.4 Applying for a period of unpaid OPL

Form OPL1 is required to be submitted giving a minimum of 21 days notice of a request to take ordinary parental leave.

The provisions in place in respect of fathers who wish to take a period of parental leave beginning when their child is born are slightly different. In this case, the notice must be given at least 21 days before the expected week of childbirth, and must specify the expected week of childbirth and the duration of the period of parental leave requested.

Similarly, where parental leave is requested to begin on an adopted child's placement, the employee's notice must be given at least 21 days before the beginning of the week in which the child is to be placed for adoption, or as soon as is reasonably practicable thereafter. The notice must specify the week in which the adoption placement is expected to occur and the duration of the period of parental leave requested.

10.5 Postponement of OPL

In most cases, a period of OPL requested by an employee may be postponed if the employee's absence at the time requested would cause undue disruption to the business. If this is the case, the line manager must:

- give the employee written notice of the postponement;
- state the reason why the postponement is necessary; and
- suggest alternative dates for the employee to take an equivalent period of parental leave within the next six months.

The notice of postponement must be given to the employee no more than seven days after receipt of the employee's notice requesting OPL.

The manager may not, however, postpone OPL where the period of leave has been requested to coincide with the birth of the child or the child's adoptive placement. This is the case irrespective of whether the dates requested are likely to cause inconvenience or disruption to the business.

10.6 Rights on return to work after OPL

Employees are not required to give any specific notice of their return from OPL, as the return date will have been agreed at the outset. The employee should simply turn up for work in the usual way on the appropriate date.

10.7 Pay and benefits during OPL

Terms and conditions remain the same for employees on OPL except the period of leave is unpaid. Time taken is treated as continuous service and employees continue to accrue annual leave and other holiday entitlements regardless of how the leave is taken.

Employees who are sick during OPL are entitled to sick pay (on provision of GP fit note) and they will be entitled to claim back the OPL entitlement.

10.8 Pension

If the employee is member of the local government pension scheme, the employee will be offered the opportunity to pay for the missing service at the end of their break, and should discuss how to do this with Payroll.

If the employee does not pay any contributions during this time, the period will not count as service for pension purposes.

11.0 Fostering Friendly Policy

The council recognises and values the contribution that foster carers make to the lives of children and young people in care. We understand that foster carers will need some flexibility in their working arrangements in order that they can meet the needs of their fostered child or young person.

The council is committed to support any staff member who is a foster carer or approved kinship carer. We will do this, wherever possible, by creating a fostering friendly organisation that offers flexible working arrangements which respond to the needs of all staff who are foster carers or approved kinship carers.

11.1 Entitlement to foster care leave

There is no statutory right to time off work to care for foster children. However, the council will allow employees paid leave if they meet the following eligibility criteria;

- they have completed a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service by the time they want to take foster care leave;
- they are registered as a foster carer, or are applying to become a carer, with a local authority or registered foster care agency, and have proof of fostering (confirmed by a local authority as the corporate parent);
- they have, or expect to have, responsibility for a 'looked after child' (where a local authority is the child's corporate parent), and the leave is for the purpose of attending training and meetings related to a fostering placement. The placement can range from weekend respite through short term to long term and permanent arrangements.

It does not apply to the care of children who are family members, unless the employee is caring for a child under Regulation 24 arrangements as an approved connected foster carer or under a Child Arrangement Order or a Special Guardianship Order.

11.2 Foster care leave

The council recognises that employees interested in fostering must go through a robust assessment process and intensive training before they can be approved. Therefore, an employee applying to become a registered foster carer may take up to 5 days paid leave to attend pre-approval training, assessment and panel process to becoming a foster carer.

An employee who is a registered foster carer may take up to a maximum of 7 days paid leave per year whilst a child or children are placed with them. This maximum is regardless of the number of children or placements that the employee has. In addition, the employee may have paid time off to attend their statutory 6 monthly meetings.

The paid leave may be used at the commencement of a placement to help settle the child or to ensure child care arrangements can be put in place or to attend meetings, home visits or mandatory training related to the fostering placement.

Foster care leave is pro rata for part time employees.

Where a couple are applying to become foster carers and both are employees of the council each employee will be entitled to the above leave.

Leave may be taken in half or whole days, subject to the needs of the service. Documentary evidence that a placement is due to start or that the employee is required to attend meetings or training must be provided for approval of time off.

There is no legal entitlement to leave for fostering purposes; therefore under this procedure any leave not taken in a year cannot be carried forward to the following year.

Where additional leave is require beyond the 7 days employees may request to take annual leave, flexi leave, time off in lieu (TOIL) or unpaid leave. The manager will consider these requests in line with service delivery needs.

Foster to adopt

A foster carer who is approved as a prospective adopter, and the child is placed with them in a “foster to adopt” situation will be entitled to adoption leave and pay.

Other leave or working provision

Foster carers are entitled to the usual unpaid leave provisions, with the exception of Unpaid Parental Leave. There is no statutory right to unpaid parental leave for foster carers.

Employees may take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with emergencies concerning a foster child, such as when a child falls ill or is injured, or to deal with an incident which involves a child which occurs unexpectedly at an educational establishment. Time off in this instance is unpaid.

Employees are expected to use annual leave or flexi-leave to cover known caring commitments.

Employees may wish to consider making a change to their working arrangement; this can be considered in accordance with the right to request flexible working policy.

11.3 Expectations of managers and employees

The council recognises that foster carers will often need additional time off work as part of successful fostering. Managers should be sympathetic to requests for time off work and flexible working arrangements, and seek to accommodate these where there is no major detrimental effect on the service.

Employees are expected to minimise their request for leave by seeking to arrange meetings, home visits and training sessions etc in their own time. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible, in this case the employee should make requests for leave as far in advance as possible in order for requests to be properly considered and to enable cover arrangements to be made where required.

11.4 Requesting foster care leave

An employee who wishes to take foster care leave should give reasonable notice (at least 2 weeks' where possible) of the intention to take leave and set out the dates on which leave is to begin and end.

Documentary evidence must be provided by the employee for approval of time off with pay. If there are any confidentiality issues regarding supplying letters already held by the employee as supporting evidence, then the employee may request verification from their Family Support Worker or relevant local authority.

Leave will be authorised by the line manager, who will take into account the nature of the request and the needs of the service. There may be occasions when, due to service needs or insufficient notice, the manager may not be able to accommodate a request for leave.

11.5 Record of foster care leave

Foster care leave should be recorded on the employee's leave record card or a record kept by the line manager under the scheme used locally to record all leave.

Appendix 1 – Maternity Key Stages / Accountabilities

Significant Event Timeline requirements	Manager's Accountabilities	Employee's Accountabilities
Notification of pregnancy: As soon as applicable BUT prior to week 25 of pregnancy	Complete a Risk Assessment once informed of the employees pregnancy and review regularly.	Notify your manager of your pregnancy. Maternity information can be viewed at www.tommys.org
Submission of MATB1 As soon as supplied by Midwife / GP / Hospital	Send the MATB1 and application form to HR Payroll Services	Provide MATB1 form to manager with a completed Maternity Leave and Pay Provisions Application Form.
11 weeks before Expected week of confinement		This is the EARLIEST you can start your maternity leave
Period of sickness within 4 weeks of EWC	If an employee reports in sick during this time with a pregnancy related absence, Payroll should be instructed to commence an employee's maternity leave. The employee should be notified that this is the case.	
Week 39 of pregnancy or before (as appropriate)	Discuss the handover of any work. Consider the most appropriate way to deal with any outstanding annual leave.	
Week 40 of pregnancy	Confirm the start of the Maternity Leave.	If surrendering car parking permit return it to parking services.
During Maternity Leave	Send documents listed in 5.4.2 on a regular basis. Complete the Return to Work notification form. Arrange Keeping In Touch (KIT) days Discuss working arrangements post return to work Agree how annual leave will be taken following return to work (if any is going to be used)	Provide your manager with a copy of the child's birth certificate. Advise your manager if you wish to return from maternity leave early – 8 weeks' notice is required.
Upon return to work	Complete 'New Mother's Risk Assessment' – particularly important if the employee is breastfeeding Advise employee of facilities available for breastfeeding etc	Advise manager if you are breastfeeding.

