



Barrowby Parish Council

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Flexible Working Policy

Document control

- **Owner:** Staffing Committee
- **Responsible officer:** Clerk / Proper Officer
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- **Next review due:** January-March 2027 at Staffing for formal adoption at Parish Council May 2027

1. Purpose and status

1.1 Barrowby Parish Council operates on a **flexible and predominantly home-based working model**. This policy sets out how employees may request changes to their working hours, working pattern, availability or working arrangements, and how such requests will be considered fairly, consistently and lawfully.

1.2 The Council recognises that flexible working can support recruitment, retention, wellbeing and effective service delivery.

1.3 This policy applies to statutory flexible working requests and also explains how the Council may consider informal or temporary adjustments.

1.4 This policy is non-contractual and should be read alongside the employee's contract of employment and any other relevant Council policies.

1.5 Where there is any conflict between this policy and the contract of employment, the contract will take precedence.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to employees of the Council.

2.2 Employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from the **first day of employment**.

2.3 Because the Council already works on a flexible and home-based model, requests are likely to relate to:

- a. changes to hours or days of work;
- b. changes to start and finish times;
- c. temporary reductions or adjustments to availability;
- d. changes to working pattern around meetings or council business; or
- e. other practical adjustments to working arrangements.

3. Principles

3.1 The Council will deal with flexible working requests in a **reasonable manner** and in line with current legislation and the ACAS Code of Practice.

3.2 Each request will be considered on its own merits. There is no automatic right to a particular working pattern, but there is a right to have a request considered fairly.

- 3.3** The Council will take a practical approach, recognising that as a small parish council it already depends on flexible working arrangements.
- 3.4** The Council will not subject an employee to detriment for making a request.
- 3.5** The Council will also consider its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including whether a request may also amount to a request for a reasonable adjustment.

4. Statutory requests

- 4.1** An employee may make up to **two statutory flexible working requests in any 12-month period**.
- 4.2** An employee may only have **one live statutory request** at a time.
- 4.3** The Council will normally complete the process, including any appeal, within **2 months** of receiving the request unless an extension is agreed.
- 4.4** The Council will consult with the employee before refusing a statutory request, unless the request is agreed in full.

5. Making a request

- 5.1** A request should be made in writing to:
- a. the Clerk, where the request relates to another employee; or
 - b. the Chair of the Staffing Committee, where the request relates to the Clerk.
- 5.2** The request should include:
- a. the date of the request;
 - b. the change requested;
 - c. the date the employee would like the change to take effect;
 - d. whether the employee is making a statutory flexible working request; and
 - e. whether they have made a previous statutory request in the last 12 months and, if so, when.
- 5.3** The employee may also include any information they wish about how the requested arrangement could work in practice.
- 5.4** The Council may also consider informal requests for temporary or minor adjustments outside the statutory process where appropriate.

6. Considering a request

- 6.1** In considering a request, the Council will focus on whether the proposed arrangement is workable in the context of a small parish council and whether the role can continue to meet the needs of the Council and residents.
- 6.2** Relevant considerations may include:
- a. the need to maintain council services and responsiveness;
 - b. attendance at evening meetings, committee meetings, site visits or events where required;
 - c. the ability to carry out the core duties of the role;
 - d. the impact on workload, deadlines and support arrangements;
 - e. communication and availability;
 - f. confidentiality and data protection; and
 - g. any additional cost or administrative difficulty.
- 6.3** The Council may arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the request, explore how it could work, and consider alternatives if needed.
- 6.4** Where appropriate, the Council may agree:
- a. the request in full;
 - b. the request with modifications;
 - c. a temporary arrangement;

- d. a trial period; or
- e. an alternative arrangement.

7. Grounds for refusing a statutory request

7.1 A statutory request may only be refused for one or more of the lawful business reasons. These are:

- a. the burden of additional costs;
- b. detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- c. inability to reorganise 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 the employee proposes to work; or
- h. planned structural changes.

7.2 If the Council refuses a request, it will explain the reason or reasons clearly in writing.

8. Trial periods and temporary arrangements

8.1 Where the Council is unsure whether an arrangement will work in practice, it may agree a trial period.

8.2 A trial period should normally be confirmed in writing and should state:

- a. the arrangement being trialled;
- b. the start and end date; and
- c. how the arrangement will be reviewed.

8.3 The Council may also agree temporary changes for a defined period where appropriate.

9. Outcome

9.1 The outcome of the request will be confirmed in writing.

9.2 If the request is agreed, the Council will confirm:

- a. the agreed arrangement;
- b. the date it will take effect;
- c. whether it is permanent, temporary or subject to trial; and
- d. any associated changes to hours, availability or duties.

9.3 Where a change is agreed on a permanent basis, the Council will confirm the contractual variation in writing.

10. Appeal

10.1 If a request is refused, the employee may appeal in writing within **5 working days** of receiving the decision.

10.2 The appeal should explain why the employee believes the request should be reconsidered.

10.3 Where practicable, the appeal should be considered by councillors not previously involved in the original decision.

10.4 The appeal outcome will be confirmed in writing and will be final.

11. Homeworking and practical arrangements

11.1 As the Council's roles are already home-based and flexible, this policy does not treat homeworking as exceptional.

11.2 Employees are nevertheless expected to:

- a. maintain appropriate confidentiality;
- b. handle council information securely;
- c. remain contactable during agreed working periods;

- d. attend meetings or site visits where reasonably required; and
- e. work in a safe manner.

11.3 Any agreed flexible working arrangement must continue to support the effective discharge of the Council's functions.

12. Equality and reasonable adjustments

12.1 The Council will apply this policy in a way that is consistent with the Equality Act 2010.

12.2 Where a request is linked to disability or another protected circumstance, the Council will also consider its wider legal obligations, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments where applicable.

13. Records

13.1 The Council will keep an appropriate written record of requests, meetings, decisions and any agreed changes.

13.2 Records will be stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements.

14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

