

Cabinet Response to an Inquiry of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee – Home & Agile Working

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the Cabinet response to the recommendations made in the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee inquiry report, Home & Agile Working, published in March 2022.

Background

2. The Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2021-22 included an in-depth review of the Council's approach to capturing the benefits of homeworking developed as an emergency response to the pandemic. The following terms of reference were used:

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 the management/leadership challenges of supporting home & agile working.

3. Membership of the task & finish group comprised:
 - Councillor David Walker (Chair)
 - Councillor Jane Henshaw
 - Councillor Norma Mackie

Members received internal evidence from a range of sources, including the Cabinet Member, Finance Modernisation & Performance; Director of

Resources, Head of Performance & Partnerships; Assistant Director, Estates; and six additional Senior Managers who contributed to fieldwork. External evidence was gathered from organisations who had adopted homeworking policies well in advance of the pandemic. These were Monmouthshire Council's Cabinet Member for Education and, Head of Policy, Engagement & Improvement, and Senior Scrutiny Officer, and from the Head of Renewal, Natural Resources Wales

4. The evidence was used to identify key findings from the Inquiry, and to develop recommendations based on the evidence heard throughout the Inquiry.
5. The Committee's report for this task and finish inquiry can be found by following this link - [Home & Agile Working Report by PRAP](#). It was published in March 2022 and considered at an early Cabinet meeting of the new Administration held on 14 July 2022, at which Cllr Henshaw represented the task group in presenting the Committee's recommendations.

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

6. The Cabinet agreed their response to the Home & Agile Working Inquiry at its meeting on 19 January 2023. Attached at **Appendix 1 is the Cabinet** response in the form of a presentation. The response outlines the recommendations made, the Cabinet response to each recommendation, and information on implementing the recommendation.
7. Overall, the Committee made 9 recommendations to the Cabinet. The Cabinet response (**Appendix 1**) shows that:
 - 6 of the recommendations are **accepted**.
 - 3 of the recommendations are **partially accepted**.
 - No recommendations are **not accepted**.

Those recommendations that are partially accepted request that in the medium-longer term, Cabinet:

R3 – Undertakes a full review of the leadership expectations and capabilities of managers at all levels. This review should provide managers with:

- 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.

R8 – 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.

R9 - Requires the Senior Management Team to undertake regular reviews, at least annually, of the quality and consistency of hybrid working, its effectiveness in the delivery of council services and the embedding of the agreed and implemented recommendations in this report.

8. The Cabinet response at **Appendix 1** explains reasons for each partially accepted determination, and Members will have an opportunity to explore the response further at the meeting.

Way Forward

9. Councillor Chris Weaver, Cabinet Member – Finance, Modernisation & Governance, and Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources, have been invited to present the response to the inquiry, and present any progress made in addressing the issues raised and recommendations approved.

Legal Implications

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

11. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

Recommendation

The Committee is recommended to receive the Cabinet response and agree the way forward for receiving progress reports on the work required to implement the agreed recommendations.

DAVINA FIORE

Director of Governance & Legal Services

16 March 2023