

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

24TH OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers

1. Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek Member approval for the Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers developed in conjunction with our Accountable Managers to facilitate the new way of working.

2. Executive Summary

The Interim Hybrid Working Frameworks has been revised following extensive consultation with Accountable Managers and other line managers to ensure that it provides them with the autonomy and information to create hybrid teams and deliver their services effectively.

3. Background:

The Interim Hybrid Working Framework was developed during the summer of 2021 as many employees continued to work from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Services continued to operate satisfactorily whilst employees were working from home, therefore the Interim Hybrid Working Framework was developed with Accountable Managers to give all managers guidance and a framework to operate in, as this way of working was new to everyone.

The document was publicised in August 2021 and Accountable Managers were asked to use this Framework to discuss working arrangements with

their teams which supported service delivery and, where possible, accommodate the requirements of employees. This work was then paused for a few months as a result of COVID-19 cases increasing over the Autumn period and then was re-launched in January 2022 and managers were encouraged within the Framework to communicate with their teams and put in place interim flexible arrangements in the first instance as it was anticipated that arrangements would need to evolve over time.

4. Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers

The Framework provides information on four different workstyles shown below, with an explanation of each one, for managers and employees to consider which workstyle would best suit their individual service needs :-

- Fixed Workplace
- Frontline / community based
- Mobile Hybrid Worker:
- Agile Hybrid Worker:

The Framework also provides guidance on how managers can:-

- Involve their team in developing the hybrid model
- Communicate with their team on hybrid working arrangements and hybrid working principles for the team
- Work together to establish new ways of team working to support the hybrid model
- Build everything on the principles of fairness and inclusion
- Review and Evaluate arrangements to ensure they are working

There is other useful information linked throughout the Framework and at the back of the Framework so that managers have everything they need in one place. There is also a dedicated section on the HR Intranet where all information and resources on hybrid working can be found.

5. Development of the Policy

A number of focus groups were arranged during May/June 2022 with around 60 Accountable Managers attending, in addition to this, the Future of Work Team attended Senior Management Team meetings to discuss the Hybrid Working Framework and how Accountable Managers felt about the Framework and implementing it across their teams. Overall, the feedback

on the Framework was positive, with the majority of Accountable Managers responding that:-

- The 4 types of worker works well and is representative of their service area
- The flexibility allows for better work-life balance for employees
- The framework is not too prescriptive, allowing service requirements to be accommodated
- It is perceived that there is less sickness due to working from home
- Good for recruitment – applicants are drawn in by the prospect of working from home/hybrid working
- Employees are more productive when working from home

There are some areas of the Hybrid Working Framework which managers found challenging and these are shown below:-

- How to monitor employee's wellbeing when working from home
- Managing expectations of staff in relation to hybrid working as service requirements must come first
- Clarification of definition of 'working from home' in relation to caring responsibilities and location
- The difference between flexible working versus the flexi-time scheme
- Information around arrangements in relation to claiming travel time and travel expenses
- Guidance in relation to childcare arrangements / school pick ups
- Availability of technology to facilitate hybrid meetings
- Communication and engagement with staff in relation to hybrid working
- A small number of managers are concerned that staff may not be as productive when working from home

As a result of the comments above, the Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers has been reviewed and strengthened to provide further guidance to managers on these matters. Please see the revised document in **Appendix 1**). In addition to this the HR Team will arrange further workshops and 'drop in' sessions for Accountable Managers and other line managers to deal with any outstanding queries which may arise.

6. Communication of the Policy

The revised Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers will be communicated widely across the Council. We will do this by including an article in the Council's Sway and In The Loop, we will place it on the HR Intranet and Yammer, we will send an email to all Heads of Service and Accountable Managers requesting them to cascade details of the new policy to all their service areas.

7. Financial Impacts:

There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

8. Integrated impact assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment, attached at appendix 1 has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

"A full impact is not required as there is no impact on any protected group. It also has no negative impact on bio-diversity or the Welsh Language".

9. Valleys Communities Impacts:

No Impacts.

10. Workforce Impacts:

The introduction of the Hybrid Working Framework provides managers with the autonomy to put in place hybrid working arrangements within their teams based on what works best for the service and also, where applicable is suitable to the employees within that service. This will in turn have a

positive impact on our employees. In addition to this, applicants to the Council will see this as a positive benefit of working in the Council.

11. Legal Impacts:

No impact.

12. Risk Management Impacts:

No impact.

13. Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

14. Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact

15. Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item. The Joint Trade Unions have been fully consulted on the development of this Framework and it has been agreed at the Local Government Services Forum.

16. Recommendations:

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **APPROVE** the Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers.

FOR DECISION

17. Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Hybrid Working Framework for Accountable Managers
Appendix 2 – First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment

18. List of background papers:

None.

19. Officer Contact

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