



**Glasgow City Council**

**General Purposes City Policy Committee**

**Report by Robert Anderson, Head of HR**

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**FUTURE WAYS OF WORKING**

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide an update on the planned approach being taken to meet the organisational design of our Future Ways of Working.

**Recommendations:**

The Committee is asked to note the council's planned approach to enabling our Future Ways of Working.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes  No  consulted: Yes  No

## **1.0 Introduction**

This report outlines the planned approach we are taking towards our defined 'Future Way of Working' throughout 2022. The approach will meet the organisational need to reform our workstyles and build on our lessons learned from the last 2 years to create a future way of working for the council that will ensure we are an attractive proposition as an employer of choice, able to employ a highly skilled and motivated workforce to deliver leading edge public services for Glasgow.

- 1.1 On 31st January the Scottish Government announced an expectation for organisation's currently remote workers to move to a hybrid style of working to continue to support the public health agenda. As a result we are now working towards defining our vision through our emerging People strategy, policy and practice determining what this means for our workforce as a whole, not only those who have worked remotely, to ensure we deliver a modern workforce fit for the future for Glasgow.

## **2.0 Our responsive and resilient workforce**

- 2.1 Our workforce has responded to the demands of the pandemic with tenacity and vast personal resilience, continuing to deliver through testing times and they continue to do so. Whilst we have supported and listened to our whole workforce through a wide range of methods, we were able to particularly focus on our remote workforce who are digitally enabled, making up over 6000 Microsoft teams users through our H&WB survey.
- 2.2 When it was safe to do so we invited employees to come back to the workplace primarily ensuring there was a safe place for those who needed it or to support employees social and mental wellbeing although this did not yield any more than 10% return across the workplace, it was an important aspect of our H&S offer. Benchmarking across 14 Scottish Local authorities also found we had led from the front in this pilot response.
- 2.3 The key findings from our remote workforce engagement found 4 key themes that will form the design of our future ways of working vision;
  - The highly positive impacts felt by over 32% of respondents who have an unpaid caring responsibility on their ability to carry out their role.
  - The increased capacity of the one in ten respondents who identify as having a disability or long-term health condition to better manage their work and life commitments with reduced levels of non-attendance.
  - The highly positive impact on 79% of all respondents to their overall Work Life Balance.
  - 26% felt negatively impacted either through needing a safe place, need for relational structure to their working day for their mental health, including for example multiple occupancy home workspaces or the challenges being managed by newly remote managers.

## **3.0 The emerging legislative, digital and policy landscape**

- 3.1 From a legislative point of view, what has been 'normal' has been reset with two years of remote working and constant change and adjustment, which is likely to determine a new baseline for 'reasonable adjustments' across the whole workforce.
- 3.2 The revolution of workforce digital delivery has been transformational in the past 2 years driven by necessity; this pace must continue as successful organisation's now look for

service delivery advantages as well as seeking to engage a younger and more digitally expectant workforce of the future. We will do this through the further integration of digital workplace solutions including Microsoft teams 365 tools, aligning us with other Scottish local authorities.

- 3.3 The UK Governments consultation work on the review of Flexible working was carried out in 2021. Whilst we await the outcome, it is likely that Flexible working will become a day 1 right, currently a 26 week right and that the reasons for refusing a flexible working request may well be reconsidered and reduced, opening up more opportunities for Work Life Balance and reducing current workforce inequalities.
- 3.4 The current economic impact of a job seekers market has brought into focus, what's now being termed the 'personalisation' of work. Employees are choosing the work that fits with their own lifestyle requirements. It is therefore our job to deliver a proposition that remains attractive to the external labour market.
- 3.5 Other policy impacts through Equally Safe (Scottish governments strategy to take action on all forms of violence against women and girls) and the Scottish Fair Work agenda (Scottish Governments agenda to balance the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers) will all require a lens on equality of access to flexible working.

#### **4.0 Building the Principles of our approach for Organisational success**

- 4.1 We've experienced how quickly the world of work can change and the necessity of enabling our workforce to be responsive and agile is understood to be critical to our success.
- 4.2 Adopting Flexible working approaches and Hybrid working will in return provide employees with a balance to this more modern ways of working.
- 4.3 Our work to shape this workforce design and policy approach will be led by the following principles;
  - The successful delivery of services will be foremost in our approach to our Future ways of working design.
  - The Health and Wellbeing of our employees is critical to successful service delivery.
  - We will work to reduce any inequality in opportunities for workforce flexibility.
  - In delivering work for Glasgow citizens there will be a need to be seen in and support the city as we work together for Glasgow.
  - We will assess roles suitable for hybrid and consider the design and development of digital tools that might support this further in the future.
  - We will challenge cultural preferences to the modernisation agenda and champion consistency, fairness and ethical practices that deliver services well.
  - Through meaningful consultation, we will trust our employees to deliver, listening and managing with compassion.

#### **5.0 Impact on terms and conditions**

Continued review of the legislative landscape as it unfolds is being carried out alongside our developing policy and guidance approach between corporate HR and Legal services. This includes consideration of any required contractual changes.

#### **6.0 Health & wellbeing of Employees for success**

6.1 Recognising the challenges of the pandemic, we committed to keeping all employees safe whilst supporting them to continue to work effectively to deliver for the citizens of Glasgow.

We acknowledged the significant and potential impacts of the pandemic on individual employee health and wellbeing and, in response, delivered a comprehensive range of supports and interventions that are accessible to all in a dedicated information and resources area on the council's external website.

6.2 From our H&WB survey we learnt that of the remote workforce, 89% of respondents said they were aware of all the health and wellbeing support available to them and 82% of people were made aware of this through the weekly corporate emails.

6.3 To reach the wider frontline workforce our Health and Wellbeing supports were made available on the staff internet pages, which allowed employees to be alerted via text message, managers briefs and other communication channels when there was updated information on events or activities for employees to engage in. Through our digital toolbox approach and our H&WB strategy commitment, we are working to ensure that all our employees have finger-tip access to any supports they might need to be there best.

6.4 Most recently, and in response to the ongoing impact of all aspects of the pandemic, we have partnered with 'Able Futures' who deliver the Government funded Access to Work Mental Health Support Service as part of the Department of Work & Pensions, which offers employees nine months of free, confidential work-focused support from a qualified mental health professional. The service can provide practical help to employees with any issues affecting them at work such as anxiety, depression, stress, debt, sleep problems, bereavement, coping with change, relationship breakdowns. This is being rolled out across the council in March 2022 as the key and critical element of our workforce support.

## 7.0 Continued benchmarking and national conversation

We will continue to benchmark through our current HR engagement frameworks with Core future cities, Scottish Local Authority networks and ensure we align with ACAS and our CIPD professional industry guidance as a standard for baseline for our work.

## 8.0 Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	No current identified impact
<i>Legal:</i>	Contractual and policy impact being assessed.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Resources being defined through workforce design.
<i>Procurement:</i>	N/A

**Council Strategic Plan:** A well Governed City that listens and responds: Priority 96

**Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.* Yes across, outcome 10 Glasgow City Council employees are supported to have improved mental and physical health.

*What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?* Appropriate Equality Impact Assessments are being worked on.

**Climate Impacts:**

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:* Yes through the redesign of workforce movement and digital engagement.

*What are the potential climate impacts because of this proposal?* Use of energy at home and workplace may have an impact.

*Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?* No known detriment at this stage.

**Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:** None

**9.0 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the measures introduced in support of employees working through the pandemic for the council and the associated approach being taken to our Future Ways of Working.