

URN: 20-154
Subject: Flexible Working Policy
Report to: Policy & Resources Committee 23 March 2021
Report by: Angela Sallis, HR Advisor (Policy), as requested by Sarah Tate, Head of OD
Date: 01 March 2021

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

The report presents the revised and updated Flexible Working Policy.

Recommendation:

That Committee

1. agree the updated Flexible Working Policy

1. BACKGROUND

The current Right to Request Flexible Working Procedure was reviewed and updated to include additional information and better guidance for employees, managers and HR on how to deal with flexible working requests.

The policy has been reviewed and updated by HR, feedback has been given by Unison and ELT, and was reviewed by JCWG on 2nd November 2020; who advised that there were no member queries and to go straight to P&R.

Once the policy is approved it will be made available to staff via The Loop and training will be given to managers as and when required.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

3. RISK IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Carried out
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Carried out
Existing Council Policies:	Right to Request Flexible Working Procedure
Financial Implications:	NA
Legal Implications (including human rights)	Employment Rights Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, Flexible Working Regulations 2014
Risk Implications:	Considered
Equality Issues/EIA:	Considered
Crime & Disorder:	NA
Every Child Matters:	NA



Flexible Working Policy

Author	Human Resources
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Introduction

The Council believes that its employees are its most valuable asset and is committed to retaining, and attracting, the very best talent.

The Council considers that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity, by helping employees balance their work commitments and home lives along with other priorities.

Employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working, as long as they have not made a flexible working request in the previous 12 months. All such requests received from employees will be seriously considered. In considering such requests, the Council must also consider the needs and demands of the service.

This policy provides information for Heads of Service, managers and employees on the right to request flexible working and the procedure which must be followed, as well as some examples of different ways employees can work flexibly, timescales involved, what Heads of Service will consider in making a decision, the grounds on which an application may be refused and the appeal process.

Where flexible working can be agreed, it should support employees, increase staff motivation, increase the rate of retention of staff, reduce absence, attract new talent, promote work-life balance and reduce employee stress. In doing so, this will improve the Council's efficiency, productivity and service for all.

Whichever way our employees work, we expect them to perform their duties in accordance with their contractual obligations, their job description, any agreements and GYBC Agreed Behaviours: Effective communication, Working together, Taking personal responsibility, Putting Great Yarmouth First, People focused and Embracing change. Our Agreed Behaviours confirm the way we will behave at work (including homeworking), what behaviour is supportive, appropriate and welcome and what is not, and forms part of the Performance Development Review (PDR) / performance management process. For more information: <https://the-loop.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/review-my-performance/agreed-behaviours-framework>.

1.0 The business need

- 1.1 Although the Council is committed to providing the widest possible range of working patterns for its workforce, Heads of Service and employees need to be realistic and recognise that the full range of flexible working options will not be appropriate for all jobs across all areas of the Council.
- 1.2 When a request for flexible working is received, the Head of Service will need to take into account the timescales involved in managing the employee's request (see 5.0) and criteria to be considered including, but not limited to, the following:
 - the cost of the proposed arrangement,
 - the effect of the proposed arrangement on other employees
 - the effect of the proposed arrangement on customers / service and ability to meet customer demand
 - impact on quality
 - impact on performance

- the level of supervision that the post-holder requires
- the structure of the department and staff resources
- other issues specific to the individual's department
- an analysis of the tasks specific to the role, including their frequency and duration
- an analysis of the workload of the role
- any planned structural changes

2.0 Eligibility to make a statutory request for flexible working

- 2.1 In order to be eligible to make a statutory request for flexible working employees must have 26 weeks' continuous service and must not have made a request for flexible working within the 12 months previous to the date of their request.
- 2.2 An employee is entitled to additional requests if they relate to a statutory entitlement, for example, the Equality Act 2010 and the right to request reasonable adjustments.
- 2.3 Employees in all areas and levels of the Council will be considered for flexible working regardless of their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, or gender reassignment.

