WHITEHILL
TOWN COUNCIL
Serving Whitehill & Bordon

HYBRID WORKING POLICY

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 This policy is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to hybrid work from home effectively and safely.

1.2 The policy is intended to assist both managers and employees in implementing hybrid working by highlighting areas for consideration and providing practical advice and information.

1.3 The policy recognises that The Council reserves the right to change your usual place of work on a permanent basis providing one month's notice to you as stated within your contract. There is a hybrid working rota in place which is subject to change at any time by the Town Council and/or the Town Clerk. Hybrid working conditions are not mandatory and the Town Council reserves the right to change or stop the hybrid working conditions giving one month's notice to you.

1.4 This policy should be considered alongside the Staff Handbook and the Lone Working policy.

2. Background

2.1 The Town Council aims to create and provide a modern and efficient ways of working for employees where different attributes can be obtained whilst working in the office and from home. This helps reduce travelling time and cost. Hybrid working started in 2020 with the coronavirus pandemic and has progressed to being part of our working daily practice.

3. General Approach and principles

3.1 WTC has established four generic work styles that will be allocated to all employees, as follows:

- Officers – Town & Deputy Clerk
- Administrative workers
- Finance Officer
- Ground staff

3.2 The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk are permitted to hybrid work two days per week and one day hybrid for the Finance Officer. Due to the nature of the Groundstaff's work they are not permitted to work at home. As the WTC Administrator's roles are part time and required to have face to face contact with members of the public there is no hybrid working for these roles either.

3.3 Hybrid working is subject to ensuring that the Town Council office is always occupied with a staff member(s) to answer the phone and provide a face-to-face service to public enquiries at the hatch.

3.4 Should a staff member wish to not hybrid work because they find that it is easier working from the office, do not have the correct set up of a spare room for equipment and papers, or prefer the office environment working alongside colleagues, then they can inform their line manager who will adjust the rota accordingly. Hybrid working is completely optional, and it is there to enhance your working experience with the Town Council.

3.5 Staff members are provided with a mobile phone, laptop and have access to the Town Council email and online server facilities.
Homeworkers must have a broadband facility and can log onto virtual meetings when required if they are not attending in person.

3.6 This policy highlights the attention that should be given to health and safety whist working from home. Each staff member must complete a Self-Assessment Checklist prior to

commencing any working from home arrangements. This form is as **APPENDIX ONE** which will be reviewed annually unless circumstances change which will prompt a review sooner. DSE form (Display screen equipment workstation checklist) **APPENDIX TWO** and the Staff Handbook should be referred to and all equipment provided must be used in accordance with instructions, safe methods and systems of working and must be returned at the end of employment with the Town Council.

4. Communication

4.1 Employees based at home should receive the same level of information, with the same frequency contact as their office-based colleagues. Contact needs to be two-way, so it is important that open channels of communication are set up and maintained. Regular contact will also allow the line manager to pick up on early warning signs if something is going wrong and offer appropriate support.

4.2 There should be clarity about the times in which an employee working from home should be available for contact and about any requirement for the employee to make regular contact with the office. These should be established and agreed with the Line Manager and communication to the team.

4.3 Any visits to the employee's home must be made by prior arrangement and during agreed working hours.

4.4 External mail should be directed to Town Council offices and not to the employee's home address unless specified by the bank because it's banking logging on information.

5. Performance and support

5.1 Working from home arrangement requires a high degree of trust, together with open and honest communication. The most effective way of managing the performance of the employee working from home is to concentrate on outputs and deliverables. This relies on collaborative working between the employee and the line manager and regular review of performance targets and workload levels.

6. Working hours and patterns

6.1 A rota is produced on a monthly basis which shows who is working in the office and in turn shows who is working from home including extra information like staff annual leave, meetings, overtime and Time taken in leave -TOIL. This includes all staff members except the groundstaff.

7. Confidentiality

7.1 It is the responsibility of the employee and line manager to ensure the confidentiality of all Town Council information whilst the employee is working from home. Consideration should be given to the availability of lockable storage cabinets, or other suitable equipment due to the risk of other members of the household/visitors gaining unauthorised access to confidential information and where possible, this information should remain in the Council office. Reference should be made to the ICT Policy and Data protection policy.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 It is considered that working from home is mutually beneficial and that the costs and benefits working from home will cancel each other out. Consequently, a working from home allowance will not be paid.

9. Insurance Implications

9.1 In general working from home should not give rise to any special difficulties from a risk management or insurance point of view. All staff members are covered by the Town Council Public Liability insurance during employment hours and when driving the Town Council vehicle.

9.2 All staff members should ensure that they hold their own insurance whilst driving to and from work and when driving to locations in working hours on behalf to the Town Council whilst using your own vehicle. Employees own insurance policy is unlikely to be affected by working from home, however employees are advised to consider whether they need to inform their insurers or inform other such as a landlord of the working from home arrangements, within the terms of any agreements as non- disclosure may sometimes invalidate any policy.