Appendix 2 – Summary of Maternity Entitlement

Service at the beginning of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth*	Pay entitlement	Leave entitlement
Less than 26 weeks service with Walsall Council and less than 1 year Local Government Service	No Statutory Maternity Pay - may be entitled to claim Maternity Allowance No Occupational Maternity Pay	Ordinary Maternity Leave 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave 26 weeks i.e. 52 weeks in total
Less than 26 weeks service with Walsall Council but more than 1 year Local Government Service	No Statutory Maternity Pay - may be entitled to claim Maternity Allowance Entitled to Occupational Maternity Pay: Weeks 1-6 90% of normal pay Weeks 7-18 half pay (repayable if do not return to work for a minimum of 12 weeks) (OMP offset against any MA payments – the total cannot exceed normal pay.)	Ordinary Maternity Leave 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave 26 weeks i.e. 52 weeks in total
More than 26 weeks service with Walsall Council but less than 1 year Local Government Service	Entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay** Weeks 1-6 90% of normal pay Weeks 7-39 SMP rate (dependent on earnings) No Occupational Maternity Pay	Ordinary Maternity Leave 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave 26 weeks i.e. 52 weeks in total
More than 26 weeks service with Walsall Council and more than 1 year Local Government Service	Entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay** 39 weeks (dependent on earnings) Entitled to Occupational Maternity Pay: Weeks 1-6 90% of normal pay Weeks 7-18 half pay (repayable if do not return to work for a minimum of 12 weeks) (OMP offset against any SMP or MA payments – the total cannot exceed normal pay.)	Ordinary Maternity Leave 26 weeks Additional Maternity Leave 26 weeks i.e. 52 weeks in total

Adoption leave and pay entitlements mirrors that of maternity.

*for UK adoptions - service requirement is by the week in which notified of having been matched with the child (i.e. the 'matching week'),

**to qualify for SMP average earnings must be above the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions, where this is not the case a claim may be made for Maternity Allowance.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Family Friendly Procedure		
Directorate	Resources and Transformation		
Service	HR Strategy and Planning Team		
Responsible Officer	Nicola Rickhuss		
EqIA Author	Rebecca Lloyd		
Date proposal started	February 2016	Proposal commencement date (due or actual)	October 2016 - Review September 2019 - Review November 2022

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Policy	Yes	Revision
	Procedure	Yes	Revision
	Internal service	Yes	N/A
	External service	No	N/A
	Other - give details	N/A	N/A

2	What are the intended outcomes, reasons for change, who will it affect? (The business case)
	<p>The Family Friendly Procedure sets out Council approach to the management of a number of internal procedures which are the interpretation of legislative requirements relating to maternity, paternity and shared parental leave. This policy is a key element of our employment practices and it is vital that it meets the needs of the employees and managers who use it.</p> <p>This procedure is in part a revision of the existing Family Friendly Procedure implemented April 2015. The Procedure now incorporates Adoption leave and Pay, and Maternity Support leave, which are currently separate documents. This now brings together all of the options regarding the operation of leave around the birth or adoption of a child in one procedure. This revised Family Friendly Procedure also introduces paid time off for foster carers.</p>

Legislative changes to adoption provision have now been included in the Family Friendly Procedure, including:

- Adoption leave as a day one right (rather than having to have 26 weeks service);
- Statutory Adoption Pay mirroring Statutory Maternity Pay;
- New groups being eligible for adoption leave and pay (i.e. 'fostering for adoption' situations and surrogate 'parental order' parents);
- Right to paid time off to attend up to 5 adoption appointments.

Further amendments have been made to the adoption procedure whilst transferring it into Family Friendly Procedure:

- Amendment to the Occupational Adoption Pay scheme to mirror the Occupational Maternity Pay scheme (given that Statutory Adoption Pay has changed).
- Removal of the scope allowing for paid time off in relation to the adoption of step children, as statutory adoption regulations exclude adoptions of step children.
- Removal of the phased return to work following adoption leave as this was previously removed for maternity leave. Phased return can be done by the provisions of the keeping in touch days and annual leave.

Other minor amendments have also been made to the Family Friendly procedure for clarification following queries received over the past 12 months and the integration of procedures into one document. These include:

- Amendment to the notice required if employees wish to return to work before the end of the 52 week entitlement for maternity and adoption leave, to 8 weeks' notice in line with statutory rights;
- Changes to antenatal provision for intended parents in surrogacy cases, clarifying where the intended parent is the biological father;
- Clarification on SPLIT and KIT days under Shared Parental Leave;
- Clarification of unpaid parental leave up to the child's 18th birthday.
- Rewording of the paternity leave section to give clarification on when time off can be taken.
- Maternity Support Leave, which is a separate document on the HR intranet has also been inserted into the procedure.

With regards to foster care leave; Foster Carers currently have no statutory right to time off work to care for foster children, as the parental responsibility is considered to be with the local authority. However, many organisations and local authorities are adopting a fostering friendly approach. It shows the council as a modern and caring employer, which looks to attract people to work from across our communities, and supports the corporate parenting responsibility given to the local authority.

The foster care leave section includes up to 5 days paid leave for attending training and assessments before being approved as a foster carer. This mirrors the adoption procedure where 5 days paid leave is given to attend the adoption preparation course. Following the initial assessment, once they are registered as foster carer with a placement the procedure allows up to 5 days paid leave per year. From benchmarking this is within the range offered by other local authorities (between 3 and 10 days) and is the most common allowance from those benchmarked.

3 Summarise your evidence, engagement and consultation.

A first draft of the revised Family Friendly Procedure was consulted on with the wider HR management team between 23 March and 8 April 2016. The draft was approved by HRSMT on 3 June following discussions with the HR Portfolio Holder (Councillor Nawaz) on the inclusion of the Foster Care Leave.

A draft was then sent out to consultation with the ADs/Head of Service and the Trade Unions/Professional Associations between 8th June and 27 June 2016.

The trade unions did not comment on the revisions and were not opposed to the procedure including Adoption Pay and Leave, Maternity Support Leave and Foster Care Leave.

A following consultation changes were made to the draft procedure and it went back to HRSMT for approval on 17 August.

The Family Friendly Procedure will be submitted to CMT 8 September 2016 and will taken to the next available Personnel Committee (14 September 2016) for sign off as this relates to pay.

As of 31 March 2016 the total number of Walsall Council employees (excluding Schools) was 3635. In total there were 160 (4.4%) employees who declared they had a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, some of these may require communication in a different format.

4 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group?	
Characteristic	Affect
Age	No impact foreseen.
Disability	Potential impact on employees who require reasonable adjustments for communication and for those who do not understand the procedure e.g. employees with learning disabilities.
Gender reassignment	No impact foreseen.
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact foreseen. The procedure allows civil for partnerships and situations where no legal marriage has taken place
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential impact for people who are on maternity, adoption or paternity leave and are not updated about the procedure. However, the procedure will only apply to those looking to access the provisions anew after the procedure is implemented. Any statutory provisions due to an employee already on maternity, paternity or adoption leave will have been given.
Race	Potential impact on those employees whose first language is not English as they may not understand the procedure
Religion or belief	No impact foreseen

Sex	No impact foreseen. The procedure allows for more flexible taking of leave related to adoption, fostering and maternity support regardless of gender.
Sexual orientation	No impact foreseen.
Other (give detail)	N/A
Further information	N/A

5	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative affect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details	(Delete one) No
	N/A	

6	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation suggest you take? (Bold which one applies)	
	A	No major change required
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal

Action and monitoring plan

Date	Responsibility	Action
Day of launch	Directorate Support Team	Alternative formats (audio and Easy Read) for disabled employees of the new policy will be made available on request.
Day of launch	Directorate Support Team	The policy will be made available in other languages on request for employees whose first language is not English.
12 months after launch date	Strategy and Planning Team	There is a statutory requirement to review and publish this policy annually.

