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RESPONSE TO THE POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP INQUIRY REPORT ON HOME AND AGILE WORKING

Scrutiny Presentation – March 2023



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Background



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The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny agreed following its re-start in September 2020 that its work programme would include a task and finish inquiry into the Council's approach to capturing the benefits of homeworking developed as an emergency response to the pandemic.

The terms of reference for the inquiry were agreed as follows:

To examine how the experience of managing remotely during the pandemic can inform future policy on autonomy at work, operating within a culture of care and trust; with a specific focus on management/leadership challenges of supporting home and agile working.

The findings and recommendations are set out in a report dated March 2022 which was presented to Cabinet for consideration in July 2022.



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RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - Accept



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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information
<p>Cabinet develops, publishes and communicates to all staff a refreshed set of Council values setting out its vision of how hybrid working will be introduced and embedded. Such values will need to be widely communicated and receive constant reinforcement by leaders at all levels.</p>	<p>It is agreed that the Council’s move to home and agile working being part of its business-as-usual working arrangements will need to be founded on a set of agreed and robust values. This will form part of the development of policies for hybrid working.</p>	<p>Hybrid working policy framework developed and to go to Cabinet on 23rd March. This will provide the go ahead for detailed policy development and discussion with Scrutiny for their input in April 2023. Values across the Council also set for review as part of the Workforce Strategy 2023-2027 which also goes to Cabinet on 23d march 2023 and the first 18 month action plan to be discussed at Scrutiny in April 2023.</p>
<p>Cabinet refreshes and updates the Council’s HR policy framework to reflect new working styles, particularly policies affecting terms and conditions, organisation structure job roles and responsibilities, PPDRs as well as sickness absence and well being policies.</p>	<p>It is agreed that some HR policies will need to be refreshed and updated to reflect new working styles and this will be carried out for some policies as and when they are due for review and for others on a proactive basis depending on the changes required</p>	<p>This will be an ongoing process</p>



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RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY

RECOMMENDATIONS - Accept



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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information
<p>Cabinet clearly sets out its expectations on the levels of communication and consultation between managers and their hybrid/office-based and homeworking staff. Central to the system should be regular whole team meetings which encourage staff feedback to managers on how the effectiveness of working styles could be improved. An important element of the framework must be staff well-being needs.</p>	<p>This recommendation is agreed. At the beginning of the pandemic a Homeworking etiquette guide was issued to managers and staff as well a training put in place for managers regarding managing remote working employees. This documentation and training included these messages. This will be reinforced as hybrid working becomes business as usual.</p>	<p>This will take place throughout 2023/24 and onwards in a variety of forums and processes</p>
<p>Cabinet locks in the emerging Council culture by introducing a framework for the continual sharing of service area hybrid working processes, experiences and best practice, to benchmark and ensure consistency of culture, management and staff experience across the Council. Capturing some excellent existing cultural norms which are being employed by one, or a few Council Directorates offers the opportunity for useful organisation learning and potential change.</p>	<p>This recommendation is agreed. The development of the Hybrid Model at Cardiff has been a collaborative approach with services and key stakeholders. A key part of this has been ongoing staff engagement which will continue to be scheduled in for regular check points of progress and sharing of good practice.</p>	<p>This will be an on-going process</p>

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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information
<p>Cabinet recognises the value in exploring the experiences of other Councils, for example Monmouthshire, which successfully introduced new ways of working well before the pandemic. Monmouthshire’s experience of homeworking is summarised in this report and offers a number of learning opportunities for Cardiff Council, particularly their two-phase approach to hybrid working that further reduces staff: desk ratios and office space requirements. We recommend contact at Chief Executive level to establish potential learning followed by exchanges at director and senior manager level.</p>	<p>It is agreed that it is beneficial to explore the experiences of others including Monmouthshire Council as well as other core city authorities and others in Wales that have developed hybrid working. This will be developed further as more formal arrangements are put in place across organisations to support post pandemic service delivery.</p>	<p>This will take place as part of the development of the detailed policy and will continue thereafter to check against other policies as they are developed.</p>



