

TITLE	Modern Workforce Concepts
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Personnel Board on 21 st June 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Sally Halliwell – Lead HR & OD Business Partner Louise Livingston – Assistant Director, HR and OD

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This policy will be a framework to build a flexible workforce that can deliver the required services to the Borough of Wokingham building a reputation as an employer of choice.

RECOMMENDATION

The personnel board discuss and agree the concepts set out to develop a modern workforce policy.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to set out the approach the Council is looking to take regards its approach to new methods of working. Some of these ways of working will already be in place as a result of the pandemic but we want to progress and formalise this now. A full consultation will be undertaken with staff with the customer at the heart of everything we do, with service delivery remaining at the forefront whilst ensuring staff are empowered to work flexibly.

Potential Principles

- **Customer and Colleague Experience** - The customer will remain at the heart of everything we do, with service delivery remaining at the forefront. This will ensure that colleagues be the best they can be but also empower them to work flexible and in some cases allowing us to enhance service delivery, performance and wellbeing
- **Flexibility** - Acknowledgement will be given that what may work for one team or individual may not work for another therefore a flexible approach, across services, will happen with the services owning the approach that they take based on what they are delivering. We will ensure open and honest conversations happen so that colleagues have clarity and can embrace modern ways of working.
- **Wellbeing** - We will strive to ensure that whilst we have our customer at the heart of everything we do, more modern ways of working will have a positive impact on colleagues. They will feel empowered and involved in choices that support them to balance work and personal lives to be the best they can be.
- **Sustainability** - As a collective these ways of working will enable us all to play our part in ongoing commitment to protecting the environment and supporting the climate emergency agenda.
- **Digital** - The use of technology and a digital first approach will support modern ways of working to identify sustainable and progressive approaches to service delivery.

One Size does not fit all

Given the diversity of the Council and what we deliver a one size fits all approach will not work. Roles vary across service to service and whilst we will encourage flexibility, consideration of service delivery will be integral to the design to all of the new approaches with services being involved throughout.

This can be achieved by a variation in work styles that will be more open to working flexibly and also create a similar mindset across services. The 3 different worker styles are described below:

- **Agile Working** will be predominantly home working with occasional visits to a Council location as and when required by the service. In practice, work can be carried out from almost any UK location.
- **Hybrid Working** will see colleagues working the majority of their time on site on or in client visits. They may work in a specified Council office between site visits and may also work from home on an occasional or more frequent basis.
- **Fixed Base Working** will see colleagues based in a Council location because their work can only be carried in a location that the service they undertake work for is based.

The Benefits

- Enable Wokingham to continuously review service delivery to ensures practices remain current and responsive to customer needs.
- Customers will remain at the heart of everything we do with colleagues feeling empowered to have input into the design their work patterns
- Colleagues will have flexibility of when, how and where they work taking into account the needs of the service allowing for a better work life balance.
- Become an employer of choice that embraces new methods of working and attract talent locally but also widens the talent reach based on the role and the service requirements.
- Support other Council priorities such as accommodation rationalisation

NEXT STEPS

- Develop more detailed guidance that would support the overarching principles of the concept which would include detailed paper, FAQs, visuals.
- Engage with Management teams across the Council over the concept so they can understand but also discuss their own service approach factoring in the one size does not fit all vision, service engagement is critical to taking this forward.
- Model proposals on worker styles with services
- Consultation with key groups such as Unions, Networks Group, Service Level Forums and Corporate Works Council
- Engage with staff at wider level such as Big Chat and/or Colleague Conference
- Personnel Board engagement and sign off.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Indirect savings of becoming an employer of choice will be to assist with attracting the talent the Councils needs to deliver for its community and will retain staff

Cross-Council Implications

This policy is relevant to all directorates in the Council

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken in respect of the policy changes and a EIA will be completed when the policy is written

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

N/A

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A.

List of Background Papers

None

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