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Contact Officer:

John Armstrong,
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1 July 2021

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE** to be held in Committee Room 1 - Chanceries, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on **FRIDAY, 9 JULY 2021** at 9.30 am.

Yours faithfully

James Whiteman
Managing Director

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Joss Bigmore
Councillor Jan Harwood
Councillor Paul Spooner

Authorised Substitute Members:

Councillor Tim Anderson	Councillor Nigel Manning
Councillor Christopher Barrass	Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor David Bilbe	Councillor John Redpath
Councillor Richard Billington	Councillor John Rigg
Councillor Graham Eyre	Councillor Fiona White
Councillor Tom Hunt	

QUORUM 3

THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision – for the borough

For Guildford to be a town and rural borough that is the most desirable place to live, work and visit in South East England. A centre for education, healthcare, innovative cutting-edge businesses, high quality retail and wellbeing. A county town set in a vibrant rural environment, which balances the needs of urban and rural communities alike. Known for our outstanding urban planning and design, and with infrastructure that will properly cope with our needs.

Three fundamental themes and nine strategic priorities that support our vision:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Place-making | Delivering the Guildford Borough Local Plan and providing the range of housing that people need, particularly affordable homes |
| | Making travel in Guildford and across the borough easier |
| | Regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas |
| Community | Supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community |
| | Protecting our environment |
| | Enhancing sporting, cultural, community, and recreational facilities |
| Innovation | Encouraging sustainable and proportionate economic growth to help provide the prosperity and employment that people need |
| | Creating smart places infrastructure across Guildford |
| | Using innovation, technology and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services |

Values for our residents

- We will strive to be the best Council.
- We will deliver quality and value for money services.
- We will help the vulnerable members of our community.
- We will be open and accountable.
- We will deliver improvements and enable change across the borough.

AGENDA

ITEM

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

2. LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

In accordance with the local Code of Conduct, a councillor is required to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) that they may have in respect of any matter for consideration on this agenda. Any councillor with a DPI must not participate in any discussion or vote regarding that matter and they must also withdraw from the meeting immediately before consideration of the matter.

If that DPI has not been registered, the councillor must notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of the DPI within 28 days of the date of the meeting.

3. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee held on 3 March 2021.

4. ADOPTION OF AGILE WORKING POLICY (Pages 9 - 30)

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EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

3 March 2021

- * Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- * Councillor Joss Bigmore (Vice-Chairman)
- * Councillor Paul Spooner

*Present

EM17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies for absence.

EM18 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

EM19 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

EM20 PAY AWARD 2021-22

The Committee considered a report on the proposed pay award to staff for 2021-22. Councillors noted that the Managing Director had delegated authority to determine the annual pay award for all staff in the salary bands below Director level as set out in the Council's Constitution under Part 3, Delegation to Officers:

In consultation with the Leader, to determine the annual salary increase to locally determined salary scales for grades below Director level, provided that the cost of such is within the relevant overall budgetary provision

The Committee acknowledged that the Council was facing a severe financial shortfall in the next few years and immediate action was required to redress this. The cost of any pay award was significant, and this had to be balanced with the Council's ability to meet the costs of the award. In view of this, the Managing Director had agreed in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and with Unison, that no pay award would be made this year. However, it had been proposed that the lowest paid workers, (those on Band 2 and below) should receive a non-consolidated payment of £250 on 1 July 2021.

The Council's Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 had set out the Council's approach to reviewing levels of pay annually. It stated that the Council would ensure that overall remuneration packages aligned with market norms for local government and public sectors while at the same time taking account of pay levels in the local area, including neighbouring public sector employers.

It was the Government's view that Local Government should exercise restraint in making pay awards this year. Coupled with this, the UK currently had very low rates of inflation and had seen a contraction of pay rates in the wider UK economy. Each 0.5% pay award had a cost to the Council in the region of £135,000. The report included details of the pay awards that had been agreed by other Surrey councils for 2021.

The cost of making the proposed non-consolidated payment of £250 for staff on Bands 1 and 2 would be £63,000. As there was no budget provision made for a pay award this year, this would be funded by bringing forward funds set aside for next year's pay award (2022-23) as set out in the medium term budget approved by the Executive on 24 November 2020.

Incremental progression was a contractual benefit and 326 staff out of 683 staff, (almost half of our workforce) were eligible to receive incremental progression this year.

The Committee noted that the Managing Director had agreed a request from Unison, as part their pay claim this year, for the award of an additional day's leave on the anniversary of 15th and 25th year of service. This would be a non-consolidated gift in each of those years and not added to an employee's leave allowance and could not be claimed retrospectively.

The Committee, having discussed a number of options in relation to recognition of the hard work and dedication of the Council's staff over the past 12 months

RESOLVED: That the decision of the Managing Director not to make a pay award but to make a non-consolidated payment of £250 to all staff on Grade 2 and below on 1 July 2021 be endorsed.

Reason:

To ensure that the Council's lowest paid workers receive a payment in the absence of a pay award.

EM21 AMENDMENTS TO PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021-22

The Committee was reminded that the Public Sector Exit Pay Cap Regulations, which came into force on 4 November 2020, implemented a £95,000 cap on exit payments in respect of staff and the Council, at its meeting on 8 December 2020, had approved the amended Pay Policy Statement 2020-21 to reflect the Regulations.

The Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 10 February 2021. However, on 12 February 2021, the Government had revoked the Regulations, which meant that the 2021-22 Pay Policy Statement now needed to be amended.

The Committee considered a report, which would also be considered by the Council at its extraordinary meeting on 4 March 2021, which set out details of the required amendments to the Pay Policy Statement.

Having considered the report, the Committee

RECOMMEND: (to Council: 4 March 2021):

That the proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement for the 2021-22 financial year, shown by way of tracked changes in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Committee, be approved.

Reason:

The Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 required amendment following the Government's revocation of the Public Sector Exit Pay Cap announced on 12 February 2021.

EM22 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Act.

EM23 PROPOSED REDUNDANCY TERMINATION PAYMENTS ABOVE £95,000

In the light of the amendments to the Pay Policy Statement for 2021-22 due to the recent revocation of the Public Sector Exit Pay Cap Regulations 2020 proposed in agenda item 5 that the Committee had recommended to Council for approval (see Minute EM21 above), the Committee was invited to consider two proposed redundancy termination payments which exceeded, in both cases, the £95,000 threshold.

The Committee considered a report on this matter which, due to the amounts involved, would need to be considered and approved by the Council at its extraordinary meeting on 4 March 2021. The Committee, having endorsed the proposed redundancy termination payments in both cases,

RECOMMEND (to Council on 4 March 2021):

That the proposed termination payments associated with the redundancy of two posts which exceed £95,000, as set out in the table in paragraph 3.1 of the report submitted to the Committee, be approved.

Reason:

To enable the payment of the full entitlement of termination pay to two employees whose posts have been made, or proposed to be made, redundant.

The meeting finished at 5.03 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date

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Employment Committee Report
Report of Managing Director (Head of Paid Service)
Author: Francesca Smith, Lead Specialist HR
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Lead Councillor responsible: Joss Bigmore
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Date: 9 July 2021

Implementation of Agile Working Policy

Recommendation to Employment Committee

That the Agile Working Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable the Council to implement new working practices for staff following the working from home arrangements that resulted from the Government advice during the pandemic which are due to end later this month.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the Employment Committee to approve the Council's human resources policies.
- 1.2 The current pandemic resulted in a requirement for our office-based staff to work from home if possible and this situation is ongoing with a partial return to the office environment. The progress of the pandemic is uncertain; however, the Government's Road Map sets out the date for the ending of Covid-19 restrictions as 19 July 2021. In preparation for this we need to confirm to our office-based workforce how we plan to work in the future and the Agile Working Policy, attached as Appendix 1, provides this guidance.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The Council needs to demonstrate that it is using innovation, technology, and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council service
- 2.2 Office accommodation requirements can be significantly reduced through remote working creating an opportunity to generate rental income. Prior to the pandemic our aim was to achieve a desk ratio of 1.5 employees: 1 desk; however, it is now likely that a ratio of 2:1 is achievable. A review of the need for office accommodation at Millmead is a key part of the operational asset review which forms part of the Council's savings strategy. There is a target to achieve £1.5million savings from this

workstream of which the Millmead site is expected to contribute significantly towards the achievement of that savings target. In addition, the Millmead offices are being included in the Guildford Economic Regeneration (GER) Project as a potential site for the delivery of housing. To enable the Council to realise the benefits of the GER Project we will need to find alternative office accommodation. The cost of providing alternative office accommodation will be lower if we are able to implement the 2:1 desk ratio outlined above.

3. Background

- 3.1 Prior to the current pandemic there were a number of our staff working from home on an informal basis through agreement with their managers, and a few members of staff with an agreed contractual arrangement of working part of their weekly working hours from home. No staff were fully home-based workers and all of the partial homeworking arrangements in place had been requested by the employee as their preference. These arrangements had been agreed with their line managers and had generally been accommodated for reasons such as long commuting distances and childcare/eldercare arrangements.
- 3.2 The homeworking arrangements for non-operational staff introduced last year in response to the pandemic have been very successful despite the rapid transition for most staff from office to home based working. These staff are able to access the systems in the same way as they do at their desk as long as they have a home broadband connection. Home workspaces are the responsibility of the employee and no furniture or equipment is provided other than the laptops with built in soft phones, some mobile phones and small items such as laptop risers. An allowance of up to £100 can be claimed towards the employee's home office set up as a one-off payment. The line manager requires the employee to complete an on-line homeworking health and safety module which provides a self-assessment of the suitability of the workspace set up.
- 3.3 As the current pandemic restrictions come to an end, we intend to offer most of our office-based employees the option of working up to half of the working week from home or another remote location. This hybrid office and home-working arrangement ensures team integration and enables the management and development of staff, whilst not returning to the pre-Covid-19 office attendance levels. Unison and staff have been consulted with widely and are supportive of an approach which combines remote and office-based working. Whilst the Policy clearly benefits the workforce, the implementation of the Agile Working Policy will also support the operational asset review which forms part of the Council's savings strategy.
- 3.4 The line manager, in conjunction with the Service Leader, will determine the category of each job role within their team depending on the business needs and individual service requirements. Working patterns will then be agreed and approved by the Director to ensure fairness and consistency of approach across the Council. Where service requirements change, possibly at short notice, staff may be required to increase their office attendance either on a temporary or permanent basis.

4. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.1 The Council's duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 is to have due regard to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions. There are no direct equality impacts associated with agreeing the Agile Working Policy; however, the impact and application of the Policy will require monitoring. There is an unequal gender balance in the non office-based employees who are predominantly males engaged in Operational Services and who will not be eligible for remote working arrangements. This impact is unintentional and arises from the nature of the role rather than a corporate decision or practice. The positive financial, environmental and wellbeing impact on introducing agile working arrangements for the majority of our workforce mitigates the unintended consequence of the equality impact.
- 4.2 A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment completed in respect of this policy is attached as Appendix 2.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are significant accommodation savings to be realised from the reduction of office attendance and the possible rental income from office space. Accommodation requirements are under review currently with a number of options being considered all of which result in reduced accommodation costs. If the Agile Working Policy is agreed, it is expected that 90% of the office-based staff will work remotely for either one or two days per week.
- 5.2 This change to our working arrangements will be key to the Council's aim to achieve significant savings through the operational asset review and to delivering the GER project as set out in paragraph 2.2 above.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The regulations within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 set out the employer's responsibility to ensure a safe working environment and this extends to remote working arrangements. Employees complete a self-assessment of their remote workstation which requires management approval prior to agreeing to home working arrangements and those employees requiring special adaptations to the workstation will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 6.2 ICT Security and Data Protection issues can arise from remote working arrangements and these are addressed within the ICT Security Policy which all staff are required to comply with.

7. Human Resource Implications

- 7.1 Agile Working will not be a contractual requirement for our existing employees; however, we may require new employees to work remotely for part of the working week. Contracts of employment will be amended to provide for agile working arrangements for new office-based employees, but the primary work location indicated in the contract will continue to be an office base.

- 7.2 Training will be provided for managers in managing remote workers and monitoring productivity.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The Agile Working Policy encourages our employees to adopt a flexible, collaborative working style which supports the delivery of effective customer service. This flexibility means that we can utilise our accommodation more efficiently and provide an environment where teams can expand and contract over time and accommodate working with partners.

9. Background Papers

None

10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Agile Working Policy
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment



Agile Working Policy and Procedure

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We encourage our employees to adopt a flexible, collaborative working style which supports the delivery of effective customer service whilst also offering staff flexibility in how they work. Agile technology enables us to work remotely and allows staff to access the information and tools that they need to carry out their work at any time from any location. This flexibility means that we can utilise our accommodation more efficiently and provide an environment where teams can expand and contract over time and accommodate working with partners.
- 1.2 Some roles within the Council will require employees to have a fixed work location but for all other employees there is an expectation that they will be flexible in their work location. We are working towards achieving remote working and hot desking arrangements for the majority of staff, and for new employees the ability to work remotely (at home or other work locations) will be a contractual requirement.

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This document sets out the Policy, Procedure and standards for remote and mobile working and applies to all employees working for the Council whose work location may be flexible. Those employees who have a role which needs to be carried out in a fixed location will not be able to work remotely and this Policy and Procedure does not apply to them.

- 2.2 The following employees will normally be excluded from working from home:
- Employees carrying out operational roles which cannot be carried out remotely.
 - Employees who are subject to formal support arrangements under the Capability Procedure.
 - Employees who are subject to a formal warning under the Disciplinary Procedure for a breach of this procedure or other relevant misconduct.
- 2.3 Agency workers may be assigned as agile workers depending on the nature of the role, and the service should assess what equipment will be necessary for them to undertake the duties associated with the role.
- 2.4 This Policy will be applied fairly and consistently to all staff employed in the Council regardless of the work location and number of hours worked.

3. Policy

- 3.1. All jobs will be assessed to determine how the work needs to be carried out and each role will be categorised under the following definitions:

Category	Description
Fixed Worker	workers will have a fixed place of work and will work in a fixed office location at a fixed desk. The nature of the work dictates that work must be carried out at a particular location (e.g. acting as a 'hub' for the team, continuously responding to clients from a fixed building, delivering a service across the Borough from a fixed work base).
Agile Worker	workers who can work effectively for part of the week at a different location and can choose to split their time between home and a Council office with hot desking arrangements.
Equipment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some specialist packages, such as CAD, fixed desktop computers are required and these will be based at a fixed desk location. • Otherwise, all employees are provided with laptops that can be used with desktop docking stations at any desk across any Council offices, or for homeworking. The laptops will pick up the corporate wifi automatically from any Council office and employees will use personal wifi when working from home. • When working from home employees will need to use the Council provided laptop as they will be unable to use personal devices to connect to Council systems. • Telephony is built into the laptops provided. 	

- 3.2. The working pattern for Agile Workers will be determined through an assessment of a

range of factors affecting the role and the wider team, or service. This will include the need for office cover, need for collaboration with other staff, and whether someone has managerial or supervisory responsibilities. As a general guide staff are expected to attend the workplace for at least half of the working week but we recognise that work patterns may vary at different times.

