

Ways of Working Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to seek approval for:

- An update and amalgamation of the Homeworking and Flexible working policies.
- And that this updated policy is called Ways of Working policy.

Background

1. Prior to the Covid pandemic, many employees worked part of their time from a council workspace and part from home and some employees worked all their time from a council workspace. However, with the impact of COVID, most employees have had to work from home for most of the time.
2. The Workplaces and Workspaces workstream are reviewing employee/service needs in order to maximise the use of all workplaces in a manner that enhances services, improves performance, staff wellbeing and realises the best economical returns from our estate.
3. Our current policies (Flexible Working and Homeworking) were introduced in 2011 and do not now fully reflect the reconfiguration of our workplaces or how employees would like to work.
4. The latest wellbeing survey results showed that most teams and employees believe they can be effective with far less access to council buildings. The Ways of Working Policy has been produced to support this.

Main considerations

5. Employees, with agreement from their managers, can work at home/remotely if they choose and where it does not impact on service delivery. However, employees will be required to attend the workplace if requested to do so or where service delivery demands it.
6. Homeworking allowance was removed in March 2020 and will not be reinstated as it continues to be employee's choice to work from home. Employees will be able to work from a council workspace if they choose.
7. The next phase of the workplaces and workspaces review is to look at a wider office footprint to identify additional workspaces for employees, increasing the number of spaces available.

8. There will be no changes to employees' contractual work base as flexible working practices will provide more flexibility with how employees can work, but still require employees to attend the workplace as needed.
9. Where an employee chooses to work from home the council can provide homeworking equipment in addition to their laptop (e.g. monitor, keyboard)
10. All employees who choose to work from home must complete a homeworking risk assessment. Detail on the homeworking risk assessment will be presented to CLT and will then be brought back to Staffing Policy Committee for information.
11. Managers will also be expected to discuss working arrangements at their regular 121s and annual appraisal to ensure that employees working environment continues to be suitable and that no health or wellbeing concerns are developing as a result of working at home/remotely.

Reason for changes to the policy

12. The Ways of Working policy has been developed to support employees post pandemic and will embed the positive lessons learned from the pandemic, extending the flexible working practices pre Covid and align to the reconfiguration of the Wiltshire workplaces and Our Identity whilst reducing the need for employees to travel contributing towards our 2030 carbon neutral commitment.

Environmental impact of the proposal

13. Extending our flexible working practices will reduce the need for staff to travel contributing towards our 2030 carbon neutral commitment.

Equalities impact of the proposal

14. The Ways of Working Policy will be taken through EIA in January and any feedback will be incorporated.

Risk Assessment

15. The Council is looking to build on the positives from the pandemic and develop the way it does its work and how to use workplaces to better serve its customers and residents. Some of the benefits seen from home/remote working are a reduction in sickness absence, travel time and road congestion and improved work/life balance.
16. If the policy is not agreed, then there is a risk of not embedding the ways of working required which may impact on employee engagement and well-being and the capability to deliver the organisations business plan.

Financial Implications of the proposal

17. Extending our flexible working practices will support the organisations financial savings as it opens commercial opportunities to make savings through the release or rental of spaces

Recommendations

It is recommended that Staffing Policy Committee approve the amalgamation of the Homeworking and Flexitime policies to create the Ways of Working policy.

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