

Silloth-on-Solway Town Council

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mobile phone technology has advanced significantly over the last few years - and it continues to evolve. Wireless connections have extended the capabilities of mobile phones, enabling access to a wide range of new content and services globally. Many phones now offer Internet and email access, alongside the most often used standard functions of messaging, camera, video and soundrecording.
- 1.2 Mobile phones, alongside other forms of technology, are changing the way and speed in which we communicate. They can provide security and reassurance; however, there are also associated risks.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, and which are most susceptible to misuse. Misuse includes the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying.
- 2.2 It is also recognised that mobile phones can cause an unnecessary distraction during the working day and can be intrusive when used in the company of others. When mobiles phones are misused it can impact on an individual's dignity, privacy and right to confidentiality.
- 2.3 It is appreciated that it can be very difficult to detect when such devices are present or being used, particularly in relation to enhanced functions, such as cameras. The use of all mobile phones is, therefore, limited regardless of their capabilities. The aim is to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day, and to minimise the opportunities for any individual to make any covert images or misuse functions in any other way.

3. Equalities

- 3.1 All employees and Elected Members of the Council are expected to treat each other and members of the public equally and with respect regardless of
– Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex or Sexual Orientation.

4. Aim

- 4.1 The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to promote safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear, acceptable use guidelines.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 All employees are responsible for the safe use of mobile phones and the continued implementation of this policy.
- 5.2 Under no circumstances should any employee use a mobile phone whilst driving. This is an offence and you will be liable to a fine and points on your licence. If caught using a mobile phone, whilst undertaking official council duties, the Council's disciplinary procedure will be invoked and may result in your dismissal. If a call is received while you are driving, **do not**

answer it until you can park in a place where it is safe to do so. Alternatively allow a passenger to answer or make the call.

53 If you have been issued with a work mobile it is your responsibility to look after it properly and it must be returned immediately if you hand in your notice to cease employment with Silloth-on-Solway Town Council. The cost of mobile phones which are not returned promptly will be deducted from your final pay.

54 Non adherence or disregard to this policy will be seen as a breach of the policy and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked which could result in your dismissal.

6. Mobile phones and the Law

61 Driving when using a hand-held mobile phone is illegal and you may be fined and receive points on your licence.

62 Picking up or using any type of phone or similar device (whilst driving) that is, or must be, held to operate it would be breaking the law. You can also be prosecuted for using a hands-free mobile phone if you fail to have proper control of your vehicle.

63 The law requires a driver to have proper control of his or her vehicle at all times. Consequently, driving in a careless or dangerous manner whilst using a hand-held phone could result in prosecution, with penalties including an unlimited fine, disqualification and up to two years imprisonment.

64 From 1 March 2017 the fine for using a mobile phone whilst driving doubled to £200 and points doubled to 6. Further, if you have had a licence for less than 2 years, you will lose it. If you are banned from driving and this affects your ability to undertake your duties, dismissal may result.

7. Private Use

7.1 Mobile phones are issued to employees for the purpose of communication on work related business.

7.2 Mobile phones may be used for private calls but only in case of emergency.

7.3 The use of all mobile phones should be limited, regardless of their capabilities to avoid distraction and disruption of the working day. Excessive use of mobile phones during working hours may result in disciplinary action being taken.

8. Guidelines

8.1 Non adherence or disregard to any of the points set out within this document will be seen as a breach of this policy and the disciplinary procedure will be invoked which could result in your dismissal.

8.2 The following rules must be followed when using mobile phones for Council business. You should also refer to any specific manufacturers safety information supplied with your phone.

8.3 Certain areas should be considered 'mobile free' areas. These areas are considered to be the most vulnerable and sensitive:

- changing areas
- toilets

- 84 A zero-tolerance policy is in place with regards to the use of personal or work related mobiles by any individual in these areas.
- 85 Do not under any circumstances use a mobile phone whilst you are driving.
- 86 When you have to use a mobile phone, use it for a short duration only.
- 87 On a long journey take regular breaks to check for messages and to make any necessary calls. Always park in a suitable and safe location.
- 88 The use of personal mobiles during normal working hours is not permitted and should be switched off. Personal mobile phones may be used during break times. Excessive use of personal mobile phones will be seen as non-compliance with this policy.
- 89 In case of emergency, messages can be relayed to a member of staff via the Town Clerk or the Park Manager.
- 8.10 To minimise disruption to others, the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) is prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings, by members of the Council and the public. The Chairman may approve an exception to this request in special circumstances.