

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 26 July 2022

Title: Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Working Policy

Purpose of the report: To approve the strategy and interim policy

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Cllr Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

BACKGROUND:

The Covid-19 pandemic saw the abrupt enforcement of a national lockdown that included the requirement to remain at home and work from home wherever possible. These measures necessitated that the majority of our office staff work in a significantly different way. Staff respond quickly and positively to this change. In the main, the positive response was as a result of steps already taken towards a more agile and smarter way of working, including the investment in digital equipment and software, and the enhancement of the existing flexible working arrangements already in place.

Way We Work project

Having responded well to the initial challenges posed by the pandemic, focus shifted to how the Council could learn and build from the experience. The 'Way We Work' project was established to review the remote working practices adopted during the pandemic. The project aimed to explore the appetite for long-term change within the workforce whilst ensuring that service delivery remained the primary focus. The project allowed the opportunity to explore the extent of a shift in the wider strategic vision of where, when and how we as an organisation undertake work.

As part of the project, a significant staff engagement exercise was undertaken to gather feedback, experiences, ideas and future workplace requirements in order to support strategic decision-making. An estimated 74% of the working from home workforce participated in at least one of these engagement activities. Themes emerging from the staff engagement exercise and national research, trends and highlights have informed the development hybrid working strategy.

The staff engagement exercise indicated that there were many benefits from home-working but also recognised that there were challenges for some staff. The benefits reported included virtual meetings, increased productivity, improved collaboration, elimination of office distractions and interruptions. The identified challenges included poor broadband connectivity, training and inducting new staff, a lack of separation between work and home – “living in the office”, feelings of isolation due to less social encounters, and inadequate workspace in their home.

HYBRID WORKING STRATEGY

Using research findings and staff engagement evidence the Hybrid Working Strategy was developed setting out the principles and implementation process of a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. The needs of the service will always be the over-riding priority when considering any hybrid working possibilities. It was recognised that this level of flexibility, due to the nature of some roles or other constraints, will not be achievable for all staff but that there will remain a commitment to explore how a level of flexibility can be built into roles across the organisation. During the initial stages of implementation, Customer Contact services will remain online and over the phone. The reception desks at Canolfan Rheidol and Penmorfa will also remain closed initially whilst other face-to-face services will be phased in as part of the implementation process.

The Vision for the strategy is “to nurture an empowered, resilient and high performing workforce. A workforce that has the skills and equipment to work flexibly to deliver high quality services in an efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly way, now and in the future. We will design workplaces with modern, flexible spaces that not only encourage collaborative, cross-functional activity but also strengthen our corporate culture, increase engagement with our partners and support a better customer experience.”

The strategy introduces a set of priorities including a) agile and mobile ways of working; b) environmental and financial sustainability; and c) providing a better customer experience. In addition, a set of parameters were identified within which the hybrid working model could be built, such as ‘*where our staff can work as efficiently remotely or in the office they can choose where they work on any given day*’; ‘*hybrid working staff having no permanent personal space in the office, other than in exceptional circumstances*’; and ‘*our meetings with colleagues and external partners will be virtual wherever possible*’.

In order to identify different types of roles across the corporate workforce four workstyles were introduced: Fixed – a role which requires the post holder to attend the workplace due to the nature and requirements of the role and therefore not suitable to hybrid working. The remaining three are all types of hybrid working - Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid and Roaming. Categorising roles in this manner assists in determining ICT equipment requirements, training and development methods and office demands. Corporate managers in each service will place each role within their teams into one of these categories. The categorising will depend on the role and nature of their work.

To support the implementation of the hybrid working model three workstreams have been created, each chaired by a Corporate Lead Officer, and who report to a Ways of Working Project Board. The workstreams are:

- Workplace Design – Responsible for redesigning workspaces to increase inclusivity, flexibility and to support new ways of working for the workforce and customers.

- Digital Solutions – Responsible for reviewing and improving digital solutions to support collaboration, hybrid working and improved customer service.
- Policies, Procedures and Training – Responsible for developing new, and reviewing existing, policies and procedures to support new ways of working.

INTERIM HYBRID WORKING POLICY

The Interim Hybrid Working Policy has been developed to provide detailed information around what hybrid working means for the Council. It will support employees and their managers in implementing hybrid working by providing practical advice and information, enabling employees to work from the office or home effectively, productively and safely.

The proposal is that the policy is in place for a period of 18 months to allow for hybrid working to be trialled as the managers and our workforce identify an effective new way of working post-pandemic. At the end of this period, the interim policy will be replaced by a Hybrid Working Policy and other policies will be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose in a new landscape.

The policy has been subject to consultation with the recognised Trade Unions and who have been involved in the development of the document from the early stages. Their feedback and suggested amendments have been incorporated where appropriate.

Policy Headlines

The main policy headlines have been set out below:

- Hybrid status is a benefit which the employee can apply for where their roles has been designated as hybrid suitable (Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid & Roaming)
- Hybrid working employees may choose to attend workplace (or hub) on a daily basis but will only have to access to a hot desk booked via a desk booking system.
- To achieve hybrid status employees must demonstrate or agree to:
 - Sufficient broadband speed
 - Accommodate the necessary equipment for productive working
 - Ensure maintenance of information security
 - Safe working environment
 - Return to workplace if disruption to connectivity
 - Only work from recorded remote working locations
 - Attend the work location if required
- No contractual changes during period of Interim Policy. The contractual work location will stay the same and there will be no travelling expenses to attend work location or hot desk hub
- No working from home allowance payable as this will be a voluntary arrangement
- Hybrid status may be withdrawn under certain circumstances
- Recruitment/interviews for will be virtual interviews by default unless there is a strong justification for face to face interviews.

