

**JULY 9, 2025**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**REPORT NO. CW-056-2025**

**REMOTE WORK POLICY**

**RICK PURDY  
MANAGER, HUMAN RESOURCES**

**KIMBERLY LITTLE  
DIRECTOR, CORPORATE SERVICES**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**THAT** Committee of the Whole recommends the adoption of the Remote Work Policy to take effect August 1, 2025;

**THAT** the necessary by-law be prepared.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Only the positions in the Provincial Offences Department are not equipped with mobile equipment. With intentional scheduling of approved remote work days, this group could conceivably share 2-3 laptops. Standard laptop set up, inclusive of licensing, etc. costs approximately \$2,000 per unit. Implementation of this policy may cost \$4,000-\$6,000 in one-time unbudgeted costs.

**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

The introduction of a Remote Work Policy contributes to the foundational strategic priority to operate a responsible government built upon the strength of our employees. Providing employees this flexibility aligns with strategic initiative 4.3 Create a long-term strategy for workplace sustainability and culture.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

Where possible, reports are provided in a digital format to reduce the Counties carbon footprint. Likewise, policies are made available to staff in digital format through posting on the intranet.

### **ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

This report and the associated policy can be made available in alternate accessible formats on request.

### **COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS**

Based on the direction provided to staff, this matter requires regular communication protocols to be completed.

### **BACKGROUND**

As the workforce and labour market changes, flexible work arrangements can offer an array of advantages to both employees and employers. The attached Remote Work Policy is an entirely new policy intended to provide an additional flexible work option of value to eligible employees.

This policy first came to Committee of the Whole on November 4, 2024. There was mixed feedback, many questions and concerns about the policy as presented. Staff undertook further research into the issues identified by the Committee and sought clarifying direction from the Interim CAO and new Warden. It was determined that policy direction from the recently established Corporate Services and Finance Committee and the new CAO would be sought.

Having received clarifying direction at the May 21, 2025 meeting of the Corporate Services and Finance Committee meeting, the policy was further revised and returned to the Corporate Services and Finance (CSF) Committee for consideration on June 18, 2025.

The CSF Committee requested the Policy advance to Committee of the Whole with revision to reflect CAO approval required to work remotely outside the Province of Ontario. This revision has been made to the attached policy.

## **DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES**

Several questions/concerns were raised at the initial provision of the Remote Work Policy to Committee of the Whole and in subsequent discussions at the Corporate Services Finance Committee. For ease of the reader, a question-answer format is used to ensure each item is addressed.

### **Is there evidence that confirms remote work actually supports recruitment and retention?**

Literature and statistics subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic indicate remote work, particularly hybrid options are now “almost standard business practice” or the “new normal”.

- 49% of Canadian job seekers would like a hybrid role, 26% are interested in a fully remote position, and only 24% prefer a fully in-office position. (Robert Half, May 2025)
- 66% of Canadian workers cite flexibility in when and where they work as a top influence of job satisfaction and decision to stay with an employer. (Robert Half, May 2025)
- “A mismatch between employees’ preferences for telework and the hours they work from home may negatively affect employee retention.” (Statistics Canada, January 2024)
- A 2023 study published in the Journal of Economic Perspectives suggests “when working from home is feasible, hybrid arrangements that allow people to work from home one or two days a week can improve productivity and lead to happier employees.” (Schirle, September 2024)
- 76% of employees want their company to make work permanently flexible in terms of schedule and or location per a Harris poll. (Forbes Business Council, February 2022)

The opportunity to work remotely provides employees flexibility which some employees value and which may be a key differentiator in a tight labour market, aid talent recruitment to Leeds Grenville and positively contribute to job satisfaction and thereby retention.

### **What is the prevalence of remote work policies amongst Leeds Grenville municipalities?**

On May 27, 2025 a query was sent to the thirteen Leeds Grenville municipalities. Responses were received from four of the thirteen. Two indicated they have no formal remote work policy. One has a policy that has carried over since introduced during the pandemic; their policy does not specify maximum number of days. The final responding municipality has in place a formal Remote Work Policy dated June 2023. This policy is very similar in content to the Policy here proposed, including the up to maximum of two days.

### **How have the implications of home as the workplace been contemplated and addressed from a health and safety perspective?**

The *Working for Workers Five Act, 2024* amended the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) to capture its applicability to “telework performed in or about a private residence or the lands and appurtenances used in connection therewith”. This means the OHSA now formally applies to employees who telework and employers with employees who telework. Telework is currently undefined in the OHSA but the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety defines telework as a “voluntary arrangement in which workers request to work somewhere other than at the designated worksite.” Telework, remote work and work from home terms are used interchangeable throughout literature and various policy examples reviewed.

In recognition of this mutual OHSA responsibility, the policy includes:

- Employee expectation to maintain a safe remote working environment
- Requirement for home workstation to meet health and safety requirements including ergonomically sound.
- Access to a competent supervisor to report an injury while working remotely.
- Right to investigate accident/injury claims that occur in the home workspace.
- Employee acknowledgement of these responsibilities within the Remote Work Agreement.
- Requirement for the completion of a Remote Work Health & Safety checklist at commencement and at least annually thereafter.

### **How will privacy and data/cyber security be managed and protected?**

Similar to when at a Counties worksite, the onus is on the employee to protect confidential information and to report any real or suspected breach of privacy.

Additionally, only Counties supplied equipment, applications and systems are to be used to conduct work and personal phone numbers are to be blocked when calling external parties.

Data and cyber security are the responsibility of all staff wherever they are working. Counties owned equipment and multi-factor authentication must be used while working remotely to connect to the Counties Network with VPN. The same security measures in place for onsite work, will continue in the case of remote work.

