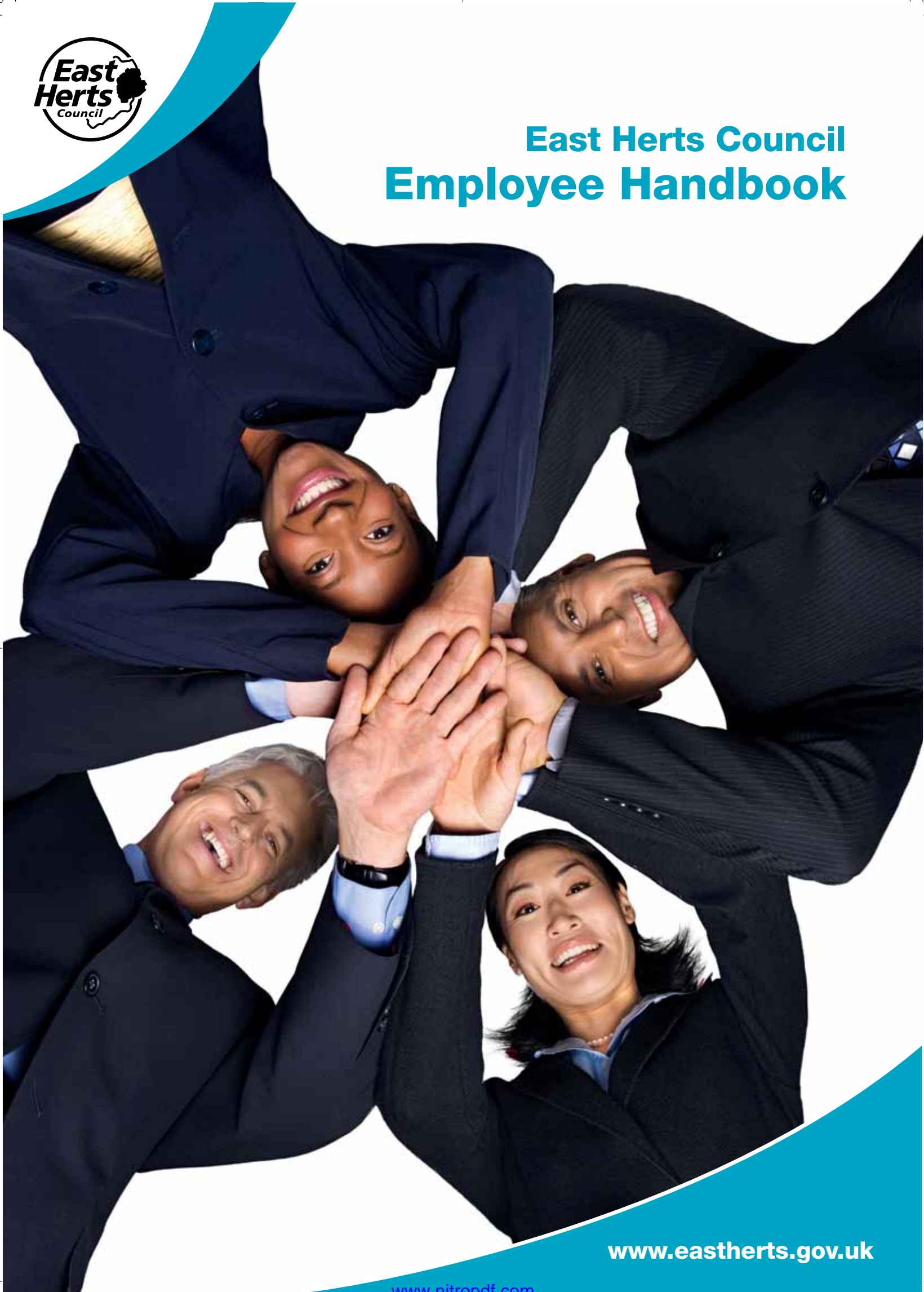




East Herts Council Employee Handbook



www.eastherts.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction

The Council	3
Our Vision and Priorities	3
The People Strategy	3
Here to Help	4
Values and Behaviours	4
The Structure of East Herts Council	5
East Herts Council Offices	6
Consultation and Negotiation	7
Investors in People	7

General Terms and Conditions

Contract	8
Terms and Conditions of Service	8
Probation Period	8
Continuous Employment	8
Pay	9
Grades	9
Hours of Work	9
Annual Leave	10
Bank Holidays	10
Ending Your Employment	11
Retirement	11

Flexible Working

Introduction	11
Flexi-Time Scheme	11
Flexible Working	13
Home Working	13
Overtime/ Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)	14
Working Time Directive	14
Lone Working	14

Leave

Introduction	15
Maternity	15
Paternity	15
Shared Parental Leave	15
Adoption	16
Surrogacy	16
Parental Leave	16
Unpaid Leave – Time off for Dependents	16
Discretionary Leave	16

Sickness

Notification and Certification of Sickness Absence	17
Leave for Medical Reasons	19
Bereavement	19
Carers	19

Benefits

Local Award	20
Pensions	20
Life Assurance	20
Essential Car Users	21
Casual Car Users	21
Subsistence	21
Car Loan	22
Long Service Awards	22
Retirement Gift	22
Sharing the Caring (give as you earn)	22
Childcare Vouchers	22
Cycle to Work Scheme	23
HertSavers Credit Union	23
Eye Tests	23
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	24
Unison	24
Employee Discount at East Herts Leisure Facilities	25
Hertford Theatre	25
Kaarp Benefits	25

Performance Development and Training

Performance Development Review Scheme	26
Learning and Development	27
Secondments	27
Professional, Career and Vocational Development	28
Training Courses and Day Release	28
Career Breaks	28

Rights and Responsibilities

Equality and Diversity	30
Grievance Procedure	30
Disciplinary Procedure	30
Managing Performance Policy	31
Harassment and Bullying	31
Confidential Reporting Code	31
Anti-fraud and Corruption	31
Code of Conduct	31
Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse	32
Smoke-free Workplace	32
Data Protection	32
Webcasting and Right to Report	33
Data Quality	33
ICT and Acceptable Use of Emails	34
Social Media	34

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Safety	36
First Aid	36
Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures	37
Wellbeing	37
Occupational Health	37

General Information

Induction	38
Standards of Dress	38
Uniforms and Protective Clothing	39
ID Badges	39
Car Parking and Car Park Permits	39
Lift share	39
Loss or Damage to Personal Property	40
Change of Personal Details	40
Office Environment	40
Facilities Helpdesk	40

Other

Secondary Employment	42
Politically Restricted Posts	42
Court Attendance as a Witness/ Jury Member	42
Time off to Undertake Trade Union Duties	42
Interviews in Other Local Authorities	43
Time Off for Election Duties	43
Further information	43

N.B. The Council reserves the right to amend and vary the employee handbook. The employee handbook is updated every three years and therefore any policies or collective agreements that are agreed throughout the year will override the employee handbook.

