

EIA Summaries Resources and Business Transformation

Equality Impact Assessments: Resources and Business Transformation

The Resources and Business Transformation Portfolio contains the following service areas

- 1 Legal and Democratic
- 2 Service Transformation
 - Service Improvement
 - ICT
- 3 Finance and Commercial Services
 - Management Accounting
 - Planning and Reporting
 - Managed Services
 - Internal Audit
 - Procurement
- 4 Customer Contact
 - Customer Services
 - Corporate Complaints
- 5 Human Resources
 - Human Resources
 - Training and Development

The following EIAs are summarised below:

Legal and Democratic	Date of completion
Democratic Services	10.05.2006

Service Transformation	Date of completion
Provision of IT Training	22.03.2006
Provision of IT Services	18.08.2007

Finance and Commercial Services	Date of completion
BCC Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme Communication Policy Statement	Dec 07
Pension Fund Governance Policy and Compliance Statement	03.04.2008
Financial Instructions	23.10.2007
Code of Governance	03.04.2008
Statement of Accounts	10.04.2008
E-Payment Strategy	14.03.2008
Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Policy Statement and Framework	April 2007
Local Management handbook for Schools	03.10.2008
Capital Investment Strategy	09.10.2007

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Risk Management Strategy	29.07.2008
Debt Management Strategy	16.07.2008

Customer Contact	Date of completion
The Contact Centre	March 2006
Corporate Complaints	29.05.2007

Human Resources	Date of completion
Recruitment and Selection Process	29.03.2006
Training and Development course delivery from the HR Consultancy	29.03.2006
Harassment and Bullying at Work Policy	27.03.2006
Carer's Policy	29.11.2007
Flexible Retirement / Postponement of Retirement Policy	12.12.2007
Induction Intranet Site	05.11.2007
Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedure	03.04.2008
Organisational Health Survey	June 2008
Health and Attendance Policy	27.03.2008
Manager's Guide	16.11.2007
Grievance Policy and Procedure	03.04.2008
Corporate Talent Management and Succession Planning	24.06.2008
Corporate Workforce Planning	24.06.2008
Competency Framework and Appraisal Process	June 2008
Introduction to Buckinghamshire County Council	15.11.2007
Capability Policy and Procedure	12.03.2009
Remote and Homeworking Policy and Procedure	
Secondments	04.12.2008
Redundancy Policy and Procedure	02.12.2008
Reorganisation Policy and Procedure	14.01.2009
Employee Transfer Policy and Procedure	16.10.2008
Employee Benefits Package	22.04.2008
Career Break	01.10.2008
Car Parking Policy	09.06.2010
Whistleblowing Policy	25.09.2009
Health and Safety Policies	29.10.2010
Health and Safety Training	29.10.2010

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Name of Policy / function: Democratic Services Date of assessment: 10 th May 2006
What is the Policy about? The aim of the service is to provide support to Members, the Council decision-making process and to service other meetings as required by our trading account, or requested internally.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is no evidence of any adverse impact.• Where access issues arise they are dealt with on an individual basis. For example the interpretation and translation service has been used to assist during Stage 3 Review Panel Hearings and we are currently looking at methods to support one Member who has English as a second language.• Disabled access to the Crown Court, where County Council meetings are normally held would improve access to the service.
Actions: No immediate actions were identified. Ongoing monitoring of complaints and comments from the public along with surveys of members and officers will allow for specific issues to be picked up and actioned.

Name of Policy / function: The Contact Centre Date of assessment: March 2006
What is the Policy about? The aim of the Contact Centre is to provide a 'best-in-class' customer service operation. The centre's aim is to provide a one-stop service to the community, resolving 80% of enquiries at first point of contact. It will improve the overall customer experience through a more efficient and streamlined process.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The following were identified as possible unmet needs / requirements:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Language – minimal provision for serving members of the community who do not have English as their first language– Facilities for the heard of hearing– Recruitment of disabled staff due to restricted access in Contact Centre– The staffing mix does not reflect the community we serve• The following were identified as possible ways to improve the service:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Advise community of new service through Buckinghamshire Times– Start using new leaflets carrying the Contact Centre number– Press release and radio advertising
<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Check awareness of service through customer surveys and feedback– Gather monitoring information relating to ethnic origin, gender, disability and age. This will allow us to analyse satisfaction levels and complaints in relation to these.

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Actions:

- Aim to reflect the community in our service workforce
- Publish the results of actions from customer feedback and performance results
- Obtain comparison data both locally and nationally

Name of Policy / function: Corporate Complaints and Feedback

Date of assessment: 29th May 2007

What is the Policy about?

Key Aims

- To allow customers of BCC to comment, compliment or complain about the services they have received;
- To help services assess the effectiveness of their services provision (what they are doing well as well as areas for improvement);
- To help achieve the Council's aim of being open and accountable; to consult and listen.

Key Outcomes

- Resolution of problems for service users, and therefore improvement of satisfaction ratings for council services.
- Improvement / modification of BCC services to better target customer needs.

Key Findings:

Complaints Information Leaflet (hard copy and web version)

The leaflet outlines a number of ways in which people are able to make complaints. This gives customers choice over the way they contact the Council. It is stated that alternative formats are available upon request. However, a number of issues were identified with the leaflet. In particular:

- There is no distribution strategy or method for checking whether the leaflet is in stock in various offices / buildings. Having a distribution policy may be a way of ensuring leaflets are always accessible. This could be particularly useful in more rural areas where facilities such as libraries may be the main point of contact with the Council for some service users.
- The statement about alternative formats and who to contact to obtain these needs to be more prominent and more clearly worded.
- Consideration should be given to producing a BSL version of the leaflet.

Complaints Form

- A form is included in the complaints leaflet to give people a simple way of complaining / commenting. Customers answer a series of questions to set out what their problem is and how they would like it to be resolved. It was thought that this could help people who may find it difficult to write a letter. However, the spaces for written information are quite small and may not be large enough for some customers.

Monitoring Form

- A form is included in the leaflet to record some personal information about the complainant, e.g. gender, ethnic group, age and disability. This could provide a means of monitoring complaints to check if all groups are able to access the process. However, customers do not often use the form to complain – they either write or phone instead. Even those who use the form do not often complete the diversity questions. Data is only captured for about 1% of complaints. Currently there is no monitoring of complaints by ethnicity, age, gender, disability etc. as there is not enough data captured.
- The tick boxes are unbordered white circles on a light green background. These may not be easily visible to customers with visual impairments.

Other Methods of Complaining

Telephone:

- Contact via telephone will go through to the Contact Centre. Language Line is available for customers who do not speak English, but this is not widely publicised.
- The Contact Centre does have a minicom number but this is seldom publicised or used. Thus hearing impaired customers may not know the facility exists.

In Person:

- Non-English speaking customers and hearing impaired customers may have communication difficulties if they are not accompanied someone who can help them communicate. Staff in reception areas / public buildings need to ensure they are able to provide the customer with information about what to do (e.g. via the complaints leaflet) or that they know who to contact for help with interpretation if the matter is urgent.

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Actions:

- Consider introducing distribution strategy to ensure complaints leaflets are widely available at all times.
- In revised complaints leaflet ensure information on alternative formats and alternative languages is clearer.
- Check the font, text and background colours, the size of tick boxes and spaces for written response to check they meet the requirements of customers with visual impairments. Ensure that the large print version is publicised in large print on the complaints leaflet.
- Consider applying for Crystal Mark to ensure plain English is used throughout.
- Consider preparing an Easy English version of the complaints information for customers with learning disabilities.
- Seek advice from RESPOND and other county councils on the collection of personal data (age, gender, ethnicity) with a view to improving the quality of our data to the extent that monitoring can take place.
- Ensure that the re-launch of the leaflet is accompanied by appropriate publicity across the council and training where necessary. If service complaints officers are to be introduced then they will require further training.
- Ensure that there is appropriate training for any staff who will be using the complaints recording software, and that this covers the collection of personal data.
- Once complaints recording software is in place across council monitor usage to check consistency and start running reports to analyse complaints according to, for example, age, sex, ethnic group.