- 3.3. For new employees, agile working will be a contractual requirement if the job is assessed as suitable for agile working arrangements
- 3.4. No existing employee whose job is assessed as suitable for an agile working arrangement will be required to work away from the office environment if they choose not to do so. All existing staff (at the time of this policy being adopted) choosing to become agile workers, do so on a voluntary basis.
- 3.5. Employees who work under an agreed agile working arrangement will be expected to do so on a permanent basis or until operational requirements are redefined. Because of office accommodation requirements it will not always be possible to allow employees to change to different office working arrangements. However, it is recognised that employees' circumstances can change, and a manager may agree to a change to the agile working arrangement, and these should be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 3.6. Employees will be provided with ICT support, including equipment (Laptop, riser, keyboard, mouse), software, training and technical support and advice, as appropriate to their work style. Arrangements will be put in place to preserve continuity of all ICT systems which agile workers rely on to carry out their jobs effectively.
- 3.7. Employees who work at home as part of their working arrangement will be provided with advice and information on appropriate insurance (see 15.3).
- 3.8. Employees working away from the office (at home or at other work locations) must be logged into MiCollab and be able to receive telephone calls through both Teams and MiCollab during pre-defined working hours.
- 3.9. Employees who volunteer to become agile workers or new employees who are recruited as agile workers are expected to provide themselves with a suitable workspace within the home where they can work effectively (e.g. in a quiet location, at a workstation with an adjustable chair and any specialist equipment that they need). All working environments (including the home 'office') will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure the health and safety of relevant employees. Employees may be prevented from working from home where their workspace within the home has been assessed as not compliant with health and safety requirements.
- 3.10. Teams will have designated work areas and lockable storage and individual lockers will be provided. The team managers will implement a desk booking system within the designated areas.
- 3.11. Council office locations which accommodate agile workers will have adequate arrangements for 'flexi-desks', including workstations (laptop docking and PCs), meeting spaces, and any other requirements as agreed with the line manager. Other specified Council workplaces may be identified to provide 'touch down' spaces for agile workers.
- 3.12. All employees working at home must have suitable child care/dependant care

arrangements in place (see 5.6).

- 3.13. All equipment provided to the employee is for the exclusive use of that employee (i.e. not for use by family/friends).
- 3.14. Managers and employees will be provided with procedures, training, and support, as necessary, to ensure that performance and conduct can be managed for agile workers.

4. Procedure for approving Office, Agile and Homeworking Arrangements

- 4.1. The line manager, in conjunction with the Service Leader, will determine the category of each job role within their team. Working patterns will then be agreed and approved by the Director.
- 4.2. Each employee will be notified of the manager's assessment and employees will commence the new working style. Managers will discuss any concerns that the employee may have.
- 4.3. The line manager will meet individual employees, as necessary, to discuss the implications of transferring to agile working, and will ensure that they have access to any relevant guidance documents. HR or ICT can provide further information or answer specific queries.
- 4.4. New employees will be required to work from home or work remotely unless the post is assessed as an Office Worker. There may be exceptions to this, and these will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- 4.5. If an employee cannot work remotely due to a change of circumstances a fixed office base will be considered if there are sound reasons that affect the employee's ability to work flexibly. The Service area will incur any cost associated with the transfer to non-flexible arrangements.
- 4.6. In cases where the employee has been excluded from working from home (see 1.4 above), in some circumstances the line manager may, in conjunction with the Service Leader, determine that agile working may commence or continue. This decision should take account of the operational needs of the service, the nature of the problem, and be subject to suitable management arrangements being in place.
- 4.7. Agile working arrangements may be suspended for short periods for operational reasons, after consultation with affected employees.

5. Hours of work

- 5.1. Employees working away from the office must work between 7.30am and 7.00pm Monday to Friday as specified in the Council's Flexible Working Scheme, unless the post specifically requires work to be carried out outside these hours, or where alternative arrangements have been agreed with the line manager subject to service provision.
- 5.2. As a public service there is a need for customer demand to be serviced during normal working hours. Full-time employees should always be at work between the core hours of 10.00 am to 12.00 pm and 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm and must take a lunch break of at least ½ hour between 12.00 noon and 2.30 pm unless otherwise agreed

with their line manager. Core hours will not apply where alternative working practices are currently in place to support the business need or operational requirements. The working hours of employees working under these arrangements are reflected in their contracts of employment.

- 5.3. For part time employees, the line manager and employee should agree the normal daily working hours, during which period the employee should be contactable by telephone and email, as appropriate.
- 5.4. Hours worked should be recorded on the electronic time-recording spreadsheet.
- 5.5. The line manager may agree with the employee reasonable 'time out' during working hours in order to improve work life balance (e.g. to take children from school to an after-school activity, walk the dog or attend appointments). This should be reflected in the employee's time-recording spreadsheet.
- 5.6. Employees working from home must confirm their childcare/dependant care arrangements with their line manager, where these apply. Homeworking must not be seen as a substitute for other childcare/dependant care arrangements, and employees working from home should not do so whilst in sole charge of children/other dependants requiring care and supervision unless as an agreed 'time out'. Staff with parental responsibilities should be aware of the NSPCC guidance on leaving children at home alone <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/in-the-home/home-alone/#>. This guidance should be followed in determining whether your child can be left unsupervised to enable you to carry out your job efficiently and effectively without undue distraction.
- 5.7. All employees have a responsibility to adhere to the Working Time Regulations (WTR) with respect to weekly working hours and rest breaks. Line managers should monitor the number of hours employees are working flexibly to ensure that WTR are not breached.