Introduction

Welcome from the Chief Executive

Dear Colleague

Welcome to East Herts Council. I hope you will find this a great place to work and enjoy working as part of our team. Our primary reason for being here is to deliver good services to our residents and I believe we do that best when we find our time here worthwhile; both professionally and personally fulfilling. This handbook provides you with a guide to the council's employment policies, procedures and benefits.

That said, you are likely to have lots of questions not only about your work and work environment but also perhaps about your conditions of employment. If you don't find the answer in here, please don't hesitate to ask! Your manager will be your first point of contact and will be there to support and help you with any issues you may have.

Best wishes

Chief Executive

The Council

The Council consists of 50 members, all of whom are Conservative. Elections are held every 4 years. The Council has an executive of 7 members, together with 3 scrutiny committees responsible for corporate business, community and environment.

Our Vision and Priorities

The Council has a three year Corporate Strategic Plan which outlines the key corporate priorities for the Council. The priorities set out in the Corporate Strategic Plan are incorporated into the individual Service Plans which are produced annually by each Head of Service. For further information, please refer to the Corporate Information section of the intranet.

The Council's vision is;

"To improve the quality of people's lives and preserve all that is best in East Herts."

Alongside our partners that make up the Local Strategic Partnership, the Council aims to achieve this vision by working towards the following priorities:

- **People** - Fair and accessible services for those who use them and opportunities for everyone to contribute
- **Place** - Safe and Clean
- **Prosperity** - Improving the economic and social opportunities available to our communities

The People Strategy

The People Strategy is the Council's framework for the delivery of people management over the next three years. Everyone has some responsibility for delivering the key people objectives identified in the strategy to succeed in developing a high quality workforce that delivers high quality services.

For more information about the People Strategy, please see the HR pages of the intranet.

Here to Help

The Here to Help programme is an organisational development programme which commenced in January 2014 to allow managers and employees to contribute to the development of the Council's performance, values and behaviours.

The Here to Help programme is about celebrating what is good, sharing good practice, making things better and unlocking barriers.

It is about giving employees the opportunity to think about how we can improve the way we work together to deliver a high quality customer experience every time.



Values and Behaviours

Our goal is to embed the core values and positive behaviours in everything we do and generate an organisational culture of continuous improvement where employees are engaged and empowered to make a difference every day. East Herts Council's chosen Values and Behaviours are:

Here to help

- We are helpful and understanding
- We listen and explain
- We are knowledgeable and informative
- We make time for our customers
- We take ownership of an issue and we try to get it right first time

We work together

- We respect and value colleagues
- We work together as one team
- We recognise each other's skills and utilise them
- We offer help and support to each other
- We support colleagues to be flexible and resilient, able to respond to service changes and developments

We aim high to make a difference

- We go the extra mile
- We take a pride in what we do
- We continually look to improve our performance
- We are flexible in our approach
- We pride ourselves on providing excellent customer service

All employees must clearly understand what is expected of them and must know how to actually demonstrate the Council's behaviours. Employees must show behavioural support for the cultural change and lead by example.

Here to Help values are discussed in 121's and are an integral part of the performance appraisal process (PDRS) and service planning.

The Here to Help programme plays a key role in helping to support the council in the future as we continue to improve the services we offer to our customers.

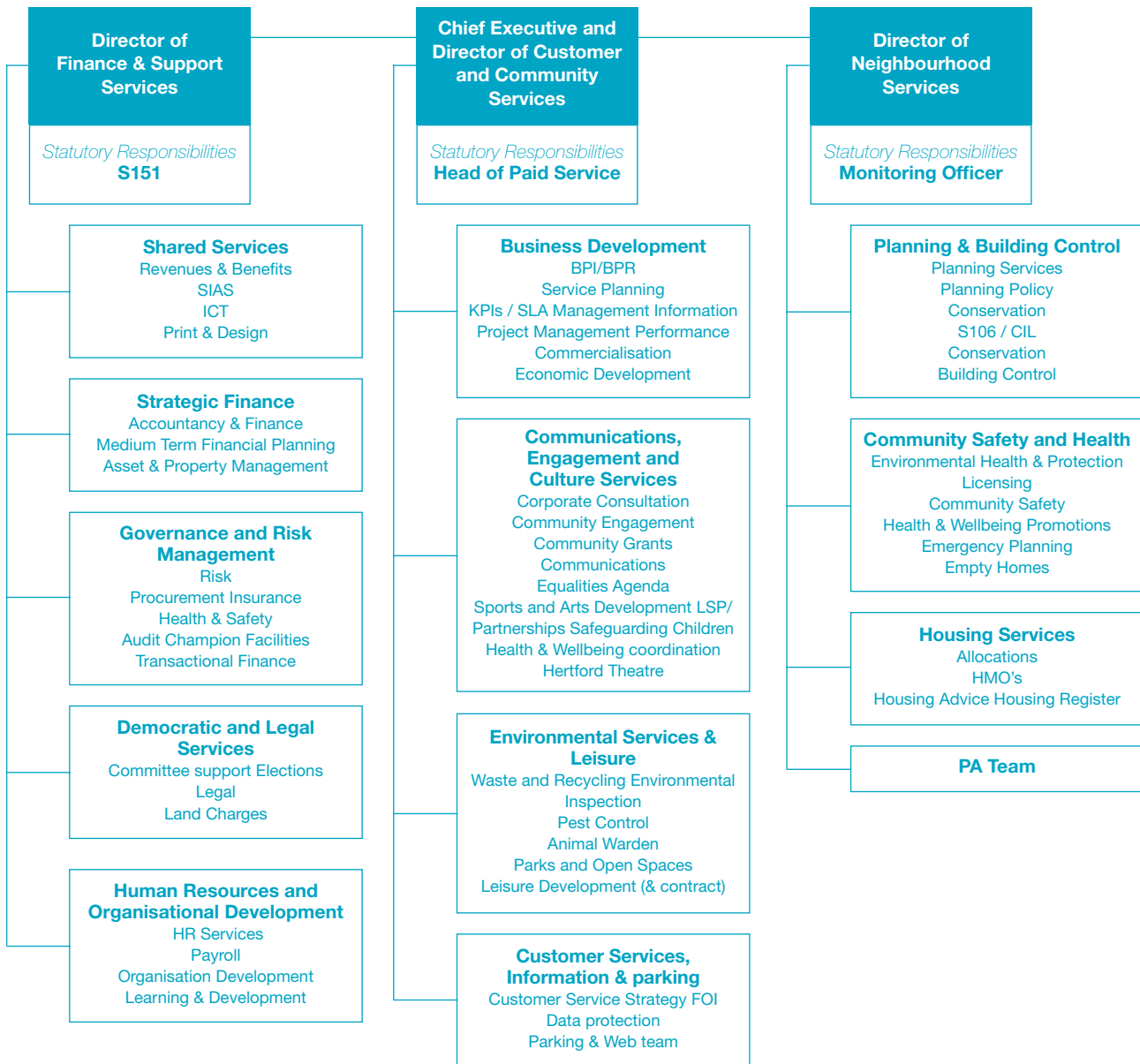
For more information about Here to Help, please view the Corporate Core pages of the intranet.