Name of Policy / function: Provision of IT training

Date of assessment: 22nd March 2006

What is the Policy about?

Provision of training either in a formal setting, at the individual's desk or via CBT to provide staff with the knowledge to be able to carry out their job in terms of IT equipment and software.

Key Findings:

- The provision of some training accommodation allows for disabled access.
- The 'display properties' of PCs allows for greater visibility to accommodate the visually impaired.
- 'Closed' training courses are provided for staff with a hearing impairment who wish to bring a 'signer' with them and this is followed up by 1:1 sessions at the delegate's desk where they can lip read. Specialist aids brought along by the delegate can normally be accommodated. Disabled parking is made available
- Courses are offered on a variety of dates so as to provide choice to the delegate in terms of working hours, childcare arrangements and faith holidays.
- There have been no instances where we have been unable to meet the specific requirements of delegates in terms of access. Delegates specify in advance where they have special requirements, however this information is not proactively sought.

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Actions:

- Add a sentence to our printed material and also ask delegates prior to coming on the course if they have any special requirements so that this information is always collected.
- Ensure all staff in the IT Unit are aware of this and can promote what we do.
- Find out how we can obtain aids / communication support for delegates who are unable to bring their own interpreters / aids with them.

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Name of Policy / function: Provision of IT Services

Date of assessment: 18th August 2007

What is the Policy about?

The IT Unit provides a flexible and responsive ICT service in line with Council aims and objectives to Buckinghamshire County Council and its partners for the provision and support of:

- Voice and data networks connecting offices to central resources
- Hardware
- Software
- Applications
- Clear and timely advice and guidance
- Affordable solutions

Key Findings:

- Services are designed to ensure that users can work effectively and efficiently having regard to diversity issues to ensure access by all. In addition, we enable the provision of large screens for staff with any visual impairment and ensure through our contract arrangements that any systems fall in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. Speech recognition software is also available. In liaison with Health and Safety additional equipment can be provided to assist with conditions such as RSI, for example. We provide equipment at home for Councillors to enable them to work effectively and we also provide technology to enable home working for staff in line with flexible working arrangements. This is available to all staff but is particularly beneficial for working parents/guardians and others with caring responsibilities.
- We provide IT training for staff and have ensured that the training request form asks if the individual has any special requirements so as to ensure that we can tailor requirements accordingly.
- So as to provide an effective service we also ensure that the diversity needs or issues of our own staff are taken into account.
- Monitor HR workforce data and in particular:
 - Identify ways of improving rates of declaration for BME and disabled employees
 - Obtain workforce profile across the grades for age, disability, part time and fixed term staff
 - Assess training and development opportunities across gender, age, disability and age
 - Assess staff turnover across gender, age, disability and age
 - Assess recruitment across gender, age, disability and age
 - Continue to ensure all recruitment panels have at least one person who has undergone formal recruitment and selection training
 - Ensure KPI information is acted upon
- There are a number of opportunities for the work of the IT unit to contribute to equality objectives, in particular through increased flexible working and access to information. Specific projects in this area include a Digitv project, mobile working and teleconferencing.

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Actions:

- Ensure Cohesion & Equality is embedded into ISO in readiness for Accreditation process
- Ensure Cohesion & Equality awareness is promoted
- Implement digitv project
- Continue rollout of Wi-fi to increase work flexibility
- Monitor use of teleconferencing

Name of Policy / function: BCC Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme
Communication Policy Statement

Date of assessment: December 2007

What is the Policy about?

Regulation 106B of the 1997 Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations (as amended) state that it is a statutory requirement for each LGPS administering authority, in this case Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), to have published governance and communication policies before 1 April 2006. The key objective is to ensure that the correct information about the Fund reaches all interested parties, enabling them to understand how the Scheme works and updating them with relevant information, using all media and methods of communication available to the Fund.

Key Findings:

- The current volume of communication and target audiences are listed.
- On request, large print versions of all our printed literature can be provided. In line with BCC's corporate communications strategy 2008/09, all key documents will clearly advertise the availability of alternative formats in a minimum font size 16.
- The pensions web pages are designed to work with assistive technologies e.g. screen readers for visually impaired users.
- Scheme members can contact the Pensions section to book a one-to-one appointment with a trained pensions officer. Interpreters can be booked using the interpretation & translation service offered by BCC Adult Social Care. Induction loop facilities can also be provided.
- A new forum, the Pension Fund Consultative Group, has been set up which will provide an opportunity for scheme members and employers to raise queries.

Actions:

- To ensure that all literature sent by the Pensions section is written using plain English.

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Name of Policy / function: Pension Fund Governance Policy and Compliance Statement Date of assessment: 3 rd April 2008
What is the Policy about? Pension Fund Governance Statements are a requirement of the Local Government Pension Scheme as outlined with the regulations defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Governance Statement outlines the governance arrangements for the Bucks Fund to all stakeholders including our scheme members, pensioners, employers and other interested parties.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The needs of stakeholder groups have been considered and as a result, the Pension Fund Consultative Group has been established to support the main Pension Fund Committee and to obtain future feedback. This Consultative Group is made up of a range of stakeholders (eg scheme members, pensioners, employers, Union, Finance staff and HR staff) and therefore ensures the Fund obtains this range of views.• A communications plan for Pensions information is in place.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No adverse effects or immediate actions were identified.

Name of Policy / function: Financial Instructions Date of assessment: 23 rd October 2007
What is the Policy about? Financial Instructions establish a governance framework for financial transactions within the authority. Financial Instructions provide protection to both Council funds and staff and non-compliance is a disciplinary offence. Financial Instructions apply to all staff and cover all Council monies, including arms length transactions such as Voluntary Funds. Financial Instructions assist the role of the statutory s151 Officer in ensuring that a financial control framework is established and effective within the Authority. These FIs update the 2001 version already in operation.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cross- service working group has been established to assist the development of FIs. The requirements of staff undertaking transactions have been researched and considered in the development of FIs.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No adverse effects or immediate actions were identified.

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Name of Policy / function: Code of Governance Date of assessment: 3 rd April 2008
What is the Policy about? The Code of Governance establishes a governance framework for the organisation and ensures compliance with the 2007 CIPFA SOLACE framework for Local Authorities. The Code provides support to Council decision making, protection to Council funds and protection to staff in their day to day operations. Non-compliance is a disciplinary offence. The Code applies to all staff and covers all Council services and monies, including arms length arrangements such as partnerships. The Code does not seek to establish new practice or procedure for the Council but seeks to co-ordinate the strands of governance already in place. It has been approved by EMT & R&A Committee.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small cross- service working group has been established to assist the development of the Code. The requirements of staff, members, stakeholders and our regulators have been considered during the development.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No adverse effects or immediate actions were identified.

Name of Policy / function: Statement of Accounts Date of assessment: 10 th April 2008
What is the Policy about? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statutory obligation to produce a statement of accounts.
Key Findings: The initial screening process indicated that no full EIA was required as there is no impact on employees, customers or the way services are provided.

Name of Policy / function: E-Payment Strategy Date of assessment: 14 th March 2008
What is the Policy about? E-payment allows customers to use electronic payment methods to pay for goods / services. Payment may be made directly by the payee or through an intermediary such as the Contact Centre.
Key aims and objectives: For customers and staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the customer with an alternative method of paying for Council goods and services.• Increase access to the customer via the Corporate website on a 24 / 7 basis.• Alleviate the workload of frontline staff through offering a self service approach.• Provide efficient reporting tools to enable better analysis of customer / staff requirements.

