

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**For Approval**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the Authority's Flexible Working Policy attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To approve the Authority's Flexible Working Policy attached as Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 In light of statutory changes to the Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023 which came into effect 6 April 2024, we have reviewed our existing arrangements in relation to Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

3.2 Specially, the legislation now states:

- Employees are entitled to request flexible working arrangements from the first day of their employment rather than after 26 weeks. This includes requests for part-time, term-time, flexitime, compressed hours, and varied working locations
- Before rejecting any request for flexible working arrangements, employers must explain the reasons behind their decision. Previously, employers could deny any request for flexible working without explanation. (Note: This will not require a policy change for the Brigade as a full rationale for any decision on a flexible working request is always provided and written into our procedure/ associated paperwork clearly)
- Employers must respond to flexible working requests within two months, compared to three months previously.
- Employees can make two statutory requests for flexible working in any 12-month period, as opposed to one request previously

4. FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 4.1 The revised Flexible Working Policy and Procedure is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Section 1 sets out the scope of the policy which has been amended to signpost other relevant policies and procedures.
- 4.3 The Authority's role is presented at Section 2 (page 4).
- 4.4 Communications to employees regarding the changes to the Flexible Working policy and procedure will be communicated via the usual routes which include Comms Forum and publication on the Key Document Framework located on 'The Bridge'.
- 4.5 The Fire Brigade's Union and UNISON have been consulted on this Policy and Procedure and to date no issues have been raised.
- 4.6 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the implementation of this and no issues have been identified that would negatively impact any protected characteristic group.

IAN HAYTON
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

KAREN WINTER
ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER
STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RESOURCES