AGILE WORKING – POLICY STATEMENT

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1. Introduction

Aim – An agile and effective workforce supported by cost efficient infrastructure

Denbighshire County Council's corporate priority is to develop modern working practices which help managers and employees to do their jobs in the heart of the community. We know that work performance is better if employees are able to have flexibility in their working arrangements, enabling them to better meet business needs and to improve efficiency and effectiveness, it can also help with balancing work and life demands.

With an organisation as diverse as the council a "one size fits all" approach will not work and as a management tool there will be differing levels of flexibility that can be applied to different posts. There will, of course, also be some roles where agile working is not possible. Although agile working is not a right our aim is to apply agile and flexible principles wherever possible.

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.

We want to make sure that working in an agile way does not mean that service delivery suffers in any way. In fact, we want it to improve our services to customers. We also need to reduce the cost of services by reducing the amount of office buildings, business travel and printing, therefore we need the technology and building infrastructure to enable more agile working by our employees. Our service provision models will have a clear goal of reducing reliance upon physical space and utilising areas in different ways.

We also want to make sure that employees understand what is expected of them when working agilely, to ensure that there is fairness and equity and that working arrangements are safe. Vitally important is also the need to maintain teamwork and opportunities for development and learning.

Agile working is about being able to do your job from a variety of locations. This could be from your usual place of work, a remote office, from home or on the move as long as the service needs are met.

Agile working is also about how we work, eg different working patterns such as annualised hours, 9 day fortnight or even the flexibility to take your lunch break at a different time of day.

Agile working is about flexibility and as such it is difficult to apply a rigid set of rules around it. Employees are expected to enter into the spirit of this flexibility and to remember that agile working brings a responsibility to co-operate with managers and colleagues.

As indicated the extent of agile working will vary according to the job role, and the main considerations are the impact on access to services by the public and on employee welfare both of the individual and their colleagues.

The Modernisation programme, through agile working supports the sharing of office facilities and aims to reduce the amount of corporate office space and to invest in changes to the amount and style of office space, the technology that employees use to work in a mobile way and the policies and procedures to support agile workers and teams.

2. Workstyles

Denbighshire has identified a number of workstyles:

- Desk based - for those predominantly based in the office and working from one desk

- Mobile/flexible - for those who spend some of their time working away from an office base

- Collaborative - a flexible or desk based worker who needs to be able to work from the base of another organisation

- Home based - for those more likely to be based from home.

Workstyles describe the ways in which staff are supported by facilities provided by the Council: office space, technology and management practice.

For those who do not fit into the above categories, their circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.

3. Equalities, Fairness and Consistency

It is essential that managers and employees alike enter into the spirit of agile working within the constraints of normal service provision. As each service offering is different, a 'one size fits all' approach cannot be applied.

It must be remembered that the final decision will be based on the impact it has on the Service, so although most employees have access to agile working not all outcomes will be the same and not all roles will be suitable for agile working.

An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken for new ways of working.

4. Review

Not all agile working arrangements will be successful either from the service point of view or the individual's point of view, so they are open to review at any point.

If problems arise every effort will be made to resolve them.

Managers will only stop agile working arrangements for sound business or performance reasons and after consulting fully with the employee.

5. Costs and Expenses

Printing is actively discouraged, but if there is a need to print anything it is expected that employees working remotely will use council facilities. This is particularly relevant for bulk printing or postage as it is far cheaper to use office based Multi-Functional Devices and franking machines.

Employees who want to access the workplace electronically from home will need to use their own broadband facilities and will not be reimbursed for doing so. It works on the same principle as getting to an office base – it is at their expense. The same principle applies to increased energy costs arising from home working.

Very few posts will be designated as 'home based' and this will apply where the employee infrequently needs to visit an office base or go into the community to work. All employees will be given a normal work base to meet with colleagues and this base should be used for travel claims.

It is important that all employees manage their travel and limit it in order to achieve the environmental benefits of agile working. Video and telephone conferencing is to be used in preference to travelling to meetings.

