

THRAPSTON TOWN COUNCIL

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FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

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1. It is the Council's view that the promotion of flexible working arrangements increases staff motivation, performance and productivity, reduces stress and encourages staff retention by enabling employees to balance their work life with their other priorities.
2. **The statutory right**
Employees have a statutory right to request to work flexibly and to have their flexible working application dealt with in a reasonable manner. In order to make a request under the statutory right, you must have worked for the Council for a continuous period of 26 weeks at the date of application. You must also not have made another request to work flexibly under the statutory right during the previous twelve months.
3. **Flexible working generally**
You may wish to apply for flexible working to accommodate caring arrangements, charity work, leisure activities, external study or indeed for any other purpose. All employees are eligible to apply for flexible working regardless of their seniority, current working pattern, age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, whether they have a disability or whether they are employed on a permanent or fixed-term basis.

You can apply to vary the number of hours you work, the times you work or your place of work (between your home and the Council's place of business). Although the Council is committed to being flexible on working patterns for its employees, you must recognise that the requirements of the business are paramount and it may not be appropriate or possible for flexible working arrangements to apply to all jobs across all areas of the business.

4. **The flexible working application procedure**
You should comply with the following procedure to make your application for flexible working arrangements:
 - Make your request in writing to the Town Clerk setting out the flexible working arrangement you seek.
 - If necessary, the Town Clerk will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the changes you have proposed, the effect of the proposed changes and any possible alternative work patterns that might suit. You may be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague.
 - The Personnel Committee will consider your request and will make a practical business assessment on whether and, if so, how it could be accommodated.
 - The Council will notify you of its decision. If the Council accepts your request, it will write to you, establishing a start date and providing a written note of the contract of employment variation. If your application is refused, the Council will explain the grounds for refusal in writing and confirm the appeal procedure.
 - Where your request is accepted, unless otherwise agreed, it constitutes a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment. This means you do not have the right to revert to your previous pattern of working at a future date. However, depending on the circumstances of the case, at its absolute discretion the Committee may be willing to agree to a temporary change to your terms and conditions of employment for a specified period only. In that case, you would then

- revert back to your previous pattern of working after the specified period comes to an end.
- You may appeal against a refusal of your flexible working request within five working days of the decision. Appeals must be made in writing and addressed to the Chairman of the Council and state the grounds for your appeal. The Committee may then set up a meeting with you to discuss your appeal and you may be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague. Whether or not an appeal meeting is held, the Council will write to you to notify you of the outcome of your appeal.
 - The Council will notify you of its decision on your flexible working application within three months beginning with the date on which your application is made, or such longer period as may be agreed between the Council and you. This decision period includes dealing with any appeal against a decision to refuse your flexible working request.

5. Grounds for refusal

The Council may refuse your flexible working application on one or more of the following business grounds:

- The burden of additional costs.
- The detrimental effect it would have on the Council's ability to meet resident demand.
- The Council's inability to re-organise work amongst existing staff.
- The Council's inability to recruit additional staff.
- The detrimental impact it would have on quality.
- The detrimental impact it would have on performance.
- The insufficiency of work available during the period when you propose to work.
- The Council's planned structural changes.

In refusing an application, the Council will provide details relating to why the particular ground applies in the circumstances.

6. Each request for flexible working will be dealt with individually, taking into account the likely effects the changes will have on the Council, the work of the department in which you are employed, your work colleagues and the particular circumstances of the case. This means that if the Council agrees to one employee's request, this does not set a precedent or create a right for another employee to be granted the same or a similar change to their work pattern. For example, having approved one flexible working request, this may mean that the business context has changed and this may be taken into account when considering a second request from another employee against the above business grounds.

The Town Council reserves the right to amend and update this policy from time to time.

Adopted by Thrapston Town Council
23rd June 2019

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Chairman

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Town Clerk