



# Employment and Appeals Committee Agenda

Wyre Borough Council  
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**Employment and Appeals Committee meeting on Monday, 10 July 2023 at 6.00 pm in the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre**

1. **Election of Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/24**
2. **Election of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2023/24**
3. **Apologies**
4. **Declarations of interest**

Members will disclose any pecuniary and any other significant interests they may have in relation to the matters to be considered at this meeting.

5. **Confirmation of Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Employment and Appeals Committee held on Monday 20 February 2023.

6. **Introduction to the Employment and Appeals Committee**

The Human Resources Manager will provide members with a short verbal introduction to the Employment and Appeals Committee.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee can be found at Part 2.08 of the Council's Constitution and is available [here](#).

7. **Policy Review** (Pages 7 - 10)

Report of the Human Resources Manager to present to the Employment and Appeals Committee additions and amendments to Human Resource Policies.

- (a) Resolution Policy (Pages 11 - 28)
- (b) Reservists Policy (Pages 29 - 36)
- (c) Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme (Pages 37 - 42)
- (d) Social Media Policy (Pages 43 - 50)



## Employment and Appeals Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 20 February 2023 at the Committee Room 2 - Civic Centre.

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### **Employment and Appeals Committee members present:**

Councillors Lady D Atkins, Baxter, P Ellison, Rendell, A Turner and Webster

### **Failed to attend or tender apologies for absence**

Councillors Armstrong, Fairbanks, Holden and Smith

### **Officers present:**

Olivia Cordingley, Human Resources Advisor

Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary)

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

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### **11 Declarations of interest**

None.

### **12 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Employment and Appeals Committee meeting held on 31 October 2022 were **confirmed** as a correct record.

### **13 Policy Review**

The Human Resources Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer, Jane Collier, submitted a report presenting six policies and procedures that had been amended.

Olivia Cordingley, Human Resources Advisor, introduced the report and provided members with a brief overview of the policies.

#### **13a Safeguarding Policy**

Olivia Cordingley explained that the policy had been reviewed by designated safeguarding officers, which resulted in minor amendments to reflect post title changes and current practice.

### **13b Smoking Policy**

Olivia Cordingley updated members that the policy had been amended to provide clarity around employees smoking during the working day. The policy included that employees should be on arranged breaks and 'clocked out' of work.

She added that the policy had been updated to include homeworkers. She acknowledged that it was challenging to monitor employees who smoked while working from home, but she emphasised the necessity of this policy, at least in part, for those who participated in virtual meetings and telephone calls. Olivia also highlighted to members that the boundary map that was attached to this policy had been removed as a means to encourage employees to not smoke at the front of the Civic Centre.

The Chair, Councillor Ann Turner, highlighted the difficulties of employee compliance regarding smoking when home working, Olivia reiterated that this section of the policy was primarily concerned with employees smoking cigarettes or electronic cigarettes during virtual meetings and telephone calls.

Members asked questions and received answers regarding designated smoking areas.

Several members questioned the inclusion of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in the policy and whether the use of the word "smoking" could be reviewed to ensure it also refers to e-cigarettes. Olivia highlighted to members that at section 5.6 of the policy it referred to electronic cigarettes (also known as vapes). Following further discussions, the group suggested that the inclusion of the following amended sentence at section 11.4 of the policy be taken into consideration:

"The Human Resources team is able to provide those wishing to stop smoking and/or the use of electronic cigarettes with appropriate literature".

### **13c Work Experience and Placement Policy**

Olivia Cordingley explained that the policy had been amended to include additional information on internships. She added that other minor amendments had been made throughout.

Olivia responded to questions regarding the method of placements and the Safeguarding Children's Policy.

### **13d Flexible Retirement Policy**

Olivia Cordingley stated that this policy had been updated to clarify that employees who wished to continue working beyond their agreed

retirement date could only do so following a break in continuous service and through the normal recruitment process.

In response to a question, Olivia clarified that before an employee submitted an application they should have considered the period they envisaged the reduction in hours/grade continuing until they retired completely. Once an employee had entered flexible retirement there wasn't an agreed process for them to reverse the process.

Olivia reassured members that Human Resources promoted retirement seminars for those employees who were beginning to consider retirement.

### **13e Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy**

Olivia Cordingley explained to members that there had been minor amendments made throughout this policy.

In response to a question regarding Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, Olivia explained that DBS checks were carried out if the role required.

### **13f Zero Tolerance Policy**

Olivia Cordingley highlighted that this policy had been reviewed by Health and Safety and several amendments had been made. These included readability improvements, the elimination of a risk assessment in section 4.3 of the policy, the elimination of training that was no longer provided, and other small changes made throughout.

Olivia added that training was provided for appropriate employees, in particular client-facing roles, to manage conflict/personal safety.

In response to a question regarding incident reporting, Olivia explained that employees were encouraged to submit incident/accident reports (as appropriate) when subject to abuse or assault.

## **14 Decision taken**

Following discussions, the committee **approved** each of the following Human Resources policies and arrangements:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Work Experience and Placement Policy
- Flexible Retirement Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.23 pm.

**Date of Publication:** 23.02.2023

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Human Resources	Employment and Appeals Committee	10 July 2023

Policy Review
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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To present to the Panel additions and amendments to Human Resource Policies.

**2. Outcomes**

2.1 The amendment to existing policies and procedures.

**3. Recommendation**

3.1 That the Panel approve the policies and arrangements set out in Section 5.

**4. Background**

4.1 From time to time the Council needs to develop new policies and working arrangements to ensure we comply with statutory requirements and effectively manage our human resources.

4.2 The development of new policies and the review of existing policies will also be informed by employment best practice and the organisational needs of the Council.

