MONK SHERBORNE PARISH COUNCIL

HOME WORKER POLICY

1. PURPOSE

To detail the arrangements for and the conditions on which home workers are employed by the Council to work at home, making specific reference to those aspects of the employment relationship that require special consideration due entirely to the location of the home worker.

2. SCOPE

All permanent and temporary employees who work entirely or mainly from their homes, this being their job location for the purposes of their terms and conditions of employment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The Council agrees that members of staff work from their own homes to carry out the business of the Council.

4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The basic terms and conditions on which home workers are employed will be as set out in the offer letter and in their Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment. With the exception of the place of work, these will be as applicable to “office” based employees. All Council policies and procedures will also apply unless expressly stated to the contrary.

5. WORKING HOURS

The home worker will be required to work the hours specified in his/her Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The home worker will receive an Annual Appraisal, as specified in his/her Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

7. TRAINING

It is recognised that the majority of training occurs within the normal working environment - where employees receive operational training, coaching, detailed procedural guidance and day-to-day advice. Because home workers do not have access to this informal training special consideration will be given to support the development of home workers.

For example, home workers will be encouraged to make use of distance learning materials obtained from local training organisations. Relevant external or internal training events are also considered especially useful for home workers.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

8.1 Home workers in particular need to have effective and continuous access to this communication system so that they are able to identify with the team or department to which they belong, to the Council as a whole and to encourage participation in the Council's affairs and events.

8.4 The most important aspect of the communication process is the need for personal interaction between the home worker and the other members of the Council. Home workers should be invited to attend meetings when held.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

9.1 The Council will arrange for a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by home workers to check the accommodation to ensure that Health and Safety regulations are met. The Council undertakes to meet the cost of ensuring that these conditions are met.

9.2 Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Council will consult with the home worker as appropriate and take such steps as are necessary to prevent harm to them, or to anyone else who may be affected by their work, and will ensure that:

- adequate training and information is provided to permit them to conduct their duties without jeopardising their own or others' health and safety;
- all electrical equipment used in the course of work activities is inspected in order that the installation and wiring of any equipment has been conducted to the highest standards;
- all portable equipment is tested;
- all fixed installations are routinely inspected;
- all necessary protective equipment and personal protective clothing is available and in good condition;
- adequate controls are put in place to prevent exposure to hazardous substances;
- equipment has the right controls to allow the work to be carried out safely;
- all equipment is correct for the job that is being done;
- lifting aids and/or adequate training are provided to avoid the need for hazardous manual handling;
- an assessment of VDU equipment and work stations is carried out;
- Adequate first aid provisions are supplied.

9.3 Home workers should be advised that the Council is only responsible for equipment supplied by the Council. It is the home worker's responsibility to ensure that all

electrical sockets and other parts of the home worker's domestic electrical system are secure and neutralised so far as is possible.

The home worker is expected to work in a safe and efficient manner while at the work station in his/her domestic premises and has a duty to :

- have adequate regard for their own and others' safety at work;
- co-operate in the observance of all the appropriate safety rules, codes of practices and procedures issued by the Council;
- wear the appropriate safety clothing and use the safety devices issued by the Council in a proper manner;
- report any incidents or accidents immediately;
- ensure that no unauthorised modifications are made to their equipment or protective clothing;
- ensure that if they use a hazardous substance in the course of their work, that they handle and store it in the prescribed manner. Any new substances or usages must be reported for evaluation and advice to be given;
- report all faults which may be a hazard to their own or others' health and safety. Immediately upon noticing an electrical problem no home worker should work with that equipment until it has been shown to be safe to do so by a competent person;
- make suggestions, where appropriate, to improve health and safety in the workstation;
- give proper consideration to health and safety in respect of all methods of work, materials, substances and equipment in their area of control;
- adjust their workstation to a comfortable position and take breaks from work;
- maintain their workstation to an acceptable level of housekeeping and represent a safe and healthy working environment;
- no repairs or changes of plug to work equipment is carried out without authorisation;
- electrical equipment must be visually inspected at least once per week by the home worker.

10. EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

To facilitate the effective carrying out of a home worker's duties the Council will provide the following equipment as appropriate to the needs of the Council and to the work undertaken:

- telephone and separate business line;
- lap-top or palm-top personal computer and printer;
- desk and chair;

- secure filing cabinet(s);
- desk stationery;
- Council letter paper and other stationery;
- writing materials;.

The equipment supplied will remain the property of the Council and, as such, will be covered by the Council's insurers. The equipment must be returned to the Council in the event that the home worker leaves the Council's employment and an inventory will be kept as a means of recording the equipment supplied. The employee will be required to sign for the receipt of any equipment provided.

Home workers are advised to check that their home building and/or contents insurance(s) are not invalidated by working from home or by the storage and use of Council equipment at home. Any additional costs to the home worker's insurance, as a result of working from home, will be met by the Council.

11. EXPENSES

Equipment and Services

The home worker will be entitled to receive reimbursement of the following costs incurred in the provision of services connected to the work activity :

- installation and rental costs of a separate business telephone line;
- outgoing telephone calls made on Council business;
- installation and rental costs of modem (ISDN or cable) connection;
- costs of all stationery purchased by the home worker which cannot be supplied by the Council;
- costs of postage and couriers with the proviso that the latter cost must only be incurred where a delivery has to be made on an urgent basis. All other mail should ordinarily be sent second class unless instructed otherwise.

In all cases payment by the Council of installation and rental costs will be subject to the Council being satisfied that these items would not have been installed but for the employee's obligation to the Council and that the employee actually incurs the costs. The Council will require proof of this where an employee is not a householder or in the case of shared occupancies.

No more than one installation charge per employee will normally be paid. The Council will make the arrangements for any installation required and invoices will be submitted directly to the Council.

Mileage

Travel between the home worker's home and any Council premises (including the Common), noticeboards, meetings, training sessions, councillors homes/place of work, residents on council business and purchasing supplies is regarded as business travel and will be reimbursed. For all claims for reimbursement of travel expenses, details of the journey, the mileage and the reasons for it must be shown on an Expense Claim Form as detailed in the Schedule of Expenses and Allowances Policy.

Additional Home Expenses

The Council will pay an agreed sum, based on HMRC homeworking rates, to take into account the use of space, lighting, heating and electricity due to working from the private premises of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer to the Council.

12. RESPONSIBILITY

All those persons referred to within the Scope of this policy are required to adhere to its terms and conditions. They must understand that this policy is also incorporated into their contract of employment.

Individuals are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied within their own area. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed prior to any action being taken.

The Council's function has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy can only implement revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy following consideration and approval.