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Reviewed August 2019

The following have been amended:

1. It has been agreed that the current suite of HR policies and procedures will be reviewed across the board to align with the Walsall Proud Programme and the council's vision, values and behaviours. As part of the review the policy has been re-formatted and redesigned to reflect the following principles;
 - Alignment with Walsall Proud Programme and vision;
 - Clear identification of accountabilities in line with behaviours;
 - Clear, consistent and concise policy containing easily identifiable principles and procedure;
 - Streamlined detail in the policy document with more in-depth guidance provided in the supporting documents.
2. Clarification of occupational maternity / adoption pay entitlement based on service with an easy to read table in appendix two of the policy.
3. Removal of reference to childcare tax savings, due to changes in salary sacrifice legislation closing the childcare voucher scheme to new applicants.
4. Reference included to the new entitlement to parental bereavement leave (section 5.5.16), subject to the implementation of the Parental Bereavement (Pay and Leave) Act anticipated in April 2020. The procedure for parental bereavement leave is in the Leave and Time Off policy with all other forms of compassionate leave.
5. Removal of the section on time off for IVF treatment, as this is already in the Leave and Time Off policy where time off for all other medical appointments can be found.

Reviewed November 2022

The following has been amended in Section 11:

- Title changed from Foster Care Leave to Fostering Friendly Policy
- Introductory two paragraphs on the Council's commitment to supporting foster carers.
- Section 11.1 – amendment to who is entitled to foster leave.
- Section 11.2 – increasing the maximum days paid leave per year from 5 to 7 days, with additional time off to attend the statutory 6 monthly meetings.

Consultation took place between 2 and 11 November 2022 with senior managers and trade unions colleagues. Feedback on the changes from senior managers has all been positive with no issues being raised. Feedback from trade union colleagues raised no issues or comments that needed addressing.

As of 31 March 2022 the total number of Walsall Council employees (excluding Schools) were 2998.

The Council's workforce is made up of 66.94% females. 21.68% of the workforce are classified as under-represented ethnic groups (i.e. those excluding White British ethnicity). In total there were 133 employees (4.44% of the workforce) who declared they had a disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Of Walsall Council employees 3.20% are in the age group under 25, 24.35% in age group 25-39, 24.72% are in the age group 40-49, 44.09% are in the age group 50-64, and 3.64% are in the age group 65 and over.

Personnel Committee – 5 December 2022

Soulbury Pay Scale for Educational Psychologists

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To gain Personnel Committee approval to adopt all spinal column points within the Soulbury Pay Scale for Educational Psychologists, endorsed by Corporate Management Team (CMT) at its meeting of 17 November 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the change of spinal column points (SCP) within Soulbury Pay Scales for Educational Psychologists.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 The Soulbury Agreement allows Local Authorities to choose a scale of 6 continuous points (+3 SPAs) on which to pay main-grade Educational Psychologists (EP).
- 3.2 There is a shortage of EPs locally and nationally and competition to recruit is high.
- 3.3 There are currently 6.31 known vacancies from December 2022.
- 3.4 Recruitment activity is a priority for Children's Services as the EP service will be unable to function unless pending recruitment campaigns are successful. This high vacancy rate means the council is reliant on expensive locum cover to meet statutory obligations in relation to EHCP assessments.
- 3.5 Walsall Council have previously approved the use of scales 2–10 (and currently use these) of the national Soulbury pay scales. However, the national scales span from 1-11 and neighbouring authorities have advertised/are advertising on the scale 3-11 often with point 5 as a minimum start point. Please see appendix 1 for comparison data provided by Children's Services.

Aim

- 3.6 To remain competitive and attract applicants Walsall Council need to at least match remuneration offered by other West Midlands LAs. There is strong demand from schools to purchase EP time through our trading model. If we are unable to meet this, they will resort to private arrangements and the LA/EP service will lose an important funding stream further exacerbating recruitment, statutory functions and overall viability.
- 3.7 This report seeks to increase the pay scale range used by Walsall Council so that the maximum SCP of 11 on the national Soulbury scales can be used.

3.8 Currently Walsall Council's 6 continuous points are paid at Soulbury EP Scale A, points 2-7 (+3 SPA points equating to a maximum point 10). The proposal is to change this to Soulbury EP Scale A, points 3-8 (+3 SPA points) therefore using the maximum point 11 of the national scales and changing Walsall Council scales from 2-10 to 3-11.

Know

3.9 The proposed change will support recruitment activity and therefore reduce dependence on locums leading to a cost saving in the longer term.

Our Council Plan priorities

3.10 The policy is directly aligned to the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focused, effective, efficient and equitable and helps support the delivery of our Employee Satisfaction Proud promise.

Response

3.11 Subject to approval, HR will amend the Walsall Council Soulbury payscales so they mirror the National Soulbury scales of SCP 3-11 for EP's (this will have no immediate effect/impact as no one is currently receiving SCP 2 so will not affect any individuals it will simply open up the head room for future progression).

Review

3.12 The Soulbury Pay Scales are reviewed annually in line with the national pay award and are formally published as part of the Pay Policy Statement reviewed each year.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The 2022/23 staffing budget for Educational Psychology (EP) team is £775k. This is based on the following structure:

Post Title	No FTE	Budget £
Principal EP Manager	1.00	82,512
Senior EP Manager	2.20	175,389
EPs	7.31	472,167
Trainee EP	1.00	44,834
Total	11.51	774,902

4.2 Of the 7.31 EP posts, 6.31 will be vacant by December 2022. Within the budget above, all vacant posts are budgeted for at the lowest scale point (currently PA2) which equates to £53,944 per FTE.

4.3 Following the proposal to regrade the posts to PA3-8, the budget for vacant posts would need to be increased to £56,614, an increase of £2,670 per post. Investment of £16,848 would be required to permanently regrade these posts. Potential funding options are being explored including use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

- 4.4 Agency staff are currently in place of permanent staff to cover the Council's statutory duty linked to the completion Educational Psychology assessments. The demand for these assessments varies month on month.
- 4.5 Based on an EP solely completing EP assessments, a full time worker could complete up to 120 assessments per year at a cost of £56,614 based PA3. In comparison, the current costs for agency to complete an EP assessment is £1,205 per assessment. Therefore 120 assessments would cost £144,600 per year, £87,986 more than a permanent member of staff.
- 4.7 As at October 2022, there is a forecast agency spend within EPs of £858k offset by (£519k) underspend on vacant posts. Therefore there is a current forecast overspend of £339k included in the forecasted financial position. The aim of this proposal is to support recruitment and retention and reduce overall dependency on agency going forward.

5. Legal Considerations

- 5.1 There are no anticipated legal issues arising from this report.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Not applicable

Author

Nic Rickhuss
HR Manager – Strategy & Planning
Human Resources
☎ 655617
✉ nicola.rickhuss@walsall.gov.uk

Soulbury Pay Scales for Educational Psychologists

Main-grade

LA	Date of Ad	Salary as per Ad	Overall range including SPAs.
Solihull	Jan 22	£42,075 - £51,538 (plus 3 SPA £56,554) pro rata	3-11
Stoke	Feb 22	£42,075.00 - £51,538.00	3-11
W'ton	Feb 22	£42,075 - £49,714 (plus up to 3 SPA points)	2-10 *Uplifted in July Advert
Birmingham	Feb 22	£42,075 - £51,538 plus 3 SPA (Scale A points 3-8 plus 3 SPA) our starting point will be point 5	3-11 (minimum start point 5)
Staffs	April 22	Salary: £40,438- £55, 921 per annum (pro rata):	2-10 *Re-advertised 4-11 in May
Staffs	06 May 2022	£44,782- £54,440 per annum (pro rata)	4-11
Warwickshire	April 2022	£42,811 - £52,440 per annum plus up to 3 SPAs	3-11
Telford	June 2022	Soulbury Scale A pts 2 -7 £40,136- £49,714 (plus up to 3 SPA available) Posted	2-10
Wolverhampton	Jul/Aug?	Salary, £42,811 - £52,440 (plus up to 3 SPA points)	3-11
Coventry	August 2022	£38865 - £57544	1-11
Warwickshire	August 2022	£42,811 - £57,544 -	3-11
Worcs.	Sept 2022	£42,811- £52,440 Plus up to 3 SPA points	3-11
Birmingham	Sept 2022	A point 3-8: £42,075 – £51,538 Plus up to 3SPAs It is expected that the successful candidates will start from point 5	3-11 minimum start point 5
Wolverhampton	October 2022	Salary, £42,811 - £52,440 (plus up to 3 SPA points)	3-11