**5. Key issues and proposals**

5.1	Resolution Policy	Reviewed
	Reservists Policy	Reviewed
	Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme	Reviewed
	Social Media Policy	Reviewed

5.2 The Resolution Policy has been updated with minor amendments to bring it up to date with current practice.

- 5.3** The Reservist Policy has been reviewed without any changes.
- 5.4** The Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme has been amended at section 5.2 to include only those where the last long term substantive employer was the Armed Forces.
- 5.5** The Social Media Policy has been updated with minor amendments throughout.

Section 6.8 of the Social Media Policy has been removed to reflect that the guidance is no longer available on the hub.

<b>Financial and legal implications</b>	
Finance	There are no specific Finance issues associated to this report.
Legal	There are no specific Legal issues associated to this report. However failure to comply with appropriate legislation may expose the Council to litigation.

**Other risks/implications: checklist**

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
community safety	X
equality and diversity	X
sustainability	X
health and safety	x

<b>risks/implications</b>	<b>✓ / x</b>
asset management	X
climate change	X
ICT	X
data protection	X

**Processing Personal Data**

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a ‘privacy impact assessment (PIA)’ is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.



report author	telephone no.	email	date
HR Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer	01253 887506	<a href="mailto:jane.collier@wyre.gov.uk">jane.collier@wyre.gov.uk</a>	June 2023

<b>List of background papers:</b>		
name of document	date	where available for inspection

**List of appendices**

- Appendix 1      Resolution Policy
- Appendix 2      Reservists Policy
- Appendix 3      Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme
- Appendix 4      Social Media Policy

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*Together*  
we make a  
difference

# Resolution Policy and Procedure

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## 1. PURPOSE

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- 1.1 The purpose of this Resolution Policy is to bring complaints, grievances, conflicts and disputes to a satisfactory and constructive resolution, both speedily and effectively. Wherever possible, the Resolution Policy places responsibility for the resolution of conflicts and disputes directly with the people involved. To assist resolution, the council will provide such support as is required.
- 1.2 This policy combines the previous Grievance and Dignity at Work policies to provide a positive way of dealing with issues that would have been dealt with under those policies. The Resolution Policy does not diminish employee's right to raise a 'grievance' but provides a means of doing so in the most positive way possible.

## 2. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

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- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the council excluding officers employed under J.N.C. Conditions of Service for Chief Officers, for Chief Executives and Protected Officers.
- It does **not** apply to agency staff, external contractors or external consultants.
- 2.2 This policy provides a formal method for resolving disputes, complaints, conflicts and allegations of bullying or harassment. It may be used in individual disputes, team disputes and in collective disputes.
- 2.3 The Resolution Policy is suitable for the following types of issues:
- Disagreements and disputes between colleagues;
  - Disagreements and disputes within or between teams;
  - Disagreements and disputes between managers and members of their team;
  - Concerns or complaints about the allocation or distribution of resources;
  - Concerns or complaints about the actions or inactions of the council; about terms and conditions of employment; health and safety; new working practices; the working environment; equality of opportunity; and allegations of bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 2.4 This policy will not apply in the following circumstances:
- 2.4.1 Where the disciplinary, capability or managing attendance procedures are invoked and the matter would be better be dealt with by way of an appeal in line with the relevant procedure.

- 2.4.2 When the matter is one over which the council has no control, or where management is acting in accordance with council policy and procedures.
- 2.4.3 Where the matter is the subject of collective negotiation or consultation with trade unions and staff.
- 2.4.4 Where an employee has serious concerns about an aspect of the council's work or those who work for the council. In such circumstances, the Whistleblowing Policy is available to enable employees to raise concerns about workplace malpractices, suspicions of criminal acts, miscarriage of justice and dangers to health and safety.
- 2.4.5 Separate procedures are in place to deal with grading issues (Re-grading Policy) and therefore such matters are excluded from this policy.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

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- 3.1 Resolution is all about securing a solution to a situation that is acceptable to all the parties involved. As a result, those parties then feel determined to implement the agreement
- 3.2 The council believes that a resolution that is secured by the parties themselves is more likely to be mutually acceptable and successful over the long term, rather than one that is imposed on them – with one side perceiving that they have won and the other perceiving they have lost.
- 3.3 We are committed to fostering mutual respect and understanding with all our employees - between colleagues, colleagues and their managers and within teams. This is even more important when we experience a conflict or a dispute in the workplace.
- 3.4 We recognise that conflict in the workplace is normal; in many cases, it is inevitable and when managed well, it leads to healthy, resilient and positive relationships.
- 3.5 We aim to support our employees to work together to resolve any disputes and conflicts constructively and speedily.
- 3.6 This policy encourages early resolution and offers a collaborative system of conflict resolution that balances the rights of the parties with their interests and needs; it brings the core principals of mediation to the forefront of conflict resolution and encourages constructive resolution at every stage of a dispute.
- 3.7 Any dispute will be treated in a fair and consistent way and dealt with quickly and supportively.

- 3.8 We recognise that a positive working environment and good working relationships have a positive impact on your wellbeing, engagement and the council's success.
- 3.9 This policy draws on five core principles:
- Dialogue: Building dialogue between people to help them to resolve disputes, conflicts and complaints.
  - Fairness: Giving all employees access to a fair and dignified approach for managing disputes, conflicts and complaints.
  - Mutual Respect: Recognising that disputes, conflicts, and complaints can be challenging. We encourage a respectful approach at all times to support the achievement of win/ win resolutions.
  - Collaboration: We actively encourage the parties in a dispute, conflict, or complaint to work together to identify, agree and implement a shared solution.
  - Timeliness: We will seek to resolve all workplace disputes, conflicts, and complaints in a timely manner and will, wherever possible, avoid any unnecessary delays.