3.0 Scope of a request

- 3.1 Eligible employees who make a request for flexible working can make a request for one of, or a combination of, the following, for example:
- job sharing - where a job is split/shared between (usually) two people. Each person in the job share receives the pay and benefits of the job, pro rata to the hours they work.
 - part time working - working less than 37 hours per week
 - annualised hours - where an employee's hours are expressed as a total number of hours to be worked during the year. The hours worked are likely to fluctuate from week to week and from month to month and will depend on business needs; they should be monitored to ensure the yearly allocation is met.
 - compressed hours - when full-time hours are condensed into a shorter week, e.g. working full-time hours in four days, or a nine-day fortnight.
 - term-time working - this type of working reflects school term-times; there may also be a requirement to work additional weeks which fall outside term-time (e.g. term time plus one or two weeks).
 - working from home (homeworking) – where the employees' home is their work base for all or some of their contracted hours. Heads of Service and employees should also refer to the Council's Homeworking Guidance if requesting homeworking. Homeworking is not to be confused with employees who may occasionally work from home, by agreement.
 - phased / flexible retirement – it may be possible for employees to take their benefits from their workplace pension or open their pension pot while still working, depending on the rules of their pension scheme(s); employees should consider the future impact of any early retirement pension income and tax on earned income. Flexible retirement requests we need to go to ELT for consideration/authorisation due to the financial implications where there is a pension strain cost.

- 3.2 Employees can request that the change is for:
- all working days
 - specific days or shifts only
 - specific weeks only, for example during school term time
 - a limited time, for example for 6 months only
- 3.3 Once a flexible working request has been agreed it will form a permanent change to the employee's contract, unless agreed otherwise, and cannot be changed without further agreement between the employer and employee. The Head of Service and employee can agree that the arrangements are temporary, and in all cases will be subject to a trial period to ensure, as far as possible, that the arrangement works for both parties.
- 3.4 A proposed flexible working agreement may be subject to a trial period, to allow both the Council and the employee an opportunity to review how the arrangements work in practice, and whether or not they are likely to create any practical difficulties for the employee's department or for the Council as a whole. See 7.0 for further information.

4.0 Timescales

- 4.1 Employees are requested to submit their application in good time, at least 3 months before the date they wish to commence flexible working, to allow for due consideration to be given to their request and to allow for the full process to take place, if required.
- 4.2 Whilst the time for the different stages of the flexible working process is not specified in terms of the number of days, the general principle must be that employees and the Head of Service respond to all stages as soon as possible. The law requires that all requests, including any appeals, must be considered and decided on within a period of three months from first receipt, unless it is agreed with the employee to extend this period.
- 4.3 As soon as possible after receiving the request, the Head of Service should consider the request and arrange and hold a meeting with the employee.
- 4.4 As soon as possible after the meeting the Head of Service should notify the decision to the employee verbally and follow it up in writing to the employee and HR.
- 4.5 Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their flexible working request should submit an appeal in writing to HR, setting out the grounds of their appeal, as soon as possible after they have received the decision.
- 4.6 HR will arrange an appeal meeting as soon as possible following receipt of the employee's appeal, which will be heard by a member(s) of ELT.
- 4.7 The employee will be informed of the outcome of their appeal in writing, as soon as possible after the appeal meeting.
- 4.8 The above time limits may be extended where the employee and Council are in agreement. For example, the Head of Service and employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

5.0 Guidance for employees on applying for flexible working

- 5.1 Employees who wish to submit an application for flexible working are requested to do so in good time (see 4.2 above) to their Head of Service, which must:
- be in writing (see Appendix A) and state that it is an application for flexible working under the statutory right to make a request
 - state whether they have made a previous application for flexible working and, if so, when
 - state the change(s) that they are seeking to their terms and conditions
 - state the date on which they would like to start flexible working
 - explain the effect they think the change will have on the Council and their colleagues, and how they could be dealt with
 - state if the request relates to something covered by the Equality Act 2010, for example to make a 'reasonable adjustment' for a disability the employee has
 - be signed and dated
- 5.2 Employees should also include in their application any benefits that the requested change could have, for example, cost savings, and/or any benefits to colleagues, for example, a colleague who also wishes to job share.
- 5.3 Upon receiving the application a meeting will be arranged to talk to the employee about their request. The meeting will be attended by HR. Employees can be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative, if they wish to. At the meeting the Head of Service will discuss the request and the reasons the employee wants the change, how any problems with making the change might be dealt with and any other options the employee might wish them to consider if the change is not possible. In some cases, a further meeting(s) may be required or further information requested.
- 5.4 The Head of Service will inform the employee of their decision as soon as possible after the meeting. The decision will be confirmed in writing by HR.
- 5.5 If the request is turned down, HR will write to the employee and include the business reason, as set out in legislation, for this (see 8.2) and details of appeal, should the employee wish to do so (see 9.0).
- 5.5 If the request is approved, HR will confirm the change(s) in writing as soon as possible after the decision has been made, including the agreed change, when the change will start, how long the change will last, if for a fixed time, a review date to see how the change is working and how it affects the terms of the employment contract i.e. whether it is a temporary or permanent change.