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For the Organisation:

- a. To comply with Government objectives
- b. To embrace principles of best value.
- c. Manage ongoing development of e-payment facilities across the organisation in a controlled and structured manner.
- d. To provide a more efficient service by reducing manual process.
- e. To meet the corporate aims within two of the five Improvement Programmes, 'Putting Customer First' and 'SAP Benefits Realisation'.
- f. Increase opportunities to realise revenue through increased and wider customer access and efficient working methods for staff.

Key Findings:

By providing an online payment facility via the Corporate website the following groups may benefit if they have internet access:

- Customers in urban and rural areas.
- Housebound customers
- Customers outside the county.
- Global customers
- Customers working full time Monday to Friday.

There is also the possibility to offer access through Digi-TV which by the year 2012 will be available to the vast majority.

Additional benefits include:

- Supporting the green initiative. Providing the opportunity to pay online reduces the amount of travelling required to access the same service.
- Providing another option to customers.
- Providing a more futuristic approach.
- Appealing to the younger community
- Puts money into community projects rather than administration.
- Saves the customer time and a more direct approach to pay bills, goods and services.

Customers that may be at a disadvantage:

- The visually impaired (although the system will comply with accessibility features of the BCC website)
- Those without internet access.
- Language Barriers – where the web pages are not translated into the required language.

However the existing provisions for payment will not be taken away. Therefore customers who are unable to access the new facilities will still be able to carry out all their transactions in the usual way. This project is aimed at increasing opportunities to access services and existing mechanisms will not be taken away.

Offering payment method by Credit card could potentially alienate customers that are not entitled to a credit card. However, there are still other methods of payment available to them. There is also the potential for customers to harbour resentment as there is a cost attached to paying by credit card that would be paid from Council funds, possibly at the expense of other service areas. It is intended that this area is monitored closely by analysing reports on customer activity and the cost of providing the credit card facility.

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Actions:

- Ensure there is a robust communication plan for staff and customers to advertise the service.
- Provision of performance data to establish customer take up and whether there has been an impact on the staff workload
- Provision of performance data to establish financial impact and customer habit around the use of credit cards.

Name of Policy / function: Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Policy Statement and Framework

Date of assessment: April 2007

What is the Policy about?

The Council is committed to the highest standards of propriety in the delivery of its services including taking appropriate care of the council's resources. The policy statement sets out clearly what the county council expects from elected members and staff, responsibilities and what action will be taken when fraud or corruption is found or suspected. The Strategy outlines prevention measures, detection and response. The Fraud Response Plan provides guidance for people reporting suspected fraud or corruption and advice and checklists for managers and investigators dealing with such reports.

Key Findings:

- Investigators conducting interviews would need to be aware of any communication needs, physical access requirements or cultural sensitivities in arranging and conducting their interviews. Training has been delivered to elected members and senior management. An awareness raising campaign is being developed to roll out across the organization this year.
- Decisions to take investigate/prosecute are taken by individual managers and are reported to Internal Audit. The decisions are based on a risk assessment of the nature and scale of the fraud/corruption. Where Internal Audit feel there has been inadequate or inappropriate action taken, this is reported to the Regulatory and Audit Committee. There is no equality monitoring of the decisions taken so we are unable to determine whether discrimination exists in terms of managers exercising their discretion. Action to remedy this situation is hampered by the lack of an existing corporate monitoring policy.
- The strategy relates primarily to the internal workings of the council although it is published on the county council's website so that partner agencies, stakeholders and interested members of the public can access it. Alternative formats could be made available upon request.

Actions:

- Ensure that Anti Fraud & Corruption Framework Plan addresses access and cultural requirements in the arranging and conducting of interviews
- Ensure that Checklists A and B are revised to contain access and cultural awareness prompt questions
- Develop information on access and cultural awareness issues when arranging meeting and publish this on the county council's intranet
- Develop an equality monitoring process within Internal Audit to alert to trends of discrimination in managers/investigators exercising their discretion or in determining action
- Develop a corporate equality monitoring policy for the council

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Name of Policy / function: Local Management handbook for Schools

Date of assessment: 3rd October 2008

Key Findings:

The initial screening process indicated that no full EIA was required as there is no impact on employees, customers or the way services are provided.

Name of Policy / function: Capital Investment Strategy

Date of assessment: 9th October 2007

Key Findings:

The initial screening process indicated that no full EIA was required as there is no impact on employees, customers or the way services are provided.

Name of Policy / function: Risk Management Strategy

Date of assessment: 29th July 2008

Key Findings:

The initial screening process indicated that no full EIA was required as there is no impact on employees, customers or the way services are provided.

Name of Policy / function: Debt Management Strategy

Date of assessment: 16th July 2008

Key Findings:

The initial screening process indicated that no full EIA was required as there is no impact on employees, customers or the way services are provided.

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Name of Policy / function: Recruitment and Selection Process Date of assessment: 29 th March 2006
What is the Policy about? The provision of application forms and recruitment packs to prospective employees to allow them to apply for jobs
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently the application forms are not accessible to all people with disabilities as they are not available in alternative formats. The Disability Rights Commission's Code of Employment and Occupational Practice states that application forms should be available on request in alternative formats for example email, Braille, large print, audio, and disk.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A statement should be added to the application forms to say that alternative formats are available on request.• Research should be conducted to determine how alternative formats of application can be obtained, such as email, Braille, large print and audio.

Name of Policy / function: Training and Development course delivery from the HR Consultancy Date of assessment: 29 th March 2006
What is the Policy about? The main aim of the service is to deliver management and corporate training courses.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There could be an adverse impact around faith, for example, if people are unable to attend a training course because of a faith holiday/observance. In order to improve access to the services, the leading faith holidays/observance for Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths will be avoided when scheduling training courses.• There could be an adverse impact for people working part-time or with caring responsibilities. People working part-time hours may find it difficult to attend the induction course, which is a full day course. In addition people have asked to leave courses early because of their caring responsibilities.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is recommended that when scheduling training courses faith holidays are avoided.• It is recommended that training times are changed wherever possible to a 9.30 start with a 3.30 finish or a 4pm finish with people that have caring responsibilities being allowed to go early. Worksheets should be provided so they can take information away with them. More short workshops should be provided, and blended learning options considered

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Name of Policy / function: Harassment and Bullying at Work Policy

Date of assessment: 27th March 2008

What is the Policy about?

The key aims of the policy are:-

- to support the Council to maintain a working environment where employees are treated with respect and dignity
- to ensure that managers know how to deal with situations where employees believe they are suffering harassment or bullying
- to reassure employees that they are able to raise allegations of harassment and bullying in the confidence that they will be dealt with promptly, effectively and with understanding.

As a result the Council will ensure that all employees respect each other and work in harmony to achieve the aims and goals of the Council.

Key Findings:

- Consultation has taken place with UNISON, other professional associations recognised by BCC, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps and Employee Forums
- The policy includes examples of what constitutes Harassment & Bullying including examples around the 6 equality strands. The document doesn't provide links to guidance on racist incidents and how to report them however this could be provided in the supporting tool kit.
- Some information is available from the Organisational Health Survey around reasons for bullying and Harassment, however overall monitoring is weak, however this will be improved during 2008/09 to include monitoring by service area.
- Managers will be given training or guidance at time of the policy launch and HR will be able to offer advice to service areas. A toolkit has also been written to guide managers through the policy and procedures and this will point people to relevant equalities policies. All staff have access to the policy and toolkit via the BCC Intranet site.

