



RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

Date: Tuesday, 6 February 2024

Time: 10.00 am

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| 1. 34 Hour Week - Decision to end the trial and make the changes to hours permanent | 3 - 6 |

Record of decision taken by the Chief Executive.

Issued on Thursday, 15 February 2024

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**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Agenda Item 1

RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

This form must be completed by or on behalf of the relevant Officer immediately after any decision has been made. Please send to the Proper Officer for publication in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

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| NAME OF OFFICER MAKING DECISION | Larissa Reed – Chief Executive |
| SUBJECT OF DECISION BEING MADE BY OFFICER | 34 Hour Week – Decision to end the trial and make the changes to hours permanent |
| SUMMARY OF OFFICER DECISION AND REASON FOR THAT DECISION | <p>On 22 March 2023 Policy and Resources committee members resolved the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the results from the consultation with staff to change the contracted working week from 37 hours to 34 hours be noted. • That the change in the working week from 37 hours per week to 34 hours per week with council offices closing at 13.30 on a Friday (except for emergency services) be agreed. • That two additional days leave (pro rata) be taken between Christmas and New Year resulting in a close down of the council between Christmas and New Year be added. • That a transition/implementation phase runs from 1 May 2023 until 31 December 2023. • That the permanent change to start 1 January 2024 unless there was a compelling reason not to. • That the Head of Paid Service has delegation to implement the permanent change. <p>The decision that this record relates to is the delegation to the Head of Paid Services to implement the permanent change.</p> <p>The council started the transition/implementation on 4 February 2024. Throughout the implementation officers have done the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held regular meetings with managers and staff to update on how the implementation was going and understand what issues teams and staff have. • Undertaken a monthly anonymous survey asking about workload, how the changes were affecting staff and asking for any information on issues. • Monitored several performance indicators including staff sickness, staff turnover, complaints, call handling, call abandonment. All performance indicators either showed an improvement or the lack of improvement was due to other issues which were not linked to 34-hour week (eg use of agency staff in planning increased |

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| | <p>but this was due to the national problems in recruiting planners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We had several all-staff briefings on 34-hour week • A final survey and evaluation of the 34-hour week demonstrated that there had been significant benefits of the change. • Only 2 people surveyed (the response rate was over 50%) said they didn't wish to continue with the 34-hour week. <p>The benefits of 34-hour week have been:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved staff retention • Reduction in sickness • Increase in applications for jobs. • Reduction in number of vacancies unfilled • Improved work like balance • reduction in complaints. <p>The Government have said that they do not support the idea of 'full time pay for part time hours'. This is where staff have a significant reduction of hours (20%) with no corresponding reduction in pay. It is not believed that this change</p> <p>I have therefore taken to decision to implement this change permanently.</p> |
| DATE OF OFFICER DECISION | 6 February 2024 |
| DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED | Not to continue with the 34-hour week. This was rejected due to adverse effects on staff and performance |
| DETAILS OF ANY CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN | Extensive staff consultation. A meeting with group leaders to discuss my proposed decision. The group leaders were in favour of my decision. The trades union who were also in favour on my decision. |
| DETAILS OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS | none |
| CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES/FURTHER INFORMATION | Larissa Reed 01795 417394 larissareed@swale.gov.uk |
| DELEGATED AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH OFFICER IS ACTING | |
| DELEGATING COMMITTEE OR INDIVIDUAL | Policy and Resources |
| | 34 - hour working week |

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| TITLE OF REPORT TO COMMITTEE | |
| DECISION/RECOMMENDATION MADE BY COMMITTEE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the results from the consultation with staff to change the contracted working week from 37 hours to 34 hours be noted. • That the change in the working week from 37 hours per week to 34 hours per week with council offices closing at 13.30 on a Friday (except for emergency services) be agreed. • That two additional days leave (pro rata) be taken between Christmas and New Year resulting in a close down of the council between Christmas and New Year be added. • That a transition/implementation phase runs from 1 May 2023 until 31 December 2023. • That the permanent change to start 1 January 2024 unless there was a compelling reason not to. • That the Head of Paid Service has delegation to implement the permanent change. |
| DATE OF COMMITTEE DECISION | 22 March 2023 |
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