

**BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
INDUCTION POLICY AND PROBATIONARY PERIOD PROCEDURE**

**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 In recognising the important contribution of its employees in providing a high quality service to the community Burntwood Town Council also recognises that it is the responsibility of the Council to establish appropriate work standards to ensure that quality service requirements are met.
- 1.2 As an employer the Council recognises that, during the first few months of taking up a new appointment, employees need to be made aware of the required standards of performance and should also be provided with the opportunity to discuss the extent to which they are meeting those standards and be provided with any appropriate assistance, training and encouragement.
- 1.3 This procedure is intended to ensure that all employees, during the period of their probation, have the opportunity to discuss their performance with the ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer on at least three occasions, so enabling any areas of concern, to either the employee or ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer, to be discussed and addressed.
- 1.4 The probationary procedure is backed up by careful recruitment and selection which minimises the risk of poor performance.
- 1.5 During recruitment and selection the ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer will ensure that the job description is accurate and up to date and that the person specification provides a clear picture of the main features of the job, matched with the attributes of the person needed to do that job.
- 1.6 The ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer will ensure that references are taken up and ask direct questions to act as a check on information provided by the candidate.
- 1.7 Where a new ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer has been recruited the recruitment and selection process will be directed by the Personnel Committee.
- 1.8 The Capability Procedure does not apply to the Induction Policy and Probationary Period Procedure.

**2.0 Aim**

- 2.1 This procedure aims to encourage and assist employees taking up new appointments to meet the performance standards required. Employees will be encouraged to help to identify any problems which occur and how they might be overcome.

**3.0 Scope**

- 3.1 The procedure applies to all new appointments of the Council, other than in the case of redeployment, offered as an alternative to redundancy, where an employee is transferred under TUPE, or where the employee has transferred directly from another local authority.

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**4.0 Principles**

- 4.1 The probationary period will last for ~~26~~<sup>13</sup> weeks for all staff with the exception of the ~~Chief Executive Officer whose probationary period will last for 26 weeks~~, unless there are exceptional ——— circumstances which justify an extension (see para 8).
- 4.2 The recruitment and selection process ensures that all appointees receive a detailed and accurate reflection of the duties of the post and the skills required of the post holder.
- 4.3 As part of the induction process every newly appointed employee will receive another copy of the job description and a briefing from the ~~Town-Clerk~~<sup>Chief Executive Officer</sup> to ensure that they are fully aware of the duties of their post and of the standards of performance required.
- 4.4 Detailed procedure and guidance/training notes will be prepared for the employee and explained to him/her during their first week of employment.
- 4.5 Where ever possible, a period of overlap in employment between the previous post holder and the new appointee will be arranged and a formal handover period scheduled to allow a dedicated period of on-the-job training. The new employee should also be shown where all documents and equipment are stored.
- 4.6 Employees will be given appropriate training and assistance, throughout their probationary period to help them meet the required standards of performance.
- 4.7 The ~~Town-Clerk~~<sup>Chief Executive Officer</sup> will keep written notes of the points raised during probationary interviews; these notes will be signed by both parties, placed on the employee's personal file and copied to the employee.
- 4.8 In the case of a new ~~Town-Clerk~~<sup>Chief Executive Officer</sup>, the Chairman of the Council and the ~~Leader of the Council (or their deputies)~~ will keep written notes of the points raised during probationary interviews; these notes will be signed by both parties, placed on the employee's personal file and copied to the employee.

