Report To:	**Council**
Date of Meeting:	**8 April 2014**
Lead Member:	**Cllr Barbara Smith**
Report Author:	**Linda Atkin, Head of HR** **Georgina Roberts, HR and OD Manager**
Title:	**Agile Working Policy Statement**

1.   What is the report about?

The report is about the Agile Working Policy Statement. Agile Working is the term used to describe how employees can work from any location, whether it is from a Council building, in the community, from home or any combination of these.

2.   What is the reason for making this report?

A decision is required on adopting the Agile Working Policy Statement, which will be the overarching policy on agile and flexible working in the council.

3.   What are the Recommendations?

That the Agile Working Policy Statement is agreed and adopted by Full Council.

4.   Report details.

The Agile Working Policy Statement is intended to be the over arching policy statement about how employees will work in the council going forward. The statement covers items such as flexible working, communications, office space, desk ratio's, information security and technology, all of which will help our employees work in a more agile and flexible way so that we can offer a better service to our customers and rationalize office space.

Detailed guidelines for managers and staff have been produced and are currently out for consultation

The key principles on which Agile working is based are that

- A suitable working environment must be created. This includes the provision of a suitable workspace and communication mechanisms to contact colleagues.
- Employees must keep equipment and council information safe and secure.
- Appropriate communication and support channels must be made available e.g. regular team meetings to monitor work programmes and co-ordinate office cover.

- Managers will need to manage workload and outputs, therefore keeping in touch will become a key responsibility
- Regular communication across teams and maintenance of team ethos even from remote locations will take on a new level of importance.
- Planning and agreeing a work programme with the line manager, and colleagues will be essential to ensure suitable workload cover is provided and equipment is available when needed.
- Adhering to a clear work area policy
- That it is voluntary and needs to suit the individual and benefit the delivery of service.

The Agile Working Policy Statement has undertaken extensive consultation and input from Senior Leadership Team, Modernising Board, Trade Unions, Staff Council, and managers and staff who have been piloting this over a period of 6 months.

This has been discussed at LJCC on 12 February where the Trade Unions raised concerns about homeworking, hot-desking arrangements and amendments to the Equality Impact Assessment. These issues have subsequently been addressed and clarified at the Corporate Joint Meeting with the trade unions and referred back to LJCC for recommendation to Council on 2 April 2014.

A copy of the Statement is attached in appendix 1.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This policy supports the following corporate priority:

"Modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers."

Outcome 1: Services will continue to improve and develop
Outcome 2: More flexible and effective workforce supported by cost efficient infrastructure

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

This policy defines how we will support our aim of becoming a flexible and effective workforce. Whilst there are costs associated with achieving this, these have been accommodated in the Modernising Board investment budget, Service budgets and the IT budget.

Resources from ICT, HR, and Property are involved in supporting the roll-out of this aspect of the modernisation agenda.

From an environmental aspect working in an agile and flexible way will mean less travel as employees will not need to return to the office to input or access information.

7.   What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

A copy of the EqIA is attached in appendix b.

It is recognised that this may not be suitable for all employees and therefore it is not a compulsory requirement. It will be down to the individual to determine whether it is something they wish to do and if so discuss with their manager.

Specifically, there is the potential for it to limit the ability for some people to work at other office locations if they have personally adapted equipment. As it is voluntary it will be up to individuals to decide whether they are able to work at other locations taking into account the work station available, the amount of time they are likely to be spending there and the type of work they are undertaking. Where possible and necessary, the Council will provide personally adapted equipment that is portable and transferable.

8.   What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Consultation has been carried out with the Modernising Board, Trade Unions, SLT, Middle Managers, Staff Council and the Policy Review Group.

Responses received have included the need to streamline existing policies, that a one size fits all approach would not work and that the emphasis should be on business need and service delivery which has been reflected in the development of the policy.

Concerns raised by the trade unions in point 4 above have been forwarded to the project working group to ensure that consideration is given to these.

9.   Chief Finance Officer Statement

Agile working is a key element of delivering savings from the reduction in the amount of office space occupied by the Council. A clear policy on this will therefore support the long term efficiency strategy. Any costs incurred need to be contained within existing budgets.

10.   What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

There is the potential for a reduction in team-working, communication and service delivery if people are not managed appropriately. In order to reduce this risk we have produced detailed guidance, a number of training sessions and identified people who already work in this way to provide advice and support to managers and staff.

11.   Power to make the Decision

Power to make the decision is s112 Local Government Act 1972.