6.0 Guidance for Head of Service on responding to an application

- 6.1 Flexible working applications must be considered, and decided on, according to 4.2 *and as soon as possible*. The whole process must be concluded within 3 months. Note that this time limit includes any appeals, which will be heard by a member(s) of ELT.

- 6.2 When a request is received, the Head of Service should contact HR as soon as possible and arrange a meeting with the employee to find out more about the proposed working arrangements and how it could benefit the employee and the Council. The meeting should be held at a time and place which is convenient to both the Head of Service and the employee; the employee should be informed that they can be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Representative if they wish. HR may also attend the meeting(s).
- 6.3 Following the meeting, the Head of Service should give due consideration to the employee's request, including referring to Appendix B. If a further meeting or additional information is required before a decision can be made, this should be carried out as soon as possible. The Head of Service should discuss the application with the appropriate line manager and HR and consider the potential benefits to the employee and to the Council against any adverse impact of implementing the changes, referring to other policies as required i.e. the Homeworking Policy. Each application will be considered on its own merits; where a similar application has been agreed previously, this does not mean that other similar applications can be approved.

The request may be granted in full, in part, or refused. The Head of Service may propose a modified version of the request or ask the employee to offer alternatives, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period, before making a permanent change to terms and conditions.

A Head of Service should not reject out of hand a request that does not contain the required information. They should explain to the employee what additional or amended information they need to provide and ask the employee to resubmit the request.

- 6.4 The Head of Service will inform the employee of their decision as soon as possible after the meeting. HR will confirm the decision in writing.
- 6.5 If the request is turned down, HR will write to the employee and include the business reason, as set out in legislation, for this (see 8.2) and details of appeal (see 9.0). as soon as possible after the decision has been made.
- 6.6 If the request is approved, HR will write to the employee and provide written confirmation of any variation to the employees terms and conditions, including details of the agreed arrangements, the date they will commence, how long the change will last if temporary/for a fixed time, whether it is temporary or permanent and include a review date to see how the revised arrangements are working, as soon as possible after the decision has been made.

7.0 Trialling new working arrangements

- 7.1 The Head of Service and employee may agree to try a flexible working pattern on a trial basis. If this is the case, the duration of the trial period will allow sufficient time to trial the new working practices and will be clearly set out in writing. The Head of Service, in conjunction with the employees Line Manager, should review the arrangements regularly throughout the trial period and reach a conclusion as to whether the arrangement should become a permanent contractual change before the trial period ends.
- 7.2 Where a trial period is offered, and unless the trial period will be completed within the three month decision period, the Head of Service should agree with the employee to extend the

three-month time frame for considering flexible working requests, to allow for the trial to take place and this should be confirmed in writing. In any event, the trial period should be a maximum of 6 months.

- 7.2 The new working pattern will be documented making clear that it is only a temporary variation to the terms of the employee's contract, stating the start and end date of the trial period, with the Council reserving the right to cut it short or lengthen it as necessary and the changes that have been agreed. The Council reserves the right, at the end of the agreed trial period, to require the employee to revert to their previous working arrangement. The agreement should be signed by both parties.

8.0 Refusal of an application

- 8.1 Where the Head of Service's decision is to refuse the application, the employee will be informed in writing which will state which of the specified grounds for refusal are considered to apply and contain an explanation of why this ground applies.
- 8.2 The specified grounds on which an application may be refused, may be on one or more of the following statutory grounds:
- a burden of additional cost on the Council
 - a detrimental effect on the Council's ability to meet customer demand
 - an inability to re-organise work among existing staff
 - an inability to recruit additional staff
 - a detrimental effect on quality
 - a detrimental effect on performance
 - insufficient levels of work during the periods of proposed work
 - a planned structural change.
- 8.3 The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not agreed or is agreed in part, or if it is not agreed following a trial period.

