

# **TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**08 October 2018**

### **Report of the Director of Central Services**

#### **Part 1 – Public**

#### **Delegated**

#### **1 HOMEWORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**The report attached in Annex 1 presents an updated Homeworking Policy for consideration by this Committee.**

##### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 As Members are aware, the Council's Flexible Working and Homeworking Policy currently incorporates guidelines for both managers and staff on the procedure for homeworking. Management Team consider it timely to review the existing homeworking component of this policy in order to more accurately reflect the Council's current arrangements (including opportunities presented by the developing Virtual Desktop Infrastructure), and to create the flexibility to incorporate future homeworking options. A copy of the existing Homeworking Policy is attached as Annex 2.
- 1.1.2 The policy presented in Annex 1 identifies 3 categories of homeworking; Occasional /ad hoc, Regular, and, Permanent/remote. At present all homeworking currently undertaken falls into the category of occasional/ad hoc. However, this situation could change very quickly e.g. in the event of major disruption/delays on the road network. Circumstances could arise, possibly on a temporary basis, in which a number of employees might need to work from home for a significant proportion of their working time in order to maintain service delivery. Fortunately the Council now has the IT infrastructure to support such a situation. So as to ensure that adequate attention is being given to the implications of such "regular" homeworking, (not least of concerning Health and Safety issues), the revised policy sets out updated guidelines for line managers and staff.
- 1.1.3 Currently no employees of the Council work permanently from home or remotely (i.e. visiting sites from their home as a base). However, this situation could change e.g. in the event of changes to the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy, or in the event of an individual requesting a reasonable change of

workplace due to a disability issue. Accordingly, the attached policy incorporates a framework for considering such a contractual employment arrangement (in the table on pages 4 and 5 of the policy), which would be further developed into comprehensive guidelines based on the prevailing legislative framework were such a situation to arise in the future.

## **1.2 Legal Implications**

- 1.2.1 The recommended updated policy is compliant with the Equality Act 2010, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (and associated regulations), The Display Screen Regulations 1992, and the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.

## **1.3 Financial and Value for Money Implications**

- 1.3.1 The Council's existing IT infrastructure, coupled with the roll out of the Virtual Desktop infrastructure can accommodate current and anticipated levels of ad hoc/occasional and regular homeworking within existing budgets.

## **1.4 Risk Assessment**

- 1.4.1 The updates to the existing policy regarding ad hoc/occasional homeworking have been made to respond to current and anticipated future operational needs of the Council and therefore mitigate risk.
- 1.4.2 Part of the consideration for an employee becoming a regular or permanent homeworker would be consultation with the Council's insurer depending on the circumstances of the case.

## **1.5 Equality impact Assessment**

- 1.5.1 The recommendations pertaining to reasonable requests employees with a disability support The Equality Act 2010.

## **1.6 Policy Considerations**

- 1.6.1 The Health & Safety Policy.

## **1.7 Recommendations**

- 1.7.1 This Committee is commended to **RECOMMENDED** to Council the updated Homeworking Policy, as a standalone policy separate from the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure, as set out in annex 1 to this report.

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