## 4. PRINCIPLES

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- 4.1 This policy is focussed on restoring and protecting working relationships. It is proactive, values based and it supports all parties at all stages of the conflict management cycle.
- 4.2 We encourage positive and constructive behaviours in the workplace and a collaborative approach to achieving a constructive resolution to disputes or conflicts.
- 4.3 This policy integrates the values and principles of mediation into conflict resolution: empathy, dignity, respect, openness, collaboration and fairness.
- 4.4 We place significant emphasis on early resolution, which will help to establish a resolution culture.
- 4.5 In more serious disputes and where there is a clear breach of conduct, the option to defer to the Disciplinary Policy may be appropriate.
- 4.6 We are committed to the Council's values which include working collaboratively, and as a team.



- 4.7 We are committed to the fair treatment of our employees, regardless of race or belief, gender, sex, gender reassignment, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical and/or mental disability, marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity.
- 4.8 Whilst a dispute is being considered the “status quo” will prevail whenever possible. “Status quo” means that any change causing the dispute will not be implemented.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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- 5.1 It is the responsibility for all **Employees** to:
- Be aware of the council’s policy and procedure.
  - To fully engage in respectful dialogue to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage of conflict.
  - To work together to find mutually acceptable, win/win outcomes to conflict.
  - To be courageous and take steps to pro-actively resolve conflict in a solution focussed manner, not allowing perceptions, assumptions or fear to rule decision-making.
  - To approach all conversations respectfully, constructively and non-judgementally.
  - To learn from previous emotionally charged situations/ conflicts and to transform that learning into positive behavioural change.
  - To engage with others constructively and calmly during difficult conversations and during times of change, conflict and crisis.
  - To be able to receive difficult feedback and respond non-defensively.
  - To be empathetic and able to respond to others in a compassionate and supportive manner.
  - To raise any matters in a timely manner, so that they can be resolved fairly and quickly.
  - To maintain confidentiality and deliver on any agreements reached throughout the process.
  - To take ownership and responsibility for resolving any conflicts or disputes.
  - If you have a disability or a learning difficulty and require any adjustments, to enable you to fully engage with the process, you are asked to notify your manager, or HR, of those requirements, so that any adjustments can be considered and put in place, where reasonable.

- 5.2 It is the responsibility of **Managers** to:
- Seek advice from Human Resources in a timely manner.
  - To promote constructive and collaborative conversations and respectful dialogue.
  - To listen actively, non-judgementally and with sensitivity.
  - To act with compassion, impartiality, integrity and without taking sides.
  - To spot the signs of conflict early, to intervene and ensure the employee has the right support and guidance to effectively secure their own resolution.
  - To keep a documented record of any conflict, the approach to resolution and any agreements.
  - To raise the profile of the Resolution Policy and the approaches available to effectively manage conflict.
  - To maintain an open culture where people can speak up about their experiences.
  - To set up and run facilitated conversations.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of **Human Resources** to:
- Ensure provision of training, support and guidance for managers.
  - Regularly review and monitor the operation and effectiveness of the policy and procedure including any adverse impact.
  - Ensure compliance with legal obligations.

## 6. PROCEDURE

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- 6.1 To commence the process, the aggrieved employee will need to submit a 'request for resolution'. The submission of a 'request for resolution' is appropriate when:
- Support is required to resolve a conflict, dispute, or complaint; or
  - Previous attempts to resolve a conflict, dispute, or complaint have been unsuccessful.
- 6.1.1 It is expected that a staff member only submits a 'request for resolution' once all efforts to resolve the issue themselves have been exhausted.
- 6.2 **Step One: Submitting a Request for Resolution**
- A written 'request for resolution' should be submitted to either Human Resources or their line manager.
- 6.2.1 Human Resources are responsible for administering and overseeing the application of the Resolution Policy. As such, any 'requests for resolution' will be communicated and shared with them. In certain circumstances this may not be appropriate and will be carried out by an appropriate Head of Service or Corporate Director.

- 6.2.2 Submitting a 'request for resolution' may result in one or more of the following courses of action:
- Encouragement to engage in an early resolution meeting (direct face to face talks) between the parties;
  - A facilitated conversation chaired by a manager or member of HR;
  - Team conference in the case of team disputes and collective disputes;
  - A formal resolution meeting to offer a determination of the case in the event that the above steps are unsuccessful or it is considered the matter is serious enough to warrant the formal process from the outset.

### 6.3 **Step Two: The Resolution Triage Assessment Process**

Following receipt of a 'request for resolution', a member of Human Resources will undertake a resolution triage assessment to identify the most suitable route to resolution.

During the assessment, emphasis will be placed on early resolution, including the value that roundtable conversations, team conferencing and coaching can have in facilitating a successful and lasting resolution.

Where the request for resolution involves a specific individual the relevant manager will be informed.

Human Resources will communicate with employees involved to support them during the process. Occupational Health and/or the Employee Support Programme/Listening Service will be available to any member of staff needing some additional support.

### 6.4 **Resolution Methods**

There are a number of approaches for facilitating a resolution, which are summarised below.

#### 6.4.1 **Early Resolution Meeting**

The resolution meeting is an early attempt to identify and resolve a disagreement, a conflict or a dispute. It provides an opportunity for managers, employees, and colleagues to discuss situations in a supportive, constructive and empathetic forum.

6.4.1.1 Most workplace disagreements, disputes, and conflicts can be resolved at the resolution meeting stage.

6.4.1.2 An early resolution meeting is an informal meeting designed to secure a constructive and lasting resolution. To support the smooth running of the meeting the following guidance is offered:

- Be respectful and courteous at all times;
- Give each other time to talk and avoid interrupting each other;
- Listen actively when the other person is talking;
- De-personalise the situation, speak from the 'I' rather than the 'you';
- Try to see the situation from the other persons point of view;
- Be open and honest, this is a key part of building trust;

- Seek areas for agreement and explain what requests you would like to help move the situation forward (this should be positioned as a request and not a demand).