9.0 Procedure for handling an appeal

- 9.1 An employee may appeal against the decision to refuse an application for flexible working and should do so as soon as possible after they receive the decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal and why they feel the decision should be looked at again (for example new information) and sent to HR.
- 9.2 HR will arrange a meeting as soon as possible after receiving notice of appeal. The meeting will be held at a time and place which is convenient to the employee and the member(s) of ELT, who will consider the employee's appeal. An employee can be accompanied by a work colleague or Trade Union Representative. HR will also attend the meeting.
- 9.3 At the meeting the employee should explain why they feel the decision was wrong or unfair and share any information that was missed or not available when the original decision was made.

- 9.4 As soon as possible after the date of the appeal discussion, ELT will give the employee written notice of the appeal decision.
- 9.5 Where the member of ELT upholds the appeal, HR will write to the employee and specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect.
- 9.6 Where the decision is to dismiss the appeal, HR will write to the employee and state the grounds for the decision and an explanation as to why those grounds apply. The notice will also state that there is no further right of appeal.
- 9.7 An application for flexible working will be concluded within 3 months of the date of the application, unless an extension of time is mutually agreed.
- 9.8 The appeal decision will be the final stage of the Flexible Working Request procedure.
- 9.9 If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should contact the HR department.

10.0 Withdrawal of an application by the employee

- 10.1 An employee can withdraw their application at any stage before agreement. The employee should write to the Head of Service stating they wish to withdraw their application.
- 10.2 Where the employee fails to attend a meeting or appeal meeting on more than one occasion or they refuse to provide reasonable information to allow their application to progress, without reasonable excuse, the Council will treat the application as withdrawn. HR will confirm the withdrawal of the application to the employee in writing.

11.0 About this policy

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of management in consultation with UNISON.

Appendix A Application for Flexible Working - to be completed by employee

To be eligible to make a request for flexible working, you must have 26 weeks' continuous service with Great Yarmouth Borough Council. If you are uncertain as to whether or not you are eligible to make a request, please contact the HR department. Before making a request please be aware that only one request can be made in every 12-month period.

Once you have submitted a valid application for flexible working, your Head of Service will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss the request, which should take place as soon as practicable following the application being submitted. If it is granted, it will mean a permanent change to the terms and conditions of your employment, unless agreed otherwise.

It will help your Head of Service to deal with your application if you provide as much information as you can about your desired working pattern and the effects that you think the changes you are requesting will have on Great Yarmouth Borough Council and your colleagues.

Your name:			
Department:			
Date you commenced employment with Great Yarmouth Borough Council:			
Date form submitted to Head of Service:			
Have you submitted a previous request for flexible working? (If yes, please answer the next question)	Yes	No	
When did you submit your last request for flexible working?			
Are you a disabled person whose request for flexible working is related to your disability? Please provide further information below:	Yes	No	
<p>I wish to submit a statutory request for flexible working as detailed below:</p> <p>Please set out below what you work now, i.e. in hours and days, and the changes and pattern of working that you are requesting. For example, time of work (i.e. requesting a change to start or finish times); place of work (i.e. requesting to work at a different branch, or work from home); or hours of work (i.e. requesting a reduction in working hours) and whether your request is for a temporary or permanent change.</p>			

Current working arrangement

Hours currently worked:

Days currently worked:

Place of work:

Change(s) you are requesting:

Hours:

Days:

Place of work:

Other:

The date you would like the above change(s) to your working pattern to take effect. You should plan early and allow time for your request to be considered and responded to; at least 3 months from the date of your application

Whether your request is for a limited time or a permanent change to your terms and conditions: Where your request is for a temporary change, please state how long.

Please state what effect you think the changes you are requesting will have on your ability to perform your role, on the Council's ability to run its business, on your department and your colleagues etc.

Please state how you think any such effects might be dealt with.

