
Staffing Matters and Urgency

15th August 2022

Report of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

THIS REPORT INDICATES WHERE TEXT HAS BEEN REDACTED WHICH IS DEEMED EITHER COMMERCIALY SENSITIVE, CONTAINS SECURITY INFORMATION REGARDING CITY OF YORK'S WORKFORCE ARRANGEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Working as One Programme

Summary

1. This report gives an update on the Working as One (Wa1) programme (the Council's hybrid working programme).

Recommendations

2. Staff Matters and Urgency are asked to;
 - a. Note the benefits and aims of the programme and the achievement to date and the ongoing initiatives as the programme continues to progress.

Background

3. There are a number of aims of the Wa1 programme, some of which were borne from the recent pandemic and the way in which we adapted our services to meet the needs of our community. These ways of working now present opportunities for how we can work for the future without compromising on meeting our community and customer needs. Delivery of good customer service remains at the forefront of how we shape our services to ensure that nothing will be done which could impact on the service that our community receives.

4. Another key aim of the programme is to ensure that York like other Council's, have a modern and attractive hybrid working offer for applicants and employees. Hybrid working allows efficiencies in the ways that we work, for example, less travel for our workforce and more productive attendance at meetings and training with online offers. A hybrid working offer also means that York is attractive to a wider net of applicants than those in the immediate employment market area. Hybrid working also reports an increase in wellbeing for many employees, but allowing connectivity for teams for professional and peer support.
5. The programme is also delivering on significant financial benefits as part of commercial letting of space at West Offices.
6. The workforce who have worked on a hybrid basis have welcomed the opportunity to work in a different format and in a flexible way that gives them the opportunity to work round other commitments including family, personal interests as well as reduced commuting times and the cost of commuting. Managers have also adapted to different management styles on a hybrid basis but also using face to face time to check in in terms of mental health and emotional resilience of team members on an individual and team basis which was difficult to do in the lock down periods. There has been a number of engagement sessions with staff as part of the ongoing working as one programme and how we have implemented new technology, ways of working and reconfigured our office environment. This is an ongoing journey too that we are continuing to develop. There is no blueprint for what is right and wrong but engagement has been key and it is working well. Where there has been concerns raised these have been addressed and worked on with employees. Hybrid working is now the 'norm' offer for employment for roles that can work in this way and to be able to promote our Grade AA standard offices is an asset to the Council and an attractive offer for new applicants.
7. The Working as One programme, identified three groups of workers:
 - office based workers - those staff who need to be in an office full-time as their work can only be done from a council building, or they have requested to work in the office

- community based workers - those who work out in the community, none of their role is able to be undertaken from home
 - hybrid workers - those whose role can be undertaken from different locations and who want to combine home and office working
8. The requirement to work from a council building is driven by the needs of the service and the role being undertaken, therefore, we have not specified how often hybrid workers are required to be in the office, again this is an attractive offer for new applicants and existing employees. Some services operate a rota where staff need to be in a few days a week, whereas others may only need to come in to cover a particular type of work or to attend team meetings or training, others will be office based full time. Employees can also attend and work in offices should they not have an appropriate set up at home, or if they need contact with colleagues or are simply more productive in the office.

Current position

9. From May 22 the request to return process for West Offices and Hazel Court, which had operated during the pandemic, was removed. All staff can now use the council offices.
10. The percentage of employees working on a hybrid basis is 66% (approx. 1600) community-based workers 29% (approx. 700) and office-based workers 5% (approx. 150)

West Offices Changes

11. REDACTED TEXT for security reasons

12. We already have partners in West Offices **REDACTED TEXT** and we are still considering commercial interest in using other parts of the building **REDACTED TEXT**, in recognition of the fact that the majority of staff in West Offices have moved to hybrid working.

Desk Booking system

13. A desk booking system went live in West Offices in June 22. Hybrid workers can now book desks, collaborative spaces and pods. This facility guarantees staff a work setting when they come into the office.

14. Office based workers have been allocated fixed desks and do not have to use the booking system.

15. REDACTED TEXT for security reasons

16. Meeting rooms continue to be booked through our facilities management team for the immediate future but this may change.

17. The launch of the booking system went smoothly, and usage has been high.

ICT

18. All hybrid workers have been issued with a laptop which they can use at home, and in the office. A standard ICT kit and furniture list has been agreed for the 3 work styles, and officers can request other equipment should they need them for accommodate reasonable adjustments.

19. Reconfiguration of ICT desk equipment at West Offices has been completed - there is now a 50/50 split between docking stations, where hybrid workers can link laptops to screens, and desktop computers, this maximises the use of laptops issued to hybrid workers.

20. Improvements have been made to the WiFi at West Offices and Hazel Court and is currently underway at the York Registry office and Explore library sites.

Lockers & Business Storage

21. All the lockers, business storage cupboards and wardrobes have been emptied and reorganised as part of this change. Day lockers are now available for use on the ground and first floors at West Offices.

Communications

22. Fortnightly Wa1 emails are being issued to all staff to update them on progress. All staff information sessions were held in April and June, to providing updates and question and answer opportunities. There are also further sessions planned in the future.

23. A dedicated Hybrid Working page is now available on the intranet covering the latest information as the programme progresses, it provides guidance for managers on how manage hybrid workers,

support and training for staff to help them get the best out of the new ways of working.

24. We have also produced a range of short educational videos to help staff understand the changes, topics include connecting to ICT equipment, returning to the office and hybrid working.

Health & Safety and Security

25. Where staff have not been in the building for some time, we have re-familiarised staff with key health and security arrangements
REDACTED TEXT

Consultation

26. Our unions are working with us to implement the Working as One programme, fortnightly meetings are held to consult on changes and provide progress updates.

Next Steps

27. In the Autumn the programme will start to focus on the ICT and booking system requirements for Hazel Court, the use of community hubs as dropdown places to work, pool car provision and embedding the new ways of working and culture change across the council.

Council Plan

28. The Council Plan identifies three priorities, four of which are relevant:
 - good health and wellbeing
 - well paid jobs and an inclusive economy
 - an open and effective council

Implications

29. The following implications are for noting;
 - **Financial** – spend associated with the programme is within existing budgets and funds from commercial use of the unused areas of West Offices following reconfiguration of office space. All spend is approved via a programme board. The commercial income from letting West Offices and the introduction of hybrid working is delivering significant financial benefits.

- **Human Resources (HR)** - while we are trialling our hybrid arrangements, we have not made any changes to our contractual arrangements and there is requirement to attend work base for some of the time, however we have implemented guidance to support hybrid working ensuring that performance is maintained and managed, employee wellbeing is not detrimented and service objectives are delivered.
- **Equalities** - Wherever an employee is working, they will be given access to the same: support – including access to their representatives (for example, a recognised trade union), opportunities – for training, development and promotion. Reasonable adjustments continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis
- **Information Technology (IT)** – Increased demand in the market for ICT equipment and consumables is causing supply chain issues and some delays to equipment ordered

There are no known **Legal, Crime and Disorder, Property** and **Other** implications

Risk Management

27. There are no known specific risks outstanding, however the programme board are made aware of operational programme risks as part of scheduled management updates.

Author:

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Helen Whiting
Head of HR & OD
HR

Helen.whiting@york.gov.uk

Ian Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

Report
Approved

 Yes

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Janie Berry – Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer

Debbie Mitchell – Chief Finance Officer and s151

All

 Yes

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: None