

# SOUTHWATER PARISH COUNCIL

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## WORKING FROM HOME POLICY



Reviewed:	n/a
Approved:	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 (F&GP Committee)
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Next Review Date:	February 2028

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Southwater Parish Council (the Council) recognises that working from home can provide flexibility in certain circumstances; however, the preferred working arrangement remains office-based for operational efficiency. Working from home is permitted on a discretionary basis with prior approval from the Executive Officer, in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.2 This policy applies to office-based staff whose duties can be performed remotely. Home working is not an automatic entitlement and is subject to review.
- 1.3 This policy operates in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, which grants the Executive Officer full authority over all staffing and operational matters, including approval and management of home working requests.

## 2. Eligibility and Approval Process

- 2.1 All staff wishing to work from home must seek prior approval from the Executive Officer, who has full discretion to determine operational and staffing arrangements.
- 2.2 Requests must be submitted in writing, stating the reason and expected duration. The Executive Officer will assess each request based on:
  - 2.2.1 Operational requirements.
  - 2.2.2 Workload and team availability.
  - 2.2.3 Office coverage needs.
  - 2.2.4 The suitability of the role for home working.
- 2.3 The Executive Officer may decline requests where it is determined that home working would negatively impact Council operations or service delivery. Decisions made by the Executive Officer are final.

## 3. Expectations and Office Coverage

- 3.1 The Council expects employees to work primarily from the office. Occasional home working may be permitted for office-based staff, subject to operational requirements and approval from the Executive Officer.
- 3.2 The Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that the office remains adequately staffed at all times. Requests for home working will not be approved if they compromise office coverage.
- 3.3 The Executive Officer may work from home at their own discretion, ensuring that office operations are not disrupted.

## 4. Equipment, Costs and Expenses

- 4.1 The Council will provide necessary IT equipment (e.g., laptops) for authorised home working. However, employees are responsible for routine costs such as broadband, heating, insurance, and electricity, unless explicitly agreed otherwise.
- 4.2 Any Council-provided equipment must be used solely for work purposes and must be returned upon termination of the home working arrangement.
- 4.3 Employees are responsible for ensuring that all work-related information remains secure and complies with the Council's Data Protection Policy.

## 5. Security and Confidentiality

Employees must:

- Keep all council documents and information secure.
- Use password protection and ensure devices are locked when unattended.
- Store confidential paperwork securely and dispose of it properly.
- Report any data security breaches to the Executive Officer immediately.

## 6. Health & Safety

6.1 Employees working from home must:

- Follow the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- Ensure their home workspace is safe and free from hazards.
- Complete a Home Working Risk Assessment and return it to the Executive Officer.

6.2 The Council reserves the right to conduct health and safety assessments for home workers, including virtual or in-person inspections, where necessary.

## 7. Termination & Review of Home Working

- 7.1 The Executive Officer may terminate home working arrangements at any time if it is deemed necessary for operational reasons.
- 7.2 Home working arrangements do not constitute a permanent right and will be reviewed periodic.
- 7.3 Employees must be prepared to return to office-based working upon request. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

## 8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

8.2 The Executive Officer will monitor the impact of home working arrangements and make adjustments as needed to ensure the efficient operation of the Council.