The purpose of all staff policies and procedures is set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required of staff, how they can gain advice or support

and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed?

If, not, please state why

Summary:

Long term: Long term planning has been embedded throughout the development of this strategy and policy. The initial phase of the strategy is 2022 – 2027, whilst the policy is interim for a period of 18 months, this is to allow for regular review to ensure effectiveness and building a solid foundation for further developments. Overtime, this will allow for the best use of resources and space requirements.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Consideration given to how the policy will impact staff across the Authority. Their roles have been assessed on suitability for hybrid working whilst ensuring high quality Service delivery. A reduction in travel, both commuting and business, due to hybrid and virtual working will have a positive impact on the Authority's carbon footprint.

Collaboration: Collaborated with employees and recognised trade unions throughout the development of the strategy and policy.

Involvement: The strategy was developed following a large staff engagement exercise. The policy was developed through a workstream which included trade union partners.

Prevention:

Integration:

Recommendation(s): (a) To recommend approval of the Hybrid Working Strategy
(b) To recommend approval of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy

Reasons for decision: To support the implementation of a new hybrid working model.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Corporate Resources 21/06/2022

Policy Framework:

Corporate Priorities: Investing in People's Future

Finance and Procurement implications: Within budget

Legal Implications: N/A

Staffing implications: Supports recruitment and retention

Property / asset implications: Not expected to be any implications during the life of the interim policy

Risk(s): Potential risk to recruitment and retention if hybrid working is not adopted.

Statutory Powers: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

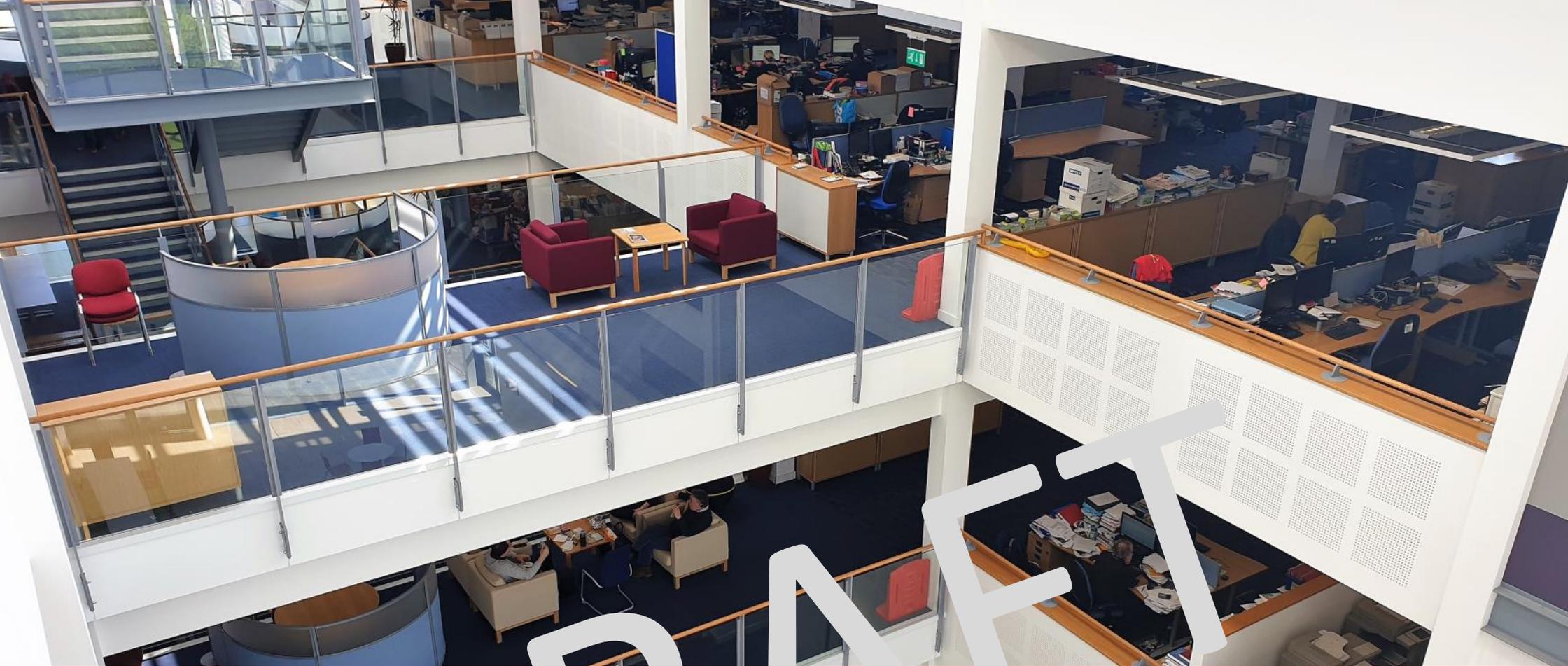
Appendices: Appendix 1 – Hybrid Working Strategy

Appendix 2 – Interim Hybrid Working Policy

Corporate Lead Officer: Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation

Reporting Officer: Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation

Date: 30/06/2022



DRAFT



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Hybrid Working Strategy 2022 - 2025

New Ways of Working



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Introduction

Welcome to Ceredigion County Council's Hybrid Working Strategy. This strategy is aligned and contributes to Ceredigion County Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 outlines the following vision for Ceredigion,

"Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money sustainable bilingual public services that support a strong economy and healthy environment while promoting wellbeing in our people and our communities."

The priorities outlined in the Corporate Strategy aim to enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Ceredigion.

