

Personnel Committee

REVISED JOINT HOMEWORKING POLICY

5 JUNE 2013

Report of the Head of Transformation

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the Council policy in relation to the revised Joint Home-working policy

This report is public

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the revised Joint Home-working policy

Executive Summary

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The revised policy is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2 The revised Joint Home-working policy is intended to cover all staff employed at both South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council.
- 1.3 The Joint Home-working policy provides guidance for managers and employees when considering working from home on an ad-hoc or regular basis or mobile working. Regular home-workers or mobile workers are defined as employees who have the Councils' agreement to work remotely (most likely this will be from home but this will not exclusively be the case) as part of their job.

2 Proposals

- 2.1 The original version of this joint policy was approved in February 2012.
- 2.2 The revised joint policy promotes home-working where it adds value to the service efficiency of the organisation.
- 2.3 The policy sets out the circumstances under which an employee may gain approval from their manager to work from home. The policy refers to the following definitions of home-working.

2.4 There are various ways that home-working may operate, ranging from occasionally to regular home-working arrangements that are agreed by a variation to contract or mobile working.

2.4.1 **Occasional home-working**

Taking work home occasionally, on an ad hoc basis, to concentrate on a particular project or task may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- Where a specific task needs dedicated and focused input and/or could be undertaken more efficiently at home.
- Where staff take work home on an ad-hoc basis

Occasional home-working must be agreed with the line manager in advance. Employees will need to complete **Appendix A** and be supplied with appropriate equipment to enable occasional remote working i.e. a Vasco fob.

2.4.2 **Regular contractual home-working**

Working from home for a percentage of time on a regular basis as part of an agreed working pattern. This arrangement will be reflected in the contract of employment. Attendance in the office would be agreed the manager and the employee may also make outside visits. This may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- To facilitate a more flexible working pattern
- The job involves frequent/regular outside visits

2.4.3 **Mobile worker(s)**

Mobile workers may start and end their day from either a specific work/establishment base or their home. They plan their visits to make best use of their time and resources. Some mobile workers will spend most of their day out in the field, visiting sites and/or service users starting their day from the most appropriate location either the work base or at home.

There will be a requirement to “hot desk” on the occasions when they are working in the office. Hot-desking requires employees to work at whichever desk and computer is available rather than at a personal workstation.

- 2.5 The policy also advises on the equipment and materials required by the employee to facilitate working from home in addition to the issues of security and confidentiality and Health and Safety. The procedure also includes at **Appendix A**, a Manager and Employee Checklist which is currently completed to apply for home working and to gain Citrix (remote) access to IT via the Information Services Team. This form needs to be signed by the manager and employee, approved by the Head of Service and then sent to the HR team. **Appendix B** is the Working from Home Workstation Assessment for DSE Workers which is completed by the employee and the Corporate Health and Safety Manager.
- 2.6 Whilst considering if some or all of the employees within a service can home-work, it is recommended that home-working is piloted in the first instance. This will allow the relevant Head of Service or Manager to evaluate the impact and to ensure that any disruption is minimised once the scheme rolls out to the wider service(s).
- 2.7 The proposed policy removes the obligation on the behalf of the employee to complete an application to agree each period of home-working with their manager. Managers have viewed this as an over bureaucratic process.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 The current Joint Home-working Policy is more restrictive and does not promote home-working. There are many benefits to home-working and building a flexible work force. The new policy will fit and integrate more appropriately with both Councils future aims and objectives for a flexible workforce.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.1 The Council has an obligation to ensure its policies and procedures remain up to date in relation to the law and best practice as well as ensuring they meet Council Objectives.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the proposal is believed to be the best way forward:

Option One Approve the revised Joint Home-working Policy.

Option Two Retain the current policy.

Consultations

Trade Union The Trade Union provided feedback which has been incorporated into the revised policy.

Staff Consultation Group The Staff Consultation Group provided feedback which has been incorporated into the revised policy.

Implications

Financial:	<p>There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate System accountant 01295 221559</p>
Legal:	<p>There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.</p> <p>Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning & Litigation 01295 221687</p>
Risk Management:	<p>In adopting the revised policy the Council seeks to further eliminate potential risk to employees and service users</p> <p>Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate System Accountant 01295 221559</p>

Wards Affected

ALL

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Joint Home-working Policy
Background Papers	
N/A	
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