6.4.1.3 A good structure for the conversation would be:

- To outline what you have observed;
- To share any relevant facts, which support or illustrate what you are saying;
- To explain what impact the situation is having on you;
- To explain what your perception is of the other persons intention;
- To explain what your underlying needs and goals are.

## 6.4.2 Facilitated Roundtable Conversations

A facilitated conversation may be led by a manager or a member of Human Resources. In some cases, it may be chaired jointly.

6.4.2.1 The conversation is a confidential discussion between all parties that draws on the same principles as mediation. However, it is less formal than mediation and can be used to bring parties together at an early stage of the dispute. The facilitator acts neutrally and creates the right conditions for effective dialogue. The facilitator encourages the parties to engage in constructive dialogue and to listen actively. It is a solution focussed process with the aim of helping the parties to reach a mutually acceptable outcome.

## 6.4.3 Team Conferencing

Team conferencing has many similarities to the approach of facilitated conversations and mediation and seeks to bring a group of people together to address and resolve issues of conflict.

6.4.3.1 In brief, the process involves:

- Initially, information gathering and individual private meetings take place to explore the needs and goals for the team conference.
- At the team conference:
  - Participants are welcomed, introductions are made and ground rules are established;
  - Objectives are set, and feedback is provided on the situation and the context for the conference;
  - Participants are invited to provide an overview of their experiences, the impact of the situation, their needs and goals;
  - Dialogue is facilitated where participants raise and discuss any issues;
  - Non-blaming problem statements are generated that are used for collaborative problem solving;
  - A team action plan is developed, which includes details of follow up and after care.

## 6.4.4 Formal Resolution Meeting

A formal resolution meeting may be convened as a result of the outcome of a triage assessment or where alternative approaches to resolving conflict have been deemed unsuitable or unsuccessful.

- 6.4.4.1 A Resolution Officer will be appointed by the HR Manager to consider the matter. Where the Resolution Officer believes the issues relates to serious misconduct and where there are reasonable grounds to believe the concerns may be justified, then the matter may be referred for investigation in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.
- 6.4.4.2 The Resolution Officer will arrange a meeting with the member of staff requiring resolution to discuss their complaint. In circumstances where further information is needed, the Resolution Officer, in liaison with the HR Manager, will determine the appropriate point at which the meeting should be arranged. This may be prior to or following a period of fact-finding.
- 6.4.4.3 Human Resources, in liaison with the Resolution Officer, will send the employee a letter to acknowledge the intention to convene a formal resolution meeting, providing 5 working days advance notice of the meeting, including their right of representation.
- 6.4.4.4 The employee will receive written confirmation of the outcome of their complaint within 5 working days of the formal resolution meeting, unless further investigation is required.
- 6.4.4.5 In circumstances where further information is required, the employee will be notified of this and provided with an indicative timeframe for reaching a decision on the outcome of their resolution meeting.
- 6.4.4.6 If the staff member remains aggrieved following the outcome of their formal resolution meeting, they have a right of appeal.
- 6.4.5 **Right to Representation**
- 6.4.5.1 Employees have the right to be accompanied at the Resolution Meeting and any associated fact finding meetings by a recognised trade union representative or work colleague.
- 6.4.5.2 It is the employee's responsibility to arrange to be accompanied.
- 6.4.5.3 The chosen representative is able to contribute to and ask questions at the meeting/ hearing. However the Resolution Officer is entitled to expect the employee and not the representative to answer any questions asked.
- 6.4.5.4 If the chosen representative is not available at the proposed time of the meeting, the employee may request an alternative time and date so long as it is reasonable and falls within five working days of the original date. This alternative date must have regard to the availability of the other employees involved in the hearing and may be extended by mutual agreement.
- 6.4.5.5 There is no entitlement to external representation, legal or otherwise.
- 6.4.6 **Inability to Attend a Resolution Meeting**
- 6.4.6.1 Employees should make every effort to attend the meeting. If the employee fails to attend the arranged meeting, it will be re-arranged. If the employee fails to attend the re-arranged meeting it will go ahead in their absence and a decision will be made based on the information available.

- 6.4.6.2 If an employee feels that they are unfit to attend they should contact the appointed Resolution Officer. It may be appropriate to seek advice from Human Resources and/or seek a medical opinion from the Occupational Health Advisor. If the employee then fails to attend an occupational health appointment arranged to consider their fitness to attend the resolution meeting, it may go ahead in their absence and a decision will be made based on the information available.
- 6.4.6.3 In exceptional circumstances the employee may send their representative to the hearing on their behalf.

## 7. APPEAL

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- 7.1 Any appeal against the outcome of a resolution meeting must be submitted in writing to the HR Manager, within 10 working days of receipt of the written resolution outcome. The appeal must make clear the grounds on which it is being made.
- 7.2 An Appeal Officer will be appointed by the HR Manager to hear the appeal and the appellant will be notified of the arrangements for an Appeal Hearing, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- 7.3 The appeal hearing will not consider any new complaints or concerns, which have not been raised previously, as part of the original 'request for resolution'. It is not expected that new evidence will be allowed at appeal, unless there are mitigating circumstances as to why the information was not previously presented or available. A decision on whether to allow new evidence, will be at the discretion of the Appeal Officer.
- 7.4 The employee has a right to representation at the Appeals Hearing as set out in 6.4.5.
- 7.5 Following the appeal hearing, the employee will receive a written outcome. This will be provided within 5 working days of the appeal hearing taking place.
- 7.6 The decision at appeal is final and there are no further stages within the procedure.

## 8. COLLECTIVE COMPLAINTS, CONFLICTS OR DISPUTES

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- 8.1 To be considered a collective complaint, conflict, or dispute, the matter must have been raised by two or more employees regarding the same workplace matter.

- 8.2 The process for considering both individual and collective complaints and conflicts is the same.

