



# Lowestoft Town Council

## Personal Use of the Telephone

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Whilst the Town Council understands that there may be situations that require the use of Town Council telephones (either in the office or the Town Council mobile telephone if you have been given one), this should be kept to a minimum.

1.2 You are expected to limit personal texts or personal mobile telephone use during working hours, e.g. as a guidance, this might exceptionally be 3 short personal calls, texts or emails per working day. The Town Council reserves the right during working hours to ask you to turn off your personal mobile telephone and not access the internet for anything other than Town Council business, should this become an issue. However this does not apply during your break periods.

### 2.0 Criteria for Use of a Mobile Phone

2.1 Mobile telephones will only be available to staff who have the approval of the Town Clerk.

2.2 A member of staff will be eligible to have a mobile phone if it is deemed necessary to their position, and they meet one of the following criteria:

- If the member of staff's duties require them to spend a substantial amount of time out of the office on work related duties (substantial is defined as an average of more than 50% of their working day).
- Staff for whom it is necessary to make essential work related calls off site, as part of their normal course of work.
- Staff who are required to be contactable in an emergency situation.
- Staff who are on call after normal business hours.
- Staff identified through the risk assessment procedure.

2.3 The Town Council provides mobile telephones and services for exclusive use of its staff to assist them in the performance of their duties and improve communications. The purpose of this policy is to ensure effective management and encourage standards for acceptable use of mobile telephone resources in the conduct of its business to safeguard staff, protect Town Council assets and ensure compliance with appropriate legislation.

### 3.0 Procurement of Mobile Telephones

3.1 The purchase of mobile phones is through the services of East Point Business Services.

### 4.0 Terms of Usage

4.1 All mobile phone usage is to be done in a safe and controlled manner.

4.2 It is the officer's responsibility for health and safety reasons to keep the use of their mobile phone to a minimum and to use landlines in preference to the mobile phone.

4.3 Town Council mobile phones must be on at all times whilst the officer is at work, where they are used regularly for operational and contact purposes.

4.4 Mobile phones should be switched off (or put on silent mode) during meetings, training courses etc. other than in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to take an urgent call.

4.5 Confidential information must not be discussed in open areas or inappropriate locations.



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4.6 Mobile phone use should be able to withstand public scrutiny and/or disclosure.

4.7 Town Council staff should not use mobile phones in a way that could defame, harass, abuse or offend individuals or organisations.

4.8 Staff are required to take good care of the mobile phone and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the device is not damaged, lost or stolen.

4.9 Officers are required to keep mobile phones clean, and in serviceable condition to the best of their ability, and report all irregularities immediately to the Town Clerk.

4.10 Mobile phones should not be left in unattended vehicles.

### 5.0 Loss or theft

5.1 In the event of the device being lost or stolen, staff are expected to the Town Clerk and EPBS.

Ask for a complete block to be placed on the phone so it cannot be used. Additionally, in the case of a theft, staff will be expected to inform the Police within 24 hours of discovery of the incident.

Please ensure that you receive a Crime Number from the Police. You should also inform the Town Clerk of the incident and provide details of:

- The date of the theft or when the phone was lost
- The Police station that it was reported to and the incident number.

5.2 The Town Clerk will arrange for a replacement handset and SIM card.

5.3 If a mobile phone is broken or faulty, the handset should be returned to the Town Clerk. A temporary phone may be issued until a repair/replacement can be organised.

5.4 Depending on the circumstances in which the phone was lost or broken, the Town Council will be responsible for replacing the mobile phone. However, if carelessness on the part of the officer can be shown as the cause of loss or damage, the employee will be required to meet the replacement cost.

### 6.0 Mobile Phone use whilst driving

6.1 A substantial body of research shows that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone whilst driving is a significant distraction and substantially increases the risk of the driver being involved in an incident. Research shows that individuals are four times more likely to be involved in a crash, injuring or killing themselves and/or other people.

6.2 Using a hands-free phone whilst driving, does not significantly reduce the risks, because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention, (RoSPA).

6.3 Mobile phones cause distractions in three ways:

- Taking hands off the wheel:
- Becoming engrossed in a conversation and not concentrating on the road: and
- Mental distraction.

6.4 The use of mobile phones whilst driving is not acceptable except where a legally compliant hands free unit is installed, and even then it is strongly advised against. You should adopt the following principles:



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- You must never use a mobile phone whilst driving unless you have a fully legally compliant hands-free unit and are an experienced driver used to handling such equipment: even in such cases you should never initiate calls whilst driving.
- Unless you have a hands-free unit your phone should be switched off, with diversion of all calls to voicemail - only check messages when your vehicle is stationary.
- Never make calls, dial numbers or text whilst driving, even with a hands-free unit.

6.5 From a safety point of view, all use of mobile phones should be avoided while the vehicle is being driven, even with hands-free units, as drivers cannot fully concentrate on driving if they are having to process and respond to phone calls. If the phone has to be left on (and this may only be the case where a legally compliant hands-free unit is installed), the driver should pull off the road (in a safe position) to make a call or take a call for any length of time. If in such conditions you receive a call you should indicate that you are driving and that you will call back when stationary. Ensure you are parked safely and switch your engine off before returning or making a call.

6.6 Drivers should also be aware that if you have an accident whilst using a hands-free device you may be prosecuted for driving without due care and attention.

### **7.0 Ownership and Termination of Employment**

7.1 On termination of employment or at any point by request of the Town Clerk, the staff member must return the mobile telephone and SIM card to the Town Clerk.

7.2 Mobile phones, the SIM card and all related contracts and accessories, provided by the Town Council, remain the property of the Town Council. All data contained on the mobile phone and SIM card are the property of the Town Council and the Town Council reserves the right to own, control and interrogate that data.

### **8.0 Compliance**

8.1 All members of staff who use a Town Council issued mobile telephone are obliged to adhere to this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.