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**5.0 Procedure**

- 5.1 During the first week of employment, as part of the induction process, all employees will have explained to them the purpose and principle of the probationary procedure and how it operates.
- 5.2 During the first week of employment all employees will have the job description, duties and job purpose explained to them, together with an identification of the standards required.
- 5.3 The employee will attend an assessment interview with ~~Town-Clerk~~<sup>Chief Executive Officer</sup> on completion of:
- One (1) month's service
  - Three (3) months service
  - Five (5) months service
  - Six (6) months service

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- 5.4 If the employee performance warrants assessment at an earlier stage, or at more frequent intervals, the employee will be informed and the interviews arranged.
- 5.5 During the probationary interviews the employee's progress will be discussed.
- 5.6 In the majority of cases the employee will be making satisfactory progress and the interview will be utilised to provide an opportunity for the **Town-Clerk/Chief Executive Officer** to confirm this, therefore encouraging the employee and providing the chance to raise any questions or concerns.
- 5.7 In cases where a mismatch between the job and the person has been identified, possibly due to an inaccuracy in the job description at the advertising stage, the job description should be reviewed, in consultation with the employee, and every assistance given to the employee to ensure that they are able to meet the full requirements of the revised post.
- 5.8 In cases where an employee performance requires some adjustment, to meet the required standards, the probationary interview will be used to identify the gap between performance and required standards and what actions may be required to assist the employee to meet the required performance standards. These actions may include setting performance targets and objectives, specific skills training, temporary close supervision or assistance with organising work and setting priorities.
- 5.9 The probationary period assessment form will be completed by the **Town-Clerk/Chief Executive Officer** during the probationary interview indicating any areas of concern in the employee's performance. The form should be signed by both the **Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer** and the employee with the employee having had the opportunity to comment on the form. If the employee does not agree with what is written, as a true reflection of the meeting, he/she should make comments to this effect on the form.
- 5.10 In the case of the **Town-Clerk/Chief Executive Officer**, interviews will be held with the Chairman of the Council **and the Leader of the Council (or their deputies)**.
- 5.10 The form should then be placed on the individual's personal file and a copy provided to the employee.

**6.0 When Performance Does Not Improve**

- 6.1 Where an individual has failed to improve performance to the required standards, after having had at least one probationary interview at which failure to perform to the required standards was discussed, he/she will be informed, giving at least three days written notice, that the next probationary review meeting could result in the issue of a warning in accordance with the terms of the probationary period procedure and that he/she has the right to be accompanied at that review meeting by a Trade Union representative or an employee of the Council.
- 6.2 At the review meeting the employee will be reminded of the standards required and given details of where performance is failing to meet the required standards. The employee will have the opportunity to discuss the reasons why they are still failing to



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meet the required standards and any mitigating circumstances will be taken into account.

- 6.3 Where no satisfactory explanation is provided as to continued failure to meet the required standards the employee will be issued with a warning and notified that failure to improve sufficiently during a specified period will normally lead to dismissal, whether during or at the end of the probationary period. This warning will be confirmed in writing.
- 6.4 Where an employee is given a warning at a probationary interview this will be followed by appropriate assistance to improve his/her performance and a reasonable period of time allowed to enable the employee to demonstrate an improvement in performance.
- 6.5 What constitutes a reasonable period of time is dependent on the duties of the post being performed and the frequency at which the particular task(s) highlighted as areas requiring an improvement in performance are performed. For example, if a particular task in relation to which performance standards are not being met is performed on a daily basis, one week may be considered a reasonable time, if the task performed on a weekly basis a reasonable time could be two months.
- 6.6 Where an employee achieves the necessary improvement in performance a further interview will be arranged to acknowledge the improvement and encourage the employee to continue to perform at the required standard. The normal pattern of probationary interviews will then be resumed.

#### **7.0 Completion of the Probationary Period**

- 7.1 Where an employee has successfully completed his/her probationary period, by proving suitability for the post, the Town Clerk/Chief Executive Officer will notify the employee in writing that their appointment will be confirmed.

#### **8.0 Extension of Probationary Period**

- 8.1 In exceptional circumstances the probationary period may be extended, with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Council (or their deputies), beyond 26-13 weeks for a further period, normally not more than thirteen-six weeks for all staff with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer whose probationary period may be extended, with the agreement of the Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Council (or their deputies), beyond 26 weeks for a further period not more than 13 weeks.
- 8.2 An extension to the probationary period must be justifiable and will be granted only where it has not been possible to assess an employee's performance during the first 26 weeks of the appointment.
- 8.3 Where it has been agreed that a probationary period is to be extended the employee will be interviewed and notified of this, normally no later than the 22<sup>nd</sup> week of service. During that interview the reasons for the extension will be explained and the period of further extension will be specified.