Actions:

- Introduce monitoring of Harassment & Bullying cases going through formal stages of the grievance/conduct procedures, by Service and the 6 strands of diversity.
- Monitor perceptions of the effectiveness of the policy through the Equality Forums

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Name of Policy / function: Carer's Policy

Date of assessment: 29th November 2007

What is the Policy about?

There is a legal requirement for BCC to have a Carers' Policy.

Key aims:

- To provide guidance for managers and employees to maintain consistency of application throughout the organisation.
- To support BCC employees who are carers and offer them real choice to manage their caring responsibilities.
- To help retain existing staff and attract quality people.
- To recognise the key objectives in the People Strategy.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, other professional associations recognised by BCC, Carers' groups and individual Carers in BCC employment, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps and Employee Equality Forums.
- National statistics indicate there is likely to be a high proportion of Carers amongst BCC employees, many of whom work part time. We do not have data which would allow us to analyse the number of Carers at BCC or the specific groups they belong to. This issue has been escalated to the OD&HR equality representative.
- There is a need to ensure that the policy is applied consistently and fairly across all employees. Adjustments to SAP have been requested so this can be monitored.
- There is the potential for people to feel disadvantaged in the application of this policy. For example employees without caring responsibilities may feel disadvantaged if they are required to provide cover for Carers who are absent. Men may also feel disadvantaged, as the majority of Carers are women. Same sex partners may also feel they are required to disclose personal information about the nature of their relationship to the person they are caring for. To try and avoid these potential issues, the guidance will make it clear that all employees are entitled to apply for flexible working. The guidance also stresses the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in discussing requests for Carers Leave. HR Representatives will be available to provide further advice to individuals where necessary.

Actions:

- Ask Recruitment Team to consider how to best promote our equalities agenda through recruitment publicity.
- Circulate the Carers' Policy to the Bucks Equality Network as an example of best practice
- Briefing / guidance to managers to ensure understanding of identified issues and consistent and fair application of the policy.
- Monitor and review the fair and consistent application of Carers Leave and report annually as part of the Equalities Annual Report to Members.
- Check success of the policy through the Carers Forum once this is up and running.

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Name of Policy / function: Flexible Retirement / Postponement of Retirement Policy Date of assessment: 12 th December 2007
What is the Policy about? We are required to have a policy for flexible retirement / postponement of retirement by the Local Government Pension Scheme which provides that employees can, with employer consent, stay in the scheme beyond age 65 but benefits must be drawn by age 75. It also provides that flexible retirement with employer consent will be permitted from age 55 (or from age 50 for existing members before 31 March 2010). The policy aims to provide our employees with options and flexibility and value their diverse contributions.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation has taken place with UNISON, other professional associations recognised by BCC, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps and Employee Forums.• The recent census indicates that Buckinghamshire has more than a third of its population over the age of 50. Consequently it is going to be beneficial to introduce a policy that will retain an ageing workforce to reduce staff turnover.
Actions: Briefing / guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.

Name of Policy / function: Induction Intranet Site Date of assessment: 5 th November 2007
What is the Policy about? The Induction Intranet pages help managers plan a structured and effective induction for new staff and to make new starters feel welcome. The site now offers templates and toolkits; these are not prescriptive and services can choose how much they wish to use and can amend as necessary
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of services were involved in the development of the resources. New starters and the staff employee equality forums were consulted. Research was also done into practice at other authorities.• The electronic format allows most staff to have easy access to the resources regardless of their location and working patterns. It also means adjustments can be made to facilitate access for staff with disabilities such as changing font size or colour contrast. The pages also work with voice activated software.• Line managers are advised to print material for employees who are unable to access the material electronically.
Actions: No immediate actions were identified.

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Name of Policy / function: Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedure Date of assessment: 3 rd April 2008
What is the Policy about? The policy provides a procedure to be applied when an employee's conduct falls below normal or acceptable standards. Its aim is to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain the required standards of conduct and to ensure that BCC is objective, firm, reasonable and consistent in its approach to dealing with employee discipline issues. This is applicable to any member of staff and is designed to ensure that there is consistency across the organisation.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjustments are outlined for staff with disabilities who may need a Carer or family member present at disciplinary meetings.• Monitoring of casework is carried out by ethnicity, but overall monitoring is limited partly due to the small number of cases across the organisation. However this will be developed during 2008/09. This will include looking at data for specific services and conducting trend analyses to look for any changes over time.• Managers will be given training or guidance at time of the policy launch and HR will be able to offer advice to service areas. A toolkit has also been written to guide managers through the policy and procedures. All staff have access to the policy and toolkit via the BCC Intranet site.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training/guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.

Name of Policy / function: Organisational Health Survey Date of assessment: June 2008
What is the Policy about? The OHS is linked to the delivery of the OD&HR People Strategy. The five aims of this strategy are: Being the Best Employer, Bringing in additional talent, Developing Our existing Talent, Championing Diversity, and Transforming the Organisation. The purpose of the OHS is to gather employee feedback about what it feels like to work for the council. This feedback is used to develop future people related policies and also provides data for many of the council's corporate performance indicators.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is an optional section where respondents are asked to give information about gender, ethnicity, disability and age so that we can specifically look at whether their views are significantly different from the main population of respondents against any of the main questions asked.• The survey doesn't currently collect data on sexual orientation, religion/ belief or migrant worker status.• The survey includes direct questions around discrimination and harassment to help us monitor the extent to which these behaviours are being experienced by staff.

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- The survey includes direct questions around discrimination and harassment to help us monitor the extent to which these behaviours are being experienced by staff.
- The equality and diversity data is shared with the Cohesion and Equalities team. Each Head of Service receives a summary report on each of the questions asked.
- Staff are encouraged to complete the survey online, however paper copies are also sent out to staff without internet access. The online survey software (SNAP) meets level 3 (the highest level) of the web accessibility standards set by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World-Wide Web Consortium.(W3C).

Actions:

- Investigate whether ORC can provide any data round typical response rates for each of the particular groups. If response rates are low from some groups greater participation could be encouraged, for example via the employee equality forums.
- Investigate what additional data on the particular groups is available from SAP. Modify optional questions in OHS to match so that comparison profile on all the groups can be determined.

Name of Policy / function: Health and Attendance Policy

Date of assessment: 27th March 2008

What is the Policy about?

The primary focus of the Council's approach to managing health and attendance is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees by the early identification of problems which the manager and individual can address.

The aims of the policy are:-

- To enable BCC to maintain service delivery;
- To develop the attendance culture ;
- To support colleagues absent from work;
- To support managers to encourage achievement of healthy work/life balance;
- To take account of employment legislation when managing absence from work

The outcome of the policy is to proactively manage staff attendance with a view to minimising absence from work, and to enable employees to feel supported through periods of ill health.

Key Findings:

- Consultation has taken place with all employee equality forums and their feedback has been considered in the writing of the policy e.g. developing a new indicator on SAP for absence related to a disability. Consultation has also taken place with UNISON, other professional associations recognised by BCC, Service Managers, HR Managers, HR Diversity Group and Employee Reps.
- The policy addresses how to manage health and attendance issues in the workplace. However, it does recognise that absence may be indicative of problems within the work environment and managers are requested to identify and address any such issues. There is also scope for reasonable adjustments to be made particularly for short periods to enable and encourage a return to work.
- Managers can be put in touch with Occupational Health for advice if they feel there are issues relating to on-going ill health that are affecting staff attendance. Managers are also encouraged to seek advice on occasions where adjustments to working practices are needed due to illness or disability.