Underpinning the success of our Corporate Strategy is a high performing workforce, operating in a way that is innovative, digitally mature and sustainable.

The Hybrid Working Strategy sets out the vision and associated approaches that will be taken to ensure Ceredigion County Council has a workforce with the skills and ability to be working in a way that is fit for our organisation's future, in workspaces that meet its needs

Hybrid Working

“Hybrid Working is blending some office-based work with a more flexible approach to structuring tasks, communication, hours and physical locations to enable staff to be as productive as possible no matter where, when or who they work with.”

Local Government Association (LGA)

Why hybrid?

There is significant interest in more flexible forms of working, and hybrid working in particular, has become a preference for many employees.

Organisations who support flexible forms of working experience reduced employee turnover, increased employee engagement and improved rates of talent attraction.

Hybrid working can also provide many other opportunities for organisations including reduced estate and facilities costs, improved employee wellbeing, diversity and inclusion as well as being more environmentally friendly.



In a recent [CIPD report](#) it was found, despite the many complexities and challenges of living and working through the global pandemic, that employees identified many benefits from working from home, for both them and their organisation. Benefits included a better work–life balance, greater ability to focus with fewer distractions, more time for family and friends, saved commuting time and costs, IT upskilling and higher levels of motivation.

Other benefits of flexible working reported included savings on office space, higher levels of employee job satisfaction and reduced absence rates.

The logo for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), featuring the letters 'CIPD' in a bold, purple, sans-serif font.

Chartered Institute
of Personnel and
Development



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



CLILC • WLGA

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

40% of employers said they expect more than half their workforce to work regularly from home after the pandemic has ended.

<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/planning-hybrid-working>

Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has stated its long-term ambition to see around 30% of Welsh workers working from home or near from home, including after the threat of COVID19 lessens.

<https://gov.wales/remote-working>

Local Government Association

70% of councils told the LGA they were considering increasing home working, and 67% said they were considering increasing flexible working options.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/developing-hybrid-working-local-government>



Hybrid Working at Ceredigion County Council

The Covid-19 pandemic saw the abrupt enforcement of a national lockdown which included the requirement to remain at home and work from home wherever possible. These measures necessitated that many of our back office staff work in a significantly different way.

Staff were able to respond positively to this change. The positive response was made possible by steps already made towards a more agile and smarter way of working, including generous investment in laptops, roll out of Office 365 early on in the response and the enhancement of the existing range of flexible working arrangements already in place.

The 'Way We Work' Project

Having responded well to the initial challenges posed by the pandemic, focus shifted to how we could learn and build from the experience. The 'Way We Work' project was established to review the remote working practices adopted during the pandemic. The project aimed to explore the appetite for long-term change within the workforce and the extent of a shift in the wider strategic vision of where, when and how we as an organisation approach work.

As part of the project a significant staff engagement exercise was undertaken during April 2021. The purpose of the exercise was to gather feedback, experiences, ideas and future workplace requirements in order to support strategic decision-making.

A mixed-methodology approach was adopted, with data gathered from a staff survey and a number of focus groups. Approximately 1,069 staff were working at home at the time. An estimated 74% of the working from home workforce participated in at least one of these engagement activities.

The responses and underlying themes emerging from the staff engagement exercise, as well as national research, trends and insights, has informed the development of our vision and our strategy towards moving to new ways of working in the long term.



Staff Focus Groups

53

Participants

Staff/Manager Survey

787

Responses

Corporate Manager Sessions

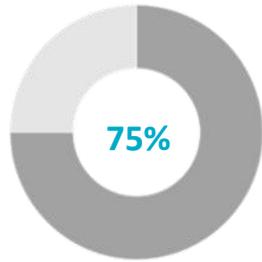
32

Participants

Participation Rate

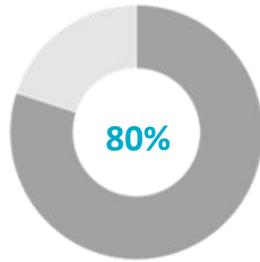
74%

Key Findings



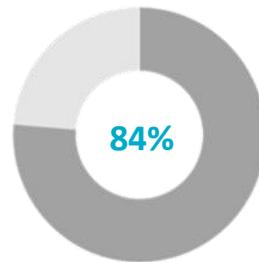
Productivity

When working at home...
I'm more productive than I am when working in the



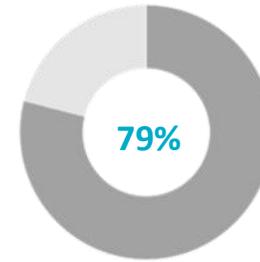
Line Management

When working at home...
I'm managed as effectively as I am in the workplace



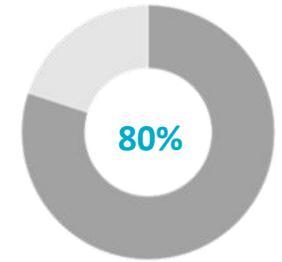
Skills and Training

When working at home...
I have the skills/training I need to work effectively



Equipment and Tools

When working at home...
I have the equipment/tools I need to effectively



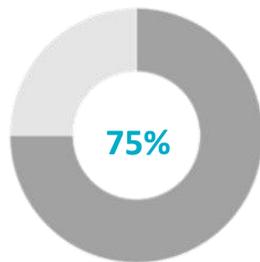
Paperless

When working at home...
I am able to work effectively in a paperless



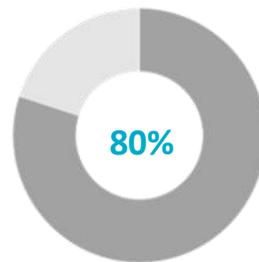
Experience

My working from home experience...
has been positive



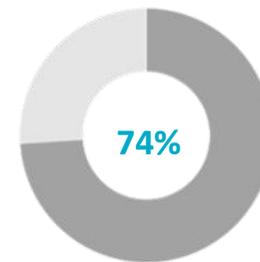
Engagement

My working from home experience...
has kept me engaged and connected with my team