## 9. TIMESCALES

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- 9.1 The early and pro-active resolution of any conflict, dispute or complaint is strongly encouraged to ensure any issues can be resolved swiftly. This will avoid matters escalating unnecessarily or working relationships deteriorating further.
- 9.2 A successful resolution is far more likely when matters are addressed promptly.
- 9.3 There are no time limits imposed for this policy with the exception of the appeal process set out in section 7 above.  
Each case will be considered on its own individual merits.  
We expect all employees to take steps to actively address any issues within a reasonable time period of becoming aware of the issue.
- 9.4 The passage of time can greatly affect an individual's recollection of events and the availability of evidence. Any historic issues raised may not be able to be substantiated owing to insufficient evidence. Staff are, therefore, encouraged to take steps to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity available.

## 10. MULTIPLE REQUESTS FOR RESOLUTION

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- 10.1 The council reserves the right to refuse a request for resolution if it clearly relates to one dealt with previously, where the issue was dealt with in a proper manner and in accordance with policy and procedure.

## 11. VEXATIOUS/MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS/COMPLAINTS

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- 11.1 Any member of staff who raises a reasonable and genuine concern or complaint, shall suffer no detriment as a result of raising the complaint. However, false or vexatious complaints will be taken very seriously. The Disciplinary Policy may be invoked in circumstances where, on the balance of probability, it is reasonable to find that a member of staff has:
- Made a false, vexatious and/or malicious complaint;
  - Deliberately made a complaint to cause distress or harm;
  - Discredited a colleague and/or the council.

## 12. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS

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- 12.1 This policy should be used to resolve all reasonable and genuine conflicts, complaints, and disputes. It is expected, therefore, that employees will fully co-operate with the process and will engage in respectful, constructive, and collaborative dialogue.
- 12.2 Should any employee be obstructive and/or un-co-operative during the application of this policy and/or behave in such a way as to aggravate or exacerbate the situation, then the Disciplinary Policy may be invoked where considered appropriate.

## 13. CONFIDENTIALITY

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- 13.1 Resolution proceedings are confidential between the relevant parties involved. Any information made available during the proceedings must not be shared with anyone except those directly involved. Any member of staff who fails to maintain confidentiality, without good reason or just cause, may be subject to disciplinary action.

## 14. SUPPORT TO STAFF

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- 14.1 Whilst the emphasis throughout this policy and procedure is on constructive resolution, it is understood that it may be stressful for any persons involved.
- 14.2 Human Resources will communicate with employees to support them during the process. Occupational Health and/or the Employee Support Programme/Listening Service will be available to any member of staff needing some additional support.

## 15. OVERLAPPING RESOLUTION AND DISCIPLINARY CASES

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- 15.1 Where an employee raises a request for resolution during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the issue raised. Where the issue or dispute and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.



## 16. EFFECT OF RESIGNATION ON OUTSTANDING DISPUTE

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- 16.1 Wherever possible a dispute should be dealt with through this procedure before an employee leaves employment. If however, this is not possible, agreement with the employee will be sought on whether and how it should be progressed.
- 16.2 In the case of a collective grievance the dispute will continue in accordance with this procedure for those employees who remain in the employment of the council.

## 17. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

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- 17.1 The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different equality groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

## 18. DATA PROTECTION

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- 18.1 In implementing this policy, the council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.

## Appendix 1

## Request for Resolution



First Name:	Surname:
Service Area:	Job Title:

**1. Request for Resolution**

Please state clearly the full nature of your complaint, conflict or dispute in as much detail as necessary.

**2. Resolution Approach**

Have you attempted to resolve the matter? Y / N

If YES, what was the approach taken, outcome reached and why you are not satisfied with this?

If NO, why not?

Please continue on another sheet if necessary.

**3. Resolution Sought**

What resolution do you need?

Please continue on another sheet if necessary.

**4. Employee Statement**

I have read the Resolution Policy and submit this request for resolution in accordance with its provisions.

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------

On Completion, please return this form to either your line manager or Human Resources.

## Electronic Meeting guidance

Where the Chair decides that a meeting should take place using alternative arrangements (e.g. by telephone or video conference) that have been previously agreed then the following will apply:

- the usual notice and arrangements for issuing papers continues except where the Chair has exercised their right to waive the usual notice;
- all participants will receive clear instructions regarding how to access the meeting including where they can access support if they experience difficulty;
- all participants will be given advance notice of the meeting in line with current policy procedures so that they can declare if they have a disability or other accessibility issues that might affect their ability to use video technology, and whether any reasonable adjustments might be needed;
- all participants must attend the meeting with webcams enabled at all times;
- where there is a requirement for an adjournment / breakout for any participant this will be carried out either at a different physical location or separate independent virtual meeting;
- all participants will note and follow any instructions given on how to manage their participation at the meeting. For example confirming attendance, speaking through the Chair of the meeting, etc;
- all panel members will abide by their normal rules, procedures and code of conduct adopted by the Council in relation to holding hearings, giving particular regard to the duty to maintain confidentiality;
- the panel will contribute towards a safe and secure environment for the meeting by giving due regard to the Council policies relating to Data Protection and the appropriate use of ICT;
- a minute taker may be nominated to take notes of the meeting – but it will not ordinarily be recorded;
- under no circumstances can a recording take place without all parties being aware.

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# RESERVISTS POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 The Reservists Policy sets out how the Council supports employees who are reservists (members of the UK's Reserve Forces) and clarifies the Council's obligations towards them and how they should be managed.

The Council is a supportive employer and has signed the Armed Forces Covenant.

This is a written and publicised voluntary pledge from business and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their concrete support for the armed forces community.

## 2. SCOPE

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### 2.1 Reserve Forces

The Reserve Forces, known as Reservists are ordinary people who give up their time to train and serve alongside the Regular Forces.

