

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

**FINANCE, MODERNISATION & PERFORMANCE
(COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER WEAVER)**

AGENDA ITEM: 4

Reason for this Report

1. To approve the Cabinet response to the report from the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee dated March 2022 relating to the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Home and Agile Working.

Background

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Members of the task and finish group first commissioned a review of published research evidence on the impact of pre-pandemic homeworking, to identify the issues that should form the basis of their evidence gathering from internal and external witnesses. To supplement this, the task and finish group interviewed a cross section of senior managers from a variety of Council service areas on their experiences and management of homeworking staff. Two public sector organisations were also chosen as reference points, due to their move to homeworking prior to the pandemic. These were Monmouthshire County Council and Natural Resources Wales.

5. The findings and recommendations are set out in a report dated March 2022 which was presented to Cabinet for consideration in July 2022 and is attached at Appendix 2.

Findings and Response to the Recommendations

6. The report from the Task and Finish group sets out a series of findings which have then translated into nine formal recommendations to Cabinet. A formal response to each of the nine recommendations is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Reason for Recommendations

7. To respond to the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Home and Agile Working.

Legal Implications

8. This report seeks approval of the Cabinet response to the report from the Chair of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee dated March 2022 and the associated recommendations arising from this.
9. In the implementation of these proposals, employment law and consultation requirements may arise in relation to the implementation of hybrid working policies and processes and legal advice will be provided as these proposals are progressed.
10. In considering this matter, Members must have regard to the Council's public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010. Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are: (a) Age, (b) Gender reassignment, (c) Sex, (d) Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, (e) Disability, (f) Pregnancy and maternity, (g) Marriage and civil partnership, (h) Sexual orientation, (i) Religion or belief – including lack of belief.
11. When taking strategic decisions, the Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ('the Socio-Economic Duty' imposed under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010). In considering this, the Council Page 18 of 20 must take into account the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers (WG42004 A More Equal Wales The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010 (gov.wales) and must be able to demonstrate how it has discharged its duty.
12. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how its decisions will contribute towards meeting its well-being objectives (set out in the Corporate Plan). Members must also be satisfied that the Council's decisions comply with the sustainable development principle, which requires that the needs of the present are

met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

13. The Council must also be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards and consider the impact of its proposals upon the Welsh language.

Financial Implications

14. There are minimal financial implications arising from this report. Apart from a potential investment in training, accepted recommendations would be delivered within existing resources. In developing the format of the training, there will be a need to balance potential costs, with available funding sources.

Human Resources Implications

15. The recommendations cover a number of employment matters which will be worked through. Any required trade Union and/or staff consultation will take place and any changes will follow corporately agreed policies and processes.

Property Implications

16. There are no immediate property implications within this report.
17. As set out in the Corporate Property Strategy 2021-26, adoption of a hybrid working strategy will have an impact on the Council's core office space requirement. It will be important to quantify this impact to inform short, medium and long term property and budget decision making.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to approve the response to the recommendations of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group on Home and Agile Working, as set out in appendix 1.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Chris Lee Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer
	13 January 2023

The following Appendices are attached:

Appendix 1 Draft Response to Recommendations of Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group on Home and Agile Working.

Appendix 2 Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group Report dated March 2022 – Home and Agile Working.