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- All employees will have access to the policy via the BCC Intranet site. Hard copies can be made available upon request. A toolkit is being written to accompany the guidance and this will link through to guidance around equalities.
- If the policy and associated guidance is not followed then there is a risk of discrimination for example if reasonable adjustments are not made. It will therefore be necessary to ensure that all HR staff are able to offer guidance to service areas and that all staff are aware of the policy and related procedures. Publicity for the policy will be planned prior to launch.

Actions:

- Ensure Contracts of Employment are updated to reflect the policy
- Discuss with the SAP Team enhancements to sickness reporting for those with a disability

Name of Policy / function: Manager's Guide

Date of assessment: 16th November 2007

What is the Policy about?

The 'Manager's Guide' is deemed necessary to improve the induction process for all new managers, either internally promoted managers to those new to Buckinghamshire County Council. The key aim is to provide managers with a clear vision what being a manager at Buckinghamshire County Council means. New managers will be introduced to the core capabilities expected from a manager and the key policies and procedures highlighted. A number of outcomes have been identified to measure the success of this.

Key Findings:

- The course content has taken into accounts key issues highlighted from the Investors in People group, induction review group, employee representatives and the Organisational Health Survey 2007. Colleagues from other service areas have also been consulted to ensure a balanced programme will be produced.
- The e-learning tool will be DDA compliant and an option will be available to print material for staff who do not have computer access or prefer to work off-line. These requirements will be built into the contract with the external provider. The provider will also be made aware of Council equalities policies.

Actions:

During development ensure that tool is DDA compliant, taking into account the needs of staff with a range of disabilities.

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Name of Policy / function: Grievance Policy and Procedure

Date of assessment: 3rd April 2008

What is the Policy about?

- It is a statutory requirement to have grievance procedures in place. The grievance policy provides a structured mechanism for employees to raise concerns related to their employment. Its aim is to resolve grievances as quickly and as close to the point of origin as possible in an equitable way, which does not hinder the provision of an effective and efficient operation within the council.
- This is applicable to any member of staff and is designed to stop issues escalating, encourage communication, ensure that employees have a voice and that morale within departments is not affected.
- The policy will also contribute to the key objectives of the People Strategy, i.e. Being the Best Employer

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps employee equality forums, school and other professional associations recognised by BCC.
- Monitoring of casework is carried out by ethnicity, but overall monitoring is limited partly due to the small number of cases across the organisation. However this will be developed during 2008/09.
- The toolkit accompanying the policy will outline reasonable adjustments that might need to be made for staff with disabilities.
- Managers will be given training or guidance at time of the policy launch and HR will be able to offer advice to service areas. A toolkit has also been written to guide managers through the policy and procedures. All staff have access to the policy and toolkit via the BCC Intranet site.

Actions:

- Briefing/guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.

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Name of Policy / function: Corporate Talent Management and Succession Planning Date of assessment: 24 th June 2008
What is the Policy about? Talent management and Succession Planning are linked to the delivery of the OD&HR People Strategy and the Workforce Planning activities. By doing the Talent management work we will enhance the capacity of the organisation by establishing a Talent Pool for the whole of the Council. It will help us to recognise those individuals who have the potential to be our leaders of the future in moving beyond the post that individuals are in now. The Succession Planning work supports the reduction of risk by identifying which posts are critical /key roles to the service now and in the future so that we can plan successors within the organisation and offer the skills to meet these expectations
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The scheme has been piloted in 5 service with feedback taken on board. Additional consultation has also taken place with Joint Consultative Group, Employee Reps, COMT, Heads of Service.• Nominations for Talented staff are based on evidence collected through the appraisal process. Nominations are also discussed and challenged within management teams (lead by Heads of Service) before forwarding to a central plan. A self-nomination process exists to staff who have not been nominated through the manager process.• All Heads of Service are receiving a briefing session so as to gain a consistent message and there is support from HR consultants.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within the County wide workforce plan explore positive actions that can be developed in partnerships to work with/ for under represented groups- linking this to the Talent management and Succession Planning processes.• Benchmark with other County Councils to compare the monitoring data and see if there are other positive actions that can be taken.

Name of Policy / function: Corporate Workforce Planning Date of assessment: 24 th June 2008
What is the Policy about? Workforce Planning is linked to the delivery of the OD&HR People Strategy. The five aims of this strategy are: Being the Best Employer, Bringing in Additional Talent, Developing Our Existing Talent, Championing Diversity, and Transforming the Organisation. In delivering this initiative we are seeking to equally attract and retain staff from all particular groups in the future. We need to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right place to deliver our services. This is about us being more pro-active rather than re active by forward planning.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Workforce planning process is reviewed each year alongside the Service planning by Heads of service to take into account improvement areas such as this year Talent management and Succession Planning. In the future we will be working towards a Countywide Workforce plan and in doing this we can start to reflect on the demographics of the County and initiate positive workforce actions to include particular groups.

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Actions:

- Collect relevant County demographics information to inform county wide planning
- Within the County wide workforce plan explore positive actions that can be developed in partnerships to work with/ for under represented groups.

Name of Policy / function: Competency Framework and Appraisal Process

Date of assessment: June 2008

What is the Policy about?

The Competency Framework is linked to the delivery of the OD&HR People Strategy in particular the objective to Championing Diversity where one of the stated aims is “to ensure that all employees are equipped with the skills and competencies they need to operate in a diverse environment.”

The purpose of the Framework is to support the development of behaviours consistent with the Councils Achieving Top performance (now Outstanding Performance) outcomes and values. The competencies are integral to a performance management and capability culture through inclusion in the recruitment, appraisal, development and succession planning processes. The Current Competency Framework has been in existence for around 2 years. The appraisal process was modified around 18 months ago to ensure that the process included discussions and feedback on behaviours as well as outcome objectives. The Framework and the appraisal process are now being reviewed in terms of usability, understanding, access etc. It is therefore timely to include an EIA assessment as part of this review.

Key Findings:

- All services were approached to provide input into a working group to determine the design and content of the Framework.
- The Framework includes the Competency “Respecting others and valuing Diversity” which is defined as “the ability to demonstrate and promote the Council’s Community Cohesion and Equalities Strategy and Policy in ways that can be recognised by employees, customers, partners and colleagues”. This is one of the 6 core competencies that are applicable to all roles in the Council.

Actions:

- Make sure that the definition and terms of the diversity competency are reviewed by the Cohesion and Equalities team.
- Seek feedback for the review from the Employee forums as well as Employee Reps.

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Name of Policy / function: Introduction to Buckinghamshire County Council Date of assessment: 15 th November 2007
What is the Policy about? The induction course is run for all new staff to the Council. It is designed to enable new employees to settle into Bucks County Council as quickly as possible, to feel welcomed and to enable them to maximise their work performance. It covers topics such as the organisation's aims, structure, and approach to customer care. It also aims to increase employee understanding of issues relating to the individual such as representation, policies and benefits.
Key Findings: Key Findings: Consultation took place during the design of the course and a number of actions have already been undertaken to try and ensure the course is as accessible as possible. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following feedback from delegates and managers the course has been redesigned so that there are no full days. This helps accommodate staff who are part time or have to leave early due to parental or caring responsibilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practicing members of some faiths may have religious commitments on Fridays, such as prayer, which may mean they are not able to be present for the whole session. Therefore it has been decided that the course will no longer run on a Friday.• Delegates are asked to specify access and communication needs on the booking form so these can be met. For example BSL interpreters have been used to interpret the course and the video• There was quite a lot of reading and writing involved in some of the exercises. In the new design, this has been reduced. Presentations have also been adapted to ensure the text is not too small. <p>There are still some issues which need to be addressed. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some people who use wheelchairs that are not powered have found that the ramp is too steep accessing the tower building. Facilities have been contacted and until this can be rectified it will be necessary to ensure individual access requirements are picked up from application forms and met.• The course is only advertised on the intranet. There are plans to also advertise it by a leaflet.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities have been contacted to request improved access to training venues such as the Tower building and Annex B. (If Buckinghamshire County Council does not improve access) if the individual indicates that they use a wheelchair someone from the learning and development team needs to be available to enable access if required.• Produce leaflets to advertise the induction course.