The Structure of East Herts Council

The Council's employees are organised into three directorates in order to carry out the policies of the Council efficiently and effectively.

- Customer and Community Services
- Finance and Support Services
- Neighbourhood Services

Corporate Management Team





East Herts Council Offices



Wallfields, Hertford Office



**Charringtons House,
Bishop's Stortford Office**



Service Centre - Buntingford



Hertford Theatre



Consultation and Negotiation

The Council works in partnership with the recognised trade union, Unison, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and consults with employees on all matters affecting terms and conditions of employment. The Local Joint Panel (LJP) was established to ensure regular methods of consultation and negotiation between the Council and its employees on matters of mutual concern with the intent of maintaining and developing an efficient service.

The LJP is comprised of four Members of East Herts Council to be appointed annually by the Local Authority and an equal number of employee representatives from Unison.

The LJP will consider any relevant matter referred to it and make recommendations to Human Resources Committee (HRC) and/or a suitable Committee of the Local Authority as to the application of the terms and conditions of service.

The HRC's functions relate to all aspects of the Council's role as an employer, including the monitoring and strategic overview of HR activity.

For more information on the functions of LJP and HRC, please see the section of the internet, Councillors, Committees and Council Information.

Investors in People (IIP)

The Council has achieved Investors in People status and has retained this accreditation since 2005. This means it prioritises the need to provide learning opportunities for employees. The Council recognises that it can only achieve its business objectives through a highly trained and motivated workforce. Please refer to the Human Resources pages on the intranet for further information on Investors in People.

General Terms and Conditions of Employment

Contract

Employees will be issued with a Contract of Employment prior to their start date with the Council. From time to time, variations in terms and conditions of employment will result from negotiations and agreement with the recognised Trade Union, Unison. Affected employees will be notified of any variations in a statement of change.

Terms and Conditions of Service

Employees' terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with collective agreements negotiated occasionally by the National Joint Council for Local Authorities (NJC) and supplemented by local collective agreements reached with Unison.

NJC agreements directly affecting terms and conditions of employment currently cover pay, working arrangements, sick pay and car allowances.

Probation Period

All new employees, including those with continuous local government service, are subject to a probationary period of six months. This is reduced to three months for secondments or fixed term contracts. Please see the Probationary Policy for more information.

Continuous Employment

Continuous service in local government will be used to calculate any statutory redundancy payment, pension rights and will determine entitlement to sick leave, maternity, paternity, adoption, surrogacy and shared parental leave, annual leave and notice period.

Pay

Salaries are paid on the 15th day of each calendar month or nearest working day before this if the 15th falls at the weekend, in twelve equal payments by BACS transfer. Payment is for the month in which it is paid i.e. on 15th January employees will be paid for the whole of January.

Salaries will increase by annual increments up to the maximum of the scale point within the grade, subject to satisfactory service. Increments will be due on the 1st April, unless stated otherwise.

A pay award, which is determined by the NJC, may be given on the 1st January each year; payments will be back dated should the agreement of the award exceed this date.

Employees who work within the East Herts region are entitled to a 'Local Weighting allowance'. This is not a contractual entitlement and is based on work location.

Dependent on the role, some employees will be required to work shifts or take part in a standby rota. If so, this will be specified in the employee's contract of employment, along with the associated rate of pay.

Grades

The salary structure at the Council is based on grades. Each post has a grade and has a scale point range which determines the minimum and maximum level of basic salary. Jobs are evaluated using the Hay Job Evaluation Scheme to determine their grade.

Hours of Work

The working week for employees on a full time salary is 37 hours, Monday to Friday. Offices must be covered between 9:00am and 5:00pm; working hours should be agreed with managers to accommodate this. Some positions require employees to attend evening meetings; this will be specified in the employee's contract of employment. The Council also operates a Flexi-time scheme.

For more details on this, please see the Flexible Working Policy on the Intranet.

Annual Leave

Annual leave entitlement is determined by salary scale point.

Scale point	Holiday entitlement*
6-21	22
22-28	24
29-31	26
32-34	27
35+	28
5 years continuous local government service	+5 days

*Basic entitlement excluding bank holidays

The Council operates an anniversary leave period commencing on the date an employee starts employment with the Council. After 5 years' continuous service in local government, employees are entitled to an additional 5 days' annual leave. Annual leave is subject to approval by line managers and should be taken in accordance with the Working Time Directive. Employees can carry forward a maximum of 5 days into the new holiday year with their line manager's consent.

Leave entitlement will be applied pro-rata and calculated in hours for part time employees, unless they work the same number of hours each day in which case they can convert it into days if they prefer. Those employees with a leave entitlement calculated in hours must book off the number of hours that they would normally work on that day when booking annual leave.

Bank Holidays

In addition to the annual leave entitlement the Council grants the following statutory holidays to all employees:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May Day
- Spring Bank Holiday
- August Bank Holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Public holiday entitlement for part time employees is calculated as 1/5th of the working week. Therefore, please credit your flexi-sheet with a 1/5th of your working hours on every public holiday, regardless of whether it falls on your normal working day.

Ending Your Employment

Employees must give the following notice:

Scale point	Notice required
Probation Period	1 week
6-34	1 Calendar month
35-50	2 Calendar month
51+	3 Calendar month

Employees should submit their letter of resignation to their line manager, sending a copy to HR and are required to work their full notice period. Employees should ensure that they take any outstanding annual leave during this period but must have consent from their line manager. Should an overpayment of salary occur employees will be required to repay this regardless as to how the overpayment has arisen. All Council property must be returned by the last day of service, including ID badges, uniforms and laptops.

Retirement

If an employee wishes to retire early or take flexible retirement they may request this in accordance with the Retirement Policy which should be referred to for more information.

Flexible Working

Introduction

The Council has a commitment to facilitating, wherever possible, flexible working practices for employees while maintaining the delivery of high standards of customer service to the local community. The Council is committed to improving service provisions to meet the needs of the customer as well as providing its employees with a good work-life balance. Flexible working can help to achieve both of these objectives; it enables the Council to work more efficiently and effectively and helps employees to balance their work, home and personal priorities.