Personnel Committee – 5 December 2022

Chief Officers and Chief Executive – Additional Days Annual Leave.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To gain Personnel Committee approval for Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Chief Officers and the Chief Executive (subject to pending CE pay agreement not confirming an annual leave increase) to be awarded one additional days annual leave effective from the 1st April 2023 in line with the 2022 NJC pay agreement that has granted the same to NJC employees.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve one additional days annual leave to be awarded to JNC Chief Officers and the Chief Executive (subject to pending CE pay agreement not confirming an annual leave increase) effective from 1st April 2023.

3. Background Information

Aim

- 3.1 The aim of this report and the recommendation at 2.1 is to ensure that JNC Chief Officers and JNC Chief Executives annual leave entitlements are not any less favourable than that of senior (grade 10+) NJC staff as a result of the NJC pay agreement.

Know

- 3.2 The 2022 pay agreement for all NJC staff has confirmed one additional days annual leave to be awarded from the 1st April 2023. This increase will mean an employee on NJC grade 10+ will be entitled to a minimum of 29 days and maximum 34 days annual leave (with 5 years continuous service).
- 3.2 The 2022 pay agreement for JNC Chief Officers has not stipulated an increase in annual leave, although the pay increase for JNC Chief Officers was on par with the NJC increase – both at £1925.
- 3.3 The 2022 pay agreement for JNC Chief Executives has not yet been confirmed but the claim asks for parity with NJC staff in general. The recommendation in this report in relation to an additional day's annual leave for the Chief Executive assumes that no additional annual leave days are awarded when the pay agreement for JNC Chief Executives is confirmed.
- 3.4 The Council has discretion to award an additional day's annual leave to JNC Chief Officers and the Chief Executive to maintain the parity of an award of one days annual leave but also to maintain parity of leave entitlement overall.

- 3.5 Currently JNC Chief Officers are entitled to a minimum of 30 days annual leave (stipulated in the NJC Chief Officers Handbook) and a maximum of 33 days annual leave (with 5 years continuous service). If Chief Officers do not receive an additional day's annual leave from 1st April 2023, their maximum leave entitlement would be below that of some NJC staff.
- 3.6 Currently JNC Chief Executives are entitled to a minimum of 30 days annual leave (stipulated in the JNC Chief Executives Handbook) and a maximum of 33 days annual leave (with 5 years continuous service). If Chief Executives do not receive an additional day's annual leave from 1st April 2023, their maximum leave entitlement would be below that of some NJC staff.

Our Council Plan priorities

- 3.9 This proposal aligns to the council's strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focussed, effective, efficient and equitable and helps ensure consistency, fairness and transparency.

Response

- 3.10 Subject to approval, the additional day's annual leave will be applied to Chief Officers and the Chief Executives new annual leave year when it commences after 1st April 2023.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs associated with an additional day's annual leave will be picked up by individual service areas budgets.

5. Legal Considerations

- 5.1 There are no specific legal issues anticipated from this report.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 CMT have considered the proposal and are supportive of awarding Chief Officers and the Chief Executive an additional days annual leave in line with the NJC pay agreement which includes an additional days annual leave for all NJC staff.

Author

Nic Rickhuss
HR Manager – Strategy & Planning
Human Resources
✉ nicola.rickhuss@walsall.gov.uk

Sponsoring Director

AUTO SIG

Name of – Executive Director

(Date

Personnel Committee – 5 December 2022

Customer Focused Ways of Working

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To provide an update to Personnel Committee on our Council wide customer focused ways of working, following a reflections briefing note being tabled at Cabinet/ Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 16 November 2022 (Appendix 1).
- 1.2 To seek Personnel Committee support to amend our ways of working principles (as detailed in this report and Appendix 1)

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Personnel Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 Personnel Committee is recommended to approve the following amendments to our ways of working principles:
 - Customer focused ways of working that are designed to deliver the best outcomes for our residents
 - Reconfirmation of policy - 'Work is what you do not where you do it' – an outcomes based approach
 - Managers must manage within the hybrid working environment utilising performance management techniques, management information, setting clear objectives and monitoring delivery, regular communication (one to ones, huddles, face to face meetings and training)
 - Staff will work flexibly based on customer and operational service needs and remain focused on delivering the Council Plan outcomes
 - Previous principle of 'Presence with a Purpose' approach to be removed.

3. Background Information

Aim

- 3.1 This report and accompanying appendix summarises our progress against the resetting through Proud plan agreed by Cabinet in June 2021 and next steps including updating the Council's customer focused ways of working principles. The Council is no longer operating under any day-to-day restrictions driven by the pandemic. The Council is keen to ensure that all the learning and development from the last 2 and a half years is not lost and that we build on what we have learnt to be successful. The Council must continue to adapt our customer focused ways of working so we are fit for the future, efficient and an attractive employer to an increasingly, limited talent pool.
- 3.2 The Council faced the challenges of the pandemic and changed its way of working to safely comply with all Covid-19 regulations. Covid-19 was a catalyst for change - but was not the sole reason for change; it enabled remote and

technologically facilitated customer focused ways of working to be accelerated and benefits achieved more seamlessly than would otherwise have been possible. The Council is choosing this moment to reflect on the lessons learned during this period, look towards the future and ensure we continue to deliver on our council plan and corporate outcomes in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.

Know

- 3.3 Our customer focused ways of working were agreed by Personnel Committee in April 2021 and are outlined below:
- Adopt a policy of ‘Work is what you do not where you do it’
 - Enable staff to work from home unless there is a specific purpose to be in a building or in the community, i.e. there is ‘presence with a purpose’
 - Comply with public health and Government guidelines
 - Make better use of smaller community-based buildings to support our most vulnerable customers
 - Offer a wider range of digital self-serve tools via the Council’s website and Intranet
 - Work with partners to help ensure that our most vulnerable and digitally excluded residents can access the information and support they need close to home.
- 3.4 The actions required to deliver the customer focused ways of working were agreed by Cabinet in June 2021 (Resetting through Proud report). The key themes are identified and reviewed in the attached Cabinet/CMT Briefing Paper (Appendix 1) alongside reflections of our progress and operation in practice. Taking reflections into account, next steps per key theme are also outlined in the briefing note.

Our Council Plan priorities

- 3.5 The Council Plan priorities continue to be delivered within our ways of working principles and the outcomes remain a primary focus for all officers. The proposal of developing and introducing a new Ways of Working Policy for employees and workers subject to Personnel Committee agreement of the amended ways of working principles, aligns to the council’s strategic priority of internal focus ensuring all council services are customer focussed, effective, efficient and equitable and helps ensure consistency, fairness and transparency.

Response

- 3.6 The next steps as outlined in the Cabinet/CMT briefing note (Appendix 1) and accompanying appendix will continue to be progressed and monitored through DMT and CMT. Key items are listed below:
- Refreshing and communicating with SMG and the wider Council our principles and customer focused ways of working
 - Continuing to refresh our offices to reflect output based working
 - New member enquiry process
 - Refreshing the “meet the team” events with members – taking into account member feedback

- Meetings - Appropriate visibility and presence – managers will be reviewing those meetings which will happen in person versus those which will be happening remotely for example APCs, strategic team meetings, training & development, workshops, wellbeing check-in's etc.
- Refreshed training for managers on how to manage in a hybrid way – focusing on regular check ins, including face to face, performance management techniques, expected standards and communication
- Refreshed policies around customer focused ways of working focusing on outcomes including a new Ways of Working Policy to be finalised and launched in the new financial year.