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Name of Policy / function: Capability Policy and Procedure Date of assessment: 12 th March 2009
What is the Policy about? The policy sets out the correct capability procedures for all staff employed on Bucks Pay Employment Conditions and those within schools who have adopted the policy.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional Teaching Associations, Unison, AEP, ASPECT, Employee Reps and Extended Management Team have all been consulted as part of the policy update.• The policy outlines how discrimination must not take place on prohibited grounds and in the case of disability that care must be taken to ensure all reasonable adjustments have been made. The toolkit clarifies that the right to representation is expanded for people who have disabilities to allow them to bring a friend, Carer or another person where appropriate to review meetings. The role of this person would be to facilitate access, aid communication or in some cases to offer emotional support.• Toolkits have been developed to support managers with the process, and guidance is also available via HR.• It is possible that due to the nature of the policy, some members of staff being taken through capabilities may feel they are personally adversely affected. However the policy is in place to ensure that fair and appropriate procedures are adhered to and this should mean there is no unfairness, discrimination or disadvantage.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review casework statistics to ensure no adverse equality issues• Review any policy issues raised by managers/Service users and discuss with Employee Relations and Policy Team

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Name of Policy / function: Remote and Homeworking Policy and Procedure

Date of assessment: 9th March 2009

What is the Policy about?

Following the Transformation Business Case for 'Optimising Work Styles and Places', alternative ways of working are being encouraged at the Council. This is to maximise the use of council buildings, reduce costs and provide employees with more flexible work patterns and a choice of places in which to work from to improve their work/life balance. This is applicable to any member of staff whose role is deemed to be suitable for remote or homeworking. For those in jobs that may not be suitable, other options may be available through the flexible working policy on the Intranet.

Key Findings:

Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers and Employee Reps. A number of provisions are made within the policy to ensure all groups are treated fairly. For example:

- Checklists are provided in the Remote and Homeworking Toolkit to try to encourage a consistent approach across the Council. There should be agreement by both parties to enter into a remote or homeworking arrangement as it is equally important that through the Transformation process, employees are not made to work from home to reduce costs across the Council, as well as that managers consider applications to work remotely or at home consistently across their department.
- The Checklists encourage a dialogue between the manager and employee to consider whether the job is suitable and also whether the employee is in a suitable situation to start a remote or homeworking arrangement.
- Offering alternative methods of working should open up the flexibility available to employees, encouraging those who may find it difficult to commute to the office every day to work from home or from a remote office. This may be particularly beneficial for those who have a disability, those who have caring responsibilities where they would benefit from being nearer to home or reducing their commuting time
- The Toolkit clearly states that when applying the remote and homeworking policy and procedure, it is important to note that those with a disability who have additional office or IT equipment may need these provisions to be provided in the remote locations or in their home office. This should not influence the decision on whether a home or remote working arrangement is suitable.
- The policy clearly states that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sex, trade union membership, faith or part-time work status.
- Where requests for remote or homeworking are refused the manager must provide reasons for this decision. Employees are able to appeal if they feel a decision is unfair.

The following possible adverse impacts were identified

- Potentially other team members may have to pick up extra work or answer telephone queries whilst an employee works remotely. An initial trial period followed by a review for anyone starting remote or homeworking should identify any issues that need to be resolved.
- There is a need to ensure the policy is applied consistently across the council. Where certain business areas are refusing remote or homeworking applications without sound business reasons, it is expected this will be highlighted by Unison and that HR would be involved from an advisory point of view to try to prevent unfair decisions being made. Some work will also be done to see if SAP can be used to monitor usage of the policy across services.

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Actions:

- Briefing/guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy
- Good communication plan for launch of policy to ensure employees and managers are aware of the new policy and toolkit.
- Monitoring on SAP – changes to be made to system to enable us to see how widespread remote and homeworking is and which areas are utilising the procedure.

Name of Policy / function: Secondments

Date of assessment: 4th December 2008

What is the Policy about?

This document sets out the Council's policy and procedures for employees who wish to apply for internal and external secondment opportunities. Its purpose is to establish clear guidelines and parameters so that employees understand the full process. The aim is to offer the opportunity to encourage development and growth, allowing employees to gain the skills and knowledge not necessarily available within their own workplace. By placing employees in different work situations, a Secondment offers the chance to introduce new ideas and perspectives back into their Service Area as well as meeting short term staffing needs.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps and Legal Services. Feedback will be incorporated into the final policy.
- The policy clearly states that there should be no discrimination in the application of the policy on prohibited grounds e.g. on grounds of gender, trans-gender, race, trade union activities, disability, age, sexual orientation, part-time work status or religious belief.
- A toolkit and guidance will be available from HR to support managers to implement the policy.
- There are no specific groups of people that should be adversely affected by this policy. Potentially new members of staff may feel it is unfair that they have to be in post for a year before they can apply for a secondment, however this criteria has been benchmarked with other authorities. A staff member who has had their application declined due to business needs, underperformance issues or have a 'live' disciplinary warning may also feel that is unfair. However, a review period has been built in for the application to be appraised again. There is also an Appeals Process that the employee can use if they are unhappy with the decision. In order to promote fairness across all service areas, managers will be required to provide reasons relating to why a secondment has been declined.

Actions:

- Briefing/guidance to HR Consultancy Team to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.

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Name of Policy / function: Redundancy Policy and Procedure

Date of assessment: 2nd December 2008

What is the Policy about?

It is a statutory requirement to have redundancy procedures in place. The policy provides a procedure to be applied when a redundancy situation arises through a re-organisation. Its aim is to provide details of the process to be followed to effect fair and lawful redundancies. This is applicable to any member of staff and is designed to ensure that there is consistency and fairness across the organisation.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps, schools and other professional associations recognised by BCC. Appropriate feedback will be fed into the policy.
- If a redundancy situation is not resolved by means of voluntary redundancy, compulsory redundancy may be required. The policy is clear that selection for compulsory redundancy will be carried out using fair, objective and non-discriminatory criteria.
- Provision will be made for employees on maternity leave, adoption leave, sick leave, secondment and career breaks and they will be kept informed on updates on a regular basis.
- Redundancy entitlements for teachers are governed by teacher's terms and conditions and previous Union agreements and are subject to length of service and in relation to teachers it will be dependent on their age. The entitlements for teachers comply with statutory redundancy entitlements and all other staff on Bucks pay conditions receive a redundancy entitlements that is better than the statutory minimum.
- A toolkit and guidance will be available from HR to support managers to implement the policy.
- If the policy and procedure are correctly followed, there are no specific groups of people that should be adversely affected. The only adverse effect would potentially be for any staff who are made redundant. However, the policy should ensure they are given ample opportunity to present their case, with representation if they wish, and to appeal against any redundancy decision that may be imposed.
- Employees who have been with the council for a shorter period of time may feel it is unfair that they would receive smaller redundancy payments than staff who have worked here for longer. However this is in line with the terms of Bucks Pay and Conditions and statutory guidance.

Actions:

- Training/guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.

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Name of Policy / function: Reorganisation Policy and Procedure

Date of assessment: 14th January 2009

What is the Policy about?