Flexi-Time Scheme

Flexi-time is a method of working flexible hours during the day to accommodate both the needs of the service and the personal circumstances of employees. Flexi-time can be applied successfully to many service areas; although inevitably some jobs will not operate practically under this system.

For a more detailed guide to the Flexi-Time Scheme please refer to the guidance on the Human Resources Forms section of the intranet.

Flexible Working

Flexible working involves a range of different working arrangements which allow managers and employees to utilise non-traditional working patterns. The Council has introduced a number of options for working flexibly such as compressed hours, job sharing, term-time working and reduced hours.

For more details about the types of flexible working that the Council offers, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Home Working

The Council offers employees the opportunity to work from home, on either an occasional or regular basis. Some of the many benefits of home working include improved efficiency and productivity, greater flexibility in hours of work, a good work life balance and a reduction in travel time/commuting. For more information and how home working may apply to you and your role please view the Home Working Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Overtime/Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)

Time worked outside the hours of 8:00am and 6:30pm may either be claimed as overtime or taken as time off in lieu, provided 37 hours have been completed that week and prior approval is obtained from the employee's line manager.

Employees over Scale Point (SCP 28) should take time off in lieu but may claim overtime with prior written approval from their Director.

Overtime will be paid at time and a half except where 37 hours have not been completed that week, when it will be paid at plain rate. Saturday working is paid time and a half and Sunday working paid at double time. The weekend rates apply regardless of whether 37 hours have already been completed that week. Overtime for officers above SCP 28 will be capped at SCP 28. Please see the Overtime Rules for more information.

On weekdays between 8:00am and 10:00pm time off in lieu (TOIL) will be awarded at plain time. TOIL will be awarded at premium rates between 10pm and 8am Monday - Friday and at weekends.

Premium rates (as defined in the Green Book) are:

- Monday to Saturday Time and a half
- Sunday Double time (min 2 hours)
- Public Holidays Double time (min 2 hours)
- Extra Statutory holidays Double time (min 2 hours)

Time off in lieu should be approved by line managers. Any time should be recorded on the back of the annual leave form. Time accrued should, if possible, be taken within a month. The leave form must be countersigned by line managers before time off in lieu can be taken.

All employees in receipt of an allowance to attend evening meetings or specified to do so in their contract of employment are entitled to no further payment. Any employees who have different terms and conditions specified in their contract of employment are not entitled to these payments.

Working Time Directive

The Working Time Regulations, implemented on 1 October 1998 require that a “worker” must not work in excess of 48 hours per week averaged over a 17 week period unless they chose to opt out. For further information and an opt-out agreement form please view the Working Time Directive on the HR intranet pages. It should also be noted that, under the Working Time Directive, employees must take, at least, a 20 minute break when working more than 6 hours per day, irrespective of the job or shift pattern.

Lone Working

The Council has a responsibility under Health and Safety at Work legislation to help all employees reduce the risks of lone working and to implement suitable and sufficient measures to ensure employees’ safety at all times when out of hours, off site or lone working is unavoidable. This may cover those parts of employees’ homes that may be considered an extension of the workplace due to agreed home-working arrangements.

For further information please refer to the Lone Working section on the intranet.



Leave

Introduction

The following are a summary of the types of leave and time off available to employees in varying circumstances. For more information please refer to the Human Resources Policy section on the intranet.

Maternity

All female employees are entitled to take Maternity Leave of up to 52 weeks, regardless of their length of service. Maternity Leave and pay are separate entitlements and payment while on maternity leave varies depending on the length of employment. All employees with 26 weeks' continuous local government service by the 15th week before the expected date of childbirth are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). In addition, the Council pays an enhanced rate of maternity pay to employees with more than 12 months' continuous local government service.

Paternity

Employees who are the biological father and/or the expectant mother's husband or partner (including same-sex partner or civil partner) are entitled to two weeks' paid Ordinary Paternity Leave. Ordinary Paternity Leave can be taken from the date of birth or up to eight weeks (56 days) from the birth and has to be taken in weekly blocks.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. Its purpose is to give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for and bond with their child. All eligible employees have a statutory right to take Shared Parental Leave. There may also be an entitlement to some Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

Adoption

Employees are entitled to Adoption Leave if they have 26 weeks' continuous service before the beginning of the week when they are matched with a child. In terms of both leave and pay, Adoption Leave has the same conditions as Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave.

Surrogacy

Employees who are the intended parents of a surrogacy arrangement will be eligible for Statutory Adoption Leave and Pay and for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

Parental Leave

There is a right for both parents to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave per parent per child. For qualifying conditions please view the Family Friendly Policy.

Unpaid Leave – Time off for Dependents

Employees will be allowed reasonable unpaid time off to take the appropriate action necessary to resolve or deal with an unexpected issue which has arisen because of a dependent.

Discretionary Leave

Directors have the discretion to grant to employees up to 5 days' paid leave per annum. Discretionary leave will normally be used by employees who need to be with a seriously sick dependent or relative; however, the circumstances of each application will be considered thoroughly.

Sickness

Notification and Certification of Sickness Absence

Employees must contact their manager by telephone if they are absent from work due to illness, injury or any other health problem on every day of absence for the first 7 days of absence. If their manager is unavailable they should contact another member of the team. The employee must also confirm when the sickness started, how long they expect to be away from work and the reason they are sick. In exceptional circumstances, if the employee is too ill to notify their absence themselves then they can arrange for someone to do this on their behalf.

Employees must keep their line managers up to date if the reason for the absence changes or if the absence is expected to last longer than originally stated.

For each occasion of sickness absence, employees must complete a self-certification form for the first seven calendar days (including weekends and public holidays). Self-certification forms should be countersigned by the line manager, who will forward the documentation to Human Resources.

If the absence continues beyond seven calendar days then the employee must keep their manager informed of the progress of their illness on at least a weekly basis and obtain doctor's certificates to cover the length of the sickness period (from day eight). In cases of continuing absence these should be consecutive. Employees must forward doctor's certificates immediately to their manager who in turn will forward these onto Human Resources.

Every absence must be certified and recorded to ensure correct payment of sick pay and to ensure that accurate records are maintained. Failure to comply with the certification and reporting procedures may result in loss of sick pay. Misleading or false statements may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

If an employee is absent from work through sickness they must refrain from working elsewhere. If this situation were to arise it may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Length of Service	Sick Pay Entitlement
During 1st Year	1 month's full pay and 2 months' half pay
During 2nd year	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
During 3rd year	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
During 4th and 5th year	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
After 5 years	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

For a more detailed guide to procedure regarding sickness please consult the Absence Management Policy which can be found on the HR intranet pages.