**How will productivity and accountability for time be measured, managed and monitored for employees working remotely?**

Productivity and accountability for time will be managed in the same manner as if the employee were working on site. Every employee has positional expectations, tasks to complete, customer (internal or external) needs to meet, etc. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring these expectations are met, how this oversight occurs varies by position. Additionally, employees eligible to work remotely will have completed their probation and have a solid grounding in the skills needed to complete their duties, regardless of location.

At the workplace, employees are trusted to manage their time appropriately whether it be in relation to breaks, leave requests, or fulfilling their duties, the same will hold true for employees working remotely.

**How many employees and in what positions would be potentially eligible for remote work under the proposed policy?**

The policy is applicable to all non-union employees, though not all non-union positions lend themselves to working remotely due to the nature of work, operational needs and legislative requirements.

While remote work offers enhanced flexibility to non-union Counties employees, it is important to recognize that 75-80% of the Counties workforce, cannot work remotely due to the nature of their work. Positions that lend themselves to remote work may be supervisory or support services. The drafted policy endeavours to strike a balance between the needs of the Corporation and its diverse employee groups and occupations, against the opportunity to offer this flexibility.

The following non-union positions, subject to the policy parameters related to performance, attendance and operational needs, would be potentially eligible to work remotely to varying degrees.

- All positions in the Information Technology Department
- All positions in the Human Resources Department
- All positions in the Accounting Services/Finance Department
- Administration Division – MVL Construction Administrator, Special Projects Coordinator, Economic Development Manager, Communications Coordinator, Clerk
- Public Works Division – Administrative Assistant, Engineering Technician, Planner 1, Planner 2, Senior Leaders
- Paramedic Services – Administrative positions, Superintendents, Senior Leaders
- Community and Social Services – Policy Analyst, Affordable Housing Coordinator, Financial Analyst, Homelessness Coordinator, Supervisors, Executive Assistant, Senior Leaders.

Of the 184 non-union employees, the above positions account for 98 employees. Through the Employee Engagement Survey, 26 employees commented on the absence a remote work policy; comments were about equally split between divisions comprised mostly of unionized employees and divisions with wholly non-union employees.

**How will consistent application of and adherence to the policy be monitored, ensured and achieved?**

Recognizing the different operational needs by Division/Department and role, application of this policy will by necessity look different throughout the organization. Leaders best know their operations and are best positioned to determine the extent that remote work is appropriate and may be approved. All Counties employees are responsible for following policy set by Council. Leaders, in their decision-making capacity and position of trust, have an enhanced responsibility to ensure policy adherence. Concerns about policy compliance may be identified by employees to Human Resources for follow-up.

**What is the anticipated cost of establishing remote workstations in employee homes, in terms of furnishing, equipment and technology?**

The majority of non-union positions potentially eligible to work remotely have laptops which allow them to use Counties equipment when working remotely. Presently, only the positions in the Provincial Offences Department are not equipped with mobile

equipment. The cost of providing such would be influenced by the number of employees interested in requesting and approved for remote work. Recognizing, there would still remain a minimum number of employees required in office/on site, with intentional scheduling of approved remote work days, this group could conceivably share 2-3 laptops. Standard laptop set up, inclusive of licensing, etc. costs approximately \$2,000 per unit.

Per the proposed policy, it is only at the request of the employee that a remote work arrangement would be considered. No employee is required to work remotely, as such, setting up a home workstation (i.e. chair, desk, second monitor), internet, insurance, heat, etc. are not costs the Counties will incur to support remote work. Aside from the provision of a Counties laptop, other costs associated with working remotely are employee responsibility. The policy clearly indicates the requirement that approval of this benefit is to be cost neutral to the Counties.

Key revisions to the Policy since it was last proposed to Committee of the Whole and to address feedback received, include:

- Clarification throughout that Remote Work is a benefit not an entitlement.
- Only Counties supplied equipment, applications and systems will be used to conduct work remotely.
- Section 8 – Communication Standards and Expectations – new section
- Section 9 – additions to the Health and Safety section, specifically defining the workplace, requirement checklist completion, and no in-person meetings to be conducted at remote home workspace.
- CAO approval to exceptionally work remotely outside Province of Ontario

The attached policy has been reviewed and had input by relevant stakeholders, including the HR Manager, Directors and CAO. Communication of policy changes will ensure it is well understood by employees. The policy is to be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness and continued relevance.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

A – List of Sources Cited or Referenced

A - Remote Work Policy

The report set out above has been reviewed and the information verified by the individuals listed below.

**RICK PURDY**  
**MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

**JUNE 26, 2025**  
**DATE**

**KIMBERLY LITTLE**  
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

**JUNE 26, 2025**  
**DATE**

**PAT HUFFMAN**  
**TREASURER**

**JUNE 26, 2025**  
**DATE**

**AL HORSMAN**  
**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

**JUNE 30, 2025**  
**DATE**



## **ATTACHMENT A – LIST OF SOURCES CITED OR REFERENCED**

[Canadian Remote Work Statistics and Trends 2025 | Robert Half](#), May 16, 2025.

[Going Remote To Enhance Retention, Versatility And Survivability](#), S. Ordocia for the Forbes Business Council, February 24, 2022.

[Research to Insights: Working from home in Canada](#), Statistics Canada. January 18, 2024.

[Settling into a New Normal? Working from Home across Canada – C.D. Howe Institute](#), T. Schirle, September 25, 2024.

The Hybrid Workplace: Flexibility in Municipal Employment. OMHRA webinar presented by L. Williams of Williams HR Law, May 28, 2025.

[Working for Workers ... From Home? Ontario's Working for Workers Five Act, 2024 and Telework - Ogletree](#), P. Yung, Ogletree Deakins, January 9, 2025.

[Working from Home in Canada Statistics for 2025 | Made in CA](#), January 4, 2025.