The policy aims to provide a structured and professional approach to reorganisations thereby minimising the anxiety experienced by those people affected by the change. It is applicable to all Council employees except those employed within schools.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers and Employee Reps This only identified minor cosmetic change.
- Feedback on managing change gathered from the Organisational Health Survey has been addressed. This predominantly covered lack of clarity of process. Feedback has suggested that this policy, which focuses wholly on reorganisation, will make a real difference to the approach and perceptions of managing change. A further criticism of managing change has been the lack of communication. This policy goes to great lengths to emphasise the need for continuous communication.
- It could be argued that employees in a reorganisation situation may suffer an adverse effect as preference to jobs is given to those on maternity/adoption leave. However, this is justifiable and legitimate and covered by employment law.
- Any member of staff involved in reorganisation may feel they will suffer if the nature of their job changes, or if their position is not part of the new structure. Having a Reorganisation Policy and Procedure in place should help minimise this by ensuring proper processes are followed and all parties are kept informed.

A number of provisions are made within the policy to ensure all groups are treated fairly. For example:

- It is made clear that staff absent from a service area at the time of re-organisation must be involved in consultation and any job matching e.g. those on long-term sick, secondment, career breaks.
- The policy clearly outlines that special arrangements for consultation and for placing people within the new structure apply to individuals who are on maternity or adoption leave to ensure they are not disadvantaged by their absence
- The policy clearly outlines that employees have the right to be represented or accompanied at formal meetings by a trade union representative or a work colleague.
- The policy clearly states that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, trans-gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, sex, trade union membership, faith or part-time work status.
- The policy outlines a requirement for an Equality Impact Assessment to be carried out on any review.
- The guidance asks managers to consider individual circumstances in any reorganisation e.g. needs of Carers
- A toolkit and guidance will be available from HR to support managers to implement the policy.

Actions:

- Good communication plan of launch of policy to ensure that employees and managers aware of new policy and toolkit.

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Name of Policy / function: Employee Transfer Policy and Procedure

Date of assessment: 16th October 2008

What is the Policy about?

The policy fulfils a statutory obligation to provide suitable alternative employment for employees who are at risk of redundancy. In addition, the policy provide a mechanism for redeploying employees who are coming to the end of a fixed term contract and employees who are unable to continue in their job due to ill health or disability. The policy seeks to reduce the number of involuntary redundancies and help retain employees who have skills and knowledge that can be utilised in an alternative role.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers and Employee Reps. Appropriate feedback will be fed into the policy.

A number of provisions are made within the policy to ensure all groups are treated fairly. For example:

- It is made clear that the policy is not an alternative to good performance management.
- It is made clear when the procedure may be used for people with a disability or who have ill health, in particular that reasonable adjustment must be attempted in the original job.
- The policy clearly outlines the order of priority that is given to different groups on the redeployment register when there is competition for the same post. For example the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations mean that an employer is obliged to offer any suitable vacancy to the absent employee automatically where the absent employee has been selected for redundancy.
- The policy clearly states that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, trade union membership, faith or part-time work status.
- The procedures set out to ensure that any adverse effect on employees who have to go through redeployment are minimised, for example in terms of changes to pay, contractual terms or travel arrangements.
- A toolkit and guidance will be available from HR to support managers to implement the policy.
- Potentially those not on the redeployment register may feel adversely affected if they have reduced access to internal vacancies. However this is justifiable and legitimate and covered by various acts of employment law.

Actions:

- Briefing/guidance to managers to ensure understanding of the policy and a proactive approach to Redeployment.
- Good communication plan of launch of policy to ensure that employees and managers aware of new policy and toolkit.

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Name of Policy / function: Employee Benefits Package

Date of assessment: 22nd April 2008

What is the Policy about?

Employee benefits form part of the overall employment package as part of our total reward strategy. They are an important aspect of the recruitment and retention of employees.

Key Findings:

- The employee benefits package was discussed in a variety of employee forums – some specific focus groups were set up, surveys were sent out and the package was discussed with Unison and employee reps through the normal employee consultation mechanism.
- In the 2005 Organisational Health Survey only 42% of employees indicated they felt the employee conditions and benefits were fair and this had increased to 60% by 2007 (national benchmark in 2007 is 59%).
- Feedback identified gaps in provision for employees with caring responsibilities and also some concerns around grade related benefits. For example discounts on Adult Learning courses are only accessible to employees on ranges 1-5 and lease cars and private health insurance are accessible to employees (largely) on ranges 7 upwards. This is not illegal and can be justified by the requirement for effective recruitment and retention. However it is recognized that this could potentially have a greater adverse impact on women as there is a preponderance of women in the lower ranges where some benefits are not accessible (n.b. the majority of jobs at range 1-4 are home carers, school support staff, or admin/secretarial support, which have traditionally been more female orientated jobs. The preponderance of women at these grades within the Council is in line with National Statistics).

Actions:

- Gap identified by employee focus groups in support available for employees with caring responsibilities. Action taken – Carers Policy developed and implemented in 2007 with application to all employees.
- Consider options to review application of grade-related employee benefits within overall package. Application of discounted private health insurance agreed for employees who are not covered by full employer cover.

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Name of Policy / function: Career Break

Date of assessment: 1st January 2008

What is the Policy about?

The Council recognises that during an employee's working life there may be times when personal commitments take priority over work, and we want to encourage good work life balance for these staff. The policy provides a defined process which allows for employees to take a career break, for example to pursue full time education, a personal interest or project, overseas travel, charity work or childcare responsibilities. The key aims are to provide consistency across the Council, retain skills and knowledge, to support personal growth and to assist employees with caring responsibilities. This policy is open to all employees with two years continuous service.

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with UNISON, Service Managers, HR Managers, Employee Reps and Legal. Appropriate feedback will be fed into the policy.
- Managers are to ascertain whether a Career Break is the appropriate option for the employee. It may be that alternative working arrangements are more suitable in some cases e.g., reduction in hours, job-sharing or flexible working.
- Employees who have taken up any of the organisation's benefits (pension, car scheme etc) have access to information to gain an understanding of any impact on themselves should they take a career break.
- Potentially some employees may have concerns about discussing the reasons they are seeking a Career break. For example employees requesting a career break to care for a relative may be uncomfortable discussing the particular nature of the condition or be worried about the number of staff who have access to the information once it has been declared on the form. This is likely to occur infrequently but consideration needs to be given as to how to deal with potentially sensitive or confidential data.
- A toolkit and guidance will be available from HR to support managers to implement the policy.
- There are no specific groups of people who are likely to be adversely affected by this policy. The only adverse effect would potentially be for an employee who has had their application postponed or declined due to business needs, underperformance issues or a 'live' disciplinary warning. However, a review period has been built in for the application to be appraised again. There is also an Appeals Process that the employee can use if they are unhappy with the decision. In order to promote fairness across all service areas, managers will be required to provide reasons to explain why a Career Break application has been postponement or declined.

Actions:

- Briefing/guidance to HR Consultancy Team to ensure understanding of the policy and a consistent and fair application of the policy.
- Consideration to be given to issues around the recording and storage of sensitive information.

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Name of Policy / function: Car Parking Policy

Date of assessment: 9th June 2010

What is the Policy about?

The Council's aim is to promote a fair, equal and consistent approach with clear guidelines for all employees to understand and follow. It also takes into consideration the [green travel agenda](#) that encourages staff to commute using sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing) where possible. The policy provides consistency for allocating access to the car park for:

- Employees
- Employees with a disability (see below)
- Agency Workers
- Contractors
- Consultants
- Employees of Partner Organisations (Public or Private)
- TUPE Transfers

Key Findings:

- Consultation with staff and Unions took place via a Car Parking Working Group which was established in January 2010. Research was also conducted into policies at other authorities.
- BCC did not renew car parking permits as a cost cutting exercise from April 2010. Employees who were affected were written to and advised to relocate to Friars Square car park. Employees were also redirected to the surrounding pay and display car parks if Friars Square was full. Analysis of the use of Friars Square car park occurred during April and May for a period of 4 weeks. The findings demonstrated that at its peak of 97.07%, the car park still had 3% availability which equates to 12 car parking spaces.
- There was extensive communication of the changed policy to staff via numerous internal communication channels.
- Employees with a disability, if appropriate, will be allocated access to car parking as a reasonable adjustment, irrespective of business mileage and where capacity allows. This will also include employees who are temporarily undergoing treatment. Each situation will be dealt with on a case by case scenario.

