

**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**APPOINTMENTS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023**

**Report of the Interim Director of Organisation, Development & Policy**

**Working Arrangements Policy including amendments to Travel, Leave Schemes and Flexible working policies**

**1. Purpose**

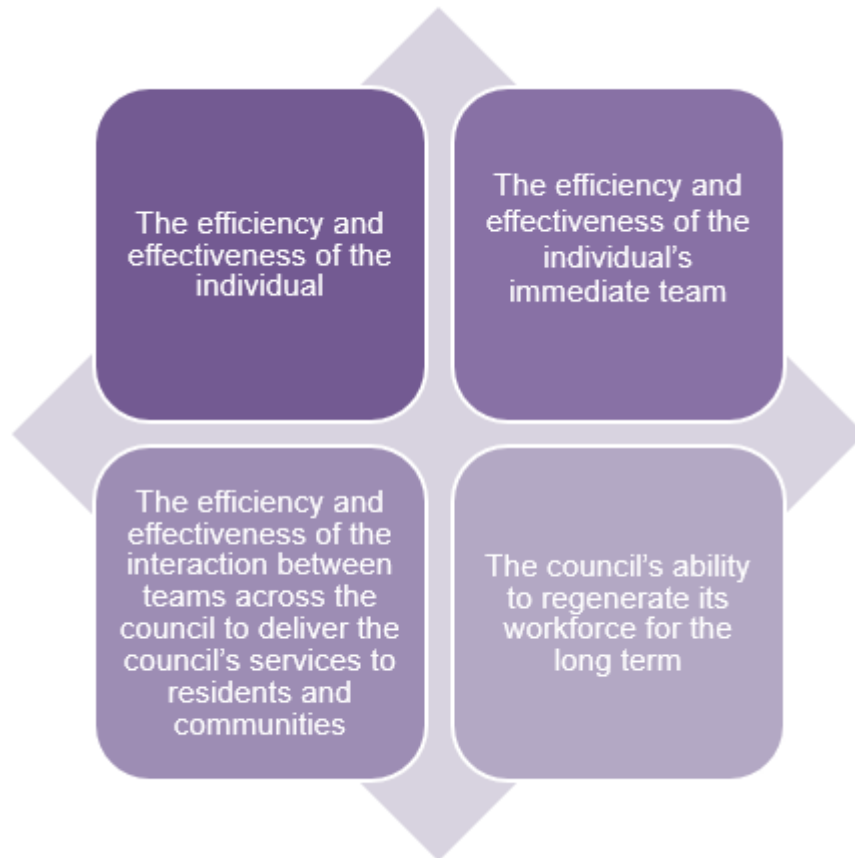
- 1.1 For the Committee to approve the new Working Arrangements Policy for implementation on 1 April 2023 which replaces the existing documents namely 'A guide to flexible working by location' and 'A guide to fixed homeworking'.
- 1.2 For the Committee to approve the updates to the existing Travel Policy (previously called Travel Guide), the Leave Schemes Policy and the Flexible Working Policy amended to align with the new Working Arrangements Policy for implementation on 1 April 2023.

**2. Information and Analysis**

- 2.1 The social, environmental and economic challenges facing the council make it more important than ever that it has an agile, responsive and independent workforce, equipped with the skills, competencies and behaviours for the future.
- 2.2 For some employees the COVID 19 pandemic resulted in significant changes in where and how they work. Whilst the Council had two existing documents namely 'A guide to flexible working by location' and 'A guide to fixed homeworking' these did not sufficiently reflect the council's transition to new ways of working, the future employee profiles

required or nor do they fully align with the principles that underpin the organisation's desired working arrangements.

- 2.3 As such the development of the Working Arrangements Policy commenced and two workstreams were formed, a Joint Trade Union consultation workstream and a Departmental and Divisional Leads Group to seek views across the Council.
- 2.4 Employee preferences on working arrangements hadn't been sought since the employee survey undertaken in July 2020. This was at the height of the pandemic at which point the majority of colleagues were working from home on a permanent basis, this also being a substantial shift from the former working arrangements prior to Covid.
- 2.5 Running in parallel with the discussions outlined above and to enable evidence-based policy decisions to be made, a survey was co-developed with Joint Trade Unions and departmental/divisional leads.
- 2.6 The survey aimed to target feedback from all employees when considering the proposed employee profiles and sought to ensure that all aspects of the policy development were considered. Key demographics were incorporated into the design coupled with ensuring a viewpoint from managers and employees was gained.
- 2.7 Overall the comments from the survey reflected feedback from both discussions with Joint Trade Unions and departmental/divisional leads.
- 2.8 The feedback reinforced the need for a clear framework whilst ensuring that this does not detract from the agility, efficiencies, and effectiveness that our new ways of working have delivered thus far.
- 2.9 The Policy outlines that the Council is committed to enabling its colleagues to be the best they can be, valuing both the benefits that remote working has enabled, whilst remaining committed to in-person interaction. We are a people organisation and as such, interaction should reflect this. The Working Arrangements Policy will enable the right balance between the following four key elements;



