



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Staff Committee  
29 September 2021  
Agenda Item 7

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected:

**Blended Working Policy**

**Report by the Director for Digital Sustainability and Resources**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The report seeks approval of the Adur & Worthing Councils Blended Working Policy.
- 1.2 This policy (if approved) will replace the current Ways of Working Policy.
- 1.3 The aim of the policy is to enable staff to voluntarily work a proportion of their working hours from home, where their role is deemed by their manager as suitable.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Joint Staff Committee is recommended to approve the Blended Working Policy with effect from 1st November 2021.
- 2.2 The Joint Staff Committee is asked to delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources (in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal Services, where relevant) in order to make minor and non-consequential amendments to this policy at any time.

**3. Context**

- 3.1 Working through the Covid -19 pandemic over the last 18 months has meant that a lot of services had to adapt the way that they work in order to enable staff to work from home, where at all possible, under the Government guidelines.

- 3.2 This in turn has enabled the Councils to look at how services can be provided more flexibly in the future and how this allows the workforce to work in a different way.
- 3.3 The Blended Working Policy has close links to the new Staff Travel Policy and the updated Staff Expenses and Reimbursement Policy and Procedure and therefore it was decided that all three should be brought to the Joint Staff Committee together.
- 3.4 The three policies are connected and are there together to enable a flexible working approach for the Councils staff that encourages a healthier work life balance, and enables staff to have a blended working approach, where they can voluntarily work a proportion of their working hours from home, where their role is deemed by their manager as suitable.

#### **4. Issues for consideration**

- 4.1 Whilst the essence of the Blended Working Policy is to enable staff to voluntarily work from home for a proportion of their working hours, every job is different and therefore the Councils are unable to agree that all roles will have this level of flexibility.
- 4.2 If staff do not want to work from home for some of their working hours then they can work at their contractual base.
- 4.3 If there are roles that are deemed to be able to be performed from home for 100% of the time, then these roles will be classed as homeworker roles rather than roles where the postholder can work from home voluntarily for a proportion of their working hours.
- 4.4 The policy also details the requirements for working from home, such as the equipment that will be provided and the security and confidentiality requirements that the staff member needs to ensure are in place.

#### **5. Engagement and Communication**

- 5.1 Unison have been consulted with and they consulted with their members providing them with time to provide any feedback.

5.2 Following that period of consultation Unison formally agreed the policy at the Joint Officer Negotiating Group (JONG) on 4th August 2021.

5.3 Two policy consultation & engagement sessions were delivered in June for all employees. Feedback from these sessions was taken on board, which is reflected in the policy.

5.4 Further staff engagement sessions/information sharing is planned to coincide with the rollout of the policy which might include training or workshops for managers.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no unbudgeted financial implications arising from this proposed policy. Any new equipment or furniture required to support home working will be funded from the AW Workspaces budget.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 This policy is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

7.2 Section 112 Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to appoint staff on such terms and conditions as it considers appropriate.

## **Background Papers**

- Proposed new Adur & Worthing Councils Blended Working Policy available at Appendix 1
- The Blended Working Policy Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and the EIA statistics are available at Appendix 2
- Adur & Worthing Councils Ways of Working Policy available at Appendix 3

## **Officer Contact Details:-**

Heidi Christmas

Head of Human Resources

Worthing Town Hall

Direct Dialling No 01903 221183

Email:[heidi.christmas@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:heidi.christmas@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

The proposed policy will enable the Councils to provide services in a more flexible and efficient way.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

Matter considered and no issues identified

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

The Equality Impact Assessment for this policy and associated statistics are attached as Appendix 2

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

Matter considered and no issues identified.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

The proposal for staff to work from home is on a voluntary basis, so if there are staff members that don't want to work from home for any reason then they can work at their contractual base.

### **3. Environmental**

Staff working from home for a proportion of their working hours may decrease the number of journeys they are making to and from work, which in turn could reduce the amount of CO2 emissions.

### **4. Governance**

DSE Workstation assessments are covered in the policy and the stance is that if a staff member's working environment does not meet the DSE workstation standards they may be unable to work safely from home and then will need to work in the office.