Actions:

- Review access to car parking in Friars Square to measure capacity for a three week period
- Some female employees may feel vulnerable using other car parks that do not have CCTV or Security on site. Raised with Transport/Facilities Management to review lighting/security in other car parks

EIA Summaries Resources and Business Transformation

Name of Policy / function: Whistleblowing Policy

Date of assessment: 25th September 2009

What is the Policy about?

The Council is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethical standards in public life. The key aims of the policy are to:

- provide a structured mechanism for employees/workers to raise concerns about any aspect of the Council's work by encouraging a culture of openness and transparency
- provide managers with a robust procedure to deal with any concerns raised
- reassure individuals who raise concerns through the Whistleblowing procedure that the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 offers protection from reprisal, victimisation or harassment at work if a concern is raised in good faith

Key Findings:

- Consultation took place with staff and Unions. The main concerns raised through consultation surrounded roles and responsibilities within the process. These have been clarified within the policy and the accompanying Toolkit will provide guidance for all those involved in the Whistleblowing procedures.
- Another concern was ensuring penalties are in place for anyone that breaches the terms of the policy either by not following correct procedure or causing detriment to an individual that whistleblows. The policy states that anyone found to be causing detriment will be subject to action under the Council Conduct and Discipline policy and procedures.
- Internal audit have the whistleblowing hotline situated in their office. They suggested the hotline should be publicised more so individuals are more aware of it as a tool for reporting concerns in a confidential manner. This will be done as part of the policy launch.
- Because of confidentiality we have been unable to approach specific individuals who have blown the whistle in the past. However, managers have been asked their views on the process and whether they feel comfortable with being tasked to deal with concerns raised to them. Some managers did say that they would benefit from training relating to the procedures and this will be provided at launch.
- The whistle blower is protected by law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The policy also states that anyone in breach of the policy by causing detriment to an individual because they have raised a concern, or failing to follow procedures, may be subject to action under the Council's Conduct and Discipline policy.
- Different routes for employees to raise a concern are including a confidential phone line, via their Trade Union Representative, directly to their line manager or an alternative manager if appropriate. Individuals are able to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or work colleague to any meetings that are required to discuss the concern raised.
- All employees have access to the Employee Assistance Programme and this will be referred to in the toolkit accompanying the policy. The EAP will be able to provide guidance to employees who have concerns about whistleblowing and will advise them to speak with either their manager or another senior manager if appropriate.
- Vulnerable employees may wish to raise concerns with someone outside of their service area for example a work colleague. As all employees/workers have a duty to raise concerns then whomever hears the complaint should report it to the relevant senior manager.
- There will be extensive communication of the revised policy via internal communication channels.

Actions:

- Review any policy issues raised by managers/Service users and discuss with Employee Relations and Policy Team

EIA Summaries Resources and Business Transformation

Name of Policy / function: Health and Safety Policies Date of assessment: 29 th October 2010
What is the Policy about? In order to fulfil its legal obligations for Health and Safety BCC has a number of health and safety policies and procedures that managers and heads of establishments are expected to implement and/or comply with including Risk Assessment, Manual Handling, Control of Contractors, New and Expectant Mothers, Young People, Disability.
Key Findings: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most BCC Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are developed to implement legislation/best practice and therefore the content is dictated by those requirements.• Health and Safety Policies and Procedures in the main are designed to benefit employees and members of the public affected and protect vulnerable groups e.g. young people, new and expectant mothers, people with disabilities.• All major new policies and revisions to existing policies go through a consultation process with relevant parties and are approved by the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.• Certain health and safety legislation differentiates against groups of people such as legislation aimed specifically at new and expectant mothers and young people and manual handling guidance which set different guide figures for safe lifting for men and women. This is normally done to give added protection to those groups where there is evidence that they are likely to be more vulnerable. In particular there is guidance around staff with disabilities, and a risk assessment procedure is in place which should be followed by all managers employing a disabled member of staff to ensure that necessary reasonable adjustments are identified.• The DSE (Display Screen Equipment) assessment that all employees who are categorised as display screen users are asked to do is designed to pick up specific requirements that individuals may have around their work station, for example chair settings, foot or wrist rests etc. This should ensure that the risks associated with using DSE are minimised and that any particular needs that individuals have are identified and can be actioned by line managers.• Policies are communicated to employees via the Intranet and to schools via the schools web. Some information is printed off and circulated within establishments or pinned on notice boards. H&S Policies are promoted and changes to policies notified to employees via Team Brief, Manager Brief and School Bulletin. There is an FAQ section on the intranet which provides answers to some common questions. The Health and Safety Team can also be contacted directly for information and advice• Employee induction includes information about health and safety policies and procedures. If employees are unable to access the information from the internet or schools web their manager is responsible for identifying this and ensuring the employee receives the information they need in an accessible format.
Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review EIA in 3 years time.

EIA Summaries Resources and Business Transformation

Name of Policy / function: Health and Safety Training

Date of assessment: 29th October 2010

What is the Policy about?

The Health and Safety Team deliver a comprehensive health and safety training programme to all services of BCC including schools. Some is delivered by members of the Team and some through external trainers. Example of courses – manual handling (object and person), asbestos awareness, risk assessment, managing medicines in schools.

Key Findings:

- The course content is appropriate for the participants - e.g. in terms of their level of understanding of the subject matter, and reviewed regularly. Many courses are tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of employees, for example there is a general Health and Safety awareness course, as well as one specifically for managers. Some refresher courses are also offered which offer a reminder of good practice, and there are also specific courses for social care staff. Course descriptions provide a clear indication of who the course is aimed at.
- Courses are booked through the Learning and Development Team who do all course administration. The needs of individual participants are assessed and accommodated as part of the booking process, and trainers would be informed ahead of the course if any delegates had specific requirements, for example around access or communication. For example assistance is given on examined courses such as IOSH Working Safely where participants have literacy problems.
- BCC venues are often used for the internally run training, but external venues may also be used. Because access needs are assessed as part of the booking process, changes to the venue could be made, or adaptations put in place should this be necessary.
- There is a rolling programme of training with a choice of dates and venues for courses to try and ensure that delegates have flexibility around when and where to attend a course. Individuals with children or who have caring responsibilities can sometimes find it difficult to attend courses which start early and finish late in the day. A number of the Health and Safety courses run over half a day, however some are full day course or longer, particular those that are run externally and which are accredited. However if individuals need to arrive late or leave early, trainers will try to ensure their needs are accommodated.
- Course evaluation forms are monitored and changes made to courses where needed. These include questions relating to the suitability of the venue as well as the training provision itself. To date comments have not suggested that there is a need to make any substantial changes to courses in order to better meet delegate needs.
- Some training is provided by external tutors who have expertise in the particular subject areas. Each tutor is issued with a standard contract which includes clauses on their responsibilities regarding equalities. Tutors are monitored via evaluation forms, meetings and occasional attendance at training by H&S Team members, informal feedback is also invited. Tutors are updated when changes to relevant BCC Policies and requirements are made. Trainers from the Health and Safety Team are aware of BCC Policies on Equalities and have attended various awareness sessions.

Actions:

- Review EIA in 3 years time.