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- 8.4 The extension to the probationary period will be confirmed in writing stating that assessment interviews will continue and where possible giving the dates of those assessment interviews.

**9.0 Failure to Successfully Complete Probationary Period**

- 9.1 Where an employee with a warning fails to make the necessary improvements during this period he/she will be interviewed again by the ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer and their failure to meet required standards discussed. In the absence of an acceptable explanation employment will normally be terminated, with the appropriate notice.

This dismissal will be on the grounds of capability and the reasons will be fully explained to the employee.

- 9.2 The Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Council (or their deputies) will conduct this stage of the probationary process.

- 9.3 Where it is proposed to issue a warning or terminate employment, the employee should be given at least three working days notice, in writing, and reminded of the entitlement to be accompanied by a trade union representative or an employee of the Council.

**10.0 Appeals**

- 10.1 An employee has the right of appeal against dismissal under this procedure by giving written notice to the ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer of his/her intention to appeal within seven (7) working days of receiving written notification of termination, stating the grounds on which he/she wishes to appeal.

- 10.2 For full details of the Appeals procedure see Appendix III of the Disciplinary Procedure.

- 10.3 There is no right of appeal against warnings issued under this procedure.

**11. Authority to Hear Appeals**

The appeal will be heard by the Appeals Panel (appointed by the Town Council), serviced by the ~~Town Clerk~~ Chief Executive Officer who will act as advisor to the panel.

**12. Notice**

Notice of termination will be in accordance with contractual requirements.

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<b>Issue No.</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Details of Amendments</b>
1.0	16/09/2009	Approved at Full Council meeting
1.1	01/06/2015	New paragraph 1.8
1.2	23/06/2016	Minor amendments to paragraphs 4.1, 8.1 and 8.3; "Town Clerk" changed to read "Chief Executive Officer" throughout the document and "Chairman of Council" changed to read "Chairman of the Council and the Leader of the Council (or their deputies)" throughout the document.

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## **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 1.1 Burntwood Town Council (BTC) takes very seriously the health, safety and welfare of all its staff. It recognises that some staff are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in its offices. The purpose of this policy is to enable BTC to meet its obligation to protect these staff so far as is reasonably practicable from the risks of lone working.

## **2.0 SCOPE**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff including temporary staff. It forms an integral part of BTC's Health and Safety Policy. The policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of our staff.

## **3.0 DEFINITION OF A LONE WORKER**

- 3.1 BTC defines lone workers as:

'Staff whose working activities involve situations where they are without any kind of close or direct supervision. Employees whose activities involve a large percentage of their working time operating in situations without the benefit of interaction with other workers.'

Lone work is not the chance occurrence of finding oneself on one's own, for example, when somebody arrives first in the office or leaves last, or where an individual has to go unaccompanied to another part of the workplace. Lone work is specifically intended to be unaccompanied work, or work without immediate access to another person for assistance.

## **4.0 POLICY AIMS**

- 4.1 This policy aims to:

- increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to lone working;
- make sure that the risk of working alone is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable;
- make sure that appropriate training is available to staff in all areas, that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone;
- make sure that appropriate support is available to staff who have to work alone;



- encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working; and
- reduce the number of incidents and injuries to staff related to lone working.

## **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 Lone working environments present a unique health and safety problem. Although there is no specific legal guidance on working alone, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, we must organise and control the health and safety of lone workers.

5.2 The ~~Town Clerk~~Chief Executive Officer (or his/her designated Deputy) is responsible for:

- making sure that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working;
- providing resources for putting the policy into practice; and
- making sure that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the Monthly Meeting Management Committee regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policy;
- making sure that all staff are aware of the policy;
- making sure that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly;
- putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone;
- making sure that staff groups and individuals identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training, including training at induction, updates and refresher training as necessary;
- making sure that appropriate support is given to staff involved in any incident; and
- managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

5.2 All staff are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their actions;
- cooperating by following rules and procedures designed for safe working;
- reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others and asking for guidance as appropriate;

- taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy; and
- reporting any dangers they identify or any concerns they might have in respect of working alone.