Mileage claims will be reimbursed under the usual terms and conditions of claiming expenses and subsistence allowance.

Travel time between the designated work base and home is not refundable.

6. Accommodation

All employees will have a designated work base where their team work area is situated, along with shared workspaces and limited storage facilities (electronic storage is the norm). This base will be used for mileage claims.

Physical work accommodation will, wherever possible, be designed in ways that:

- Respond to opportunities offered by new ways of working;

- Provide flexibility in terms of accommodating differing work styles and functions;

- Stimulate greater productivity;

Open plan work layouts should be implemented wherever practical.

Open plan allows more flexibility, particularly when combined with principles of hot desking

This aspiration will be extended to open plan management suites where possible.

Use of cellular offices will be limited to the need for access to small private space for 1:1's, confidential phone calls etc

In order to reduce demand on the meeting rooms, the integration of informal breakout areas will be encouraged. The location of breakout areas needs to be considered in order to facilitate uninterrupted conversation for the users and minimise potential interruption to surrounding work areas. Wherever possible, breakout areas should be located in central (or at least designated) areas where they can be utilised by more than one service.

Where there is a genuine need for service/customer confidentiality, then this will be determined and appropriately designed in consultation with the service provider. All council employees will be bound by the same rules of confidentiality.

Use of meeting spaces should be restricted to meetings involving large numbers, training events and public meetings etc.

In order to facilitate desk sharing and departmental hot desking, a clear desk policy will need to be implemented at service level.

A limited number of corporately available hot desks/drop down spaces will be provided in each office building.

7. Enabling Technology

All employees will be provided with suitable ICT equipment depending on their workstyle. This could include laptops, PCs, tablets with IM (Information

Management), and video/audio conferencing facilities, so there is absolutely no reason why working remotely should be any different to working in a council building.

Arrangements should be made for appropriate office cover. Core contact time and office cover arrangements should be agreed between the team and the line manager. Agile workers must be contactable.

All employees who are able to work remotely will have the ICT equipment to do so.

Mobile phones will be issued where the job role demands it i.e. it is a requirement of the job that the employee is mobile.

Where employees have their own personally adapted equipment (e.g. left hand keyboard and mouse) they will be able to keep this for their personal use and move it with them when working in any offices or remote sites. For Health & Safety purposes if an employee cannot work safely from remote locations without their specially adapted equipment they will not be able to do so.

Employees will be able to use their ICT equipment in a DCC office or any other remote DCC location.

Employees will be responsible for providing their own broadband for homeworking purposes.

8.   Information Security

The Council's Information Security Policy must be followed in relation to protecting information appropriately (link to Information Security Policy)

If handling personal data, the Council's Data Protection Policy must be adhered to.

All Council paperwork is securely locked away and only accessible electronically to the employee. Employees should make sure that screens and documents cannot be overlooked by other people when working flexibly.

Equipment, software, files and any other information should be taken care of to make sure it is not lost. It is particularly important to ensure that other people (in the home or whilst working off site) cannot access confidential or personal information.

Work files must never be taken off the corporate network and saved to home computers.

9. Health and Safety

Health and safety Regulations apply to the employer and to all employees. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations requires employers to ensure that a risk assessment of all activities is carried out with the significant findings being recorded and safe working systems developed where necessary.

When "agile" working, employees must ensure that they have suitable equipment, a suitable workspace with adequate security, storage, seating, ventilation, lighting and space.

10. Property & Insurance

Computers, laptops, phones and other items of equipment provided by the Council are covered by the Council's insurance policy. However employees will still need to make sure the equipment AND ANY INFORMATION ON IT is safe and secure.

Staff should only use equipment that they are competent to use and all equipment should be checked by the user before use to ensure that it shows no signs of fault or damage. Faulty or damaged equipment should be replaced.

Employees are responsible for contacting anyone with an interest in their property (e.g. mortgage lenders, landlords, leaseholders, Building and Contents insurer) to make sure there is nothing they need to consider when home working.