



## **CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

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### **1.1.0 POLICY RATIONALE**

1.1.1 At the time of renewal of the mobile phone contract in 2006 / 2007, some 133 mobile phones had been issued by Council as follows:

23 Elected Representatives  
21 Eastern Group  
4 LVRP  
85 Council Employees

Under the terms of the current contract, handsets are provided at no cost to Council, with all employees covering the costs of any personal calls made.

In August 2006 the Council was of the view that there was a need to ensure a more effective management of the Council's mobile phone usage, in order to protect Council assets, and to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation.

It should be noted that prior to the establishment of a corporate mobile phone policy, the issue of mobile phones and guidelines for their usage, was at the discretion of individual Council departments, within their respective budgets.

This policy seeks to establish a standard set of conditions, and a framework for the use of mobile phones within the Council.

### **1.2.0 SCOPE**

1.2.1 This Policy will apply to all Council employees who are provided with a mobile phone to assist them in the performance of their duties.

### **1.3.0 PRINCIPLES**

1.3.1 The Policy is designed to ensure that there is clear internal arrangements for the effective management of mobile phones.

- 1.3.2 The Policy ensures that Health & Safety issues are identified in relation to the use of mobile phones, and ensures compliance with legislation on mobile phones and driving.
- 1.3.3 The Policy underpins any operational procedures connected with the Council's framework for lone worker safety.
- 1.3.4 The Policy establishes the responsibilities of employees of the Council in regard to the issue and use of Council mobile phones.

## **2.0 MOBILE PHONE POLICY**

### **2.1.0 CRITERIA FOR USE OF A COUNCIL MOBILE PHONE**

2.1.1 Mobile telephones will only be available to staff who have the approval of their Manager, and authorisation of the appropriate Director. An employee will be eligible to have a mobile phone if it is deemed necessary to their position, and they meet any one of the following criteria:-

- If the employee's duties require them to spend a substantial amount of time out of the office on work related duties (substantial is defined as an average of more than 50% of their working day)
- Staff for whom it is necessary to make essential work related calls off site, as part of their normal course of work
- Staff who are required to be contactable in an emergency situation, when working off-site
- Staff who are on call after normal business hours
- Staff identified through the risk assessment procedure

### **2.1.2 POOL PHONES**

Mobile telephones may be issued on an individual or on a shared basis. In all cases it is the Manager's responsibility to determine which officers will be part of a shared resource pool, and how this will operate within their area of control.

### **2.2.0 PURCHASE**

- 2.2.1 The purchase of mobile telephones must be in compliance with the Council's purchasing policy. The contract will be reviewed and market tested on an annual basis.
- 2.2.2 A mobile phone request form (Appendix 1) must be completed in all cases and should be forwarded to the employees Line Manager, in the first instance.
- 2.2.3 Any requests for a specific model of mobile phone outside the standard phone issued by the Council will involve additional charges to the applicant.
- 2.2.4 All costs for the purchase and use of mobile phones will be charged to the appropriate departmental budget. It is the responsibility of each Departmental Head to ensure that adequate provision is made in the annual estimates to cover the cost of all mobile phones issued within their department.

### **2.3.0 REPLACEMENT PHONES**

- 2.3.1 The Council expects all employees, who have been allocated mobile phones, to take the utmost care and responsibility for them. If a phone is lost or stolen, it should be reported immediately to the employees Line Manager and also the Member Services Section of the Council.
- 2.3.2 If a phone is broken or faulty, then the handset should be returned to the Member Services Section. A temporary phone may be issued until repair can be effected. If the phone cannot be repaired, a request for a replacement phone will be required.
- 2.3.3 Depending on the circumstances in which the phone was lost or broken, the Council will be responsible for replacing the phone. However if carelessness on the part of the employee can be shown as the cause of the loss, the employee will be required to meet the replacement cost.

### **2.4.0 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

- 2.4.1 On termination of employment, the employee must return the phone with a Mobile Phone Return Form to the Human Resource Section (Appendix 2), unless the Manager has authorised a transfer to a new user using

the appropriate paperwork. Any accessories supplied by the organisation for use with the mobile phone must also be returned.

2.4.2 Mobile telephones issued to an individual must not be passed to any other employee without the authorisation of the Manager, and completion of a Mobile Phone Transfer Form (Appendix 3).