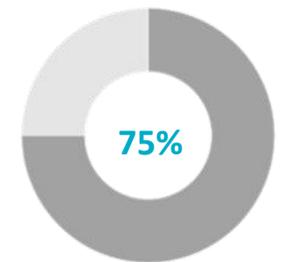
Work-Life Balance

Continuing to work remotely...
will improve my work life balance



Health and Wellbeing

Continuing to work remotely...
will improve my health and wellbeing



Financial Wellbeing

Continuing to work remotely...
will benefit me financially

Benefits and challenges

Findings from the staff engagement exercise show that our staff have experienced many benefits as a result of home-working. A significant number of respondents commented that virtual meetings had allowed them to increase productivity and improve collaboration. Less office distractions and interruptions from colleagues were reported as benefits. As was spending less time travelling to work. Others acknowledged the positive contribution to the environment as a result of less travelling.

Other benefits highlighted were the ability to spend more time with the family during the day and increased wellbeing due to a flexible work environment that helped many maintain a healthier lifestyle. Respondents also found that remote working allowed them to better manage their work-life balance and also felt that not being constrained to standard office hours allowed them to work when they were most focussed and productive.

Working from home for some was not without its challenges however. Poor broadband was recognised as key challenge as well as training new staff. Other respondents highlighted blurred working boundaries had meant more hours of work and a negative impact on work-life balance. Feelings of isolation as a result of reduced levels of human interaction and social encounters with co-workers were experienced by others. Others reported not having an adequate workspace in their home.

"We now have a weekly Team Meeting 'On Line' with better attendance whereas face to face meetings were monthly and relied

"It has improved the quality of my work and the ability to complete tasks without being

"I think it's been hard for new starters not being able to physically meet their team."

"Have saved a lot over the year in the actual value of my car - 3000

"Meetings have been easier to arrange, managing to fit more in due to less travel."

"Due to online meetings, I've connected more with new colleagues across different services whereas I may not have in the office."

"We need fixed base for storing all our resources."

"Not having to travel. Working hours which suit me. Being able to spend time with my family."

"I have found the experience positive, we seem to communicate more, we have weekly team catch ups, we have developed more effective systems and ways of working as time has gone

"[Hybrid] workers could use hot desks - however some staff need particular chairs/desks due to physical problems like back/neck problems."

"Office equipment - not got the space in my house, currently using dining table - not right heights etc."

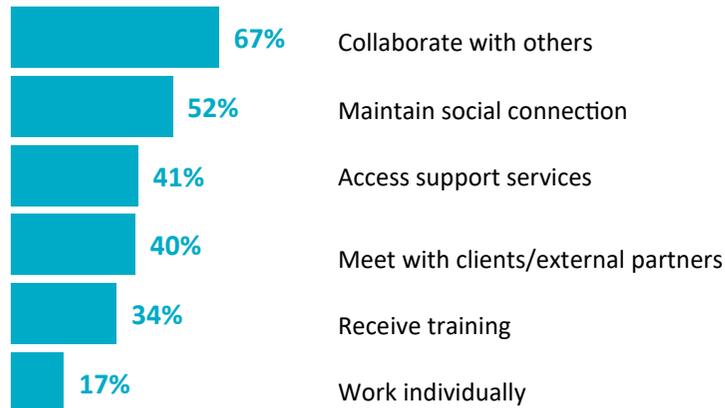
"I have been healthier, no colds or

"The big downside has been the very slow, sometimes intermittent, internet."

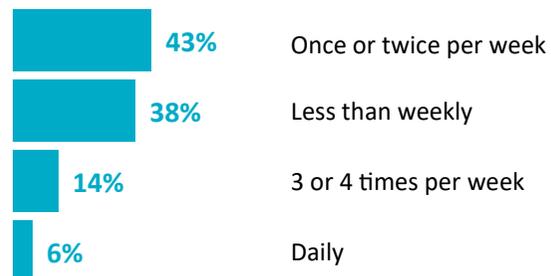
Returning to the workplace after the pandemic

To determine how our workplaces might be used by staff on their return to the workplace we asked them firstly to rank, from the 6 options provided, what would be their main reason for doing returning to the workplace and secondly how often they foresaw they would need to return to the workplace. Our findings showed a significant reduction in attendance with attendance in our main offices reducing on average to 28%.

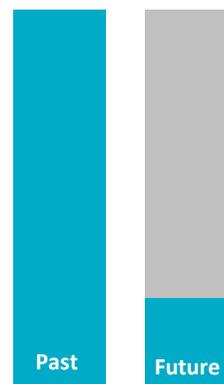
Workplace Use



Workplace Attendance



Estimated reduction in attendance



Types of employees

We also asked staff and managers on feedback as to the possible future employee types within our organisation. The 4 employee types below were agreed upon.

During implementation of our hybrid working model these employee types will allow service area leadership teams to categorise roles and determine which are suitable for benefitting from hybrid working. The categorisation of employee types will also be of assistance when determining needs such as:

- ICT equipment
- learning and development



Fixed

A role which requires the post holder to attend the workplace throughout the day due to the nature and requirements of the role.



Limited Hybrid

A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace but due to certain responsibilities/client demand the post holder will be required to visit council buildings or schools on a regular basis with little notice.