Response

3.7 The council is facing similar sector wide challenges as all local government - with an aging workforce and an increasingly competitive labour market - the Council's customer focused ways of working are critical to creating a modern, thoughtful workplace that attracts, retains and motivates its employees to ensure we deliver on our Council plan and key outcomes. To do this, we remain committed to our customer focused ways of working and delivering on our reset plans whilst taking into account feedback from customers, members and our employees.

3.8 The new Ways of Working Policy will be launched in Q1 (2023) (subject to subsequent Personnel Committee approval) and will become part of the suite of employment policies that govern the expectations of employees and how they work. All employment policies will usually be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, unless legislation or internal organisational need prompt a review earlier.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report – any financial implications or savings related to the estate and investments required will be presented as separate business cases to the appropriate governing committee.

5. Legal Considerations

5.1 The Council remains compliant with its legal duties and there are no direct legal implications arising from this report or amended ways of working principles.

6. Risk Management

6.1 Full equality impact assessments will be undertaken in relation to any employment policy updates or introductions as part of the consultation and approval process for those specific policies (all of which will be subject to Personnel Committee approval).

7. People

7.1 Individually new and amended employment policies include a scope section (where applicable) and in each policy it clearly sets out who the policy applies to and who it does not.

7.2 There is a direct and positive impact on our residents as a result of our amended ways of working principles which have at their core a customer focussed and outcomes based approach aligned to the delivery of Our Council Plan.

8. Consultation

8.1 There is no direct consultation impact arising from this report – as part of the action plan, where a need arises for a consultation, the Council will ensure this is meaningful and fair and adheres to all policies and procedures. In addition all relevant employment policies will be consulted on across the organisation with senior managers and trade union colleagues and this will be the case with the development of a new Ways of Working Policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Cabinet/CMT Briefing Note 16 November 2022 - Customer focused ways of working – reflections a year on

Background papers

25 March 2021 – Blended Working – CMT report

16 June 2021 – Resetting the Council through Proud – Cabinet report

9 Feb 2022 – Customer Focused Customer focused ways of working Update – Cabinet report

16 November 2022 – Customer focused ways of working – reflections a year on – Cabinet/CMT report

Author

Nic Rickhuss
HR Manager – Strategy & Planning
Human Resources
✉ nicola.rickhuss@walsall.gov.uk

Sponsoring Director

AUTO SIG

**Name of – Executive Director
(Date)**

Briefing note

Cabinet/Corporate Management Team – 16 Nov 22

Title: Customer focused ways of working – reflections a year on

Service area: All

Portfolio: All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to reflect and update Cabinet/CMT on our Council wide customer focused ways of working – we must now learn and evolve our customer focused ways of working driven by the pandemic, utilising lessons learned and feedback from our customers, members and employees. This report details progress against the June 2021 action plan, proposes amended blended working principles and next steps for our residents, members and employees taking into account the current context with which we operate within.

2. Aim

- 2.1 This briefing note summarises our progress against the resetting through Proud plan agreed by Cabinet in June 2021 and next steps including updating the Council's customer focused ways of working principles. The Council is no longer operating under any day-to-day restrictions driven by the pandemic. The Council is keen to ensure that all the learning and development from the last 2.5 years is not lost and that we build on what we have learnt to be successful. The Council must continue to adapt our customer focused ways of working so we are fit for the future, efficient and an attractive employer to an increasingly, limited talent pool.
- 2.2 The Council faced the challenges of the pandemic and changed it's way of working to safely comply with all Covid-19 regulations. Covid-19 was a catalyst for change - but was not the sole reason for change; it enabled remote and technologically facilitated customer focused ways of working to be accelerated and benefits achieved more seamlessly than would otherwise have been possible. The Council is choosing this moment to reflect on the lessons learned during this period, look towards the future and ensure we continue to deliver on our council plan and corporate outcomes in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.
- 2.3 This briefing note proposes changes to the Council's ways of working principles – to be taken to Personnel committee for approval.

3. Know

Background/context

- 3.1 Our customer focused ways of working were agreed by Personnel Committee In April 2021. These are outlined below:
- Adopt a policy of “Work is what you do not where you do it”;
 - Enable staff to work from home unless there is a specific purpose to be in a building or in the community, i.e. there is “presence with a purpose”;
 - Comply with public health and Government guidelines.
 - Make better use of smaller community-based buildings to support our most vulnerable customers.
 - Offer a wider range of digital self-serve tools via the Council’s website and Intranet.
 - Work with partners to help ensure that our most vulnerable and digitally excluded residents can access the information and support they need close to home.
- 3.2 The actions required to deliver the customer focused ways of working were agreed by Cabinet in June 2021 (Resetting Through Proud report). The key themes are listed below alongside reflections of our progress and operation in practice. Taking reflections into account, next steps per key theme are outlined below and fully outlined in appendix A.

Allow the public to access services in a safe way and listening to our customers;

Reflections:

- 3.3 The Council allows the public and members to access services in a safe way regardless of where our teams are working. This has been successfully implemented through leveraging technology, focussing on managing by outcomes and listening to customer feedback.
- 3.4 The Council reviewed it’s provision for face to face contact and has responded to the resident’s survey in 2021, where it was highlighted that vulnerable and elderly residents would overwhelmingly prefer to access advice and digital support in locations closer to their own homes, to keep travelling time and transport costs down. Since this, the Council has launched the “Walsall Connected” project alongside trusted partners to help residents access and navigate council services locally and build resilience within the community. The Customer Strategy (approved in Dec 2021) and supported through delivery of the Customer Access & Management workstream has enabled the public to access services through our website and digital channels.
- 3.5 The council has remained accessible to members and will continue to improve our customer focused ways of working with members. Currently 90% (Apr 22 to date) of member enquiries are handled within the timescales agreed – The Council will further improve on this through streamlining the process and utilising technology to ensure all members receive the same level of service.

The Council has introduced “meet the team” events where members can directly access key officers at arranged face to face sessions with teams in the Civic, Council House and Depot. The Council will review these events, consulting with members and taking into account their feedback to reflect on learning about the frequency, format and content of these “meet the team” events.

Next steps:

- 3.6 The Council will continuously seek feedback from customers and members and review our approach accordingly, ensuring the customer strategy is adhered to. All actions within the original reset plan (Appendix A) have been completed.

Listening to our people and keeping our people safe in the office

Reflections:

- 3.7 The Council utilised data effectively to inform policy and working practices – a combination of employee surveys and measures such as sickness, grievances and productivity were used to ensure that the Council’s customer focused ways of working were fit for purpose. The Council responded effectively to public health data and ensured our sites were compliant to guidelines issued.

Next steps:

- 3.8 The Council continues to review all data/insight and take advice from public health, reviewing HR and other relevant policies in line with guidance issued. The Council estate plans will continue to focus on safe spaces to work within and remaining open actions are outlined in Appendix A - section B1 and B2.

Making sure our buildings are fit for purpose for blended working

Reflections:

- 3.9 Since 2020, the Council has reviewed and adapted it’s estate – technology has been implemented to allow for hybrid meetings to take place (where some people attend in person while others attend remotely) and for teams to book workspaces. Attendance at the Civic has been increasing in line with our original blended working principles of “presence with a purpose.” An online booking system is in place to allow for workspaces to be booked to suit operational needs. Teams are coming in for strategic meetings, supervisions, training as per the Council’s commitment to support our ongoing new customer focused ways of working and to continue to encourage activity based working. The estates team have started to trial new formats and furniture in the civic centre to deliver an updated workspace that more accurately reflects the working needs of hybrid users. These facilities will allow and support a workspace culture where officers make use of a variety of locations and

technological tools to help them deliver their job roles; to suit both themselves, customers and the council, that work well, feel good and are cost efficient.