## **6.8 ASSESSING THE RISK**

6.1 Lone workers should not face any more risks than other staff within the organisation. Setting up safe working arrangements for lone workers is no different to organising the safety of other staff, so we must all follow the general principles of risk assessment. If a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, other arrangements must be put in place. Risk assessment should take account of both normal work and foreseeable emergencies such as fire, illness and accidents. The risk assessment process is summarised in Table 1, separated into five distinct stages and action points to support effective assessment of the risks involved in lone working.

<b>PROCESS</b>		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	Identifying lone workers	Establish and identify lone workers for each work area.
<b>2</b>	Identifying associated hazards	Isolate the range of dangers associated with whole work areas of work and/or work processes.  Review a generic risk assessment to make sure you have included these issues.
<b>3</b>	Assessing the degree of risk	Review the generic risk assessments and complete individual or local risk assessments if necessary, then prioritise the level of associated risk.
<b>4</b>	Putting control measures in	Assess how effective the existing control measures are and update them if appropriate.  Develop local procedures or action plans if necessary.
<b>5</b>	Evaluating and review	Evaluate and record how effective the control measures are.  Review when the assessments of controls are no longer required.

**Table 1**

6.2 Risk assessments must be carried out in all areas of work where working alone poses an actual or potential risk to staff. The risk assessment will involve identifying all potential dangers and the risks associated with specific work tasks or activities. It should identify who will be affected and how, and the control measures which are needed to get rid of or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably possible. Risk assessment should be carried out by competent people and should be recorded and shared with relevant others. Factors to consider when carrying out the risk assessment include the following:

- Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Can the risks of the job be adequately controlled by one person?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone?
- What training is needed to make sure the staff member is competent in safety matters?
- Have staff received the training which is necessary to allow them to work alone?
- How will the person be supervised?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are people of a particular gender especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are new or inexperienced staff especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are younger workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What happens if a person becomes ill, has an accident, or if there is an emergency?
- Are there systems in place for contacting and tracing those who work alone?

6.3 Details of the risk assessment should be recorded and should include:

- the extent and nature of the risks;
- factors that contribute to the risk including job content and specific tasks and activities; and
- the safe systems of work to be followed to eliminate or reduce the risk. Information from the risk assessment should be passed to staff. Risk assessments should be reviewed and updated each year (or sooner should circumstances change).



## **7.0 MANAGING RISK**

7.1 The risk which lone workers face should be reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable. Issues to consider in developing safe systems of work include:

- joint working with others for high-risk activities;
- improvements to security arrangements in buildings;
- security lighting in parking areas;
- using checking-in and monitoring systems; and
- using personal protective equipment or mobile phones and personal alarms.

7.2 Arrangements for managing risk should include:

- guidance for lone workers on assessing risk;
- details of when to stop and get advice; and
- the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident or emergency.

All staff must be familiar with these procedures.

## **8.0 STAFF TRAINING**

8.1 BFC will provide training where required to allow lone working. The training will be based on the needs identified through local risk assessment.

