

# **BLUNDESTON & FLIXTON PARISH COUNCIL FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY**

## **1. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

1.1 This flexible working policy gives eligible employees an opportunity to request a change to their working pattern.

1.2 Flexible working arrangements take account of employees' preferences, interests and non-work responsibilities whilst also meeting the needs of the council.

1.3 We will deal with flexible working requests in a reasonable manner and within a reasonable time. In any event the time between making a request and notifying you of a final decision (including the outcome of any appeal) will not exceed three months unless we have agreed a longer period with you.

1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY**

2.1 To be eligible to make a flexible working request, you must:

- (a) be an employee;
- (b) have worked for us continuously for at least 26 weeks at the date your request is made; and
- (c) not have made a flexible working request during the last 12 months (even if you withdrew that request).

## **3. WHAT IS A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST?**

3.1 A flexible working request under this policy means a request to do any or all of the following:

- (a) to reduce or vary your working hours;
- (b) to reduce or vary the days you work;
- (c) to work from a different location (for example, from home).

## **4. MAKING A FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST**

4.1 Your flexible working request should be submitted to the Chairman in writing and dated. It should:

- (a) state the date of the application
- (b) state that it is a flexible working request;
- (c) details of how you would like to work flexibly and propose a start date;
- (d) identify the impact the change would have on the business and how that might be dealt with; and
- (e) state whether you have made any previous flexible working requests.

## **5. RESPONDING TO YOUR REQUEST**

5.1 Upon receipt of the request, we will arrange a meeting at a convenient time and place to discuss your request, unless we agree immediately to your request (see point 5.2 below). You may be accompanied at the meeting by a colleague of your choice. They will be entitled to speak and confer privately with you but may not answer questions on your behalf.

5.2 We may decide to grant your request in full without a meeting, in which case we will write to you with our decision.

5.3 Having the right to request a change to your working arrangements does not necessarily mean that your request will be accepted. We will carefully consider your request taking into account the benefits and/or adverse impact on both yourself and the council.

## **6. DECISION**

6.1 We will inform you in writing of our decision as soon as possible after the meeting.

6.2 If your request is accepted, we will write to you with details of the new working arrangements and the date on which they will commence. You will be asked to sign and return a copy of the letter.

6.3 If we cannot immediately accept your request we may require you to undertake a trial period before reaching a final decision on your request.

6.4 Unless otherwise agreed, changes to your terms of employment will be permanent.

6.5 We may reject your request for one or more of the following business reasons:

- (a) the burden of additional costs is unacceptable to the council;
- (b) detrimental effect on the council's ability to deliver for the community;
- (c) inability to re-organise work among existing staff;
- (d) inability to recruit additional staff;
- (e) detrimental impact on quality;
- (f) detrimental impact on performance;
- (g) insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work; or
- (h) planned structural changes to the council.

6.6 We may write to you to propose an alternative, which may require further discussion, or to confirm a compromise reached at the discussion.

6.7 If we are unable to agree to your request, we will write to tell you which of those reasons applies in your case. We will also set out the appeal procedure.

6.8 You must be aware that if your request is approved you do not have a statutory right to make a further request for a period of 12 months, although you may still ask without the statutory right.

## **7. TIMEFRAME FOR DEALING WITH REQUESTS**

7.1 We will do what we can to respond to your request as soon as possible although the law requires the consideration process to be complete within three months of first receiving a request, including any appeal. If the request cannot be dealt with within three months, we may ask to extend the consideration process, provided you agree to the extension.

## **8. APPEAL**

8.1 If we decline your request and you wish to appeal, you must do so, in writing, within 5 days of receiving the letter informing you of the outcome.

8.2 You may appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving our written decision.

8.3 Your appeal must be dated and must set out the grounds on which you are appealing.

8.4 We will hold a meeting with you to discuss your appeal. You may bring a colleague to the meeting.

8.5 We will tell you in writing of our final decision as soon as possible after the appeal meeting, including reasons. There is no further right of appeal.

## **9. DATA PROTECTION**

9.1 When managing a flexible working request, we will process personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which we receive a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible working. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

This policy was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 17 February 2025

Date of next review – February 2026

Reviewed-February 2026

Next Review-February 2027