- 3.10 Alongside an increase in employee engagement and customer satisfaction – continuing our customer focused ways of working will also support the attraction and retention of a workforce that are increasingly seeking an adaptable and agile working culture and environment. The workforce of the future is expecting a modern, thoughtful organisation that will have both flexible working patterns and facilities that support this.
- 3.11 The impact of activity based working has also had a positive impact on easing traffic and congestion in Walsall at prime times – the decrease in travel time allows our teams to focus on outcomes and increasing productivity.

Next steps:

- 3.12 There are open actions on the reset plan outlined in Appendix A - The council will continue to support teams to work in a blended way whilst delivering on our council plan. Feedback will be sought for the areas within the Civic centre where trials are taking place and directly feed into the next steps of estate plans. As part of the wider estates strategy, reviews are ongoing around the Council assets and best use of these facilities to support our communities and partners. Storage needs will also be closely monitored and further explored which will result in a more efficient way of working (with less paper), reduced costs of storage and better use of the council's estate space.

Keeping our people safe at home and on the front line;

Reflections:

- 3.13 The Council responded rapidly to changing guidelines and ensured these were communicated effectively to all team members and the public.

Next steps:

- 3.14 The Council will continue to engage with its staff and members of the public ensuring that safety remains a priority regardless of workplace through appropriate assessments such as DSEs and consideration for lone workers. There remains an open action on reviewing our HR policies to ensure they support and comply with our customer focused ways of working (further detail in Appendix A).

Allowing our managers to manage;

Reflections:

- 3.15 The Council has remained committed to delivering on its Council plan and key outcomes. Blended working has not impacted delivery of these key objectives and Proud promises. The role of a manager is increasingly critical in ensuring that both team and individual performance is managed effectively. The Council's policies and procedures are being updated as per the progress

outlined in Appendix A. The council needs to support managers with the appropriate business insight data and processes to ensure visibility of workloads, check ins, and productivity is easily accessible.

Next steps:

- 3.16 Working in a hybrid environment relies on our managers to motivate, manage and trust our employees. The use of data will continue to become increasingly important as we evolve our customer focused ways of working – key performance indicators such as utilisation, productivity, compliments and complaints will be critical in measuring and managing performance going forwards. These measures will be used in annual performance conversations and for feedback during team huddles/check ins.
- 3.17 Managers continue to play a critical role in individual development and staff retention - the Council will be launching it's organisational development and workforce strategies which will include information on ensuring equitable opportunities for all, and encourage schemes such as reverse mentoring and opportunities for junior staff to shadow senior members of the team This will ensure that all staff will continue to be offered opportunities to develop regardless of where they are working. Training and communication remain critical areas in ensuring the success of teams and ensuring employees remain engaged with delivering on the Council plan. Managers will be enabled through Connected Working to improve their management skills via a series of training sessions and accompanying coaching that encourages and better enables managers to embed the learning and develop a high performing team. Hybrid and remote teams need leadership and require shorter, more frequent check ins to maintain morale, check wellbeing, help resolve issues and keep objectives paramount and on track. This is true for both team meetings and individual one-to-one meetings. As a result of this new way of working, previously used people management processes may need adjustment to ensure their effectiveness.

Allowing our teams to thrive and collaborate, Ensuring our teams are engaged, Talent Management and Culture;

Reflections:

- 3.18 In the employee survey undertaken in Oct/Nov 2021 – key findings indicate an increase in employee engagement from 2017 (From 58% to 61%), our customer focused ways of working have had a positive impact on both the customer (outlined in section 4.3 to 4.7) and the employee experience and we must continue to increase these levels to attract and retain the best talent in the workforce.
- 3.19 Our customer focused ways of working mean that we are able to attract and retain talent nationwide to our vacancies. This has helped us to fill vacancies with the best candidates where previously we were limited by geography as a primary factor when recruiting. Continuing the progress outlined in Appendix A - The Council strives to become an employer of choice. Our customer focused

ways of working are critical in ensuring we attract, motivate and retain the best talent.

- 3.20 The use of technology has allowed our teams to collaborate on site, remotely and in hybrid ways, where needed, ensuring that we remain accessible. This means that employees can take advantage of the time saved in travel (to site, to regional meetings, between sites) and use that time in a more effective way. The technology and systems implemented mean that our teams continue to serve the residents and members of the borough regardless of physical location.

Next steps:

- 3.21 As part of the Enabling Communication and Culture workstream – The Council has open actions (Appendix A – Section B5 – B8 inclusive) around ensuring that we have clearly defined our target culture (taking into account employee feedback and data) and working towards becoming an employer of choice and destination to work. The Council needs to strengthen our offer to managers on working in a blended way and ensure that all staff (regardless of their seniority) are offered opportunities to develop in an equitable way. As part of our ongoing HR and Organisational offer – The council will continue to update its policies regularly and undertake a full EQIA around working practices to ensure that teams are working and developing in an equitable way.

Council Plan Priorities

- 3.22 The Council Plan priorities continue to be delivered working within a blended environment and remain a primary focus for all officers.

Risk Management

- 3.23 There have been many positives with our customer focused ways of working but as with all change activity, we must acknowledge and mitigate potential risks. Key risks identified alongside mitigations are outlined below in table 1.

Table 1

Key Risks	Mitigations
Communication and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that data is available to show number of customer compliments, complaints, queries handled, member queries answered etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate our delivery effectively through existing channels • Standards are in place around cameras and backgrounds when presenting online to external bodies and members • Continuously improve where we fail to meet our SLAs or targets, analysing the lessons learned and incorporating these into our processes
Equalities and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full EQIA's are to be completed for all HR/OD policies (by policy owners) to ensure that working practices and policies are designed in a fair way
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing managers with training on managing in a blended way • Providing teams and managers with clear data and KPIs – setting expectations of delivery and monitoring these • Using existing HR policies and practices to support staff to perform and manage where this may not be possible • Connecting learning with performance, empowers employees to lead their own development
Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring check ins are completed • Ensuring that staff are aware that presence with a purpose includes for welfare reasons, collaboration and team building • Ensuring managers are completing APCs and checking in with their teams – individually and as a group

Financial Implications

- 3.24 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report – any financial implications or savings related to the estate and investments required will be presented as separate business cases to the appropriate governing committee.

Legal Implications

- 3.25 The Council remains compliant with its legal duties and there are no direct legal implications arising from this report or amended blended working principles.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 3.26 There are no direct procurement implications arising as a result of this report or amended blended working principles – any resulting procurement will be subject to appropriate procedures to ensure compliance.

Property Implications

- 3.27 The Property implications are fully outlined in Appendix A and detailed in paragraph 3.9 and 3.11.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 3.28 Health and Wellbeing implications will be considered through a full EQIA and consideration given in the amendments to agile working policies.

Staffing Implications

- 3.29 There are no new staffing implications as a direct impact of this report – the amended principles will be communicated to all employees and full implications considered in the amended HR policies.

Reducing Inequalities

- 3.30 A full EQiA will be considered as part of the amended HR policies.

Climate Change

- 3.31 The reduction in congestion due to teams travelling in at staggered times is having a positive impact on congestion at peak time in the borough. This will continue to be measured and reported on through the appropriate climate change taskforce.

Consultation

- 3.32 There is no direct consultation impact arising from this report – as part of the action plan, where a need arises for a consultation, the Council will ensure this is meaningful and fair and adheres to all policies and procedures.

5. Decide

- 5.1 The Council should amend its customer focused ways of working principles to reflect all the progress, learning and next steps outlined in this report. The Council has moved on from “presence with a purpose” and is continuing to deliver on its Council plan whilst operating in an outputs based working way ensuring delivery of the Council Plan outcomes. Customer related principles are reflected in the Council’s customer strategy.