Leave for Medical Reasons

Employees should use their flexi hours for the following:

- GP appointments
- Dental appointments
- Optician appointments
- Fertility treatment

Employees are entitled to paid time off for the following appointments:

- Medical screening as deemed necessary by their GP
- Hospital appointments following a referral by their GP

These must be outpatient appointments; if you are required to stay in hospital your absence is classed as sick leave.

Bereavement

When an employee suffers the loss of an immediate family member, for example, partner, parent or sibling, the employee is entitled to 5 paid days' leave, to include the day of the funeral, on or around the time of bereavement.

When an employee suffers the loss of a relative or friend, the employee is entitled to 1 day's paid leave to attend the funeral.

Carers

The Council recognises that some employees have caring responsibilities and these individuals may need support to combine work with care; please view the Carer's policy for information about the support and leave available to employees.

Benefits

Local Award

Employees will be eligible to receive the Local Award of 2% of their basic salary, subject to performance, after 3 years' service (from the employees' original start date with East Herts Council) in accordance with East Herts Council's policy. There is no automatic entitlement to the award; it will depend on service being entirely satisfactory in the previous six months.

This scheme is not a contractual entitlement and East Herts Council reserves the right to withdraw the Local award on an "across the board" basis.

Pensions

Employees will be brought into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) from their start date. This is a career average scheme. Every year, you will build up a pension at a rate of 1/49th of the amount of pensionable pay you received in that scheme year (or half this rate for any period you have elected to be in the 50/50 section of the scheme). The amount of pension built up during the scheme year is then added to your pension account and revalued at the end of each scheme year so your pension keeps up with the cost of living. Simply, this means that for every £49 that you earn and pay contributions on you'll get £1 of pension added to your pension account each year.

For more information, please visit www.lgps.org.uk

Life Assurance

The Council arranges Group Life Insurance for employees on the Council payroll system (including casuals). Arrangements are put in place for employees aged from 18 to their 70th birthday. This excludes:

- Secondments
- Agency/Temporary staff
- Personnel shared with another Authority, if the other Authority is the employing Authority

The benefit payable is 1.5x gross annual salary, inclusive of local weighting and local award (bonuses, overtime, out of hours' allowance, election payments, standby hours etc. are excluded). Payment is subject to policy terms and conditions and Insurer's acceptance of individuals.

Car Users

Essential Car Users

Any employee who completes over 2000 business miles per annum (pro rata for part-time employees) is classed as an essential car user. Essential car users receive a monthly allowance and are entitled to claim mileage allowance towards travel for business purposes. For part-time employees the monthly allowance is pro-rated on the basis of annual hours worked.

Business mileage for all posts will be reviewed annually in December to determine eligibility for mileage allowances the following year.

Casual Car Users

Employees who are not classed as essential users are entitled to casual mileage allowance; this means they can claim mileage expenses for travel for business purposes.

For more information on mileage rates and to obtain a mileage claim form, please go to the Payroll Forms page on the intranet or view the Expenses Policy. All forms must be authorised by line managers before any payment will be made. Claims older than three months will not be paid.

It is the responsibility of employees undertaking official journeys on behalf of the Council to be sure that they have adequate motor insurance cover, i.e. extended to include business use. Many private motor insurance policies do not cover business use as standard. Daily commuting to and from the usual place of work will not invalidate policy cover; however, any deviation or another journey in connection with Council business may, including attending a training course at another site.

There is no insurance industry standard, so it is recommended that employees explain the purpose of journeys to their insurer and seek confirmation that appropriate cover is in place.

Employees driving for business purposes must also hold a full UK driving licence and an MOT if the vehicle is three years or older. Employees are required to show their managers these documents annually.

Subsistence

Employees are entitled to reclaim expenses incurred, such as meals, while away from the office on business. A claim form must be submitted with a receipt attached. An allowance will be paid of the actual expense incurred up to a locally determined maximum. Please see the Expenses Policy on the intranet for subsistence rates and the expenses claim form.

Car Loan

The Council offers all employees who require a car to carry out their duties for the Council a loan to buy a car. This loan is then paid back with interest by way of salary deduction. Please see the Car Loans section of the intranet for more information and to download an application form.

Long Service Awards

After 20, 30 and 40 years' continuous service with the Council, employees are rewarded with a lump sum to thank them for their service. They will also be presented with a long service framed certificate.

Retirement Gift

The Council rewards employees aged 65 or over, with 10 years' service upon retirement, with a lump sum to thank them for their service.

Sharing the Caring (give as you earn)

Employees can donate to their chosen charity through the payroll system which allows the charity to receive a tax free donation. If you are interested in donating money to your chosen charity in this way, please contact the HR service to request a form. Upon receipt of your completed form, arrangements will be made for the required amount to be deducted from your monthly salary.

For more information, please visit www.sharingthecaring.org.uk

Childcare Vouchers

The Council has introduced as part of its family-friendly initiative, a more flexible way to meet the costs of childcare. Childcare vouchers are paid for through the payroll system and receive tax and National Insurance relief. They, therefore, represent a saving for employees who receive them as part of their total employment package. Childcare vouchers have become the recognised payment method for childcare in the UK and can be exchanged, in whole or part for childcare services including nurseries, after school and holiday clubs and child-minders. For more information refer to the Computer Share website www.computersharevoucherservices.com

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Council participates in a Cycle to Work Scheme, with Halfords as our provider, which means that the Council can offer employees bicycles and accessories as a tax-free benefit.

Bicycles and accessories are loaned to employees via a salary sacrifice arrangement whereby the costs of loaning the equipment are offset by deducting the amount from the employee's gross pay. Employees will save tax and National Insurance on the part of the gross salary sacrificed.

At the end of the loan period the Council gives the employee the option to purchase the equipment at a fair market value, which will be substantially less than the original cost of the equipment.

All employees are entitled to a 10% discount at Halfords, regardless of whether they have taken up the scheme.

For more information, please view the HR intranet pages.

HertSavers Credit Union

The Council is a member of HertSavers Credit Union which is a not-for-profit financial co-operative that is owned and controlled by its members. Members of credit unions pool their savings together; these savings then provide funds from which loans can be made. Credit Unions are regulated and authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) who oversee all banks and building societies and provide protection for members' money.

Benefits to employees include:

- An easy way to save whereby money is transferred to their Credit Union savings account via payroll deductions
- All members receive an annual dividend on their savings
- Access to low cost loans that are responsibly lent
- Automatic free life insurance on both savings and loans
- Assists employees in the management of their money and encourages regular saving

For more information, please view the HR intranet pages.

Eye Tests

The Council will provide employees with eye care vouchers to cover the cost of eye tests every 2 years and will make a contribution towards lenses that are required for either Visual Display Unit (VDU) or non-VDU use. Please refer to the Health and Safety pages of the intranet for further information.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP is a confidential advice, information and counselling service available to all employees and their immediate family household members – including dependents currently living away from home, such as children at college or university. If counselling is required, the first four consultations are free. The EAP is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for expert independent advice and guidance on a wide range of subjects. Further details can be found on the HR intranet pages.

