







Corporate Ways of Working Task and Finish Group

Challenges, risks and recommendations

Challenges / Risks	Assurance provided	Recommendations	Progress against recommendations
A whole Council approach			
<p>· Being mindful that flexibility might not be suitable for all jobs. The Council employs more than 6200 people in a variety of jobs, undertaking a wide range of duties, providing services to residents, communities and elected members. Clearly communicating to all staff about what hybrid means and how it may apply differently to different jobs, and how it may not apply to some at all will be essential.</p>	<p>· Planned roll out of new ways of working, including hybrid working, across all office bases, including locality offices.</p>	<p>(a) That all communications relating to the Programme be sense checked to ensure they are not unfairly and unnecessarily addressed to those that are predominantly office based, unnecessarily referencing County Hall.</p>	<p>a) All programme level communications have been addressed to ensure where it has a council wide impact, that it references the wide variety of worker styles outlined below - ensuring no-one is excluded from the process and that is isn't centred around solely County Hall.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Fixed Location</p> <p>Customer facing staff and/or those who work in a fixed location/place of work. Examples include Libraries, Reception staff, Catering Assistants, Office staff with specific need for access to workplace equipment to undertake their duties</p> </div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Fully Flexible</p> <p>Ability to undertake the majority of their role independent of a fixed location. Majority of the working week spent remotely with attendance at an LCC workplace by need rather than default. The majority of office based staff will fall into this category</p> </div>  </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 5px;"> <p>Field Based</p> <p>These roles spend a lot of their time working within our wider community, including for some attendance at a work place. Their role dictates when and where they work. Examples include Social Care teams, Trading Standards Officers, Highways workers</p> </div>  </div> </div>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority has many staff who are not, and were not pre-Covid, office based and there is a risk through its delivery that the Programme becomes too County Hall focused. Whilst it is accepted those who are currently office based, largely at County Hall, might be most affected, it should not be forgotten that the Programme will affect all staff to some degree or another, even those working in the localities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting communication and culture change work will be in place. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ways of Working action plans at service level undertaken to capture individual and team requirements in relation to new ways of working. 	<p>(b) That additional communications be provided to those staff that already work remotely, in the localities or on the front line, to ensure they too are adequately accounted for and understand how the Programme might affect them.</p>	<p>b) All department level communications have gone from directors to all staff and have made explicit how this will involve all staff to varying degrees. Work is underway across not just County Hall but also localities and wider sites to support new ways of working, with those staff and managers being engaged in the design and delivery of these changes.</p>
<p>Service outcome prioritisation</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing choice and flexibility will need to be accompanied by clear parameters or principles that will enable staff to understand how this will apply to them and their teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Programme clearly sets out that service needs remain the first priority and should form the foundation for any new flexible arrangements agreed by managers. 	<p>(c) That Service Heads be requested to review their action plans as their teams' working arrangements evolve, to ensure that core requirements (service to the customer) are captured and met.</p>	<p>c) All senior managers have been requested to review their ways of working actions plans a number of times over the past year to ensure they are reflective of how they need to work. Direct engagement with departments and managers through implementation of the new office model in room 700, and now 600 has taken place, with support from the programme team to better refine this in line with the new office environment - maximising the benefits of new ways of working.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Providing flexibility whilst ensuring access to services is not reduced could be a difficult balance for managers to strike. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · By way of the action planning exercise all managers have begun to discuss and identify with their teams what their service needs are, when an officer presence (whether at home or in an office) will be required, and how they might shape their flexible working arrangements around that. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A move away from 9 to 5 working should not be at the expense of service accessibility during those times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clear guidance and policies in place. 	(d) That communications be provided to managers to emphasise the need to access:	di) Several news bulletins have been issued, as well as invites from the internal learning hub alerting staff and managers to the offer available. Several courses and webinars have been made available around the below topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Flexible arrangements need to be mutually acceptable within teams (e.g. a manager may work late, but an officer may not feel comfortable or may not be able to contact them past 6pm). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · New IT service delivery commitment and revised SLAs to be launching in early 2022 that will ensure all staff and managers are aware of the fastest route to achieve IT support in the future – including chatbot 	(i) ongoing support available around Organisation Development, Leadership and culture to support them and their teams to identify the best way of working;	How to thrive in a hybrid world How to lead a hybrid team Part 1 - Managing change (2.5 hours) Part 2 - Managing teams (2.5 hours) Mastering your inbox Facilitating effective meetings Presenting with impact For those teams going through changes to their office model, these courses have been heavily promoted through rollout and emphasised by senior management to ensure increased attendance. dii) Similar to the above, a full suite of technology training has