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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information
<p>Cabinet invests in training to support the successful introduction of a new style of working in the delivery of Council services. Three key areas of focus and development for Cardiff Academy stood out in our research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management skills – in coaching and mentoring; managing home/hybrid worker performance and identifying and dealing with staff wellbeing needs. • Induction – enhanced induction for home/hybrid working new starters • IT self-sufficiency – all staff would benefit from IT skills training that ensures confident self sufficiency whilst homeworking and successful communication with their line manager. 	<p>It is agreed that along with development of vision and policies there will also be a need to invest in training whether this be through the Academy, directly in service areas or through subject matter experts. This will be put in place.</p>	<p>Training will be implemented and take place on an on-going basis to support the new way of working and the Hybrid working policy.</p>



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RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS - Partially Accepted



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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information	Comments for partially accepting
<p>Cabinet undertakes a full review of the leadership expectations and capabilities of managers at all levels. This review should provide managers with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An updated role definition; • A full understanding of their responsibility for disseminating the Council's vision and upholding its culture; • The people management skills and personal guidance they require to successfully deliver a hybrid model; and • A clear definition and understanding of what the Council means by 'management by results'. This should include defining expected people and performance management capabilities, leading to a review of the knowledge and skills required to develop all managers to meet this key requirement. 	<p>Whilst it is agreed that managers need to:</p> <p>Understand their responsibilities in role modelling and disseminating the Council's vision and culture;</p> <p>Have the people management skills and personal guidance to successfully deliver the hybrid model, and</p> <p>Have a clear definition and understanding of what the council means by 'management by results'</p> <p>It is not agreed that this necessarily requires an updated role definition for every manager and that this could be achieved through clear communication of the Council's expectations of managers.</p>	<p>There is a process outlined in the Workforce Strategy 2023-2027 which sets out the need for manager competencies and it will be within this framework that this is carried out.</p>	<p>To change every manager's job description will require mutual agreement as it is part of their contractual terms. Therefore it was decided that this could be better achieved through a manager competency framework which allows managers to be measured against the framework and training and development interventions to be put in place to support managers where there are gaps.</p>

RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY

RECOMMENDATIONS - Partially Accepted



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Recommendation	Cabinet Response	Implementation Information	Comments for partially accepting
<p>Cabinet requires each Directorate to develop and implement an action plan setting out what it expects in terms of people management and preferred leadership styles. These plans should be consistent across the Council reflecting the refreshed vision and values</p>	<p>New ways of working, including Hybrid Working are being built into refreshed Service Delivery Plans and Service Workforce Plans rather than as standalone plans for Hybrid Working. It is recognised that ‘one size doesn’t fit all’ but the policies, values and management guides referenced in earlier recommendations will support a consistent framework being developed.</p>	<p>This will be delivered as part of 2023/24 Directorate Delivery and Workforce Plans</p>	<p>It is agreed that each Directorate needs to set out its expectations with regards to people management and how it will deliver its service. Rather than these be separate from the Directorate Delivery plans it can encompassed in them as the workforce plan will be from 2023//24.</p>



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<p>Cabinet requires Senior Management Team to undertake regular reviews, at least annually, of the equality and consistency of hybrid working, its effectiveness in the delivery of council services and the embedding of the agreed and implemented recommendations in the report.</p>	<p>As already referenced, regular staff engagement activity will continue to be undertaken as Hybrid working is developed at the Council and this is being reported to the Senior Management Team. This will include gaining assurance on the equality and consistency of how Hybrid Working is being deployed. In addition, as this becomes business as usual, assurance will also be gained through existing corporate mechanisms such as Senior Management Assurance Statements</p>	<p>Ongoing staff engagement and for embedding in corporate assurance processes by the end of 23/24.</p>	<p>It was felt that rather than separate reviews this should be part of already existing corporate mechanisms to ensure that there is consistency of approach and that it is reviewed alongside other processes that make up corporate mechanisms such as the Senior Management Assurance Statements.</p>



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