Unison

The Council works in partnership with Unison to consult with employees on important issues affecting them. The Council acknowledges the value of trade union membership for its employees and encourages employees to join.

Unison, with nearly 1.3 million members across the public sector, is Britain's biggest trade union and is the one recognised by the Council through a formal Recognition Agreement.

A full list of all the Branch officers is displayed on the Unison intranet page.

To become a member, employees should complete the application form that can be found on Unison's page on the intranet. Please note: the form cannot be completed online and should be returned to one of the Unison members at the Council.

The cost of joining depends on an employee's pay scale and is also found on the application form. Being a member of Unison entitles employees to a huge range of benefits which are shown on the intranet page.

Finally, as laid down in the recognition agreement, Unison participates fully in the Local Joint Panel where Councillors and employee representatives discuss important issues affecting employees. If an employee would like something raised on their behalf they should speak to their local Branch Officer.

Employee Discount at East Herts Leisure Facilities

Employees can receive a discount on leisure facilities at the following sports centres across the district:

- Hartham Leisure Centre, Hertford
- Grange Paddocks Pool and Gym, Bishop's Stortford
- Ward Freeman School pool, Buntingford
- Fanshawe Pool and Gym, Ware
- Leventhorpe Pool and Gym, Sawbridgeworth

For details of the employee discounts available, please see the Employee Benefits page on the intranet.

Hertford Theatre

Employee discounts are available at Hertford Theatre. Council employees can also see shows for free by volunteering to be an unpaid member of the front-of-house team.

Kaarp Benefits

The Council subscribes to the Kaarp Voluntary Benefits website. Employees are able to take advantage of any of the offers available. Offers include days out, theatre tickets, holidays, restaurants, CDs, DVDs, car insurance, and much more. For more information, please go to www.kaarp.co.uk

Performance Development & Training

Performance Development Review Scheme (PDRS)

The performance development review is a two-way process designed to record an assessment of performance, giving recognition of performance and contribution and to look back on what has been achieved. Previous objectives will be reviewed and revised and new objectives will be agreed as part of the changing priorities and service plan. The PDRS process should be ongoing throughout the year using 1-1's to review progress and there should be no surprises for the employee at the review meetings.

There are two formal reviews of both performance and learning development needs every year. The PDR Scheme consists of three elements; a review of the past year to discuss existing objectives, an opportunity to review competencies against the Council's values and behaviours, identifying learning and development needs and an action plan to set targets and objectives for the future.

Each employee has a responsibility for their own learning and development. It is essential that all employees:

- Take an active part in the PDRS process
- Share responsibility for identifying development needs
- Take advantage of learning and development as identified

As part of the PDRS, managers will assist employees in creating learning and development plans and will:

- Help employees to identify their specific learning and development requirements
- Prioritise their needs within given constraints
- Select the most appropriate, cost-effective solution to ensure their needs are met.

Ongoing monitoring of performance both throughout and after learning and development is essential to ensure the benefits are optimised.

Reflecting on the development and deciding whether it achieved the learning objectives and whether the service and/or the employee benefited from it, is a key part of the process. For more information, please view the PDRS pages on the HR intranet pages.

Learning and Development

The Council aims to provide learning and development opportunities to all employees to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge and skills they require to carry out their job role effectively and also, to provide employees with opportunities for career development. Please refer to the Training and Development Policy on the HR intranet pages for further information.

The Council publishes an annual Corporate Learning and Development Plan which is monitored during the year to ensure it is meeting the needs of the organisation and the individual. The plan is designed to meet the range of different corporate training and development needs.

Each Service has a separate training plan and budget which includes service specific training and CPD events including seminars and conferences.

The Council also supports professional development and employees are encouraged to discuss with their manager how they can develop their skills and knowledge to support their current role or future career plans.

Corporate training is advertised in Team Update, the Council's employee magazine and in a training bulletin which is sent to all employees by email on a monthly basis.

For a copy of the Corporate Learning and Development Plan, please go to the Learning and Development intranet pages.

Secondments

The Secondment Policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to the development of all employees, both for their current roles and for the individual and organisational changes and challenges of the future.

The Secondment Policy works in conjunction with other learning and development initiatives within the Council to offer internal and/or external opportunities for individuals to take up different posts for a specific period of time in order to provide temporary cover, i.e. for maternity leave in another service. For further information, please refer to the Secondment Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Professional, Career and Vocational Development

Employees can apply for sponsorship and limited paid time off for professional, career and vocational training which leads to formal qualifications. Please see the Professional, Career and Vocational Study Policy for details on criteria for approval, the application process, sponsorship amounts and study leave.

Training Courses and Day Release

Paid time off will be given to employees participating in training events and/or day release courses subject to approval by their line manager.

Career Breaks

The Council recognises that during an employee's working life there will be times when personal commitments may take priority over work e.g. bringing up children; longer term care for sick or elderly relatives or pursuing a course of further education. The Council offers employees with at least two years' continuous service with the Council the opportunity to take a career break to accommodate such personal commitments.

A career break enables an employee to take an unpaid break from work for personal reasons and maintain continuity of service with the Council. The minimum break is three months and the maximum break is one year. Please read the General Leave Policy and Procedure on the HR intranet pages for further details.



Rights and Responsibilities

Equality & Diversity

The Council is firmly committed to providing and promoting equality for all its employees and the wider community. The Council has adopted this policy to ensure equality, diversity and social inclusion influences the way we provide services and the employment of staff. The Council will seek to ensure applicants and employees with disabilities receive full and fair consideration for all types of job vacancies, as well as for training, career development and promotion. The Council is signed up to the JobCentre Plus 'Two Ticks' Scheme to help protect against discrimination at recruitment level. A full copy of the Council's policy on Equal Opportunities can be found on the intranet or through the 'equality officers' task group'.

Grievance Procedure

In the majority of cases employees can resolve their concerns through informal discussion with their line manager. However, if the issue cannot be resolved in this way, the Council's Grievance Procedure enables individual employees to raise their grievance through formal processes to resolve disputes internally. For further information, please read the Grievance Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Disciplinary Procedure

The Council's Disciplinary Procedure has been established to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of conduct in support of its Vision Statement, Corporate Priorities, Values and Behaviours and Service Plans. For further information, please read the Disciplinary Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Managing Performance Policy

The Council's Managing Performance Policy has been established to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of performance and contribution in support of its Vision Statement, Corporate Priorities, Values and Behaviours and Service Plans. For further information, please read the Managing Performance Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Harassment and Bullying

All Council employees should be treated with dignity and respect and as an employer the Council has both a legal and moral duty to protect its employees against harassment and bullying. For further information, please read the Harassment and Bullying Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Confidential Reporting Code

The aim of the confidential reporting code is to provide employees with the opportunity, without fear or recrimination, to disclose any allegations of malpractice within the Authority, any impropriety or breach of procedure or any deficiency in the delivery of the service. Please refer to the Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Code on the HR intranet pages to find out how to use the code.