Signed:		Dated:	
For office use only: Appendix A part 1 Note for Heads of Service: An application for flexible working will be concluded within 3 months of the date of the application, unless an extension of time is mutually agreed, including where a trial period has been agreed. Please attach a copy of all correspondence to this form before submitting to HR.			
Date form received by Head of Service:	Date received: <i>This date is the start of the 3-month period for completion of the process. Inform HR ASAP and arrange meeting.</i>		
Date meeting arranged for:	Date meeting arranged for: <i>This should be as soon as possible after receiving the application. Meeting to include HR Advisor. Employee may wish to be accompanied – refer to policy.</i>		
Date meeting held:	Date meeting held: Consider trial period of up to 6 months, by agreement. If longer than 3 months agree this with the employee. Confirm you have referred to Appendix B checklist: If considering rejecting the application, confirm you have referred to the statutory grounds for refusal in 8.2:		

Date decision verbally confirmed to employee by Head of Service:	<div>Date:</div>
If agreed, date amended terms and conditions issued by HR:	<div>Date amended terms issued by HR:</div> <div>Date signed terms received by HR:</div>
If rejected, date of outcome issued by HR:	<div>Date letter of outcome issued:</div>
If an appeal is received, date of receipt.	
Date of appeal hearing	
Date decision confirmed to employee:	
If decision is to agree to flexible working, date amended terms and conditions issued by HR, stating whether it is a temporary or permanent change and whether it is subject to a trial period:	<div>Date received:</div>
If decision is to reject appeal, date of outcome issued by HR:	
	This is the end of the process and unless mutually agreed i.e. to allow for a trial period or due to other circumstances, must not take longer than 3 months to complete.

Appendix A part 2 Decision sheet for request for flexible working – for Head of Service to complete in conjunction with HR Advisor

Employee's name:

Job title:

Head of Service:

Line Manager:

HR Advisor:

Date application received

Date arranged for meeting with HR and employee

Date meeting held with employee

Decision

NB: If a request is refused under the council's Flexible Working Policy / scheme the Head of Service must indicate the reason for refusal and confirm that they have consulted with their HR Advisor / the HR team prior to the decision being made (continue on separate page if necessary).

Refusal should only be for one of the following reasons for statutory requests:

- burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- detrimental impact on quality and/or performance
- not enough work will be done during the hours the employee proposes to work
- planned structural changes

Please detail reasons for refusal

Date written notification of decision sent to employee

Date copy of decision sheet attached to employee's personal file

Date copy of decision sheet sent to HR team

Appendix B Checklist for Head of Service when considering flexible working requests

Flexible working can be beneficial to employees, allowing them to create a strong work life balance that can assist with personal commitments such as caring responsibilities.

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working hours after they have completed 26 weeks of service, unless they have made a previous request in the last 12 months. These types of requests can include a change to hours, days worked, or to work from home, for example.

Heads of Service are encouraged to carefully consider flexible working requests and consider how it will benefit the employee and Council, and the effect on the work, the service, colleagues etc. and should only decline a request where there is a sound business reason for their refusal, on one of the statutory grounds. Before making any decisions, Heads of Service should discuss and consider the application with HR, including:

- ☐ Has the employee completed 26 weeks of service?
- ☐ Has the employee made a request for flexible working within the last 12 months, other than their current request? If they have, you are under no statutory obligation to consider this request but may consider the request informally, as a temporary measure, but not under this policy
- ☐ How would these amended working arrangements assist the employee?
- ☐ Has the employee's personal situation caused them to miss days of work?
Would this new arrangement help to prevent this?
- ☐ Is there enough work for the employee to do during the periods they wish to work, or could tasks be redistributed so that they do have work?
- ☐ Would the employee be able to finish all of their tasks with their new hours/working arrangements, or would it require some of their work to be redistributed to other members of the team?
- ☐ Consider what the effect will be on performance and output
- ☐ Would the employee be required to attend team meetings that are outside of the hours / working arrangements they wish to work?
Can you make arrangements for them to attend or be included within team meetings?
- ☐ Could the employee miss out on any training or development opportunities through the new working arrangement?
If so, are there any arrangements you could make to enable them to benefit from this, such as online training sessions?
- ☐ If accepted, would the Council be able to continue to meet customer needs and required service level?
- ☐ If accepted, would there be any additional cost to the business – i.e. if the employee was to work from home, would they need to be provided with computer hardware or software? (In terms of reasonable adjustments, speak to HR about Access to Work)
- ☐ If accepted, would you need to recruit an additional member of staff to cover periods where the employee would not be present? If this is required, no flexible working request should

be approved until ELT have approved the recruitment and the recruitment process has been concluded. In these circumstances you will need to discuss this with the employee and mutually extend the 3-month timescales for responding to an employee's request.