10. Tax Implications

10.1 Employees should contact HMRC to discuss claiming any tax relief against energy costs incurred whilst hybrid working.

APPENDIX 1

Home Working Risk Assessment Template

Use the following simple risk assessment to find out how safe your home working space is. Take a look at the risks in the first column and answer 'yes' or 'no' as applicable and then make a note of what needs to be done to reduce or remove risk if necessary.

Date:

Assessor:

Location of Assessment: _____

Risk	Yes / No	Action Required
Desk Area		
Do you have adequate space to work comfortably?		
Is there enough space underneath your desk to stretch your legs?		
Are there trailing electrical cables around your working area that need to be tied up?		
Is your working area warm, well-lit and well ventilated?		
Do you need to a desk lamp to improve lighting?		
Is your working area clutter free so that you can focus easily on the task?		
Display Screen Set-Up		
Is your desk chair set up correctly? Is your lower back supported, are there armrests and are you feet flat on the floor?		
Do you have enough surface space on your desk to work comfortably?		
Are your keyboard and mouse clean and within easy reach, without having to stretch?		
Is your display screen clean and positioned so there is no glare from a window or light?		
Is your display screen level with your eyes so it doesn't cause discomfort to your neck or head?		
Can you easily reach everything that you need without twisting and straining your upper body?		
Fire and Electrical Safety		
Are smoke detectors working and checked regularly e.g. every month?		

Do you regularly dispose of waste, including papers, to prevent a build-up of fire 'fuel'?		
Does any electrical equipment spark or show signs of burns and so needs removing from use?		
Do any wires look damaged or frayed and so need removing from use?		
Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to check for signs of wear and tear?		

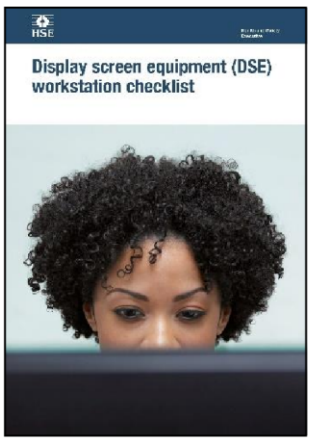
Number of Actions Required:

Do you switch off equipment when not in use?		
Do you have emergency arrangements in place in case of fire?		
Stress and Welfare		
Do you take regular breaks away from your workstation?		
Do you carry out regular stretches at your desk to avoid stiff or sore muscles?		
Do you sit with good posture or are you hunched over the desk?		
Do you have easy access to first aid equipment if required?		
If you regularly use a computer, do you have your eyes tested every year?		
Can you easily reach everything that you need without twisting and straining your upper body?		
Manual Handling		
Are all items that you need for work within easy reach?		
Are heavy items stored on lower shelves to avoid the need for lowering them?		
Do you know how to correctly pick up, carry and lower heavy items?		
Slips, Trips and Falls		
Are floor coverings, such as carpets and rugs, secure?		
Do you frequently carry hot drinks and food upstairs/downstairs and risk tripping?		
Are stairways and corridors clear of trip hazards?		
Is the floor area around your desk clear of boxes, papers and wires?		
Lone Working		
Are you familiar with your employer's lone working health and safety policy?		
Do you know the name and number of a manager or supervisor who you can get in touch with easily?		
Do you have a system for regularly 'checking in' with your employer if you are not visibly online each day?		
Is your home kept secure whilst you're working there?		
Are important files and laptops kept locked away securely when not in use?		

Date Actions Completed:

APPENDIX 2

Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist



This is a web-friendly version of *Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist* published 05/13

Workstation location and number (if applicable): .....

User: .....

Checklist completed by: .....

Any further action needed: Yes/No

Follow-up action completed on: .....

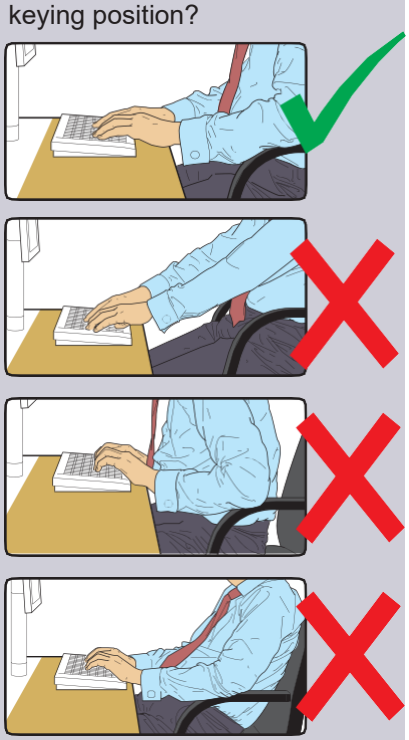
The following checklist can be used to help you complete a risk assessment and comply with the Schedule to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.

The questions and 'Things to consider' in the checklist cover the requirements of the Schedule. If you can answer 'Yes' in the second column against all the questions, having taken account of the 'Things to consider', you are complying. You will not be able to address some of the questions and 'Things to consider', eg on reflections on the screen, or the user's comfort, until the workstation has been installed. These will be covered in the risk assessment you do once the workstation is installed.

