

## CABINET

10 MAY 2011

### REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

<b>Title:</b> Home-Working Policy		<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Summary:</b> <p>The Human Resources Service is carrying out a review of key employment policies and procedures to bring them in line with the latest employment legislation and best practice.</p> <p>The Home-Working Policy is a new policy and is being introduced as part of the Council's "Modern Ways of Working" programme. The Policy was subject to extensive consultation with managers and trade unions and their comments and feedback were taken into account in the final document, which is attached at Appendix 1.</p> <p>The Home-Working Policy was considered by the Employee Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2010 and recommend to Cabinet for approval.</p> <b>Wards Affected:</b> None		
<b>Recommendation(s)</b> <p>The Cabinet is recommended to agree the Home-Working Policy as set out at Appendix 1.</p>		
<b>Reason(s)</b> <p>To ensure that the Council is compliant with the latest ACAS guidance, employment and equalities legislation and "best practice", as well as help contribute to developing a highly effective, motivated workforce.</p>		
<b>Comments of the Chief Financial Officer</b> <p>The relevant considerations appear at Section 2 of the Report.</p>		
<b>Comments of the Solicitor to the Council</b> <p>The relevant considerations appear at Section 3 of the Report.</p>		
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## **1. Introduction and Proposal**

- 1.1 The Human Resources Services is carrying out a review of key employment policies and procedures, in consultation with managers and trade unions.
- 1.2 The Home-working Policy is a new policy and is being introduced as part of the “Modern Ways of Working” programme, which involves looking at new approaches to how and where employees work. These will support the delivery of excellent services and help employees to manage their work-life balance
- 1.3 The Policy provides a framework and guidance as to when home working may be considered, and the principles that will apply to help to ensure a consistent approach across the Council. The emphasis is on managers planning ahead and reviewing with their employees how work is organised within teams.
- 1.4 The Policy has been equalities impact assessed and there is no adverse impact for any groups of employees; the new arrangements are objective, fair and easier to follow. The application of the Policy will be monitored closely to ensure that it is applied fairly and consistently across the Council and in departments.

## **2. Financial Issues**

- 2.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this proposal.
- 2.2 The new home-working arrangements will create a more flexible workforce which is likely to see increases in work productivity as well as being an aid to recruitment and retention. The potential benefits are likely to include improved sickness absence (by helping employees back into work), reduced accommodation needs and reduced travelling for staff. There may be some initial increased costs with home working arrangements e.g. IT equipment etc and these will need to be funded within existing service budgets.
- 2.3 At this stage it is difficult to assess what the full financial benefits of these new arrangements would be until the scheme has been fully implemented and been in operation for a period of time. Officers will therefore need to monitor the new arrangements and report back accordingly on the quantitative benefits that have arisen.

## **3. Legal Issues**

- 3.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this proposal. However, the report includes a significant move towards home working which necessitates careful attention to risk management and data protection compliance. The draft Home-working Policy addresses issues of such compliance. Members will wish to be satisfied that risks associated with home working have been properly addressed in the policy.

## **4. Other Implications**

- 4.1 **Risk Management** – Employees working from home are required to comply with the Council’s rules with respect to information protection and security; this includes

the purchasing and use of IT equipment and software, as well as e-mail usage and internet access and the storage of electronic/non electronic information etc. Employees will be made aware of their contractual responsibilities in regard to the Data Protection Act and that failure to follow these rules may result in disciplinary action being taken.

- 4.2 **Staffing Issues** – The trade unions (and staff support networks) have been consulted on the proposals and their comments and feedback taken into account in the final document; they will be consulted on the arrangements for communicating and implementing these if agreed.

**Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:**

None

**List of appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Home-working Policy