2.4.3 Employees who transfer to other departments within the Council and are authorised to have continued use of a Council mobile phone must inform the Members Services Section using the Mobile Phone Change of Details Form (Appendix 4)

## **2.5.0 CONDITIONS OF USE**

2.5.1 Council mobile phones must be on at all times during business or call out hours, except when driving, or when an employee is at his normal place of work. However, if an employee would be expected to be contactable via mobile phone, rather than a regular fixed telephone in the office, then the mobile should be kept on, even when in the office. In meeting this requirement, cognisance however must be taken of Section 2.5.3

2.5.2 Calls from a mobile must be kept to a minimum and in circumstances where a fixed telephone is available to make outgoing calls, then use of the mobile for that purpose is discouraged.

2.5.3 Mobile phones should be switched off during meetings, lectures, seminars, training courses etc. other than in very exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to take an urgent call. In these circumstances it is courteous to alert colleagues to the fact that an urgent call is expected and where possible, the phone should be kept on 'silent'.

2.5.4 Confidential information must not be discussed in open areas or inappropriate locations. Many departments / buildings eg. hospitals, have local rules regarding the use of mobile phones and these must always be respected. Discretion should be used at all times.

2.5.5 If the employee has not taken the available option to use their Council mobile for private use, then the phone must be returned to their manager for any periods of extended leave, including maternity.

2.5.6 Council mobile phones should be used in accordance with the Council's Information Technology Policy and must not "be used inappropriately". (refer to section 12.1 of policy).

## **2.6.0 HEALTH & SAFETY**

2.6.1 The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require the Council to ensure all information and instruction is provided to conform to the appropriate Health & Safety Legislation and associated regulations.

2.6.2 Staff must not use a mobile phone in a moving vehicle and must only use the phone when a vehicle is safely parked.

2.6.3 Guidance may be issued to mobile phone users from time to time regarding health & safety in relation to their use, (ie. Legislation on mobile phones and driving guidance notes, and must be observed at all times).

2.6.4 Staff must ensure that, when they carry a Council mobile phone, they have included in the contacts the number of their Line Manager, Departmental Manager, PSNI and Emergency Services.

## **2.7.0 PRIVATE USE**

2.7.1 Council issued phones are intended primarily for Council business use, however, employees can apply to take up the option to use the Council mobile phone for private calls and texts, using the Mobile Phone Private Use Request Form (Appendix 5). This option will enable staff who are issued with a Council mobile phone, to make private calls, and to reimburse the Council on a monthly basis for all associated costs.

2.7.2 All bills must be settled promptly. Failure to do so may result in this benefit being withdrawn.

2.7.3 Managers and supervisors will monitor usage of Council mobile phones for both private and business use.

## **3.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE**

### **3.1.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

3.1.1 This policy will initially be implemented through the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors of the Council.

- 3.1.2 At the time of going out to tender, a review will be undertaken within each department as to the number of mobile phones in use, and whether their issue complies with the criteria set out in 2.1.0.
- 3.1.3 A memo will be sent to all users of Council mobile phones to make them aware of the policy. A comprehensive list will then be brought to the CS Committee for approval in advance of tenders being sought.
- 3.1.4 It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that new staff receive information about this Policy, and should be part of any local induction where appropriate. Human Resources will add the Policy to its list of policy issues provided to any new starts.

Managers must also ensure that any changes to this policy are effectively communicated within their areas of responsibility.

### **3.2.0 COMPLIANCE**

- 3.2.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of the location of this policy. In addition, Managers are responsible for keeping staff up to date about any changes within the policy.
- 3.2.2 All staff who use a Council mobile phone are obliged to adhere to this Policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### **4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

- 4.1.0 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following legislation, regulations and Council policies:
- Management of Health & Safety at Work (NI) Regulations 2000
  - Castlereagh Borough Council lone worker risk assessments
  - The Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (NI) 1999 and Road Traffic (NI) Order 1999

- Report “The Risk of Using a Mobile Phone While Driving” 2002 (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents)
- The Highway Code points 127 & 128 – Use of Mobile Phones and Gadgets

## **5.0 DISTRIBUTION**

5.1.0 This Policy will be available for all the Council’s designated locations. Copies will also be available from the Human Resource Department and on the Council’s Intranet.

## **6.0 REVIEW**

6.1.0 The issue of mobile phones to any staff member, will be reviewed on an annual basis, in accordance with the criteria set out in 2.1.1, by Line Managers. Member Services will be notified of any changes.

6.2.0 This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis with the next review date being November 2007.