Flexible Hybrid

A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace.

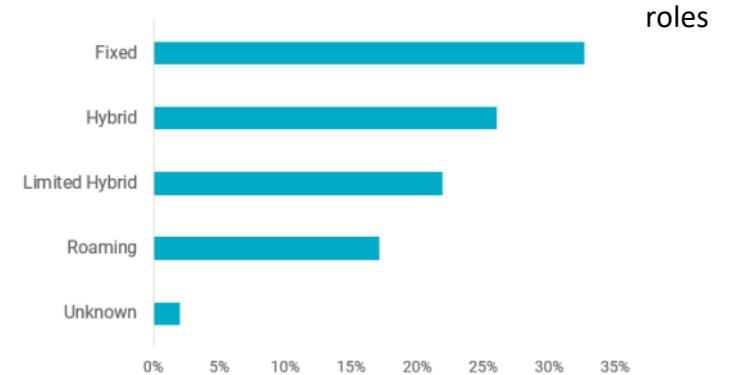


Roaming

A role which requires the post holder to consistently carry out over 50% of their work at various public and private locations across the county.

Inventory of employee types

To gain an estimate of the number of staff within each employee type category we asked each of our corporate services to complete an inventory. It was found that over 65% of our corporate workforce occupied



Moving to

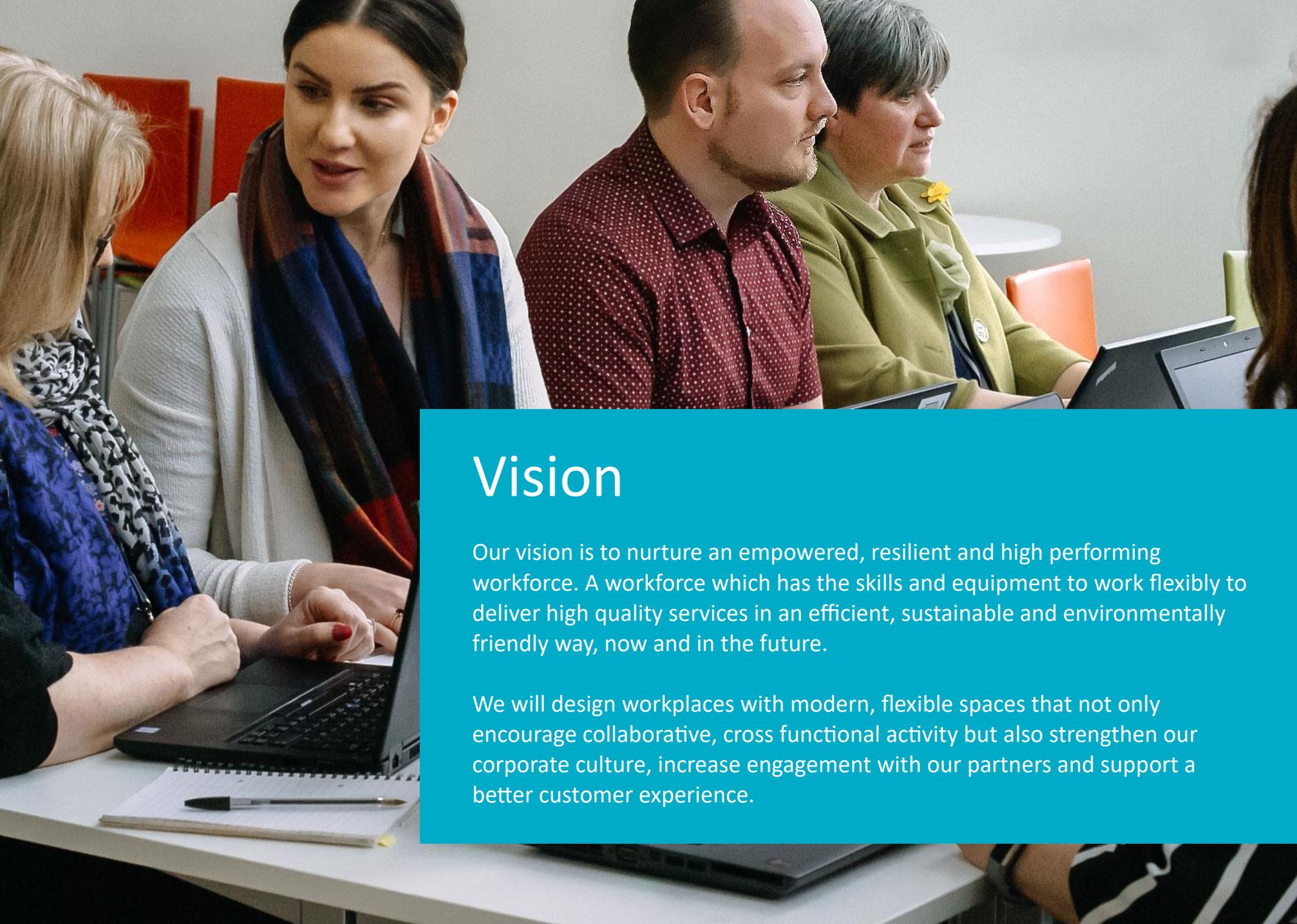


Our Hybrid Working Model

Our aim is to embed a hybrid working model that gives our people greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. We want to build a culture where our people feel trusted and empowered, and will have greater freedom on how, where and when their work is delivered. Focus will be placed on outcomes as opposed to attendance at our offices.

This level of flexibility, due to the nature of some roles, will not be achievable for all of our people. There will however remain a commitment to explore how a level of flexibility can be built into roles across the organisation.

