

HUMAN RESOURCES & COUNCIL TAX COMMITTEE

20 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PARTNERSHIPS)

A.1 REMOTE WORKING POLICY REVIEW

(Prepared by Carol Magnus & Jo Williams-Lota)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update the Human Resources & Council Tax Committee on the review of the Council's Remote Working Policy in line with identified best practice and the Council's Constitution and the delegated powers within.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the review of the Council's Remote Working Policy is principally to reflect changes to working practice within the Council following the adoption of a hybrid way of working. As part of the organisation's Transformation Programme.

The ongoing Transformation Programme has a focus not only on making physical changes to the buildings and offices of the Council. It also has a focus on modernising and enhancing the ways in which staff work. This updated Remote Working Policy reflects the changes that have been made (in part accelerated as a result of Covid) and formalises the practical change in practice that has taken place since the policy was first adopted.

The revised Remote Working Policy (*and accompanying guidance, namely the Modern Working Your Guide*) follows current best practice, CIPD guidance and current legislation and provides both employees and managers with a robust position on working remotely under a hybrid working framework.

The Policy sets out:-

- What is remote working;
- The benefits and costs of remote working;
- Considerations for remote working;
- Guidance on remote working;
- Implications on contracts of employment;
- Health and safety, ICT, other equipment and insurance considerations;
- Confidentiality and security data responsibilities.

The implementation of the revised Remote Working Policy will allow the Council to more effectively and consistently supporting hybrid and remote working practices, with a view to minimising the effect on service delivery and the impact of associated costs to the staffing establishment.

For ease of reading only, the amendments are in *italics*.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that:-

- The Committee notes the ongoing progress of the Transformation programme in enabling greater flexible working;
- The Committee notes the content of the revised Remote Working Policy;
- The Assistant Director (Partnerships) be authorised to update the policy with any future legislative or best practice changes.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

This updated policy will ensure that the organisation continues to observe recognised best practice and employment legislation as a responsible employer.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

No specific risks have been identified. This is a policy refresh and update which is needed to ensure best practice and continued legal compliance. This work sits within existing budgets.

LEGAL

The Council has a duty to ensure its Remote Working Policy is compliant in accordance with employment and other relevant laws and current best practice.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**Remote Working Policy**

The Council's Remote Working Policy has undergone an in-depth review.

The purpose of the review was to incorporate the changes as a result of the Council's flexible adoption of a hybrid way of working. As such, the main changes refer to the fact that employees no longer are required to request and be considered suitable to work remotely. Instead one of the principles outlined in the policy is that it is expected that employees will spend some of their time working in the office and some of their time working at home. However, in the policy the Council acknowledges that everyone's situations are different and the policy is flexible to accommodate those different needs.

The section on 'guidance on remote working' has been expanded to include further information around new employees, managing employees, communication and meeting considerations.

The policy also refers to further guidance that is available to employees namely *Modern Working Your Guide*.

The amended policy and procedure offers a fair and consistent approach to all our employees. It gives clear guidance on what the expectations are of the employee and the manager in relation to working remotely.

CONCLUSIONS

The updated Remote Working Policy will ensure that the Council maintains its high standard of employment practices and has a policy that observes best practice and current employment legislation.

APPENDICES

Remote Working Policy – September 2021