## **9.0 REPORTING & RECORDING**

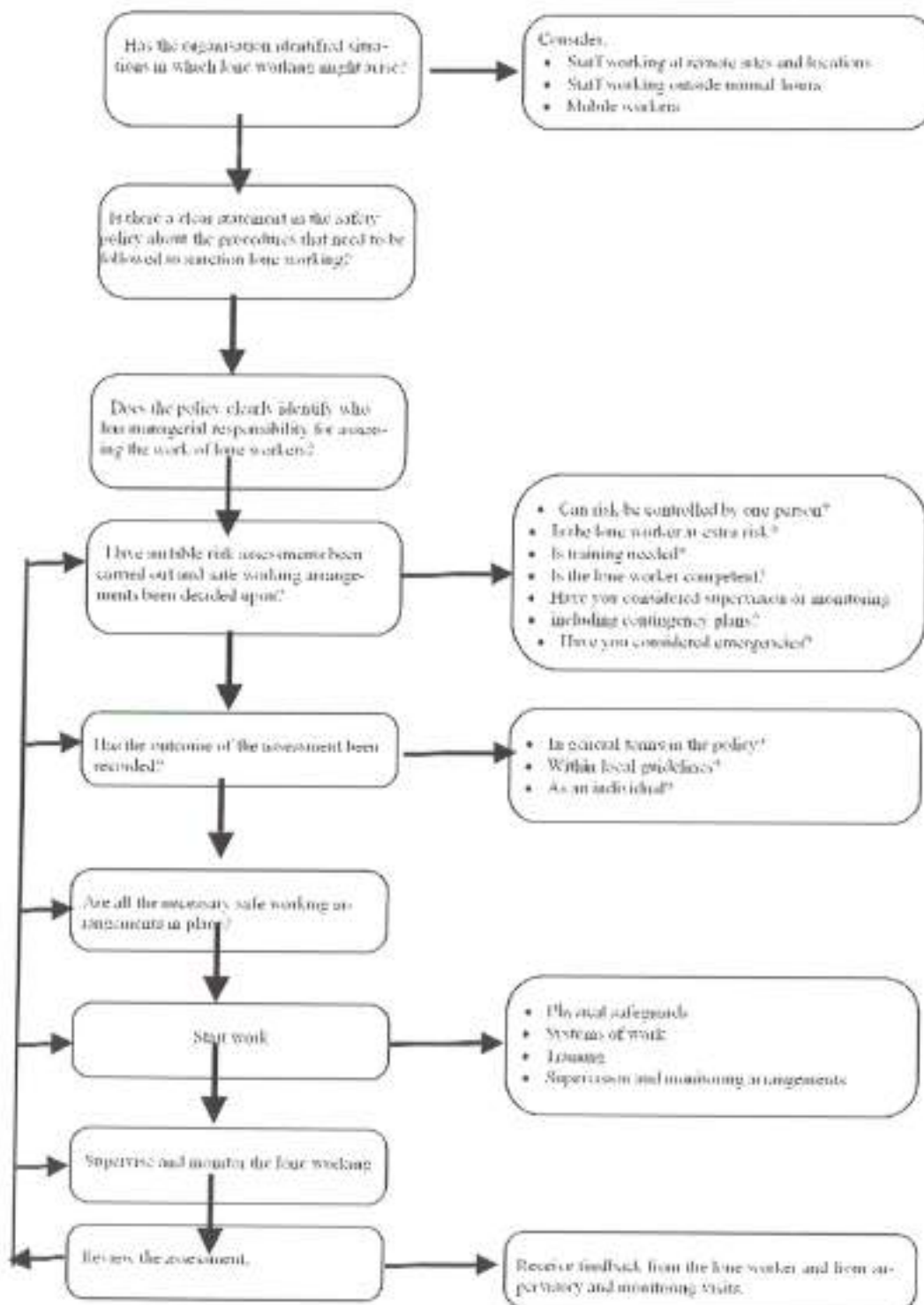
9.1 Staff should report all incidents (including near misses) to their line manager at the earliest opportunity. These should be reported on an incident form and the line manager should investigate all reports. In order to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and incident reports should be reviewed regularly.

## **10.0 MONITORING & REVIEWING**

10.1 The Personnel Committee will monitor and review this policy to make sure that it is achieving the aims of the policy. The review processes will include:

- collecting and monitoring all reported incidents;
- reviewing this area of the BFC Risk Management Policy annually; and

- \* annually reviewing progress in reducing risk and incidents and, if necessary, making recommendations for improvement for the forthcoming year.