Work is no longer the place we go, it is what we do and how we do it.



Vision

Our vision is to nurture an empowered, resilient and high performing workforce. A workforce which has the skills and equipment to work flexibly to deliver high quality services in an efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly way, now and in the future.

We will design workplaces with modern, flexible spaces that not only encourage collaborative, cross functional activity but also strengthen our corporate culture, increase engagement with our partners and support a better customer experience.

Priorities



Workplace fit for our culture and future of work

Workplaces that are fit for our culture, support our new ways of working and are accessible to all



Agile and mobile ways of working

Encourage and support agile and mobile workstyles whilst increasing productivity, cross-functional



Environmental and financial sustainability

To introduce workplaces and ways of working that reduce our carbon footprint and promote environmental and



Provide a better customer experience

Increase public facing spaces within our workplaces. Provide spaces that are welcoming and accessible to our



Modernise Services

Review the way we deliver our services, ensuring they are delivered in the way which best meets the needs of our customers.

A culture fit for new ways of working

Our people tell us a culture change is already underway as a result of the pandemic. To be successful in adopting a permanent hybrid working model we need to build on this change. We must foster a culture where our workforce feel empowered and trusted in their work, where our leaders and managers place an emphasis on outcomes as opposed to attendance, and are confident at keeping their remote teams engaged and connected. We must develop a workforce which is open to change, is effective at collaborating and has the skills to take a digital by default approach to work. We must also continue to embed a culture which supports employee health and wellbeing, where our people feel physically and psychologically safe in work.

Collaboration – A shared sense of purpose and a culture of collaboration will be nurtured. Knowledge sharing will be encouraged. Our people will be developed to use digital tools to collaborate in a virtual way. Workspaces will be designed to facilitate effective hybrid collaboration.

Empowerment – Ways of working will be developed to ensure our employees are provided with tools, opportunities, and support to empower and enable them to maintain high levels of engagement and performance in a supportive and trusting

Leadership and management – Work will continue towards developing empowering and engaging leaders and managers, with a clearly articulated vision of success and positive role modelling. Managers and leaders will encourage digital ways of working and will foster

Digital by default – Work will continue to leverage technology to streamline our processes and increase efficiency. We will develop digital skills across the organisation and foster a culture where our people embrace digital solutions in relation to the work that they are involved with.

Health and wellbeing – we will ensure our ways of working support physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. We will build on existing provision, review, and adapt this to reflect hybrid working arrangements and maintain our sense of team within a culture that is physically and psychologically safe.



Implementation

To support successful implementation of our hybrid working model, 3 key workstreams have been identified:

- Workplace Design
- Digital Solutions
- Policies, Procedures and Training

Leadership and strategic direction for implementation will be provided by the New Ways of Working Project Board. The 3 workstreams will report to the project board. Each workstream will have a designated lead officer who will co-ordinate the area of work and will report to the project board on progress.



Ongoing engagement

We acknowledge the importance of providing our workforce with the opportunity to have input into any changes in relation to their work. In line with this, we will continue to engage with our people throughout implementation and encourage them to share their views to assist us in shaping our hybrid



Workplace Design

We will redesign our workspaces to increase inclusivity, flexibility and to ensure they better support our new ways of working. They will be designed in a way as to foster a creative and collaborative culture, improve organisational performance whilst also supporting an excellent customer experience.

In making design changes we will adopt an evidence-based approach to understanding the amount of space needed in the office, and the different of kinds of spaces required by the workforce and our customers.

Data gathered during our staff engagement exercise, including anticipated staff attendance and reasons for returning to the office, will be used to inform interim design changes. Further engagement will be required to understand the scope of storage reduction, and how changes to work processes and technology use will create opportunities for further design changes.



As more of our people become hybrid workers there will be reduced requirement for personal desk space in our offices. In response to this change, space currently allocated to rows of workstations will be changed for:

- spaces to meet customer needs
- meeting and collaboration spaces (meeting rooms, breakout spaces)
- ‘touch-down’ informal spaces for people working on the move
- spaces for confidential work, virtual meetings and phone calls
- hot-desk workstations
- resource areas

It is envisaged that changes to our workplaces will occur on a phased basis, with Leadership Group determining priority areas across the Council estate. Comprehensive workplace re-designs as well as consideration to the rationalisation of assets, will occur once data regarding occupancy and workplace use has been gained.

Workstream Actions:

- > **Develop Action Plan for COVID-19 secure removal of personal belongings from Council workplaces**
- > **Using existing furniture to implement pilot return in Penmorfa and Canolfan Rheidol**
- > **Using existing furniture to implement interim design in Penmorfa, Canolfan Rheidol and other office buildings**
- > **Evidence based re-design of workplaces to increase public facing spaces, improve the customer experience and support future ways of working**

Digital Solutions

We will continue to review and improve digital solutions to support collaboration, hybrid working and improved customer service.

We will build reusable tools which can be shared across services and indeed the wider public sector.

We will support the review of all council services currently delivered to ensure services are joined up, efficient, simple and effective.

We will ensure the collection of quality data to support better decision making and the continued development and targeting of services.

Paper-dependency is a key constraint of hybrid working. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating papers are less compelling in an



Leveraging digital solutions will be pivotal in enabling our hybrid employees to work effectively from any location. As well as improving processes and data management, technology will be utilised in meeting spaces to increase productivity and to ensure all parties are able to take part and contribute effectively, no matter their location. Technology will be used to book meeting rooms and hot desks, thereby allowing us to gain occupancy trends, which will be used to inform workplace design.

