STANTONBURY PARISH COUNCIL

# Temporary Homeworking During Coronavirus Emergency Policy

**Version 1**

Signed:……G Davison…….. Main Adoption Meeting Date: ……16/12/2020…….
Chairman-Stantonbury Parish Council

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## The Policy

This Homeworking Policy applies only during the present coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency. At this time, it supersedes any other homeworking policy It applies to those who have to work from home during this crisis either because of Government guidance or because the council has made the decision to ask employees to work from home to prevent the spread of infection and safeguard the health and safety of its employees.

The policy is temporary and only applies during the period of the coronavirus crisis. It sets out the main considerations that the council and its employees should consider during this temporary period of homeworking.
(Staff may have already prepared themselves for this eventuality by taking laptops home each night in the event of being asked to work from home).

### A Temporary Homeworking Policy

It must be stressed that this is a temporary policy and only applies during the present coronavirus emergency. It does not set, therefore, any precedents for applications for homeworking under other policies. The council's existing policy on homeworking, which is temporarily suspended, will only apply to staff requests to work from home once the present emergency comes to an end.

### Terms and Conditions

An employee's current terms and conditions as set out in their contract of employment with the council will continue to apply during the coronavirus crisis and this consequent arrangement for the employee to work at home.

### Equipment

The line manager will ensure that homeworkers have the necessary equipment and access to the necessary sites.
Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes at home remains their responsibility and the council is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any personal equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work, the employee should contact their line manager.
All equipment used by the homeworker must be sage and fit for purpose. The employee may be asked, therefore, to complete a display screen equipment (DSE) assessment.

### Keeping in Touch

During this temporary arrangement, the employee's main place of work will be their home. Nevertheless, they will still need to keep in touch with their line manager. The line manager will agree a work schedule with the employee on a daily and weekly basis. It will be up to the employee to manage their time to ensure that the work is completed promptly and satisfactorily. Persistent failure to meet deadlines will result in disciplinary action.
Colleagues may need to contact them for work updates. The employee is expected, therefore, to be available at agreed times.

The employee should ensure that they check regularly for any organisational news  Any problems should be communicated to the line manager immediately.

### Costs of Homeworking

The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the council.  These costs will remain the employee's responsibility.  However, the council will contribute £26 per month towards the added costs for the employee working from home.  This will be paid via the payroll with the employee's salary.

### Data Protection

Employees must always keep the council's data and materials safe and secure, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection policy.

### Other Practical Considerations

Keeping domestic and working life separate is not always easy when working from home and the employee needs to think about how they will manage to persuade those who live with them not to interrupt while they are working.  They also need to ensure that no one else can have access to their computer or work files. Breach of security will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal.
If the employee owns the house through a mortgage, they should check with the lender that there are no issues regarding homeworking.  They should also check with the insurer that any equipment, etc. will be covered by household insurance.  If it is not, then they must inform the council so that proper arrangements can be made.  If the employee does not inform the council, then should thefts occur, the employee may be held personally liable for replacing any stolen or damaged equipment.

### End of the Temporary Arrangements

As has been emphasised throughout this policy, these arrangements for employees working from home are temporary to cover the present coronavirus emergency.  All such arrangements remain at the discretion of the council.
The council will keep employees updated of developments and of the arrangements once the risk of infection has deemed to have passed and, therefore, of the end of this temporary policy, including when employees can return to their work in the office.