6. Contact and cover

- 6.1. Line Managers should ensure that employees are clear on the standards that apply to them locally in terms of contact, availability, telephone cover, office cover, working from home etc.
- 6.2. Employees who are unable to work due to being unwell should contact their line manager in accordance with the normal Sickness Absence procedure regardless of the location they are working from.
- 6.3. All employees working flexibly should be contactable by the line manager and other officers of the Council during their normal working hours or the hours specified in their Outlook Calendar. Where appropriate, they should also be contactable by customers/clients. Agreed 'time out' should clearly be blocked out in the Outlook calendar to indicate that the employee cannot be contacted during these hours.
- 6.4. All employees should keep their Outlook calendars up to date with their location and times of meetings and make them available to the whole team or service.
- 6.5. All employees should adhere to the Council's Telephony Usage Standards. Suitable personal voicemail messages should be recorded so that callers have the right

information if the employee is unavailable or away from work. Employees' telephone numbers should be displayed in the email sign off after the job title and should be formatted as landline number followed by a council mobile (if applicable).

- 6.6. Employees should log into MiCollab when at work. This ensures that calls to their telephone extension are routed to and from their preferred device (laptop with or without headset, work mobile as appropriate).
- 6.7. Agile workers may be required by the line manager to participate in a rota system to cover office hours or essential services such as customer help lines and duty systems. This requirement will be determined on a case by case basis in each workplace/team.
- 6.8. Agile workers should plan their work accordingly to ensure that they do not rely on colleagues to carry out tasks that have to be undertaken at the office base, for example printing and scanning documents.
- 6.9. Agile workers will be required to attend meetings, training, seminars etc. as appropriate to the job, and to provide reasonable cover for absent colleagues at the request of the line manager. This may be at short notice and require the employee to attend the office or other work location if working remotely.

7. Office environment

- 7.1. Agile workers will be allocated a 'designated office' which is deemed to be their place of work when not working from home or at other locations.
- 7.2. The Council will provide workstations (also known as 'flexi-desks') with desktop PCs or the ability to plug in laptops as necessary, within designated offices, for Agile workers to use when they are in the office. They will be required to use whichever convenient workstation is available and will not have the right of exclusive use of a particular workstation. All flexi-desks should be cleared at the end of the working session and left clean and tidy for the next occupant.
- 7.3. Agile workers will have access to lockable storage in the designated office for their personal files, papers, ICT equipment and stationery.
- 7.4. Other Council offices/properties throughout the Borough may also provide temporary 'touch down' workstations with facilities for laptops and access to the Council's ICT systems. These will be available for use on an ad hoc basis by Agile workers.
- 7.5. Where an Occupational Health assessment has determined that an Agile worker requires specific workstation equipment to carry out their work, they may be given priority use of a specific workstation if this is the only practical way to provide it. However, this may limit the designated offices at which the worker can work.

8. Team ethos

- 8.1. Good communication is essential to agile working and under flexible working

arrangements it will be the manager's responsibility to ensure that they maintain team ethos within their team. Managers will therefore need to consider:

- The use of effective communication which may include regular contact and supervision meetings, updates, team meetings, informal break chats.
- Planning team building and team activities.
- Inducting new staff members into the team including their socialisation into the team.
- Ensuring emotional support is available as required either through access to managers or through the introduction of a buddy system.
- Creating opportunities for team working, mentoring, and training opportunities.

Managers are able to access support and training in maintaining team ethos through e-learning on managing a flexible workforce, and the Managing a Remote Workforce Resource Pack which is currently being developed.

9. Management of performance

9.1. Managers must put in place arrangements to ensure that the performance of each employee can be managed effectively without continuous direct supervision. Under remote working arrangements, performance management and regular contact is more important and therefore needs to be more planned and formalised.

9.2. Performance management should include;

- Regular 1:1 meetings with the employee to discuss work issues, including progress towards objectives. These should occur at least once every 4 to 6 weeks, and give the manager and the employee the opportunity to raise any matters of concern.
- The use of updates between managers and employees in between supervision meetings through effective communication.
- The use of 'SMART' work objectives in performance review and 1:1 meetings.
- A Personal Development Plan (PDP) which provides the employee with opportunities to learn and develop in the role, which is regularly reviewed with the manager.
- Regular feedback from customers and other data on work output (where appropriate).
- Effective communication mechanisms such as team briefings, team meetings, team building days etc.
- Providing support mechanisms and a supportive environment to staff who find remote working challenging.

9.3. Agile working arrangements require employees to be well-organised and motivated, with clear objectives and timescales for achieving them. Management of Agile workers must take into account the need for support, and training if necessary, to manage their own workload without direct supervision.

9.4. If the line manager has any concerns about the employee's conduct or performance, these should be raised as soon as possible with the employee. The line manager should consider with the employee whether any additional advice or support is required to help them to reach the required standards. Consideration should be given as to whether the agile working arrangement should be suspended after taking advice from HR.

- 9.5. Serious concerns about underperformance should be addressed through either the Capability Procedure, or the Disciplinary Procedure if the behaviour constitutes misconduct.
- 9.6. Managers and employees are able to access training, support and advice on the effective management of agile working arrangements through the corporate training programme and HR.

10. Equipment

- 10.1. The Council's ICT service will provide support and advice to an employee working remotely however the service is unable to support an employee's home internet connection. Where an employee's home internet connection does not work they must contact their line manager who should advise them that they need to come into the office to work until the problem is resolved.
- 10.2. Agile workers must have broadband installed with a wireless router or a wired (R45 Ethernet) network connection. Employees who do not wish to purchase broadband may not be allowed to work from home. Employees should not use Council-issued mobile phones to access the network when working remotely for any significant length of time.
- 10.3. Equipment supplied by the Council is for business purposes. Employees should refer to the ICT Policy regarding the use of Council equipment for personal use for more information. The equipment must not be used by anyone (e.g. members of the family, friends etc) other than the employee.
- 10.4. Where Council owned equipment requires maintenance or repair, this must only be carried out by the Council's ICT Service.
- 10.5. For security and support reasons employees will not be provided with a home printer unless in exceptional circumstances a business case for home printing has been investigated and approved.
- 10.6. All Council mobile workstations (Laptops/Tablets) must be connected to the Guildford Borough Council Network from a Council office at least once every month for an hour to receive updates and patches.

