

To: Council
Date: 6th October 2025
Report of: Head of People
Title of Report: Working Overseas Policy and Procedure

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Seeking agreement to implement a new policy and procedure relating to working outside of the United Kingdom.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nigel Chapman, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focused Services and Council Companies
Corporate Priority:	None.
Policy Framework:	None.

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:
1. Approve the implementation of the Working Overseas Policy and Procedure

Information Exempt From Publication	
State in here what information is to be exempt from publication – where it is, attach it as an appendix and name the appendix as you describe It here	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
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Appendix 1	Draft Working Overseas Policy and Procedure	No
Appendix 2	Risk Register	No
Appendix 3	Equality Impact Assessment	No

Introduction and background

1. The process of requesting to work overseas is not currently documented.
2. In recent months the organisation identified a number of employees, workers and members working overseas without having notified ICT or obtaining permission.
3. This poses a high risk to the council in terms of:
 - Data security
 - Tax implications
 - Right to work
 - Employment protections
 - Health and safety
 - Contractual agreements
4. Following the recent cyber incident, all access to council systems outside the UK has been stopped.
5. Access can be granted by ICT, but to mitigate the significant risks this carries, the policy provides a process that should be followed to enable working overseas in a safe and responsible way.

Proposed parameters to working overseas

6. Please note there are no alternatives to the proposed criteria to work overseas given the data security and legal risks.

Who the policy applies to:

7. This policy covers all Oxford City Council employees, workers, members and volunteers. There is a simpler process for members.

What the policy covers:

8. This policy includes any work-related activity conducted on any device whilst overseas (outside of the United Kingdom). It includes but is not limited to the checking and composition of emails, attending meetings, speaking to colleagues or completion of written work.

Parameters to working overseas for employees / contractors

9. Requests to work will be considered on a case-by-case basis and if the following apply:
 - The employee's role can be effectively performed remotely and carried out lawfully from the country in question.

- The employee is not in probation, notice period, performance improvement or disciplinary proceedings.
- The period spent working overseas will not be more than 90 days in a rolling 180-day period.
- A risk assessment (see appendix 1 of the policy document) is completed that sets out the specific risks and mitigations that will be put in place
- The employee has obtained and proven their right to work in the overseas country
- The employee will accept liability for any costs incurred as a result of working overseas including travel, accommodation, insurance and legal compliance
- The employee will accept liability for any costs incurred to the Information Commissioner as stated in Data Protection Law should a data breach occur due to the employee's failure to comply with this policy
- Work related activity will be carried out using only council equipment (no personal devices) with the strict use of a council approved VPN when accessing the council network and any work-relation information, including Microsoft 365.
- The employee will not use council devices for personal use whilst abroad
- Access to the council network will be via a private connection. Connection to public Wi-Fi is not permitted under any circumstances.
- All work will be password protected all work in case equipment is lost or stolen
- The employee will use a strong unique password and two factor authentication.
- Written approval is obtained by the Head of People, Deputy Chief Executive of City and Citizens' Services and Director of Law, Governance and Strategy.
- The council reserves the right to withdraw the agreement at any time, with reasonable notice
- If, for any reason access to work systems, facilities or permissions is revoked or restricted, the employee will need to return to the UK in order to resume duties.

Parameters to working overseas for members

10. Requests to have access to council-related data will be accommodated on the following basis:
 - A risk assessment (see appendix 2 of the policy document) is completed that sets out the specific risks and mitigations that will be put in place.
 - The member will accept liability for any costs incurred to the Information Commissioner as stated in Data Protection Law should a data breach occur due to the member's failure to comply with this policy.
 - Council related activity will be carried out using only council equipment (no personal devices) with the strict use of a council approved VPN when

accessing the council network and any work-relation information, including Microsoft 365.

- The member will not use council devices for personal use whilst abroad.
- Access to the council network will be via a private connection. Connection to public Wi-Fi is not permitted under any circumstances.
- Written agreement is obtained by the DPO (Director of Law, Governance and Strategy) and SIRO (Deputy Chief Executive City and Citizens' Services).

Red flag countries

11. Under no circumstances will any individuals be given access to council systems from any of the listed countries:

- Afghanistan
- Belarus
- China
- Haiti
- Iran
- Lebanon
- Libya
- North Korea
- Russia
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Syria
- United States of America
- Yemen

12. These are countries considered to have 'high-risk conditions' based on information from the UK Foreign Office and the European Commission adequacy decision as to whether a country offers an adequate level of data protection.

Other implications

Consultation and communications

13. This policy has been reviewed and agreed by the Unions and the Council Leadership Team.

14. Upon its agreement we will share employee and member communications to clarify the position on working overseas and set out the procedure that must be followed for any future requests.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications. The policy is clear that any costs associated with working outside of the UK will sit with the individual, not the council.

Legal issues

16. Failure to put mitigations in place before individuals carry out council-related work overseas carry significant legal risk, which are set out in the Policy and Risk Register. This includes legal implications on both the individual if:

- Personal or sensitive data is breached.
- The individual does not have the legal right to work in that country.
- The individual becomes subject to the legal jurisdiction of the overseas country.

Level of risk

17. The risk without a robust policy and procedure in place is significant. As indicated by the Risk Register, putting in place a procedure involving a risk assessment and specific criteria the risks can be sufficiently avoided or reduced.

Equalities impact

18. A copy of the Equalities Impact Assessment is attached in Appendix 3.

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