	function, and faster solutions for replacement devices/repairs.		<p>been made available - including Microsoft training for new ways of working OneDrive and Office 365 webinars Teams basic and intermediate webinars Teams advanced webinars SharePoint collaboration webinars In addition, bitesize videos and face to face training has been delivered around using laptop with new desk setup, and how to use the new hybrid meeting room technology effectively to facilitate successful hybrid meetings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A move away from a 9 to 5, Monday to Friday approach, may impact back office services. For example, will IT support be made available to staff choosing to work outside those traditional office hours. 		(j) training on how to best utilise technology and workplaces to drive the best outcomes for staff and customers.	

Communication and collaboration

- Creating the right working cultures to support good collaboration, communication, and connections between staff both within individual teams and across the organisation, in all the different places and ways they might now work.

- Technology has and will continue to be rolled out to staff which supports new and alternative approaches to collaboration and communication. The Programme continues to invest in IT skills training – in particular Microsoft teams, SharePoint, and new workplace technology to allow hybrid meetings.

(e) That information be regularly shared with all staff around new and creative ways to come together either in person, utilising the new office model to its full potential, or digitally using any new technology rolled out, including sharing lessons learnt across the organisation and from other organisations that have been hybrid working for some time.

e) A dedicated focus on smarter working and how to fully embrace this was run for all staff in November 2022 with high uptake. A smarter working toolkit has been developed, taking learnings from the room 700 pilot, and feedback from managers and external organisations has been developed and launched through department management teams to support all managers and staff to refine and fully embed smarter ways of working.

Smarter working wheel

The wheel covers six key areas essential to successful smarter working. The following sections of the toolkit include:

- ✓ Useful information about each area of the wheel, along with things to consider as a leader, manager and team member.
- ✓ Some top tips shared by our colleagues.
- ✓ Resources to help you implement smarter working practices.



- Ensuring informal conversations held in corridors, outside of meetings are not lost, as the soft information shared in this way is critical to the smooth operation of the Council.

- Pulse surveys to be considered which could capture views on what’s working in terms of collaboration etc.

(f) That communications be developed to go out to all staff to alert them to the planned pilot to be run in room 700, with regular updates across the pilot period.

f) A serious of senior managers briefings were held in advance of the pilot in room 700 going live and several updates have been provided to senior managers to cascade to their teams across the pilot period. Regular news bulletins have been posted on the ways of working programme intranet site (accessible to all staff) as well as through yammer and department ways of working leads to share with their teams. A refreshed communications plan is planned for April 2023

	for hybrid meetings to take place.		<p>around a number of topics including; Reminder of programme aims and focus Tenancy – those in place, and upcoming changes Overview of 600 and 700 with feedback from staff Future plans and rollout – including Penn Lloyd and wider sites Smarter Working Toolkit and links to wow action plans Resources and support available Meeting Room Guidance/self-service/Restaurant etc Desk Booking/Desk Setup Reminder of the basics</p>
<p>· Ensuring officers feel comfortable with the new workplace arrangements so they are used to their full potential as a place where collaboration and communication can thrive. Confidence coming back into an office environment will likely be affected post Covid, particularly as this will look and feel very different.</p>	<p>· Specific collaboration workspaces will be created through the ‘property’ workstream such as booths, pods, collaboration areas. These will be trialled as part of a pilot to be run in Room 700 of County Hall in early 2022.</p>		
	<p>· The pilot will ensure staff have a better understanding of the new office model and are able to input and contribute into that process (as different offices are changed there will be engagement with staff that occupy and use that space). Once the findings from this pilot are understood, it is then proposed that this model will be</p>		