Anti-fraud and Anti-Corruption

East Herts Council has a culture of zero tolerance towards fraud and corruption. The public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Council employees. Council workers have an obligation to avoid conflicts between their private interests and their duty to East Herts Council and should use their best endeavours to avoid any weakening of public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business.

Code of Conduct

The aim of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that all employees are clear that the highest standards are followed and to protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism. It is important to adhere to the standards of conduct set out in the Code as a breach of these standards may lead to disciplinary action. The Code must be read and followed by all employees. The Code of Conduct can be found on the HR intranet pages.

Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse

The 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act requires the Council to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its employees at work. It also owes a duty of care to third parties to take reasonable care to ensure that they are not exposed to risks to their health and safety because of substance misuse or drug and alcohol related negligence. All employees are reminded that arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or banned or misused substances is considered gross misconduct and as such will be subject to disciplinary action. For further information, please read the Alcohol, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy on the HR intranet pages.

Smoke-free Workplace

The Council operates a smoke free work place. Please refer to the Smoke-free Workplace Policy for full details.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) replaced and broadened the Data Protection Act 1984. The purpose of the Act is to protect the rights and privacy of individuals and to ensure that data about them is not processed without their knowledge and wherever possible, is processed with their consent. The DPA covers personal data relating to living individuals and defines a category of sensitive personal data which are subject to more stringent conditions on their processing than other personal data.

It should be assumed, as a general rule, that any personal data relating to an identifiable living individual held by East Herts Council, in any form, is covered by the DPA.

East Herts Council is a data controller in respect of the data for which it is responsible. This means that East Herts Council is responsible under the DPA for decisions in regard to the processing of personal data, including the decisions and actions of external data processors acting on East Herts Council's behalf (i.e. contractors/suppliers).

The DPA requires that personal information should be processed fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. East Herts Council is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of individuals in accordance with the requirements of the DPA. For further information, please refer to the guidance on Data Protection on the intranet pages and the Council's policy for Handling Personal Data.

Webcasting and the Right to Report

All employees should be aware that webcasting is used for certain committee meetings. The recordings of these meetings will also be available on the Council's internet site. Employees attending these meetings may be filmed as part of the proceedings. Any images created by the Council will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

All employees should also be aware that, following recent legislation, members of the public are permitted to record committee meetings. As members of a public body there can be no expectation of secrecy or anonymity and employees may be filmed as part of these meetings.

If an employee finds this a cause for concern the individual will need to alert their line manager or Human Resources. The individual's decision and its impact on their ability to perform their role at committee meetings will then be explored.

Data Quality

Data quality plays an important part towards contributing to the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.

Data quality is the responsibility of every employee whether they are inputting, extracting or analysing data from any of the Council's information systems. Each employee should be aware of their responsibility in relation to data quality; however, some officers will play a greater role in data quality than others.

East Herts Council has a data quality policy in place to act as a regulator for data. This means that data coming in and out of the authority has a set of standards for data to conform to. This will not only protect the interests of the public but also, the interests of all those who provide data to the council. Please refer to the Data Quality Strategy on the Publications and Procedures section of the intranet for further details.

ICT and Acceptable Use of Emails

All employees must sign and adhere to the 'policy for the use of information and communications technology and equipment'. Any employee who does not sign this agreement will have their internet access removed. The Council has also published 'best practice' guidelines for all employees with regard to the acceptable use of emails. Email misuse and/or inappropriate content may lead to disciplinary action. Please refer to the Data Quality Strategy on the Publications and Procedures and the ICT and Acceptable use of Emails section of the intranet for further details.

Social Media

Social media opens up many new and exciting opportunities. It is part of East Herts Council's Communication Strategy to engage effectively with social media. However, employees have both an opportunity and a responsibility to manage and protect the Council's reputation online and to selectively participate and engage in the online conversations that mention us on a daily basis.

The Council's Social Media Principles detailed in the Social Media Policy will ensure these are maximised for the Council. However, there are many potential issues to consider – as individuals outside work, as employees and as an organisation.

The Social Media Policy provides clear guidance about personal and business (on behalf of the Council) use of social media. This policy is part of the Information Security Policy and links with the Council's other ICT User Policies and the Officer Code of Conduct, in particular the Disclosure of Information.



Health and Wellbeing

Health and Safety

The Council is committed to providing a safe working environment for all. All employers have a duty of care for the health and safety of their employees. The Council expects everyone - employees, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and temporary or agency employees - to give health and safety the same importance. The Council's policy on health and safety must be adhered to at all times.

It is the responsibility of all employees, temporary, contract or agency employees to familiarise themselves and comply with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health and Safety Policy. All employees also have a responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions of action and to familiarise themselves with:

- The Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- The Council's Health and Safety Policy
- The General statement of Health and Safety
- General safety arrangements
- Safe systems or work
- Risk assessment control and elimination
- Instructions and advice provided for the safe use of plant and equipment
- General advice, information and guidance provided for the benefit of the health and safety of all Council employees

Please refer to the Health and Safety intranet pages where you will find the most up- to-date information.

First Aid

First aid notices can be found on notice boards and on the Health and Safety intranet pages.

Site	Number of First Aiders	First Aid Room
Hertford	5+	1st Floor opposite Council Chamber
Charrington's House	3+	Staff rest room on the ground floor
Buntingford	1+	Treatment area on the ground floor

Please remember that no medicines, not even analgesics, should be offered unless under the direction of a fully qualified person or medical practitioner.

Please refer to the Health and Safety intranet pages where first aid procedures are kept fully up-to-date.

Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures

All employees should be aware of the fire safety and evacuation procedure and ensure they know where the nearest two fire exits are in relation to the area in which they work. Please refer to the Health and Safety intranet pages where the fire safety and evacuation procedures are kept up to date and to view the fire evacuation points and assembly areas for Wallfields, Charrington's House Buntingford Service Centre and Hertford Theatre.

Wellbeing

The Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy is all about supporting good health outcomes for all those who live, work and visit East Herts. Amongst the Council employees and members this is about "Creating health and work together" one of the priorities which seeks to promote the workplace as a healthy environment and encouraging all employees to recognise their public health contribution in their work role. One of the projects planned for 2015 is for an employee and member health and wellbeing intranet site which will see a number of health opportunities and initiatives developed featuring the Five Ways to Wellbeing themes and featuring the Here to Help aspects which support these. For further information, please refer to the Health and Wellbeing intranet pages.