2.10 Moving forward as a hybrid working organisation, it is important that we remain focused not only on the immediate benefits to individuals and teams that flexible working can bring, but that we also realise the benefits of cross organisational working and ensure our workforce is fit for the future through a balance of in-person and remote working.

2.11 The Policy outlines the following important guiding principles;

- Our culture and associated working arrangements are built on **mutual trust**.
- Derbyshire County Council will support employees to adopt working arrangements that are **operationally viable** and enable us to **meet business/service needs**.
- The Council recognises the importance of **flexibility**, the need to reduce our **carbon footprint** and the importance of personal **wellbeing** in delivering its services to residents and communities. The Council must also ensure that it is able to continue to develop its workforce over time through the **mutual understanding, experience and resilient connections between people** which come from interaction in person.
- All working arrangements should be **agreed with an employee's line manager**.

- All employees are expected to work from a **safe** and **enabling** space (whether onsite or working remotely) and will have a **defined contractual work location**.
- All employees can access and work from **technology enabled workplaces** across the county, considering the most valuable, effective and efficient method of meeting when needed whilst also considering the development of our colleagues.
- All employees can **reside both within and outside** of Derbyshire (within the UK) but should be **visible and accessible both physically and virtually** to ensure we deliver the **best outcomes** for our residents and communities.

2.12 The policy also establishes our future employee profiles with roles being considered as Fixed-base, Flexible, Field-based and in exceptional circumstances employees may be home-based. The employee profile will align to roles and be determined by the requirements of the role.

2.13 The Working Arrangements Policy is attached at Appendix 2. The Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee are asked to approve the Working Arrangements Policy for implementation on 1 April 2023, which replaces the existing documents namely 'A guide to flexible working by location' and 'A guide to fixed homeworking'.

2.14 In addition to the working arrangements policy there are updates to the following policies and guidance;

2.15 The existing travel guide has been reviewed aligned to the new employee profiles seeking to simplify the rules and enable consistency across the workforce. This is being renamed 'Travel Policy' and is attached at Appendix 3. The key changes to the policy are outlined below;

- Simplification of travel rules for fixed base and flexible employees when travelling to an alternative place of duty from home. Current rules enable employees to claim the lower of Home to Duty to Home or Base to Duty to Base. The proposed rules now require employees to deduct off their usual home to work mileage from journeys being undertaken from home to an alternative place of duty.
- Clarification regarding 'choice vs instruction' for example if an employee chooses to return home during the working day and then subsequently needs to attend their work base or an alternative place of duty this should be in their own time and at their own expense.

- Adjustments are proposed to the excess travel policy amending the calculation to pro rata the travel time by contracted hours as follows;
  - For fixed base employees - It is proposed that if the employee is part time or works compressed hours excess travel time is calculated pro rata based on the number of days the employee attends their base per week.
  - For flexible employees - If the employee is expected to attend their work base less frequently due to hybrid working the payment should be calculated based on the number of days the employee is expected to attend their base per week.
- It is proposed that travel rules for field-based employees remain unchanged aligned to those currently referred to in our terms as 'employees without a fixed base'.

2.16 The existing Leave Scheme and Flexible Working Policy has been subject to minor updates to reflect the employee profiles. The policies have been separated into the 'Leave Scheme Policy' at Appendix 4 and the 'Flexible Working Policy' at Appendix 5.

2.17 To support new working arrangements the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have produced additional guidance and a risk assessment has been developed for flexible and home-based employees for the occasions when they may work from home. All home-based and flexible employees will be required to undertake the risk assessment which will be monitored by managers to ensure completion.

2.18 Providing the policies are approved the implementation phase will commence throughout March 2023 to enable the policies outlined to be implemented from 1 April 2023.