	<p>rolled out across the organisation for the benefit of all service areas, subject to any lessons learnt from the pilot.</p>		
Team cohesion and support			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Informal, unplanned, social and work-related interactions within a team can be hard to replicate digitally and there is a risk that this can negatively affect team relationships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A key part of the ‘people’ workstream will be to help officers and managers reshape why and how they come together to collaborate. Teams will seek out solutions that work for whole teams or services for a range of reasons, whether this be teambuilding, team meetings, collaboration, problem solving or general networking / wellbeing. This might involve meeting in a workplace, council building, external sites where 	<p>(g) That the use of the APR process and one to ones be extended to ask softer questions around the adequacy of peer support and connectivity and around health and wellbeing matters.</p>	<p>g) The APR template and supporting guidance was updated in October 2022 to strengthen smarter working and wellbeing conversations. This links through to the smarter working page on the learning hub that has a variety of tools to support the conversation from healthy remote working, to collaboration and connection.</p>

	appropriate, and of course virtually.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support networks can be lost reducing morale and motivation and increasing stress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · As detailed above, specific workspaces will be created to support alternatives ways for people to communicate and come together through the 'property' workstream. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Staff health and wellbeing issues could be more difficult to spot when connecting remotely by both managers and peers and so risk going unnoticed. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Teams working in different locations, perhaps with different flexible hours, could become disjointed and therefore operate less effectively. 			

Learning and development of new officers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · It can be difficult for new staff to build relationships with their team and managers remotely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Learning and development and induction processes had been developed and expanded to support smarter and remote working options. 	<p>(h) That managers be alerted to the need, as part of the refreshed induction process, to induct new staff into their base location and ways of working.</p>	<p>h) A new revised induction process is currently under development to be rolled out across the authority that makes stronger links with smarter working, including the above mentioned smarter working toolkit. The existing induction process links to the smarter working homepage on the intranet that has been updated with several useful pieces of information and guidance for managers (including training and support)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · There is a risk of missing out on 'on the job learning' within an office environment - new officers often learnt from observing their peers and listening in to conversations and discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Managers will consider the optimum ways of recruiting and inducting new staff – the latter often being best conducted face to face. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensuring new staff develop a sense of the organisation they work for, its ethos and values and build relationships with peers, both within their team and more widely across the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Corporate and local induction programmes are being reviewed. Refresh of the managers charter to ensure staff wellbeing and new starters communication is robust. 		

Staff Wellbeing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · During 2020 staff proved they are highly adaptable and able to continue to perform well working remotely despite the difficult circumstances. However, this has given rise to wellbeing and physical, mental and emotional health issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Staff bulletins had been circulated regularly during the height of the pandemic with information and practical advice on what staff could do to support their health and wellbeing and limit stress. This signposted staff to the Council's wellbeing service where further support could also be obtained. 	<p>(i) That health and wellbeing bulletins for staff be refreshed and reenergised as part of the roll out of the Programme.</p>	<p>i) Regular health and wellbeing bulletins are shared with all staff and managers, and the corporate wellbeing board connects through to department health and wellbeing boards to share department specific updates.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Home/work boundaries can become blurred, new team members might feel inadequately supported, the loss of personal social interaction and support from colleagues can all add to feelings of stress and pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Managers already undertake discussions with staff around illness and any sickness absence or adjustments required to their work as a result. Those discussions will continue and vary according to individual circumstances. The attendance management policy reflects the 		

	opportunity to consider home working if someone is well enough to do this		<p>j) Updated 121 guidance and APR guidance includes an emphasis on discussions around health and wellbeing issues. Departments also have a department level health and wellbeing group with key representatives across the department linking into the corporate wellbeing board. A variety of wellbeing Q&As are available through the intranet, smarter working resources on the learning hub, and regular bulletins.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor workforce health and wellbeing can threaten business continuity and impact organisational stability and performance. 		(j) That advice be developed for managers on how to raise and question issues about health, wellbeing and stress through regular one to ones and the APR process.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can managers ensure staff 'switch off' by taking regular breaks and finishing work at reasonable times when they are less visible in an office environment? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can managers ensure staff take adequate time off when ill? There might be the temptation to continue working from home but perhaps in a less productive way and this might not be appropriate for the service or beneficial to the employee. 			

