



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 12 MARCH 2014

HOME WORKING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present and seek approval for the Council's proposed Home Working Policy and Guidance.

Background

2. The County Council recognises that flexible working has an important role to play in sustaining and improving service delivery and the need to balance employees work, family life and environmental factors.
3. The Council already has a Flexible Working and Occasional Home Working Policy and Guidance in place.
4. The proposed Policy and Guidance applies to the implementation of more regular or permanent home working arrangements, subject to the needs of the service.
5. Whilst working at home, employees and the Council are subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). The Council must, as far as is reasonably practical, ensure the employee's health, safety and welfare at work.

Key Points

6. A copy of the Policy and Guidance is attached as Appendix A to this paper.
7. The purpose of this Policy and Guidance is to outline the types of roles that would be eligible for home working; setting out responsibilities for both employees and managers, highlighting the practicalities of working at home including any health and safety considerations which may need to be made.
8. The document also sets out the procedure for home working arrangements to be implemented; the process for requesting, approving and dealing with refusals to such requests is outlined.

9. All requests made by employees will receive full consideration by managers. Decisions will however be made as to their appropriateness in accordance with operational requirements, any impact on customer service/other employees and the practicability of the revised working arrangements.
10. In some circumstances such arrangements may be initiated by the manager, ie. due to the nature of the job, as a result of an organisational change action plan or agreed as part of a reasonable adjustment. Where this is the case and the arrangements are likely to be permanent, managers should seek further advice from Strategic HR Services.
11. The proposed work place should be adequate and practical for working in terms of health and safety. Managers should complete a risk assessment in conjunction with the employee. It is also strongly recommended that the manager visits the employee's home especially if the working arrangements are going to be longer term.
12. It is recommended that the agreed working arrangements are reviewed once implemented and therefore an initial trial period of three months should be put into place. Where these are longer term arrangements then an annual review should be agreed.
13. Employees or managers may terminate the home working agreement by giving one month's notice in writing. A shorter period may however be agreed by mutual consent.
14. The Council reserves the right to withdraw or suspend the scheme immediately and at any time should a potential abuse of the scheme be identified.

Implementation

15. This Policy and Guidance document has been fully supported by the trade unions.
16. If endorsed by the Committee, the Policy and Guidance will become effective from 12 March 2014 and made available on CIS for employees and managers to view. An article within the Managers' Digest will also be published to inform Managers about the Policy.
17. The Policy's application will be monitored through on going discussions with Trade Unions, HR Advisors and managers alike.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to approve the Home Working Policy and Guidance for implementation from 12 March 2014.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

None.

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List of Appendices

Appendix – Home Working Policy and Guidance

Equal Opportunities Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken.

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