The reserve forces include the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Territorial Army and Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

There are two types of Reservist:

**Volunteer Reservists**, civilians recruited into any of the four Volunteer Reserve Forces (VRF) which are; the Royal Naval Reserves, Royal Marines Reserves, Territorial Army (TA), and Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Reservists engage for a period of 3 years at end of which they need to re-engage if they wish to remain members of the VRF.

**Regular Reservists**, ex-regular servicemen/women who may retain a liability to be mobilised depending on how long has been served in the Armed Forces.

As members of the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Territorial Army and Royal Air Force Reserves, they make up a significant element of the nation's total defence capacity and are called upon as individuals for their specialist skills or as ready-formed units whenever required. They receive the same world-class training and develop the same skills as their Regular counterparts – which means they can carry out the same roles to the exacting high standards.

### 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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- 3.1 The Council is an equal opportunities employer and recognises that a diverse workforce, coming from all sections of the community, can improve services by offering different skills, experiences, backgrounds and cultures.

Wyre Council is committed to giving fair support to members of the armed forces, veterans and their families whilst recognising and remembering the sacrifices they have made. The Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant on 25th June 2012. The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge that we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect.

The covenant supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans, and their families and is reinforced by the different groups that have committed to making a difference.

These include:

- Central government, overseen by the Minister for Defence People and Veterans,
- The Armed Forces (Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force)
- Businesses of all sizes
- Local government
- Charities
- Communities
- Cadet forces and their adult volunteers

### 4. SUPPORTING RESERVISTS

---

- 4.1 The Council recognises that many of the skills that reservists gain during their training are transferable to the workplace. The Council will assist reservists as far as reasonably possible, for example by taking into account unusual leave requirements or the need to amend working patterns.

### 5. INFORMING THE COUNCIL

---

- 5.1 So that the Council can support reservists, new recruits who are already reservists or existing staff who become reservists are required to inform their line manager as soon as possible that they are, or intend to become, reservists. This request is made purely to allow the Council to deal with the practical implications and reservists who do this will not be disadvantaged in any way.



Anyone who becomes a Reservist, or seeks to renew their commitment (re-engage), must give permission for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to write to their employer directly. This system, known as Employer Notification, is designed to ensure that the employer is aware that they have a reservist employee and that the employee knows about the associated benefits, rights and obligations.

## 6. RESERVISTS COMMITMENTS

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### 6.1 Training

Reservists are typically committed to 30 days training per year. Training tends to take place 1 evening per week, over various weekends throughout the year and one continuous 15 day training period also known as annual camp.

The Council is not legally obliged to allow time off for training but as a supportive employer, for volunteer members of the Non-Regular Forces who attend Annual Training, Chief Officers/Heads of Service are authorised to grant two weeks leave of absence with pay per leave year. See Leave and Work Life Balance Policy.

### 6.2 Mobilisation

Mobilisation occurs when a Reservist is called up into full-time military service on military operations. The maximum period of mobilisation will depend on the scale and the nature of the operation and is typically no less than 3 months and no longer than 12 months.

The call-out notice papers for mobilisation are either sent by post to the employing organisation by the Reservist's unit, or delivered in person by the Reservist to their line manager. The reservist must inform the Council as soon as possible when they know that they are being mobilised.

The documentation will include the call-out date (first day of mobilisation) and the anticipated timeline. Whenever possible, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) aims to give at least 4 weeks notice of the date they are required to report for mobilisation, although there is no statutory requirement for a warning period prior to mobilisation.

A period of mobilisation comprises three distinct phases:

1. Medical and pre-deployment training
2. Operational tour
3. Post-operational tour leave.

### 6.3 Appeals for Exemption and Deferrals

The Council can apply for exemption from or deferral of call-out and mobilisation. When applying, the Council must make the case that mobilisation would cause the business obvious and significant harm. Details of what to do are included in the callout pack. The application must reach the Adjudication Officer within 7 days of the Reservist being served with a call-out notice.

If an unsatisfactory decision is received, the Council can appeal for a hearing by an Independent Reserve Forces Tribunal. Appeals must reach the Tribunals Secretary within 5 days receipt of written notice of the decision.

If the tribunal rejects the application for exemption or deferral, the Council must release the Reservist for mobilisation.

## 7. TREATMENT OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS DURING MOBILISATION

---

### 7.1 Pay

The Council is not obliged to pay the Reservist's salary or contractual benefits whilst they are mobilised.

The MoD will:

- Assume responsibility for the Reservist's salary for the duration of their mobilisation.
- Pay a basic salary according to the Reservist's military rank. If this basic element is less than the salary element they receive from the Council, it is the Reservist's responsibility to apply to the MoD for the difference to ensure that they suffer no loss of earnings.
- Cover the cost of contractual benefits.

### 7.2 Pension

If the Reservist contributes towards the Local Government Pension Fund, and chooses to remain in it, then the MoD will make the employer contributions for the period of mobilisation, as long as the Reservist continues to make their personal contributions.

The Council's Payroll & Pensions Officer can be contacted for further details.

### 7.3 Annual Leave

Reservists should be encouraged to take any holiday accrued before mobilisation to ensure this is not lost. Annual Leave during the period of mobilisation will not accrue.

### 7.4 Return to Work

After service, reservists are given a period of leave. If they want to return to work before the end of their leave they must get permission from either their commanding officer or the demobilisation centre.

The Council cannot force a reservist to return to work before their leave finishes.

### 7.5 Notice of Returning to Work

Reservists should write to their employer as soon as they know when they can return to work. This must be no later than the third Monday after their last day of service.

The Council must re-employ them as soon as they're able to.

### 7.6 Returning to the Same Job

Reservists are entitled to return to the same type of job they were doing before they were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions.

If the job no longer exists, they're entitled to a reasonable alternative.

### 7.7 How long reservists must be re-employed for

Employers must offer reservists employment for a certain amount of time, depending on how long they were employed by them before mobilisation.