11. Expenses and allowances

- 11.2 Employees will not be entitled to any allowances or reimbursement of utility bills for working from home.
- 11.3 Mileage is not payable when the Agile worker attends the designated office base. Any other mileage incurred will be paid at the relevant mileage rate depending on the reason for travel and any car user status attached to the post.
- 11.4 Mileage is claimed from the designated office base and if attending site visits from home the normal home to work mileage should be deducted from the mileage claim.

12. Health and safety and risk assessment

- 12.1 Most of the regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 apply to employees working at home as well as to employees working at Council accommodation.
- 12.2. Managers have a responsibility to ensure that a health and safety risk self-assessment is undertaken by the employee concerned of the work area in the home to ensure that the work can be undertaken safely without endangering the health of the worker or their family.
- 12.3. The Workrite on-line Homeworking Assessment for Mobile and Flexible Working should be completed as a joint exercise between the line manager and employee. Employees have responsibility for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce/mitigate risks in their home and to make their work environment safe. The cost of any adjustments to the home working environment to meet health and safety requirements should be borne by the employee.
- 12.4. The Council will provide a workstation at the office base that is fully compliant with all health and safety requirements. Where staff need to purchase additional equipment to ensure that their home environment is fully compliant, the Council will reimburse up to £100 towards this. If employees are unable to satisfactorily complete the homeworking assessment, they will not be able to work from home.
- 12.5. Employees with particular needs will be assessed by a trained workstation assessor or Occupational Health. Recommendations will be made about specific equipment needed (e.g. special computer mouse, or a specific type of chair). This equipment will be provided for the employee to use at their main work location. If the main work location is the office, the cost of providing additional/specialist equipment for working at home will be considered however if this cost is judged unreasonable, the Council may determine that the worker should be required to work in the office. Prior to making this decision the line manager should seek advice from Human Resources.
- 12.6. Managers should be reviewing health and safety on a regular basis and should be discussed on a frequent basis during 1:1 meetings. Where there are concerns appropriate advice should be sought.
- 12.7. Where employees are visiting clients/sites etc. they must ensure they make frequent contact with their office, usually after each visit in line with the Service's Lone Working Policy. <https://intranet.guildford.gov.uk/article/23634/Lone-working-and-violence-at-work-management-requirements>
- 12.8. Any accidents whether they occur in the workplace, whilst working from home or on a visit should be reported to the line manager as normal and recorded on an accident report form.
- 12.9. Electrical equipment supplied by the Council should be regularly tested, in line with the annual frequency at the employee's designated office location.
- 12.10. Employees must never use handheld mobile phones or email devices whilst driving and employees should be stationary when making or receiving telephone calls whilst driving. Please refer to the Vehicle Fleet Policy for further information <https://intranet.guildford.gov.uk/article/23342/Vehicle-Fleet-Policy>
- 12.11 If the line manager determines that a new employee cannot safely work at home,

they must work in the office at a flexi-desk.

13. Corporate standards

- 13.1. All employees should respect others when it comes to the working environment and be aware of how their behaviour might impact on others working in a flexible environment. It is recommended that locally services agree to a list of standards that are then communicated to employees to follow.
- 13.2. The standards below represent the minimum that is expected from employees, it is not intended to be an exclusive or exhaustive list and should be used as the basis for local agreements:
- Be aware of noise levels in the office.
 - Leave all flexi-desks clean and clear for the next user.
 - There should be no attempt to 'claim' or personalise flexi-desks.
 - 'Fixed' desks should be left clear when employees are on leave to allow other employees to use them.
 - Time keeping should be adhered to both at the start and end of meetings as a courtesy to those attending the meeting as well as to the next user of the room.
 - Leave meeting areas tidy (e.g. clearing up dirty cups at the end of a meeting)
 - Avoid eating smelly foods at desks.
 - Avoid having meetings at desks as this can disturb others. Where possible, meetings should be held either in meeting rooms or in break-out areas.
 - Earphones should be used for Teams meetings attended at the desk to reduce noise levels.
 - Where problems develop with working environments these should be reported using the management structure in place to resolve issues as they arise.

14. Security

- 14.1. Employees must ensure that all Council data and equipment (including laptops, handheld email devices, mobiles phones etc.) is stored securely, and that it is not at risk of loss or theft. Guidelines for employees on data security when working away from the office is provided in the [ICT Security Policy](#) .

15. Liability

- 15.1. Employees working away from the office are covered by the Council's insurance policy for employer's liability and personal accident in the same way as office-based employees.
- 15.2. Equipment supplied to employees working away from the office is covered by the Council's insurance arrangements providing it is used for work purposes only, and in line with manufacturer's instructions.
- 15.3. All employees working from home for part of their working week should contact their own insurance company to advise that they will be working from home. This would not usually result in an increase in premium. The Council will not reimburse any increase in premium should this occur.