**APPENDIX 1  
SUMMARY FLOWCHART FOR MAKING SURE LONE WORKERS ARE SAFE**

**BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
LONE WORKER'S POLICY**



**APPENDIX 2**

**~~LIST OF LONE WORKER OCCUPATIONS WITHIN BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL~~**

~~Town Clerk~~Chief Executive Officer  
~~Senior Administrative Assistant~~  
~~Administrative Assistants~~  
~~Cleaner~~  
~~Cemetery Gatekeeper~~



**BURNTWOOD TOWN COUNCIL  
MATERNITY POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Burntwood Town Council recognises the need to balance family responsibilities with paid work. We recognise the need for adequate maternity provision to provide pregnant employees with peace of mind and to ensure their and the child's health and welfare during the maternity period. This policy is supported by a raft of similar policies to assist the work/life balance, such as:

- Adoption Leave Policy
- Paternity Leave Policy
- Parental Leave Policy
- Shared Parental Leave Policy

1.2 This policy covers all female employees of Burntwood Town Council.

**2. MATERNITY LEAVE**

2.1 All pregnant employees are entitled to take up to one year's (52 weeks) maternity leave, regardless of length of service. Maternity leave and pay are separate entitlements. Maternity leave is a single continuous period with no gap between and is made up of:

- **Ordinary Maternity Leave** (26 weeks)
- **Additional Maternity Leave** (26 weeks)

2.2 An employee must notify the ~~Town Clerk~~ **Chief Executive Officer** in writing by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before her Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) of the week her baby is expected to be born, stating her intention to take maternity leave and when she wants the maternity leave to start.

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2.3 The employee must attach their **original** Maternity Certificate (MATB1) signed by the midwife to the letter. Without this form, Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) cannot be paid.

2.4 The ~~Town Clerk~~ **Chief Executive Officer** will respond in writing to this notification of leave within 28 days, setting out the day on which the employee is expected to return to work. Unless otherwise notified, the date on which the employee will return to work will normally be the first working day 52 weeks after the maternity leave begins.

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2.5 If an employee wishes to change the start date of her maternity leave she must give 28 days' notification, unless there is a good reason why this is not possible (for example, the baby is born early).

2.6 The earliest date an employee can take her maternity leave will be the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> week before her baby is due.

2.7 Maternity leave is available if:

- The baby is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- The baby is born at any point in the pregnancy but dies later

2.8 If childbirth occurs before the date of notification, the Maternity Leave period will start automatically on the date of the birth of the child (even if this is before the 11<sup>th</sup> week

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MATERNITY POLICY**

before the EWC). In order to preserve her rights to maternity leave and SMP, the employee must as soon as is reasonably practicable give her employer notice in writing of the date of the childbirth and evidence of the date the baby was expected. A MATB1 Certificate from the doctor or midwife can be used as evidence.

**3. COMPULSORY MATERNITY LEAVE**

3.1 No employee may return to work within two (2) weeks of the date of childbirth.

**4. MATERNITY PAY**

4.1 Pregnant employees with over one year's local government service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC plus 26 weeks continuous service with Burntwood Town Council at the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC, plus earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit are entitled to:

- 90% pay (i.e. higher rate SMP) for the first six (6) weeks
- Basic rate SMP for the next 33 weeks
- During weeks 7-18 if employees have provided written notification that they will return to work, they also receive half their normal pay. These will be without deduction unless the combined half pay and SMP exceed full pay in which case the half pay will be reduced accordingly. (This pay will be reclaimed if the employee does not return to work for at least three months.)
- Weeks 40 – 52 inclusive will be unpaid.

4.2 Pregnant employees with less than one year's local government service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC but more than 26 weeks continuous service with Burntwood Town Council at the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC, plus earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit are entitled to:

- 90% pay (i.e. higher rate SMP) for the first six (6) weeks
- Basic rate SMP for the remaining 33 weeks
- Weeks 40 – 52 inclusive will be unpaid

4.3 Pregnant employees with less than 26 weeks Burntwood Town Council service at the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC and earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit may be entitled to:

- 39 weeks Maternity Allowance (length of service insufficient to qualify for SMP)

4.4 Pregnant employees with more than 26 weeks service with Burntwood Town Council but below the national insurance lower earnings limit may be entitled to:

- 39 weeks Maternity Allowance (earnings insufficient to qualify for SMP)