Wider staff impacts			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoiding staff feeling pressured to work from home as the Programme is rolled out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The position imposed on officers to work from home as a result of Covid was <i>not</i> flexible. However, the Programme was not seeking to replicate how the Council operated during the pandemic and did not require people to work from home. 	<p>(k) That, whilst addressed through the action planning process, it be reiterated by managers and via communications at a corporate level that the Programme does not impose an expectation that the position under Covid will continue – remote working will not be imposed.</p>	<p>k) Remote working has not been made mandatory and all staff and managers have been encouraged to use the existing tools training, guidance, and support to find the best way to work. Smarter working has been the main theme around engagement with the key messages being:</p> <p><i>“Technology allows us to work in many more locations than traditional offices. Smarter and more flexible working is about moving towards a trust-based culture where we work seamlessly across locations and, in ways / at times that best suit our customers, our colleagues and ourselves”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a risk that staff may feel like they are out of pocket working from home e.g. due to increased heating costs, increased broadband costs, installation of blinds or changes to lighting, increased wear and tear on flooring caused by office chairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No contracts were being changed to designate anyone as a ‘home worker’ as it was accepted that this would not encourage the new ways of working and flexibility the Programme aimed to achieve. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · There is a risk that working from home could impact not only the health and wellbeing of officers themselves but also their family and domestic life. There might be a risk that the Council's responsibility as a corporate employer begins to encompass some negative impacts on an individual's domestic residence caused by them working from home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Officers were being advised, through discussions with their managers as part of the action planning process that the intention would be to provide flexibility that best suited the needs of the team and the individual (having regard first and foremost to service needs). If an officer preferred to work in an office base, had to for health and wellbeing reasons, or because their home environment was not suitable, this would always be accommodated. 	<p>(I) That communications, guidance and support be provided to staff on how to claim any tax benefit related to working from home from HMRC.</p>	<p>I) HRMC tax benefit guidance was issued to staff and managers when this was applicable. This has now ended however communications and briefings have been given to senior managers to follow the DSE risk assessment process to ensure staff have the correct setup for work at work locations e.g., base location, home. The revised smarter working policy has further guidance around taxation.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · During 2020 officers had received an (up to) £200 allowance which enabled them to purchase equipment necessary to work safely from home. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tax benefit of homeworking could be reclaimed from HMRC. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like all employers, the Council's responsibility is to its employees and it therefore has to ensure its staff are risk assessed and provided with appropriate PPE to enable them to undertake their jobs safely. Such arrangements were not affected by Covid or the Programme and would continue as business as usual. 		
The critical role of managers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers will be responsible for embedding the hybrid approach and ensuring their team flourish under the new flexible arrangements which will require new people management skills and a new attitude to performance and productivity management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers themselves will all undertake an APR and have regular one to one meetings with their own manager, through which performance in delivery of the 	(m) That communications be provide to managers to emphasise the need to access and take advantage of the support, guidance and training available to support culture change and skills in managing hybrid and remote teams.	See above di)

	programme within their teams will be discussed, as will any specific work pressures arising from this.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A manager's role will likely be more complex as they will need to manage different working patterns and practices, and geographically dispersed teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Managerial support is being actively addressed through the new Managers Charter and performance management framework. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Supporting a hybrid working team (both practically and emotionally) will likely be more time-consuming and therefore increase a manager's own, already heavy, workload. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Significant guidance has been and will continue to be issued and made available which are aimed to help managers develop the new skills required to manage a remote/hybrid workforce. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · There is a need to monitor and measure the fundamental role of managers delivery of the Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Balanced scorecards, customer service metrics, and staff survey results will continue to be used to measure effective implementation. 		