Occupational Health

The Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees by providing an Occupational Health Service. The role of Occupational Health Service is to:

- Monitor the health of employees in accordance with the Council's Absence Management Policy
- Help identify health problems and fitness for work issues at an early stage
- Formulate rehabilitation programmes/return to work strategies
- Work closely with line managers and Human Resources
- Promote employee wellbeing and healthy living

Managers wishing to refer employees to Occupational Health or employees who would like to self-refer should consult the Occupational Health section on the HR intranet pages.

General Information

Induction

On an employee's first day at the Council their line manager should complete a short informal induction; this includes; a tour of the building and introduction to employees at their site of work, the completion of any necessary paperwork, a brief guide about day-to-day important information and a chance to ask their manager any outstanding questions.

New employees should also attend the 'Getting to Know the Council' corporate induction day and line managers should notify them when they have been booked to attend this. The corporate induction is aimed at supporting new employees through their first few months with the Council and includes information about:

- Getting to know the Council
- The structure of the Council
- The services the Council provides
- The Council's Values and Behaviours
- How information is communicated to employees
- The working environment including the Council's policies and procedures
- The benefits the Council offers employees and
- Advice on how to seek help.

Standards of Dress

The Council considers the way we dress and our appearance to be of significant importance to ensure we portray a professional image to all our customers whether they are Councillors, visitors, residents of the district or colleagues.

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for the duties of their post and are encouraged to adopt a common sense approach with regard to the clothing and jewellery they wear to work. All external business meetings and contact with the public do require business dress, while a more casual approach is acceptable for employees working in the back office environment (jeans, t-shirts with logos or trainers are not allowed).

The Council operates a "dress down Friday" where employees may wear jeans and t-shirts. However, employees must ensure that casual dress is appropriate for the workplace.

Uniforms and Protective Clothing

Employees will be informed in their Contract of Employment if they are required to wear a uniform as part of their job. Uniforms must be worn during working hours and must be kept clean and presentable at all times.

Employees in roles that require protective clothing or footwear must wear this whilst carrying out their duties in accordance with health and safety requirements. Individuals that are unsure about such requirements should discuss this with their manager.

Employees attending training course do not need to wear uniforms or protective clothing, provided they are not performing their usual duties on the day.

ID Badges

Every employee is issued with an ID badge. New employees should inform their line manager if they do not receive one. Employees are required to display their badge at all times whilst undertaking Council duties.

Car Parking and Car Park Permits

The Council has free car parking facilities and your line manager will inform you where you are able to park. East Herts has adopted a car parking procedure to ensure fair allocation of spaces at its offices. All employees who wish to use the car parking facilities must display an East Herts car park permit. Special permits will be issued to those who require parking at East Herts car parks across the district to carry out their role.

Please see the Car Parking Procedures Policy on the Staff Parking intranet and contact the Facilities Management service to obtain your car park permit

Lift share

East Herts has signed up to a car share scheme where the database can be shared not only across the district council but with potential partners up at County Hall too. Employees don't even have to have a car to take advantage; just a willingness to share the petrol costs.

Sharing the journey not only reduces the costs for the employees, it also takes pressure off the car parking spaces at Wallfields, County Hall and in the overflow public car park. It also helps the green agenda because of the environmental benefits of fewer cars on the roads, leading to reduced pollution and carbon emissions.

For more information, please refer to the Liftshare page on the intranet.

Loss or Damage to Personal Property

The Council can accept no responsibility for any loss, by theft or otherwise, for damage occurring to personal property of employees whilst on Council premises or occurring whilst employees are travelling on Council business. Employees are, therefore, recommended to take out an insurance policy to cover their personal property.

Change of Personal Details

Employees are responsible for ensuring that any changes to their personal details are notified to Human Resources. Employees should complete the change of name/address form (which can be obtained from the intranet) as soon as possible. Should an employee change their bank or building society, details will need to be provided to Payroll by the first working day of the month in order for payment to be made to the new account. The Council will not inform HM Revenues and Customs of the new address but will update their records with LPFA, our pension provider.

Office Environment

To make the best use of the Council's working environment and to ensure it supports employees to work effectively, employees should view the Making the best use of our Office Environment Policy. The guidance covers the following issues associated with working environments:

- Clean and tidy desk policy
- Team desks & touch down desks
- Noise levels
- Data security

Further information can be found on the HR intranet pages.

Facilities Helpdesk

The Facilities Management helpdesk has been established so that employees are able to report any faults in their working environment as quickly and efficiently as possible. Information can be found on the intranet.



Other

Secondary Employment

Council employees are required to advise their line manager of any work, paid or unpaid, which is undertaken outside of employment with the Council. This is to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that the provisions of the Working Time Directive are complied with. This is updated on an annual basis.

Politically Restricted Posts

Under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, restrictions have been placed on the political activities which may be undertaken by certain post-holders within Local Authorities. Employees will be made aware of any restrictions in their Contract of Employment.

Court Attendance as a Witness/Jury Member

Employees summoned as a witness or jury member will be allowed the necessary time off to attend court. The employee should inform their line manager at the earliest convenience and pass on the summons document to the Payroll Manager for completion.

Time Off to Undertake Trade Union Duties

Unison Stewards and officers are entitled to reasonable time off for Unison activities, giving their line manager as much notice as possible. When management requests Unison to attend meetings, the employees concerned will be allowed paid time off from their normal duties to attend, as set out in the Recognition Agreement.

Interviews in Other Local Authorities

Employees will be able to take up to 5 days' paid leave per annum in order to attend interviews at other Local Authorities. It is the line manager's responsibility to approve and monitor requests for time off to attend Local Authority interviews. However, if the manager has any query regarding leave arrangements these should be discussed with the appropriate Head of Service and Human Resources before any action is taken. Please refer to the General Leave Policy on the HR intranet pages for further details.

Time Off for Election Duties

During local and general elections, employees are encouraged to volunteer for election duties, such as helping to run the polling stations or verifying and counting the votes. Employees are paid for these duties and pay rates are published at the time.

Employees are not required to book leave or flexi for election duties; they are given paid time off as well as the pay they receive for doing the duty. For polling/counting duties during the day employees should credit their flexi sheet with 7.30 hours in the adjustment panel. For further verification duties (and for general elections only, the count as well) that take place during the evening, the Council allow employees to take the following morning off as paid leave. As such, employees should credit the flexi sheet with 3:45 hours in the adjustment panel for the following morning. The 3:45 hours are only for the following morning and not to be taken at any other time.

Further Information

If employees require any further information not contained in the Employee Handbook, please view the intranet or contact a member of the HR service.