- 15.4. If an employee is home working in rented accommodation, they should advise mortgagees or landlords that they intend to work at home. However, using a room or part of a room to work in would not normally require planning permission. Working from home should not affect Council Tax liability.

16. Changing circumstances

- 16.1. When one of the circumstances below arises, the Council reserves the right to reconsider the working arrangements under which the employee works. No changes will be made without consulting the individual concerned.
- The employee moves to a different job role, either permanently or on a secondment or acting up basis. The suitability of the new role for agile working will need to be assessed.
 - The employee moves home. Arrangements for homeworking will need to be reassessed.
 - The Council undertakes a reorganisation of the work area. All job roles will need to be reassessed in the light of changes to job profiles and person specifications.
- 16.2. Managers are responsible for reclaiming equipment where an employee leaves or moves posts in order for it to be reallocated to the next post holder.
- 16.3. Managers are responsible for keeping a record of work styles in their team and informing HR of any changes.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Origination/author:	Francesca Smith, Lead Specialist HR
This document replaces:	New
Date/detail of consultation:	Unison March 2021, staff consultation one month April 2021
Date of Employment Committee approval:	
Last Review date:	
Next Review Date:	July 2022



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an assessment is to understand the impact of the Council's activities* on people from protected groups and to assess whether unlawful discrimination may occur. It also helps to identify key equality issues and highlight opportunities to promote equality across the Council and the community. The assessment should be carried out during the initial stages of the planning process so that any findings can be incorporated into the final proposals and, where appropriate, have a bearing on the outcome.

(*Activity can mean strategy, practice, function, policy, procedure, decision, project or service)

Name of person completing the assessment	Francesca Smith	Date of assessment	25.5.21
Name of the proposed activity being assessed	Agile Working Policy	Is this a new or existing activity?	existing
Who will implement the activity and who will be responsible for it?	Service Leaders and Corporate Management Team		

1. Determining the relevance to equality

What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the activity?	To encourage our employees to adopt a flexible, collaborative working style which supports the delivery of effective customer service whilst also offering staff flexibility in how they work. Agile technology enables us to work remotely and allows staff to access the information and tools that they need to carry out their work at any time from any location. This flexibility means that we can utilise our accommodation more efficiently and provide an environment where teams can expand and contract over time and accommodate working with partners.		
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Is this a major activity that significantly affects how services or functions are delivered?	No, service delivery should not be affected	Who will benefit from this activity and how?	Staff benefit from flexibility in their working day and the Council benefits from reduced accommodation costs
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Does it relate to a function that has been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	Flexible working arrangements are of particular benefit for staff with caring responsibilities which are statistically more likely to be females.	Who are the stakeholders? Does the activity affect employees, service users or the wider community?	Service provision should not be adversely affected by agile working practices. Staff will benefit from increased flexibility.
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Based on the above information, is the activity relevant to equality?

Yes – continue to section 2	Yes, agile working practices will be offered to all staff who are working in roles that can be carried out remotely.
No – please record your reasons why the activity is not relevant to equality	

2. Is the proposed activity accessible for all the protected groups listed below?
(Consider in what ways the activity might create difficulties or barriers to parts of the workforce, community or protected groups. How might one or more groups be excluded because of the activity?)

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	x		An assessment will need to be carried out on any adaptations to the home workstation that are required. The cost of these may mean that the employee can only have one set of adaptations provided, either to the home workstation or the workplace.
Race	x		
Gender	x		Approximately 20% of the workforce are operational and will not be able to work remotely in front line roles. These workers are predominantly male.
Sexual orientation	x		
Age	x		
Religion or belief	x		
Transgender or transsexual	x		
Marriage and civil partnership	x		
Pregnancy or maternity	x		

3. Is it likely the proposed activity will have a negative impact on one or more protected groups?

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability		x	Mental health conditions may be worsened by the social isolation of homeworking and wellbeing concerns may not be picked up by management and colleagues. Staff will be required to work in the office location for half of their working week to ensure team interaction and enable management support.
Race		x	
Gender		x	Domestic violence increases with more time spent in the home and victims are statistically more likely to be female. Home working is optional so those at risk can choose to be office-based.

Appendix 2

Sexual orientation		x	
Age		x	Young employees are more likely to have entry level training needs which may benefit from working within a team environment. Statistically younger employees are more likely to be affected by the social isolation created by remote working. Managers will regularly assess the needs of any employees within this strand.
Religion or belief		x	
Transgender or transsexual		x	
Marriage and civil partnership		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	

4. What action can be taken to address any negative impact? What measures could be included to promote a positive impact? *(Consider whether it is possible to amend or change the activity due to the likely adverse impact whilst still delivering the objective. Is it possible to consider a different activity which still achieves the aims but avoids an adverse impact? Is an action plan required to reduce any actual or potential adverse impact?)*

The Agile Working Policy has been well received by staff with a general consensus that a mixture of home working and office based work provides the right balance of interaction with colleagues, learning and development opportunities, prevents feelings of isolation, and enables managers to communicate more effectively with teams.

There are concerns regarding the suitability of the home environment where employees do not have an adequate workspace, however the Policy does not enforce homeworking but offers this as a choice where the role is defined as an agile one.

Some roles will be designated as office workers and will not have the opportunity to work remotely. The impact of this will need to be assessed once roles have been designated to see if there is any disproportionate impact on one or more of the protected groups.