Therefore, it is recommended that the “presence with a purpose” approach is removed and the customer focused ways of working principles be amended, via Personnel committee on 5 December 2022, taking into account the below:

- Reconfirm policy of “Work is what you do not where you do it” – outputs based working based on business need and delivery of the Council Plan outcomes
- Managers must continue to manage within a hybrid way setting clear objectives through APCs, regular performance delivery i.e. 121s and huddles - utilising training, management information and face to face meetings
- Staff will work flexibly based on operational needs and remain focussed on delivering on the Council plan and outcomes

6. Respond

6.1 The next steps outlined in Appendix A will continue to be progressed and monitored through DMT and CMT. Key items are listed below:

- Refreshing and communicating with SMG and the wider Council our principles and customer focused ways of working
- Continuing to refresh our offices to reflect output based working
- New member enquiry process
- Refreshing the “meet the team” events with members – taking into account member feedback
- Meetings - Appropriate visibility and presence – managers will be reviewing those meetings which will happen in person versus those which will be happening remotely for example APCs, strategic team meetings, training & development, workshops
- Refreshed training for managers on how to manage in a hybrid way – minimum levels of check ins, including face to face, performance management, refreshed policies
- Refreshed policies around customer focused ways of working focusing on outcomes

6.2 The refreshed customer focused ways of working principles and the reflections in this briefing note will be taken forward to Personnel committee.

7. Review

7.1 The council is facing similar sector wide challenges as all local government - with an aging workforce and an increasingly competitive labour market - the Council's customer focused ways of working are critical to creating a modern, thoughtful workplace that attracts, retains and motivates it's employees to ensure we deliver on our Council plan and key outcomes. To do this, we remain committed to our customer focused ways of working and delivering on our reset plans whilst taking into account feedback from customers, members and our employees.

Appendices

Appendix Item A – Resetting through Proud action plan

Background papers

25 March 2021 – Blended Working – CMT report

16 June 2021 – Resetting the Council Through Proud – Cabinet report

9 Feb 2022 – Customer Focused Customer focused ways of working Update – Cabinet report

Author

Caroline Brom
Head of Transformation and Change
✉ caroline.brom@walsall.gov.uk

Signed

Deborah Hindson
Interim Executive Director
Resources & Transformation, S151
16 Nov 2022

Signed

Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council
16 Nov 2022

Appendix Item A – Resetting Through Proud Plan (extracted from June 21 – Resetting Through Proud Cabinet report)

Theme	Action or measure	Owner	Timeline Short (By September 21) Medium (September – Feb 22) Long (Feb 22 Onwards)	Progress to date
Strategy and Principles				
Consider the implications of reset on the council's Corporate Planning	Update the Corporate Plan 2022-2025 in light of reset and blended working principles.	Director of Public Health	Medium (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed – the Council Plan outlines the ways of working and the outward nature of the Council to attract a range of skilled employees..
Consider the implications of reset on the council's budget and financial strategy.	Review council expenditure and consider how this spending enables us to deliver the agreed council outcomes and whether there is a better way to achieve these outcomes.	Director of Finance with input from Director of Public Health	Medium (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed - Covid and reset expenditure was reviewed during 2021/22 as part of budget monitoring and the outturn position. Ongoing implications were discussed and agreed as part of the 2022/23 Budget Setting process in Feb 2022. This has continued as part of the 2023/24 Budget Setting process underway.
Section A - Improve outcomes and customer experience				
	Review and propose options on First Stop Shop and how customers will access council services.	Director of Customer Engagement	Medium (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed
	Review and propose options on libraries and how customers will access Council services.	Director of Place and Environment	Medium (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed

A1 - Allowing the public to access services in a safe way.	Review and propose options on leisure centres and how customers will access council services.	Director of Place and Environment	Medium (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed
	Review implications of blended working on the requirements to be able to contact staff. Ensure telephony services are fit for purpose and have robust business continuity plans and disaster recovery processes.	Director of Digital and Transformation and Director of Customer Engagement	Short (By September 21)	Completed
	Review implications of blended working for Customer Access and Management programme – ensuring customer feedback is sought and input into plans for reset and the service overall.	Director of Customer Engagement	Short (By September 21)	Completed
	Review implications on stakeholders through completion of an EQIA	Director of Customer Engagement	Short (By September 21)	Completed
A2 - Listening to our customers	As part of the Proud Promises, regularly review feedback from customer surveys – ensuring this input is used to define our customer service vision and services.	Director of Customer Engagement	Short (By September 21)	Completed
Section B – Improve employee satisfaction and engagement.				
B1 – Listening to our people.	Reviewing the results of employee surveys – ensuring this input is used to define our reset approach and blended working principles.	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short (By September 21)	Completed
	Review management information such as sickness rates to ensure we understand the impact of working from home on productivity and welfare.	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short (By September 21)	Completed
	Present plan to become an “Employer of Choice” whilst working in a blended way –	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	In Progress - This is being picked up through the work with ECC and will

	Link to Proud ways of working (Enabling Communication and Culture)			be linked to the Workforce Strategy – due May 2023.
B2 - Keeping our people safe in the office.	Review and propose testing approach and whether there are any considerations that need to be taken into account for blended working and reset.	Director of Public Health	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Testing has adapted with national guidance and been offered as appropriate
	Review social distancing measures and whether there are any considerations that need to be taken into account for blended working and reset.	Director of Public Health	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Social distancing guidance has evolved inline with national guidance
	Engage with managers to ensure requirements to fulfil the principles of blended working are facilitated using Connected Working coaching capacity	Director of People, OD and Admin	Short (By September 21)	Completed – connected working service now fully operational and delivering BAU
	Define ongoing procedure for any member of staff who tests positive for Covid-19 when on site or off site and any implications of isolation/quarantining after employees take holiday.	Director of Public Health	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Guidance for employee's is in line with national guidance
B3 – Making sure our buildings are fit for purpose for blended working.	Commissioning a scope of work with a contractor/partner to understand how blended working works in practice and exploring all the considerations and possible impacts across the estate.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	In Progress – stage 1 complete - Faithful and Gould were commissioned to support this activity. Service requirements pre and during Covid were captured through workshops and staff surveys to provide a potential delivery plan to accommodate ongoing and future needs of the council through our corporate estate and aligned to our Strategic Asset Plan Implementation. The final design has been worked up in-house to reduce costs and is

				included in the capital pipeline for the 2023/24 capital programme
Estates Strategy – consider the buildings to potentially close and explore the potential to use the Civic Centre as an alternative base for displaced teams, albeit in an agile way Review WMBC staff in partner buildings and consider the cost implications of contributory payments/ agreements when we have space available. Consider which teams may be more suited to working from satellite sites.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)		In Progress - Linked to above and underway. Estate being rationalised around service/customer requirements and core buildings being invested in to make fit for purpose releasing several assets for re-purposing, development or disposal in line with the Strategic Asset Plan
Stakeholders - consider our partners - CAB / One Walsall / NHS/ Police Undertake a scenario planning workshops with key stakeholders to develop future office scenarios. Ensure approach considers staff survey outcome.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Short (By September 21)		In Progress - Worked with our partners and stakeholders throughout the period to provide accommodation when required and longer term One Public Estate plans underway as part of the overall changes to the estate with agreements with key partners being finalised
Children’s Services locality working arrangements – pilot blended working arrangements in the West locality building and use learning to agree approach and roll out across other 3 localities. Service User Engagement Space – identify 2 alternative locations for Children’s Services following termination of lease agreements.	Directors of Children’s Services Director – Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Short (By September 21) Medium Term (S Sept 21 – Feb 22)		In Progress - Two of the four localities are now operational, although There are IT network capacity issues at South Locality which are being monitored. The blended working principles are being adopted successfully by services functioning under the locality model