Weeks of employment before mobilisation	Number of weeks reservist must be re-employed for
Up to 13	At least 13
Between 13 and 51	At least 26
52 weeks or more	At least 52

- 7.8 Any reservist that is not re-employed can apply to the employment tribunal who can instruct the Council to re-employ the reservist or award financial compensation.

## 8. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

---

- 8.1 The Council can claim financial support if a reservist employed is called up.

The Council can claim financial assistance to cover:

- The cost of a temporary replacement if it's more than the reservist's salary (up to £110 a day)
- Advertising costs and agency fees for finding a replacement
- A period of handover and takeover (5 days before and after mobilisation)
- 75% of the cost of specialist clothing for the replacement (up to £300)
- Training costs for the replacement (up to £2,000)
- Overtime, if other employees cover the work
- Training the reservist needs to carry on their job when they return

**The Council cannot claim for:**

- Loss of profits, turnover or goodwill
- The reservist's salary or pension contributions if the Council keeps paying them

## 9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

---

- 9.1 The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

## 10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

---

- 10.1 In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.

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# Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 Wyre Council recognises it has a role to play in helping those leaving the Armed Forces (veterans) fulfil their potential in civilian life. Veterans can find making the transition to civilian life extremely challenging, particularly in finding and securing lasting employment. To support this, the Council has introduced a Guaranteed Interview scheme for Veterans.

## 2. SCOPE

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- 2.1 The Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans will operate for all externally advertised vacancies. The scheme will have no bearing on redeployment, redundancy selection or internal reorganisations.

## 3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

---

- 3.1 The Council is an equal opportunities employer and recognises that a diverse workforce, coming from all sections of the community, can improve services by offering different skills, experiences, backgrounds and cultures.

Wyre Council is committed to giving fair support to members of the armed forces, veterans and their families whilst recognising and remembering the sacrifices they have made. The Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant on 25th June 2012. The Armed Forces Covenant is a pledge that we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect.

The covenant supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans, and their families and is reinforced by the different groups that have committed to making a difference.

These include:

- Central government, overseen by the Minister for Defence People and Veterans
- The Armed Forces (Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force)
- Businesses of all sizes
- Local government
- Charities
- Communities
- Cadet forces and their adult volunteers

## 4. BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

---

4.1 This scheme has a number of benefits, including the following:

Veterans can bring valuable transferrable skills and qualities into the organisation, such as:

- Communication skills
- Organisational skills and commitment
- Problem solving and adaptability
- Leadership and management skills
- Health and Safety/security awareness
- Team working skills

The scheme may provide the recruiting manager with a wider selection of candidates to appoint from, using the essential criteria listed on the role profile.

It will assist veterans to overcome barriers in finding civilian employment.

It will help reduce the risk of veterans developing health and welfare problems as a result of long term unemployment.

## 5. WHAT IS THE GUARANTEED INTERVIEW SCHEME FOR VETERANS?

---

5.1 The Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans is a commitment that the Council has made to support the Armed Forces Community. The commitment is a guarantee of an interview for veterans that apply specifically and meet all of the essential criteria set out in the person specification for role that has been advertised externally only. The scheme does not guarantee a job for veterans as a selection process will follow to ensure the best candidate is appointed.

5.2 **Who is eligible for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Veterans?**

The following applicants are eligible for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme

- Applicants that meet the essential criteria set out in the role profile, and
- where the Armed Forces were their most recent long term substantive employer



## 5.3

### How will the scheme work

Human Resources will liaise with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership (CTP) Right Job website and ensure vacancies are listed on their website which is free of charge.

Once the shortlisting process has been completed, Human Resources will check to see whether any candidates have declared themselves as veterans and whether they meet the essential criteria for the job. Any veterans that meet the criteria and are eligible under the scheme as set out above must be offered an interview. Candidates offered an interview under the scheme must be offered an interview alongside other candidates shortlisted and must not displace other candidates that have been shortlisted.

At the interview, the recruiting manager or chair of the interview panel must check the Military Service Records that the applicant should bring to their interview. There is no requirement to take a photocopy of these records. This information will confirm the veteran's military service record and may be a useful documentation of their skills and experience.

Where a candidate has falsely claimed to be a veteran any offer of employment may be withdrawn.

Following interviews held all candidates should be informed of the outcome and offered feedback. It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager or interview chair to ensure that this is done. Veterans will often be keen to receive feedback on how they have performed at interview.

## 6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

---

- 6.1 The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

## 7. DATA PROTECTION

---

- 7.1 In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.

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# Social Media and Employment Policy

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

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- 1.1 Wyre Council acknowledges that there is significant potential for using social media and that this can bring great advantages. The responsible, corporate use of social media is therefore encouraged.
- 1.2 This policy provides a structured approach to using social media and will ensure that it is effective, lawful and does not compromise Council information or computer systems/networks.
- 1.3 Users must ensure that they use social media sensibly and responsibly, in line with council policy whether using it on council business or personal use outside working hours. They must ensure that their use will not adversely affect the council or its business, not be damaging to the council's reputation and credibility or otherwise violate any council policies.
- 1.4 Personal use of social media during working hours is not permitted.