### **3. Consultation**

3.1 The Council has engaged with the Joint Trade Unions through the Working Arrangements Consultation Workstream which has met regularly since September 2022 to help inform and develop the changes to the policies outlined within the report.

3.2 In addition, a survey was issued to all employees, and departments and divisional leads were consulted with through a working group that has also met regularly since September 2022.

### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 An alternative option could be to not adopt the new Working Arrangements Policy. The Council would continue to operate without a clear framework in place and would continue to utilise the two existing documents namely 'A guide to flexible working by location' and 'A guide to fixed homeworking'. However, these policies do not sufficiently reflect the new organisational ways of working, the future employee profiles the organisation requires and nor do they support the principles that underpin future working arrangements. Therefore this is not the recommended approach.
- 4.2 An alternative option could be to not adopt the revisions to the Travel Policy (previously referred to as the Travel Guide). The Council would continue to apply the terms and conditions outlined within the existing Travel Guide. This is not recommended as the existing guidance does not reflect the future employee profiles and it does not reflect the mileage and travel time terms required to fully enable a hybrid approach within the organisation.

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 None.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications  
Appendix 2 – Working Arrangements Policy  
Appendix 3 – Travel Policy  
Appendix 4 – Leave Schemes Policy  
Appendix 5 – Flexible Working Policy  
Appendix 6 – Equality Impact Analysis

## **8. Recommendation(s)**

That the Committee:

- a) Approve the adoption of the Working Arrangements Policy for implementation from 1 April 2023.

- b) Approve the adoption of the revised Travel Policy (previously referred to as the Travel Guide), the Leave Schemes Policy and the Flexible Working Policy for implementation from 1 April 2023.

## **9. Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

- 9.1 The adoption of the Working Arrangements Policy will provide a clear framework for managers enabling them to determine the most effective working arrangements to deliver their service operating model,
- 9.2 The adoption of the revised Travel Policy (previously referred to as the Travel Guide) simplifies mileage and travel time terms and conditions and aligns the travel terms and conditions to the employee profiles.

### **Report Author:**

Pete Buckley  
Head of Reward and Resourcing

### **Contact details:**

[pete.buckley@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:pete.buckley@derbyshire.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 1**

### **Implications**

#### **Financial**

- 1.1 The new Working Arrangements Policy sets out the equipment that will be provided to flexible employees in addition to that provided in Office workspaces, whilst it is evident there is additional costs associated with the provision of this equipment, most employees currently identified as flexible would have received this equipment when home working became necessary during the Pandemic, therefore a large part of this cost will have already been met. The ongoing costs of equipment for newly identified flexible employees and replacement of equipment will be covered by existing budgets.
- 1.2 There are not expected to be any significant financial implications as a result of the updates to the Travel Policy, if there are any increases in travel payable these will be insignificant and covered from existing budgets.
- 1.3 The updates to the Leave Scheme Policy and the Flexible Working Policy are merely aligning the terminology to the employee profiles within the Working Arrangements Policy and therefore no financial implications are likely to arise.

#### **Legal**

- 2.1 The Appointments and Conditions of Service Committee approve corporate employment policies, which form the terms and conditions of council employees, other than minor or technical changes to existing policies.

#### **Human Resources**

- 3.1 The Council has extensively consulted with the joint trade unions on the Working Arrangements Policy and revisions to the Travel Policy as outlined within the report.
- 3.2 Whilst introduction of the Working Arrangements Policy will not amend an employees contractual base it is proposed that employees are written to, to confirm the employee profile which aligns with the role that they undertake and the terms and conditions that apply as result.



- 3.3 Providing the policies are approved the trade union workstream and the department/divisional leads working group will continue be engaged to ensure the policies are implemented effectively.

### **Information Technology**

- 4.1 Information Technology requirements for both office workspaces and for flexible employees are outlined within the Working Arrangements Policy. Equipment that resides at home remains the property of the Council and is only available for personal use as outlined within the ICT Acceptable use policy.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 An equality impact analysis report is attached at Appendix 6.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 This proposal aligns with the people priorities outlined within the Council's People Strategy and in particular to 'Promote diversity and inclusion, enable responsive workforce plans and develop credible reward strategies' by applying pay agreement in a fair and consistent manner.

### **Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)**

- 7.1 To support new working arrangements the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team have produced additional guidance and a risk assessment has been developed for flexible and home-based employees for the occasions when they may work from home. All home-based and flexible employees will be required to undertake the risk assessment which will be monitored by managers to ensure completion.