	<p>Review implications of any Income generation targets and allowing services the space to do business.</p> <p>Review implications across the estate of CAB and One Walsall</p> <p>Review allocation of space to Registrars</p> <p>Review the purpose of the Council House space – potential to explore a corporate space we can do our business from</p>			<p>Service user engagement space has been identified within civic centre complex and supports the relocation of teams from leased buildings and to within the corporate estate, tied in with draft plans to relocate Registrars into ‘fit for purpose’ space on the ground floor of the civic centre.</p> <p>Income generation options for surplus accommodation space within the civic centre are being considered, particularly for partner agencies and ‘One Public Estate’ agenda.</p> <p>Space within the Council House is under review with a view to increasing meeting space as opposed to office accommodation, which will be more suited to meetings with members of the public, contractors, interviewees, and partner agencies</p>
	<p>Review Impact of blended working on support services across the estate - site usage including opening times- impact on support services (cleaners/ security/ curators/porters) printing supplies/ waste management/ refreshments/ bistro.</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord</p>	<p>Short (By September 21)</p>	<p>In Progress - These blended working impacts have been managed accordingly during 2021/22 onwards through the Ways of Working Group and service requirements. The more permanent impacts of this are part</p>

<p>Cleaning of rooms and collaboration spaces following use.</p>			<p>of the overall SAP Implementation and restructuring of these services will be complete in 2023</p>
<p>Building and fabric planned improvement schemes. Heating and ventilation replacement scheme – £70k design element of the scheme has already been invested- complete change may be needed and further funding for additional scheme design. Replacement fire alarm system required. Access control improvements due to 'end of life components and support</p>	<p>Director –of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord</p>	<p>Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)</p>	<p>In Progress - The works undertaken across the estate and the pilot collaboration space have been undertaken as per agreed capital programme schemes and CMT approvals. The overall building works across the Civic Centre and Council House have been included in a Midlands Energy Hub bid to support the significant Heating, Ventilation and Air Con (HVAC) costs for Air source heat pumps of upto £3.67m towards our overall cost. Following this the overall HVAC and re-design works across the Civic Centre and Council House will take place and plans are also being finalised for our other satellite sites in respect of improvements and new collaboration space requirements.</p>
<p>Storage – proposals for clearing existing stored items across the estate and providing the 'right kind' of storage for services requiring physical resources.</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord</p>	<p>Short (By September 21)</p>	<p>In Progress - This has been worked on as needed with individual teams and council wide and is factored into the overall designs and in conjunction with the Information Governance and Documents Mgt project also underway</p>
<p>Business improvement - consider a phased approach to the project to identify who and how many services need to be in the</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Corporate</p>	<p>Short (By September 21)</p>	<p>Completed - This was conducted as part of the service requirements at the start of the Ways of Working</p>

	building imminently and which teams will work towards digitalisation /paper free processes with a view to agile working across the estate.	Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord		discussions to accommodate service needs onsite and implement processes to reduce the need for a permanent location. This has been expanded upon and fully integrated with the implementation plans and final design of the Civic and corporate estate
	Building safety - with blended approach, consider and review how we cover fire regulations (escape, marshalling, capacity monitoring) and First Aid needs across the estate.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Short (By September 21)	In Progress - Services with allocated space are being asked to provide first aiders and fire marshalls from within their teams. There is potential for this safety element to be picked up and specified as an option on the procurement of a suitable desk booking system which captures and identifies the location of trained staff.
	Benchmarking - review what colleagues in other organizations/sectors are reporting and what we can we learn from them. Ensuring we have options for how we will measure success across the estate.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Faithful & Gould covered some of this in their review and we discussed with other authorities their plans moving forward. Newly agreed KPI's are in place for the whole Corporate Landlord function for 2022/23 and we'll assess our performance with others where possible in a year end review
	Room and desk booking systems – ensure options for systems to measure utilisation, options for which tools/systems we will use and considerations for prioritisation	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord –	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Corporate Landlord and DaTS worked together to ensure a solution was available for room and desk booking during the period which was used and

(taking into account the democratic calendar etc) across the estate.	Director of Digital and Transformation		managed as needed and this has evolved and is part of the new access management system underway at present
Members, Corporate Management Team, Executive Directors / Directors – review and evaluate to ensure the suitability is fit for purpose accommodation to be in line with blended working principles and the latest Covid-19 guidance.	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Short (By September 21)	Completed - Desk spaces and areas were suitably changed around Covid guidance and DaTS supported the technology changes to create the space requirements and hand sanitisers were placed in key locations, masks required to be worn and amendments in line with Covid 19 guidance
Parking – review arrangements and potential booking system for parking across the estate in line with blended working approach	Director of Place and Environment	Short (By September 21)	Completed for interim arrangements – in progress for longer term solution
General Workplace Environment- Need to follow the Governments guidance notes and good practice in terms of post Covid-19 preparations across all sites and working environments. Branding/Décor in offices– encourage collaboration, promote Walsall Council values and objectives across the estate – Liaise with Comms, Marketing and Brand	Director of Finance and Corporate Landlord/Head of Corporate Landlord	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed - Changes were implemented as Covid 19 guidance evolved and the Ways of Working group considered overall changes from all angles and updates went through CMT accordingly before implementation of changes Branding in and out the building have been updated in this respect and more recently for Walsall Connected
Review and amend HR policies in line with blended working arrangements i.e., flexi	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	In progress – Flexi Time – completed

B2 – Keeping our people safe at home.	time, agile working and define the extent of manager discretion whilst ensuring fair treatment.			Ways of Working Policy extended to tie in with F&G work – drafts being prepared for consultation.
	Consideration of those staff who do not have an adequate space or environment to work within	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed
B3 – Keeping our front-line people safe.	If social distancing remains in place – consideration for adjustments for the workplace for front line workers, social workers and those not regularly office/home based.	Director Public Health	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed - Guidance has adapted inline with national guidance
B4 – Allowing our managers to manage.	Define and set out training requirements, ensure wellbeing checks take place for teams to combat isolation. Consideration of training those who may not have ICT skills or equipment - access to sites with such facilities.	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed - L&D element complete – part of BAU. In progress - Wellbeing check in and manager advice will form part of WofW Policy (B2 action)
B5 – Allowing our teams to thrive and collaborate.	Defining our principles for team working i.e. defining minimum levels of check ins, the utilisation of connected working and circumstances for meeting in person/on site	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed - Connected Working element complete. In Progress - Wellbeing checks – same action as B4 above and will be picked up in B2 action – WofW policy
B6 – Ensuring our teams feel engaged.	Review and propose the tools we can use to measure engagement and respond to lower levels of engagement. Ensuring managers are trained and equipped to work and lead teams in a blended environment. Produce a communication and engagement plan to support blended working and supporting activities.	Director Comms Marketing and Brand, Director of Digital and Transformation and Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed - HR element completed through connected working

B7 – Talent management	Review the impact of blended working on new staff, inductions, apprentices, and gender gap.	Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed (L&D action)
B8 – Culture	Plans to reinforce desired culture, behaviours and ways of working. Ensuring we have feedback mechanisms from employees of the impact of blended working and take these in account for future measures. Engaging with public health to address any health and wellbeing implications from blended working and create an action plan based on this	Director of Digital and Transformation and Director of People, OD, and Admin Director of Public Health	Short Term (By Sept 21)	In progress - Being picked up by ECC workstream
B9 – Proud Workstreams	Review workstream plans in line with Reset and Blended working principles and ensuring we consider options for ensuring change sticks in a blended working environment.	Director of Digital and Transformation and Director of People, OD, and Admin	Short Term (By Sept 21)	Completed and plans amended where necessary
Section C - Improve service efficiency and performance				
Determine the financial implications of reset.	Capture cost savings and remove from budgets.	Director of Finance	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed – Savings have been captured during 2021/22 and 2022/23 with further reductions of this work also underway and planned during 2023/24 which are also included in the MTFS options for the budget
Capturing the savings achieved via blended	Determine reset costs – revenue and capital. Set aside a reserve for reset costs as part of financial year end close down.	Director of Finance	Medium Term (Sept 21 – Feb 22)	Completed - As part of the 2021/22 outturn position, some money was set aside for reset costs to be utilised during 2022/23 onwards. This is

working approach.				being assessed alongside the revised capital funds available and the overall requirement to deliver the changes and any surplus/additional requirement will be reported through to CMT and Cabinet
-------------------	--	--	--	--