We will look for digital solutions to improve the way traditional face-to-face services and transactional activities are delivered to our customers. We will do this in alignment with our Information Communication Technology and Digital Strategy 2018-2022 which identifies the following key objectives:



Workstream Actions:

- > **Identify ICT equipment requirements for relevant job types**
- > **Review telephone and video call solutions**
- > **Determine workplace ICT equipment requirements to support new ways of working**
- > **Support the re-design of all council services to ensure we offer customer focused, well managed and joined up services which are simple to use**
- > **Develop public ICT facilities / services in order to improve digital customer contact**
- > **Develop paperless working action plan**

Policies, Procedures and Development

It is recognised that implementation of new ways of working will require the revision of existing policies and procedures as well as the establishment of new ones. Any new or revised policies will in turn require supporting guidance, information and training to enable effective implementation.

Hybrid working will likely look very different from one organisation to the next. We at Ceredigion County Council aim to adopt a model which maximises flexibility in terms of where and when work is carried out, whilst never compromising outcomes and service standards. To assist us in balancing these priorities we have identified the following parameters to ensure hybrid is implemented across our organisation in the desired way.

Our Hybrid Working Parameters



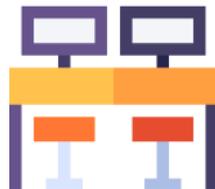
Where our staff can work as **efficiently** remotely or in the office they can choose where they work on any given day



Where **service needs allow** staff may fulfil their contractual hours between a bandwidth of 6am-9pm, Monday to Friday, with at least 4 core hours worked between 9am and 5pm each working day



It is essential that our meetings with colleagues and external partners will be **virtual wherever possible**



Our hybrid working staff will have **no permanent personal space** in the office, other than in exceptional circumstances.



Our priority is to work in a **paperless** way. We are committed to investing in systems and resources to support **digital ways of working**.

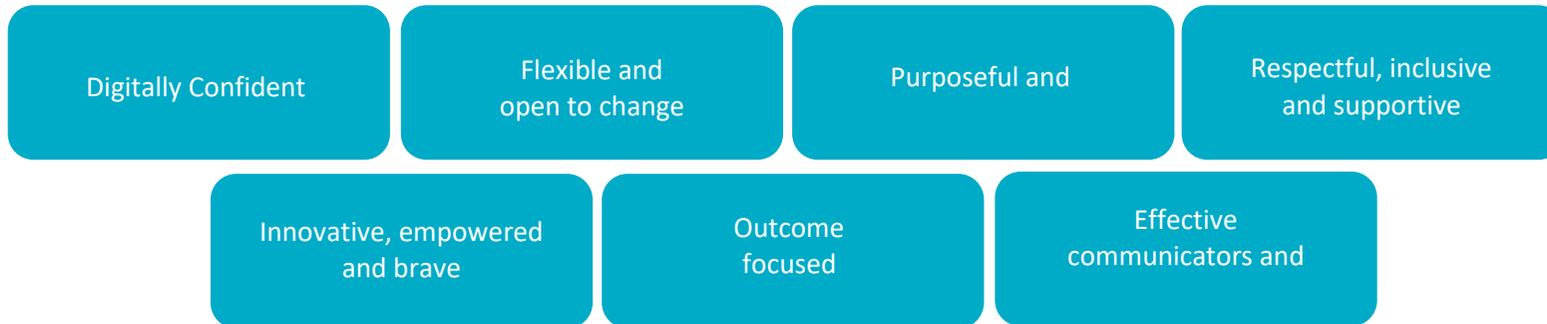
Policies and Procedures

A priority for this workstream will be to introduce an Interim Hybrid Working Policy. This policy will be in place on an interim basis whilst new policies are developed and agreed.

The Hybrid Working Policy will set out which roles are eligible for hybrid working as well as clarifying expectations around hybrid working including relevant health and safety requirements, where remote work can be carried out, virtual meeting requirements, data protection and information security requirements as well as the circumstances around which the offer of hybrid working may be withdrawn.

Development

Learning and development programmes and opportunities will be pivotal in facilitating new ways of working and supporting our change in culture. To support this change following behaviours will be encouraged and fostered within the workforce:



Hybrid working will make new demands on our managers and staff. In response to this, we will review existing learning and development programmes and activities, and where appropriate create new ones to ensure new ways of working and changes to culture are fully supported. When doing so, consideration will be given as to the most efficient and sustainable mode of delivery, whether face to face, virtually or by e-learning.

As a result of the pandemic many employees will have gained new skills in using technology. As further digital ways of working are introduced across our organisation, development opportunities will be put in place to ensure all our people have the skills needed to embrace new digital tools.

Our managers have developed many new skills in relation to managing a remote workforce. Nevertheless permanent hybrid working will bring unique challenges that are different from both predominantly remote and predominantly office-based working.

In response to this, the Ceredigion Manager Programme will be reviewed and reimagined to ensure our managers have the skills they need to foster team relationship building, effective collaboration and engagement. Furthermore our managers will need support in ensuring inclusion, conducting effective inductions and effective performance management of distributed teams.