☐ If the hours are not acceptable / cannot be accommodated, are there alternative suggestions from the employee?

☐ Could an alternative arrangement be reached, such as job-sharing with another employee?

For Head of Service to complete before sending to HR:

Employee's name: _____

Date employee's application received: _____

Date passed to HR: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Decision made: **Approved / Approved with agreed amendments**

OR

Not approved

Reason for decision: _____

If not approved, state the reason(s), which must be one or more of the statutory reasons:

If approved, what are the changes to the employee's terms and conditions?

Date employee informed of decision: _____

Signed:

Dated:

Head of Service to inform Line Manager of outcome

THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED FORM MUST BE PASSED TO HR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER COMPLETION.

Appendix C Example of a response to request for flexible working – accepting request

[Insert name]

[Insert address]

[Insert date]

Dear *[insert name]*,

Re: Your request for flexible working

I am writing to inform you of the decision that has been reached following your request for flexible working and our subsequent meeting to discuss the request on *[insert date]*.

The proposed changes to your working pattern were *[insert details of flexible working request]*.

I am pleased to inform you that your request has been granted.

[Select from the paragraphs below and delete as appropriate]

Accordingly, I can confirm that as from *[insert date]* your terms and conditions of employment will change as follows:

Your hours of work from *[insert date]* will be *[insert hours and days of work]*. This represents a working week of *[insert hours]* hours. This change means that your salary and other entitlements will now be as follows: *[insert details of changes to terms]*.

[OR]

You will work *[insert number]* hours out of your total working week at home, instead of at the Council premises. The actual hours worked at your home and on the Council premises each week will be agreed with your manager on a flexible basis.

[Select from the paragraphs below and delete as appropriate]

These mutually agreed changes will represent a permanent variation to your contract of employment.

[OR]

These mutually agreed changes will represent a temporary variation to your contract of employment until *[insert date]*. From *[insert date]*, it was mutually agreed that you will revert back to the terms and conditions of employment that were in existence prior to your request.

[Select from the paragraphs below and delete as appropriate]

Please sign the attached copy of this letter to signify your acceptance of the changes outlined above. Please return this to *[insert name]* by *[insert date]*.

[OR]

A separate statement reflecting the above agreed terms will be issued as an addendum to your employment contract dated *[insert date]*.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name]

[Insert job title]

Appendix D Example of a response to request for flexible working – declining a request

[Insert name]

[Insert address]

[Insert date]

Dear *[insert name]*,

Re: Your request for flexible working

I am writing to inform you of the decision that has been reached following your request for flexible working and our subsequent meeting to discuss the request on *[insert date]*.

The proposed changes to your working pattern were *[insert details of flexible working request]*.

I have given your request careful consideration and, unfortunately, I regret to inform you that we are unable to agree to your request. I realise that you will be disappointed by my decision and I have set out my reasons for declining your request below.

[Select from the paragraphs below and delete as appropriate]

You requested a reduction in your working hours from *[insert number of original hours]* to *[insert number of requested hours]*.

[OR]

You requested a change to the pattern of your working hours as follows: *[insert details of request]*.

[OR]

You requested a change to your place of work as follows: *[insert details of request]*.

Unfortunately, on consideration, I feel that agreeing to this request would: *[Select from the paragraphs below and delete as appropriate]*

- impose an unreasonable burden of additional costs on the Council *because [insert details of additional costs and explain why they would be incurred]*; and/or
- have a detrimental effect on the Council's ability to meet client/customer demands because *[insert details]*; and/or
- have a detrimental impact on the quality of service delivered by the Council because *[insert details]*; and/or
- have a detrimental impact on the Council's performance because *[insert details]*; and/or
- create unacceptable difficulties for the Council as we have been unable to make arrangements to reorganise work among existing staff *[insert details]*; and/or
- create unacceptable difficulties for the Council as we have been unable to recruit additional staff because *[insert reasons]*; and/or
- create unacceptable difficulties for the Council because of an insufficiency of work during the periods you proposed to work because *[insert reasons]*; and/or

- be inappropriate due to planned structural changes within the Council because *[insert details]*.

You may appeal against my decision to refuse your request for flexible working. Should you wish to do so, please set out your appeal in writing to the Human Resources Department as soon as possible setting out your grounds for appeal.

If you have any questions about the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert name]

[Insert job title]