
NON-EXEMPT

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

HR Committee

23rd March 2022

Workstyles Policy

FOR DECISION

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Narinder Bains

Key Decision: No

Report Number: HBC/038/2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper is submitted to HR Committee for agreement to implement a policy which sets out the approach to workstyles in each council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. HR Committee is asked to approve the attached policy as set out at Appendix A.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. The council does not currently have a policy in place which specifically outlines the approach to workstyles. Since the covid pandemic started more than two years ago, the approach to working for staff has altered because of covid restrictions during this time. Most staff have adapted to a different way of working which is a combination of working from home and the office (where restrictions have permitted).
- 3.2. Following the 'Future Workstyles' trial which ended on 21st Jan 2022, learning and feedback have been used to inform the accompanying policy paper. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework of understanding with regards to how the Council determines staff workstyles. It also sets out the parameters that are in

place to ensure the workstyles approach for each member of staff takes account of the needs of the service and identifies the most efficient ways of working for the organisation and the individual.

3.3 The future working trial has illustrated the benefits of a hybrid approach to working for the organisation and the individual. The policy which has been drafted encourages:

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- greater flexibility for staff with consideration for work/life balance
- greater productivity
- reduction in the carbon footprint which supports the green agenda
- redesign and review of office space
- the potential for increased diversity in the workforce profile

3.4 The benefits of a hybrid approach to working are the following:

- Resilience - a more adaptable working culture that can respond to future challenges
- Better environmental performance - reducing business travel will reduce our carbon footprint
- Reduced illness - short term sick leave has dropped by 38% at HBC
- More efficient use of office space - a reduced need for office accommodation, collaborative spaces available
- Recruitment and retention of staff - improved ways of working make the organisation more attractive to staff (current and future)
- Improved health and wellbeing - working from home eliminates the need to commute to work
- Better work/life balance - saved time can be spent on ourselves or families
- Flexibility - working patterns can be agreed to suit you and your manager

3.5 Evidence from the last two years demonstrates that the performance at each council has not been impacted by staff working remotely.

- Quarterly KPI's have remained positive
- Business and commuting mileage has been greatly reduced
- Staff surveys are positive with >70% staff happy with the hybrid working arrangements

3.6 Efficient remote working has considerably reduced commuting mileage for staff, saved many tons of carbon emissions and reduced other harmful emissions.

3.7 A review of workstyles for staff is not unique. Up and down the country, organisations are reviewing the way their staff work to maximise the benefits that virtual working has demonstrated through the pandemic and to reduce costs for office space. This in turn provides the opportunity for organisations to enhance the diversity of their workforce profile as greater flexibility in the way staff can work can enable those with caring responsibilities to undertake work/hours that they were unable to do so previously for example.

4 Additional Budgetary Implications

4.1 The policy does not have any direct budget implications. However, adoption of the policy will trigger additional spend on IT software enablers and hardware, with the priority on laptop provision to enable employees to work efficiently in the way described in the policy. This additional spend can be offset by the potential savings in rationalisation of office space.

5 Background and relationship to Corporate Strategy and/or Business Plans

5.1 Adoption of this policy supports the overall direction of transformation and is an enabler for any future working projects on the Plaza site.

6. Options considered

a) Implement the policy – this will ensure that there is a framework of understanding for staff on each council's approach to workstyles. It will also

ensure that staff can be managed effectively in line with the requirements of the policy.

b) Return to pre pandemic workstyles – this would negate all the positive change experienced during the pandemic. Carbon footprint would be increased, staff retention and recruitment would become more difficult, and the possibility of office rationalisation would be reduced. The majority of staff have embraced and enjoyed the positive work/life balance impacts that the Future workstyles have enabled and there is a risk that some may leave the organisations if a forced return to office working was to happen.

c) Do nothing – in the absence of any clear policy position, the council runs the risk that staff and managers will create their own approach to workstyles which will not ensure the maximum benefits can be achieved in terms of productivity, efficiency, and cost.

7. Resource Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

As referenced at section 4, implementation of this policy will require investment in IT software and hardware to enable staff to operate effectively with modern and reliable equipment.

A separate business case will be required for this spend, indicative figures show that approximately 65 additional laptops will be required at a cost of circa £1000 each (with ancillaries).

This additional spend can be offset by the potential savings in rationalisation of office space.

Section 151 Officer comments

Date: 9th February 2022

The financial section covers the issues well, so no further comments

Matthew Tiller

7.2 Human Resources Implications

This policy will be added to the suite of HR policies. It will ensure that staff are fully clear on the policy position with regards to workstyles and the expectation of what is required of staff. The policy will also enable managers to manage staff effectively to ensure optimum performance of service is delivered.

HR resource will be required to support with the roll out of the policy. This has been factored into existing resources.

7.3 Information Governance Implications

None identified. The Information Governance policy already covers flexible working locations.

7.4 Links to Shaping our Future Programme

The proposed policy for HBC will be reconsidered as transformation progresses to ensure that the right balance is achieved for hybrid working which balances business need and service demand from residents.

7.5 Other resource implications

Adoption of this policy will

- reduce the demand for workspace and enable a move to a reduced office footprint
- improve the council's environmental performance - reducing business travel will reduce our carbon footprint

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no contractual changes to employment contracts created with the adoption of this policy. HR processes will be followed to ensure that the relevant discussions take place with all staff with regards to their appropriate workstyle.

Monitoring Officer comments/sign-off

Date: 8th February 2022

Legal Implications are sound, nothing further to add

Surinder Atkar

9 Risks

- 9.1 Potential Risks have been identified and mitigated throughout the Future Working trial. Remaining risks are listed below along with mitigations.

Risk Title	Identification of areas where there are significant risks	Mitigation Required
Cultural - Management style unable to adapt to change in working styles	Risk of returning to previous working styles if manager resist change of working styles.	Clear communications and agreement, Performance management is being reviewed within transformation and will enable output based performance management
Resistance to proposed changes	Resistance to the future ways of working by staff leads to service disruption	FWS staff surveys indicate that there is majority support for future working styles Consultation and engagement with staff to understand any concerns and mitigate where possible
WfH environment	Some staff may not have a suitable working set up or space for working at home	All staff must complete an annual DSE review with will be reviewed by line managers and H&S

10 Consultation

- 10.1 Staff surveys and focus groups have been held during and post the Future Workstyles Trial.

10.2 Unison have been consulted on the policies in line with the usual consultation processes.

11 Communication

11.1 The policy will be communicated to all members of staff via internal channels

12 Appendices

Appendix A – Workstyles Policy HBC

13 Background papers

13.1 None

Agreed and signed off by:

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Narinder Bains 18th February 2022

Director: 15th February, 2022

Monitoring Officer: 8th February 2022

Section 151 Officer: Matthew Tiller – 9th February 2022

Contact Officer

Name: Mark Barr

Job Title: Commercial Programme Manager

Telephone: 01730 234342 E-mail: mark.barr@easthants.gov.uk