



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard both the Council and users of mobile phones supplied by Melksham Town Council. It aims to ensure that these are used effectively, for their intended purposes and without infringing legal requirements or creating unnecessary business risk. This policy sets out general principles and specific rules. Its aims are to:

- Promote the effective use of mobile phone facilities;
- Ensure that all users understand how mobile phones supplied by the Council should and shouldn't be used;
- Protect both the Council and individuals from the possibility of legal action;
- Protect the Council's information technology systems against damage from mobile phones which have email and internet facilities.

The terms of the policy are not exhaustive and should be considered in conjunction with the phone use policy contained in the Employee Handbook.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all persons granted use of mobile phones supplied by the Council. This includes Council employees and elected members, whether located within or outside Council premises. It also includes Council staff connecting to Council resources using mobile phones which have email and internet access.

3. General Principles

Mobile phones are provided primarily for the following circumstances:

- The need for the employee to be contactable and to contact others;
- If the job requires out of hours contact;
- If, following a risk assessment, a risk to personal safety exists which may in part be addressed by access to a mobile phone.

In determining whether a mobile phone is required, the following factors will be considered:

- Whether the employee has other communications facilities which would suffice;
- Whether the employee could share a mobile with other employees;
- Whether another mechanism would satisfy the communications requirement;
- Revenue budget considerations.

Eligibility for a Council provided mobile phone is determined as an operational matter by managers.

If a mobile phone is provided by the Council, it must be used responsibly, lawfully, and in accordance with the terms of this policy.

Council mobile phones must not be used in any way which is inconsistent with carrying out the employee's job or which might conflict with the Council's interests.

There must be no personalisation of the hardware or software, screensavers or file structure.

Council mobile phones must not be used to access, use or distribute any material, or to participate in any activity which is, or might reasonably be regarded as, distasteful, offensive or indecent or harmful to other users. The following list gives examples of the sort of material or activities which will be regarded as unacceptable. It is not exhaustive:

- Bullying or harassment;
- Personal insults, attacks or abuse;
- Racist or sexist activity;
- Chain letters or games;
- Pornography;
- Mobile phones must not be used to:
 - Participate in internet chat rooms or groups etc
 - Place orders for goods or services (unless authorised to do so)
 - Carry out any business activity either personally or on behalf of someone else
 - Upload, download or otherwise transmit commercial software or other material, in violation of its copyright.

If any abuse or misuse of a Council mobile phone is identified, it must be reported to a line manager.

As employees of the Town Council may work remotely meaning that their phones are a primary source of communications, users must regularly check their device for incoming messages from voicemail, email, Microsoft Teams' messages and Whatsapp. This list is not exhaustive and may change from time to time with advances in technology.

4. Breaches of the policy

Employees who do not follow the terms of this [policy will be liable to disciplinary action and, depending on the nature of the breach, may also be liable to legal proceedings.

Non-employee users of the facilities who breach the policy may have their access to the facilities withdrawn and, depending on the nature of the breach, may be liable to legal proceedings.

5. Personal use

The Council provides mobile phones to help employees carry out their jobs. However, employees are allowed personal use of the mobile phone as long as they adhere to the terms of this policy.

While composing, sending or reading SMS messages or using the Council supplied mobile phone for personal voice calls occasionally during working hours is allowed, excessive use during normal working hours to personal or non-work-related numbers is not.

The general requirement is that personal use of the mobile phone must not interfere with the employee's ability to perform the duties of their job.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the policy. They are designed both to explain the background to the policy and to outline appropriate use and good practice.

6. Preferred Supplier

The choice of supplier will be determined by the Town Clerk.

7. Coverage

No mobile phone can provide coverage all the time. Voicemail is available for incoming calls in situations where there is no coverage.

Lack of coverage will be considered by line managers when conducting a risk assessment for personal safety.

8. Passwords and Passcodes

The user must inform their line manager of the lock-screen passcode or password created by them. A list of passcodes/ passwords will be maintained by line managers and kept securely. Any changes to passcodes/ passwords must be notified to the user's line manager.

9. Voicemail

Users should ensure that their voicemail is set up as detailed in the handbook supplied with the mobile phone. Not only is this convenient it is essential to have this set up in advance in case a call should come in while the mobile phone user is driving.

10. Use while Driving

Mobile phones must not be used while driving. Voicemail should be relied upon to answer the call whilst driving. The user can then take the message when safe and legal to do so. The advice from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents can be viewed at

<http://www.rosipa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/employers/work-mobile-phones.pdf> .

ROSPAs' advice also states that car handsfree kits should not be used while driving as they only slightly reduce the risk to the driver.

11. Software and Apps

Mobile phone users should not download software onto their phones unless authorised to do so by their line manager. Downloads may contain viruses which can render the phone useless and irreparable. There must be no downloading of any Apps, unapproved software, programmes or games. In addition, employees should not delete any programme that exists on the phone at the time of issue.

No music or video streaming software or video sharing programmes are to be used except for applications specifically designated by the Council.

12. Equipment Provided

The mobile phone must ALWAYS be used in the case supplied with it. The case and phone are Council equipment and should be treated with the utmost care.

13. Lost or Stolen Mobile Phones

If an employee's mobile phone is lost or stolen, this should be reported immediately to the employee's line manager.

14. Redundant or Surplus Mobile Phone

If a mobile phone is replaced or upgraded due to age, or where a mobile phone becomes surplus, it should be returned to the employee's line manager

Finally, it should be noted that the Council reserves the right to request immediate return of the device on demand.

15. Phone Details

Phone Model	
Serial/ IMEI Number	

Signature of User	Print Name	Date	Signature of Manager	Print Name	Date

Reviewed and adopted by Full Council on 22 March 2021
To be reviewed April 2023