## 2. SUPPORTING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

---

- 2.1 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Social Media Guidance available on the Council's intranet or from the Communications Team.
- 2.2 This policy has links to the following policies:
  - Employee Code of Conduct
  - IT Computer Use Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Resolution Policy
  - Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
  - Data Protection Policy & Procedure
  - RIPA Policy Statement

## 3. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MEDIA

---

- 3.1 For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video and image-sharing websites such as YouTube, Flickr and Instagram. This list is not exhaustive.
- 3.2 Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media that can be given and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

## 4. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT WORK

---

- 4.1 Social media will be made available for corporate / business use only. If it is established that an employee's role should include the use of social media, approval should be sought by their Manager using the 'Social Media Access Form' from ICT, available on TopDesk.
- 4.2 Social media access will be granted once the request has been approved by the Communications Team and full training has been given.
- 4.3 Anyone wishing to set up a council related social media page, profile or group must first fill out the Social Media New Account Application Form which will need to be approved by the Communications Team. Anyone wishing to do this will need to show that the group, activity, place or event cannot be effectively promoted through the council's existing social media, and that they have the systems in place to monitor the account and reply to enquiries.
- 4.4 Staff who have access to council social media accounts must ensure that they are logged into the correct account and must take care not to confuse them with their personal accounts. For avoidance of doubt they must not comment on or 'like' an inappropriate post (including videos) when logged into council accounts.
- 4.5 Responsibilities of Users

The following guidelines will apply to online participation and set out the standards of behaviour expected as a representative of Wyre Council.

1. Be aware of and recognise your responsibilities identified in this policy.
2. Remember that you are personally responsible for the content you publish on any form of social media.
3. Never give out personal details such as home address and telephone numbers. Ensure that you handle any personal or sensitive information in line with Data Protection.
4. Be aware of safeguarding issues, as social media sites are often misused by offenders. Safeguarding is everyone's business – if you have concerns about other site users, you have a responsibility to report these to your manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officer (see Wyre Hub for list of names).
5. Respect copyright, fair-use and financial disclosure laws.
6. Social media sites are in the public domain and it is important that you are confident about the nature of the information you publish. Permission must be sought if you wish to publish or report on meetings or discussions that are meant to be private or internal to Wyre Council. Don't cite or reference colleagues, customers, partners or suppliers without their approval.
7. Don't use insulting, offensive or discriminatory language or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. Show consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.

8. Don't download any software, shareware or freeware from any social media site, unless this has been approved and authorised by the Information Technology Team.
9. Rules apply during the period between the notice of an election and the election itself (pre-election period). Local authorities should not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views of proposals in such a way that that identifies them with any individual members or political party – see Publicity Code. Full details are on the intranet and should be discussed with the Communications Team.

#### 4.6 Investigatory Use

The Surveillance Commissioners have provided guidance that certain activities will require authorisation under RIPA or RIP(S)A and this includes repetitive viewing of what are deemed to be “open source” sites for the purpose of intelligence gathering and data collation.

Whilst it is recognised that social media can be used for investigatory purposes (in accordance with RIPA guidance), such as identifying fraud, illegal events, debt recovery etc. under no circumstances should employees use social media for investigatory purposes without authority from the relevant Corporate Director or Chief Executive.

Officers who have the authority to carry out investigations using social media must comply with relevant guidance and legislation. See the RIPA Policy Statement on the intranet or available from Legal Services for further information.

## 5. MONITORING USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA DURING WORK TIME

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- 5.1 Social Media access is monitored in line with the guidelines set out in the ICT Computer Use Policy and staff should have no expectation of privacy when using council equipment for private usage. N.B personal use should not be in work's time as set out in section 1.4 so should be limited to lunch breaks or before/after clocking on to work.

## 6. SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

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- 6.1 The council recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the council, employees must be aware that they can damage the council if they are recognised as being one of our employees.

- 6.2 Employees are allowed to say that they work for the council, and it is recognised that sometimes staff may want to discuss their work on social media. However, an employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the council's name.
- 6.3 If employees do discuss their work on social media, they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer." This does not however exempt you from the points as set out in 6.4.
- 6.4 Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:
- bring the council into disrepute, for example by:
    - criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues, Elected Members or rivals;
    - writing or knowingly confirming by liking or sharing negative, offensive or defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups;
    - using foul or abusive language; or
    - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
  - breach confidentiality, for example by:
    - revealing information owned by the council;
    - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact) or organisation (such as supplier or partner organisations); or
    - discussing the council's internal workings (such as its future plans that have not been communicated to the public);
  - breach copyright, for example by:
    - using someone else's videos, images or written content without permission;
    - posting anything that is copyrighted, including maps; or
    - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; and
  - do anything that could be considered discriminatory, or bullying or harassment of, any individual for example by:
    - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex,



- gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
- using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the council);
- posting images or links to content that are discriminatory or offensive.

- 6.5 As the owner of the social media account the employee should take the necessary measures to ensure that friends or relatives do not access their social media accounts and make any posts or comments that may put the employee at detriment of this policy.
- 6.6 Whilst employees need to be aware of their privacy settings, restricting these does not mean that they can post what they want about the Council, individuals or organisations associated with the Council. Postings can be copied by people entitled to access them and sent on to others beyond the control of the original poster. Hence merely having privacy settings does not mean that comments will be kept out of the public domain.
- 6.7 Any employee who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted by a colleague on a social media site should inform their manager or a member of the HR Team.

## 7. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

---

- 7.1 Unless it is in relation to finding candidates (for example, if an employee has put their details on social media websites for the purpose of attracting prospective employers), the HR department and managers will conduct searches, either themselves or through a third party, on social media only when it is directly relevant to the applicant's skills or claims that they have made in the recruitment process. For instance, a prospective employee might claim that:
- they have used social media in their previous job (for example, as a publicity tool); or
  - their social media use is directly relevant to a claim made in an application (for example, if they run a blog based around a hobby mentioned in a CV or a skill that they claim to be proficient in).
- 7.2 There will be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activities, as conducting these searches during the selection process might lead to a presumption that the applicant's protected characteristics (for example, sexual orientation or religious or political beliefs) played a part in the recruitment decision.

## 8. DISCIPLINARY ACTION OVER SOCIAL MEDIA USE

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- 8.1 All employees are required to adhere to this and associated policies. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues, use of inappropriate language, accessing inappropriate and/or offensive channels or social media activity causing serious damage to the council, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

## 9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

---

- 9.1 The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different equality groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

## 10. DATA PROTECTION

---

- 10.1 In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.