



## **Homeworking Policy**

Headley Parish Council, The Employer, is keen to support its employees by agreeing to specific homeworking arrangements where the situation is beneficial to both the Employer's and the Employee's needs. Whilst homeworking is categorised as a type of flexible working, it should not be assumed that all aspects of flexible working are automatically part of a homeworking arrangement. Each employee applying for homeworking will receive an Addendum to their Contract specifying the nature of any homeworking agreement and that it is on a discretionary basis.

The Parish Office remains as the principal and main place of work with agreement to work from home occasionally.

### **Making a request**

Although employees with less than 26 weeks service do not have a statutory right to request flexible working, all employees are eligible to make a request provided they have completed their training and reached a satisfactory standard in their annual or latest performance review.

To make a request for flexible working employees must:

- make their request in writing, addressed to the Chairman of the Parish Council, stating the date the request is made, the change to working conditions they are seeking and the date they would like the change to take effect
- state whether they have made a previous application for flexible work and the date of that application
- what change to working conditions they are seeking and how they think this may affect the business. They should also state how they propose to manage their hours working from home, including the availability of a suitable working space and means of communication.
- if they are making their request in relation to the Equality Act 2010, for example, as a reasonable adjustment for disabled employee.
- complete a Homeworking Self-Assessment Checklist for review with the application.

### **Handling requests to work flexibly**

Once a request has been received the employee should arrange a meeting with the Chairman to discuss the request, this should be done as soon as possible.

This meeting can provide an opportunity to see what changes the employee is asking for and reasons for the change. Any compromise can also be explored at this meeting. The decision as to whether the request is acceptable will be made by the Policy and Finance Committee. The Committee will consider whether the employee has the ability to work without direct supervision, the ability to complete work to deadlines and the self-motivation and discipline of the individual

concerned. In any event, the process must be completed within three months of the request being received, this includes any appeals.

Any request that is accepted will make a permanent change to the employment contract, in the form of an Addendum to Contract, so if the employee wants a temporary change then an agreement may be reached and confirmed by letter.

Headley Parish Council will consider requests in a reasonable manner and will only refuse them if there is a business reason for doing so, this reason must be from the following list:

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- an inability to keep the office open during standard advertised office hours
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- a planned structural change to the workings of the Council.

Headley Parish Council has a duty of care to its employees and should carry out a risk assessment before homeworking can be approved. Review of the completed Homeworking Self-Assessment Form should form part of the approval process and should any concerns be highlighted, these must be resolved before homeworking commences.

NB: The latest ACAS Code of Practice for the handling of requests to work flexibly will be followed should this policy become out of date.

### **Other Important Practicalities**

The Parish Council will provide a suitable laptop that can be transported from the main place of work (Parish Office) and a secure VPN connection to the office. As homeworking remains discretionary and on an occasional basis, it will be the responsibility of the employee to make any changes to their home in terms of availability of a suitable workstation environment. The employee is also expected to pay for their own heating and lighting on the occasions that they work from home.

The employee should be contactable during the hours that they are working from home. The employee will be required to provide the Parish Office and or Chairman with a home phone and or mobile number.

The employee shall obtain, from their home insurer, confirmation of cover should work equipment cause damage to the employee's home. Proof of cover will be required. Work property and any valid claim by a third party will be covered by Headley Parish Council's insurance policy.

The employee should ensure that when out of the office, no third party accesses or uses the work laptop and that all documents, electronic and in paper form, are securely stored and transmitted.

In the event that the employee suffers significant IT breakdowns in the home environment, it will be necessary for the employee to return to the Parish Office to work.