Confidentiality			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring confidentiality is maintained, both in terms of overhearing meetings and telephone conversations, the use of display screens and the storage of documents will be difficult for managers to monitor remotely, particularly if staff choose to work in public places access public Wi-Fi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance around how to maintain confidentiality has already been provided to managers and all staff. 	(n) That storage solutions and guidance be reviewed for remote working.	<p>n) The revised Smarter Working Policy (approved in 2022) was updated to include guidance around confidentiality – linking to existing training that covers best practice.</p> <p>“The concept of hot desking further emphasises the need for employees to be mindful of confidentiality and data protection. This includes ensuring that all documents are securely locked away after use, kept confidential whilst in lengthy meetings and computer screens are also locked whilst away from the desk they are working at”</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assurance had been provided by the Council’s ICT services that use of public Wi-Fi did not raise security issues if people chose to work in a public location for a period, e.g. a library or coffee shop. 		
			(o) That managers and staff be reminded to continue to follow information governance and keeping data safe mandatory training.
Health and Safety			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring staff are working safely at home and undertake, for example, their display screen equipment (DSE) assessments for the different places and ways they will be working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information had been made available to advise and guide managers and staff on Health and Safety matters. 	(p) That further reassurance be sought that the Council’s approach is considered sufficient in the face of potential legal action if an employee is injured whilst working from home and	<p>Compliance information in relation to DSE is visible to all managers on Tableau dashboards. Compliance percentages are shared with DMT’s as part of H&S Quarterly reporting.</p>

		whether the Council's insurance might be affected.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will managers and health and safety teams satisfy themselves that individual officers' remote working environments are safe and appropriate, particularly for those with disabilities. This will inevitably be more difficult to determine when they are working from home and therefore their arrangements are less visible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health and Safety Team provide an online DSE assessment. Alerts are sent to staff and managers when this becomes due. It is incumbent on staff to undertake this both for their home and office workstation. The results of the assessment are referred to managers when action is required. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and safety policies around electrical and fire safety, and display screen equipment have been refreshed to address remote working options. 	(q) That further and ongoing reassurance/visibility of health and safety at home be provided through communications and engagement with staff and managers – with particular focus on relevant worker groups e.g. Disabled Workers Group.	<p>All worker groups have been engaged as part of the programme with the opportunity to raise questions and concerns.</p> <p>A Big Conversation event was held in relation to Reasonable Adjustments.</p> <p>Guidance on the intranet has been reviewed to ensure it is visible and up to date.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Refreshed “keeping safe when working from home” guidance produced to support managers and staff with ongoing health and safety. 		<p>H&S team are working with IT and a Project group to review arrangements for WFH equipment to ensure the council is compliant with health and safety/DSE requirements.</p>
Equality			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensuring inclusion and fairness was not negatively impacted and that groups with protected characteristics who might already be affected by being less visible within the organisation (i.e. parttime workers who are predominantly female, BAME employees) are not disadvantaged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · As the Programme is rolled out there will be a push to move away from a culture of presenteeism to performance management and so implementation of the Programme should provide benefits in this regard. 		<p>None</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensuring access to learning and career progression opportunities, for example, are not be made worse for such officers through remote working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Equality impact assessments will form an intrinsic part of the delivery of the Programme. 		

Productivity and Performance Management

· Moving to a different type of performance management culture with less emphasis on presenteeism and time spent working, and more focussed on effort contributed and outcomes achieved.

· Where staff are working from home, it can be challenging for managers to ensure that domestic expectations (e.g. dependents at home) do not impact an officer’s work and productivity.

· Work around performance management and measuring productivity and outcomes will begin in 2022.

· Working from home will not be a requirement imposed on any officers and therefore where such circumstances arose the officer could still choose (or the manager could request if it was impacting performance) to come into the office.

(r) That an update be provided to members of the Group on the outcome of work undertaken to introduce an assurance system for managing performance and efficiency.

r) A workstream is being driven under the People Strategy 20-24 looking at Efficiency and Productivity. The aims of the work are to

- **Define and describe performance measures managers should be using to measure, monitor and to report on the performance of individuals and their whole team(s).**
- **Describe, communicate, and reinforce a system of performance management which uses the already implemented performance management tools. This system will enable managers to robustly manage performance and maximise efficiency through new ways of working.**
- **Continue to monitor and report the impact of the Ways of Working programme on performance and productivity.**

An update on this work will be presented to Employment Committee.

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