5. What are the main sources of evidence that have been used to identify the likely impacts on the different protected groups? *(Use relevant quantitative and qualitative information that is available from sources such as previous EIA's, engagement with staff and service users, equality monitoring, complaints, comments, customer equality profiles, feedback, issues raised at previous consultations and known inequalities).*

- Staff consultation responses.
- Workforce Profile
- HR issues that have arisen during the enforced working from home period

6. Has any consultation been carried out (e.g. with employees, service users or the wider community)? Please provide details

Agenda item number: 4

Unison consultation following a 2 month of consultation with staff during April.

7. Is further consultation required as a result of any negative impact identified? If so, what groups do you intend to engage with and how?

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly, any significant change to the Policy will require further Unison and staff consultation and Employment Committee approval.

8. Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment - please summarise your findings

There are no direct equality impacts associated with agreeing the Agile Working Policy however the impact and application of the Policy will require monitoring. There is an unequal gender balance in the non-office based employees who are predominantly males engaged in Operational Services and who will not be eligible for remote working arrangements. This impact is unintentional and arises from the nature of the role rather than a corporate decision or practice. The positive financial, environmental and wellbeing impact on introducing agile working arrangements for the majority of our workforce mitigates the unintended consequence of the equality impact.

Name of person completing assessment:

Date: 23.6.21

Job title: Lead HR Specialist

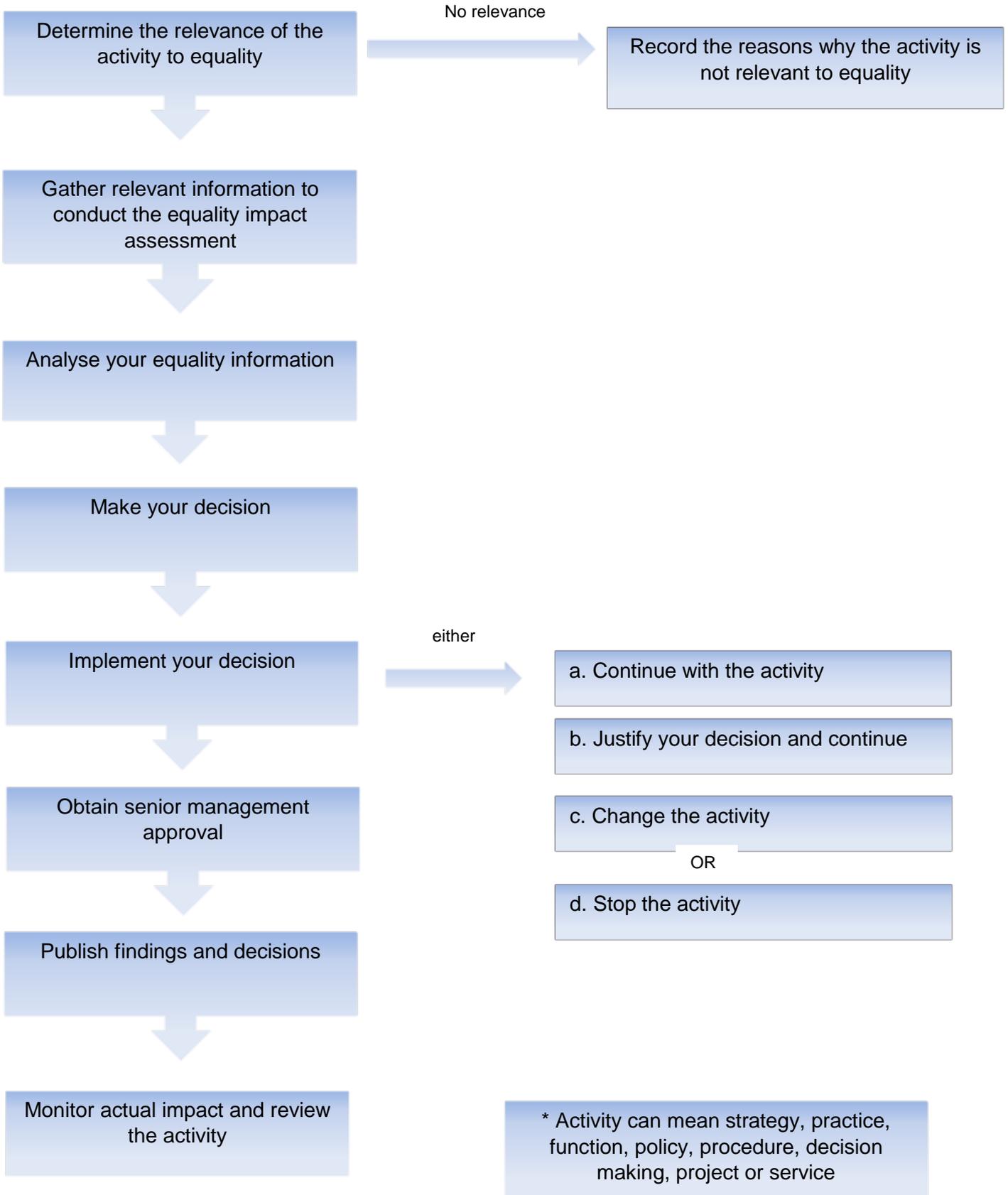
Signature: Francesca Smith

Senior manager name:

Date:

Signature:

Assessing the impact of your activity* on equality



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