Work through the checklist, ticking either the 'Yes' or 'No' column against each risk factor:

- ‘Yes’ answers require no further action.
- ‘No’ answers will require investigation and/or remedial action by the workstation assessor. They should record their decisions in the ‘Action to take’ column. Assessors should check later that actions have been taken and have resolved *the problem.*

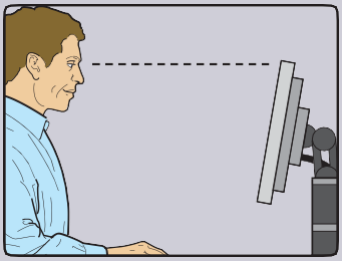
Remember, the checklist only covers the workstation and work environment. You also need to make sure that risks from other aspects of the work are avoided, eg by giving users health and safety training, and providing for breaks or changes of activity. For more advice on these see Working with display screen equipment (DSE): A brief guide.

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
1 Keyboards				
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?			This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (eg where there is a need to use a portable).	
Does the keyboard tilt?			Tilt need not be built in	
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position? 			Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists. Users of thick, raised keyboards may need a wrist rest.	
Does the user have good keyboard technique?			Training can be used to prevent: ■ hands bent up at the wrist; ■ hitting the keys too hard; ■ overstretching the fingers.	
Are the characters clear and readable?			Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read, the keyboard may need modifying or replacing. Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
2 Mouse, trackball etc				
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?			If the user is having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general-purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Alternative devices such as touch screens may be better for some tasks (but can be worse for others).	
Is the device positioned close to the user?  			Most devices are best placed as close as possible, eg right beside the keyboard. Training may be needed to: ■ prevent arm overreaching; ■ encourage users not to leave their hand on the device when it is not being used;	

			■ encourage a relaxed arm and straight wrist.
Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?			Support can be gained from, for example, the desk surface or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help. The user should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device.
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?			See if cleaning is required (eg of mouse ball and rollers). Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.
Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?			Users may need training in how to adjust device settings.

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
3 Display screens				
Are the characters clear and readable? Health and safety Health and safety			Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are available. Check that the text and background colours work well together.	

Is the text size comfortable to read?			Software settings may need adjusting to change text size.	
Is the image stable, ie free of flicker and jitter?			Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker, eg darker background and lighter text. If there are still problems, get the set-up checked, eg by the equipment supplier.	
Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?			For example, intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to small details may require large display screens.	
Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?			Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times.	
Does the screen swivel and tilt? 			Swivel and tilt need not be built in; you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism. However, you may need to replace the screen if: ■ swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory; ■ work is intensive; and/or ■ the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position.	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
Is the screen free from glare and reflections?			Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from. You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of the reflections. Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections.	

Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?			Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones. If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.	
4 Software				
Is the software suitable for the task?			Software should help the user carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly. Check users have had appropriate training in using the software. Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.	
Risk factors	**Tick answer**		**Things to consider**	**Action to take**
	Yes	**No**		
5 Furniture				
Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc? 			Create more room by moving printers, reference materials etc elsewhere. If necessary, consider providing new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved. There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.	

Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?			Rearrange equipment, papers etc to bring frequently used things within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements.	
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?			Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.	
Is the chair suitable? Is the chair stable? Does the chair have a working: ■ seat back height and tilt adjustment? ■ seat height adjustment? ■ castors or glides?			The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
Is the chair adjusted correctly? 			The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. Consider training the user in how to adopt suitable postures while working. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.	

Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?			The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the DSE?			Adjust the chair height to get the user's arms in the right position, and then adjust the DSE height, if necessary.	
Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?			If not, a footrest may be needed.	

Risk factors	Tick answer		Things to consider	Action to take
	Yes	No		
6 Environment				
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?			Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget. Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions. Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard.	
Is the lighting suitable, eg not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?			Users should be able to control light levels, eg by adjusting window blinds or light switches. Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting, eg desk lamps (but make sure lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).	
Does the air feel comfortable?			DSE and other equipment may dry the air. Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help. Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.	

Are levels of heat comfortable?			Can heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can users be moved away from the heat source?		
Are levels of noise comfortable?			Consider moving sources of noise, eg printers, away from the user. If not, consider soundproofing.		

7 Final questions to users...

- Has the checklist covered all the problems they may have working with their DSE?
- Have they experienced any discomfort or other symptoms which they attribute to working with their DSE?
- Has the user been advised of their entitlement to eye and eyesight testing?
- Does the user take regular breaks working away from DSE?

Write down the details of any problems here:

Further information

Working with display screen equipmemt (DSE): A brief guide Leaflet INDG36(rev4) HSE books 2013
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.htm

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WHITEHILL
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Hybrid Working Staff Rota

Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Events/Meetings
As a reminder the hybrid working system and rota is subject to change, needs of the council and any further staffing requirements from the Town Clerk						