Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
Working From Home Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out working arrangements and expectations that apply to employees when they work from home, whether occasionally, temporarily or on an agreed regular basis. This policy does not apply to Ash Green Sports Centre employees.

Home working may be approved by the Clerk under delegated arrangements where Council services can be maintained. At least one member of staff must be available at the Parish Office during public opening hours of 9am to 12 noon, Monday to Thursday. Arrangements for the Clerk's own home working remain subject to appropriate Council oversight.

Employees must be contactable during agreed working hours, attend the office or meetings when reasonably required and continue to meet performance and service standards.

The Clerk may review, vary or end an informal home-working arrangement where operational or health and safety needs require. Any contractual or statutory arrangement will be managed in accordance with the employee's terms and the Flexible Working Policy.

Safe Working Environment

Health and safety for employees working from home applies in the same way as it would being based in the Parish Council office. Employees (including the Clerk) must complete and submit a 'Home Working Risk Assessment' to be retained by the Clerk. This assessment should be completed annually or more frequently if there are any changes to arrangements such as new equipment or changes to home-office space. Employees should report concerns promptly, take suitable breaks and ensure that their working arrangements remain safe.

The Council reserves the right to visit employees at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

- Use a suitable chair, work surface and screen arrangement and maintain comfortable posture.
- Keep floors, cables and sockets clear of trip or electrical hazards; report damaged equipment promptly.
- Ensure adequate lighting, ventilation and space and take regular breaks or changes of activity.
- Maintain a working environment suitable for confidential discussions and focused work.

Facilities and Equipment

The council will provide employees with suitable equipment for employees to work from home and will maintain and replace these items when necessary. It is the duty of employees to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, this will need to be discussed with the Clerk.

All equipment provided by the council is for employees to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by employees or their family. All equipment will belong to the council, and employees will be required to return it to us promptly upon leaving the Council's employment.

Potential Conflicts of Interest

During hours of work, the council expects that an employee's work environment will enable them to work effectively and that they are not distracted by domestic matters.
If there is an emergency and an employee need to attend to a non-work matter whilst home-working, then they should notify the Clerk.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All Council records and personal information must be protected against unauthorised access. Employees must use approved systems and secure passwords, prevent other household members from using Council devices, keep hard-copy papers securely stored and ensure that confidential conversations cannot be overheard.
Any loss of equipment, mistaken disclosure or suspected personal data breach must be reported to the Clerk immediately. Where the Clerk is affected, the Chairman should be informed.

Insurance

The Council's Employer's Liability Insurance extends to employees working from home, and any council-owned equipment in their home will also be covered. It is the duty of employees to ensure that any agreement with their landlord or mortgage lender allows them to work from home, and that their house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by working from home.

Lone working and review

Employees working alone at home should observe the applicable provisions of the Council's Lone Working Policy, including agreed contact and emergency arrangements. This policy will be reviewed periodically and sooner if legislation or operational requirements change.

Date of Policy Adoption	Review Cycle	Date of Next Review
April 2023	Biennial	November 2028