Workstream Actions:

- > **Develop, consult and introduce interim 'Hybrid Working Policy'**
- > **Develop 'Interim Hybrid Working Policy' Ceri Net guidance**
- > **Review and amend other impacted policies**
- > **Review learning delivery methods and consider if best delivered as learning event, e-learning or Ceri Net support videos/guidance**
- > **Introduce revised Corporate Induction programme to support culture and behaviour goals**
- > **Introduce revised Ceredigion Manager Programme to support culture and behaviour goals**
- > **Explore introduction of Digital Competency Framework**

Measuring Success



Improved Employee Satisfaction



Improved Employee Retention



Improved Employee Health and Wellbeing



Increased Candidate Attraction



Reduced Sickness Rates



Reduced business travel claims



Reduction in workplace costs



Reduced operating expenditure per employee



Improved customer satisfaction



Increased digital transactions



Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council
Pobl a Threfniadaeth | People and Organisation

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Interim Hybrid Working Policy



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's Hybrid Working Strategy sets out the Council's vision and priorities in adopting a hybrid working model and facilitating a modern and efficient way of working that is sustainable and fit for the future. It is anticipated that the adoption of a hybrid working model will offer many benefits to our residents, service users and employees.
- 1.2 Whilst implementing its Hybrid Working Strategy, the Council is also responding to changing internal and external demands resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this changing landscape, this policy will be piloted over an interim period and reviewed in January 2024.
- 1.3 The introduction of an interim policy will provide an opportunity to assess the operational effectiveness of the policy as well as provide an opportunity to consider any adjustments that might be necessary to support new ways of working in the future.

1.4 Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide detailed information around what hybrid working means for the Council.

This policy is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to work from home effectively and safely.

It will assist both managers and employees in implementing hybrid working by providing practical advice and information.

1.5 Scope

The policy applies to all Council employees but excludes those employed under the delegated powers of School Governing Bodies.

Policy provisions and procedures contained within this document will temporarily override other Council policies and procedures where they conflict.

1.6 Definitions

Where reference is made to hybrid employees within this policy, this refers to all those who have the ability to submit an application for hybrid working and have had their application approved. This will be limited to employees who undertake Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid and Roaming workstyles as defined in Section ****.

1.7 Responsibilities

1.7.1 Corporate responsibilities

- The Chief Executive on behalf of the Council carries overall responsibility for ensuring that the Council has the appropriate processes in place to adequately and appropriately support its employees, regardless of what working arrangement they have.

- The Corporate Lead Officer: People and Organisation Service is responsible for reviewing, updating, and amending this policy and procedures to reflect changes in employment legislation or practice. This will be done following consultation with recognised trade unions and due democratic approval where required.
- The People and Organisation Service is responsible for providing advice, guidance, and training on this policy and procedures.
- The People and Organisation Service is responsible for maintaining and monitoring of the Health and Safety asset register as well as ensuring appropriate support is provided to on equipment use.
- The Corporate Lead Officer: Customer Contact Service is responsible for reviewing, updating and amending any policies in relation to Information Governance and Security in light of this policy, as well providing any necessary advice and training.
- The Customer Contact Service is responsible for maintaining and monitoring an ICT equipment asset register as well ensuring appropriate technical support is provided to staff on equipment use.
- Service Areas are responsible for allocating and maintaining any service specific equipment.
- All Corporate Lead Officers are responsible for ensuring:
 - Effective fair and consistent implementation of the policy
 - Continued service delivery; and
 - Engagement with their employees on these arrangements

1.7.2 Line Manager responsibilities

Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- Compliance with the requirements and procedures as set out in this policy.
- Flexibility and openness in relation to discussions and agreements with employees around hybrid working, whilst remaining focussed on the needs of the service.
- Arrangements for both regular individual and team meetings, ensuring regular communication is maintained between themselves and team members.
- Employees are given clear work expectations on outputs, actions and activities.
- Employees meet their responsibilities in relation to health and safety by undertaking appropriate risk assessments and acting on any areas of concern.
- A review of hybrid working arrangements will take place during the annual appraisal.
- Appropriate systems are in place to ensure information security and compliance with data protection legislation.
- That they have completed all relevant management training.

1.7.3 Employee responsibilities

Employees who are participating in hybrid working are responsible for:

- Complying with the requirements and procedures as set out in this policy.
- Being open and constructive in discussing and agreeing hybrid working arrangements, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service.
- Ensure they have completed the mandatory e-learning modules for hybrid employees.
- Ensuring a minimum broadband connectivity (minimum of 8 Mbps).
- Maintaining regular contact with their manager and team.
- Complying with Health and Safety Policy and Procedures by participating in and undertaking risk assessments; carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk; maintaining a safe working environment and taking reasonable care of their own safety.
- Taking responsibility for maintaining appropriate security requirements in relation to the use of equipment and information. Reporting immediately any loss, theft or damage to Council equipment or the loss of confidential information.
- Ensure the return of all equipment when they leave or transfer to a different role where the equipment requirement no longer applies.

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2. Hybrid Working

2.1 Principles

2.1.2 As set out in the Council's Hybrid Working Strategy, the aim of the Council is to adopt a hybrid working model which maximises flexibility in terms of where and when work is carried out, whilst never compromising service delivery.

2.1.3 To assist services in balancing these priorities and ensuring hybrid working is implemented across the organisation in the desired way the following principles have been agreed:

- Where our employees can work as efficiently remotely or in the office they can choose where they work on any given day.
- Our hybrid working employees will have no permanent personal space in the office, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Where service needs allow and with agreement from their Line Manager, hybrid employees may fulfil their contractual hours between a bandwidth of 6am and 9pm, Monday to Friday, with at least 4 core hours worked between 9am and 5pm each working day.
- It is essential that our meetings with colleagues and external partners will be virtual wherever possible
- Our priority is to work in a paperless way. We are committed to investing in systems and resources to support digital ways of working.

2.2 Work Styles

2.2.1 The ability to work in a hybrid way will be dependent on the demands of the role, the needs of the service and the employee's individual circumstances.

2.2.2 To assist with the identification of roles which may or may not be eligible for hybrid working the Council has identified four work style categories:

- **Fixed:** A role which requires the employee to attend the workplace throughout the day due to the nature and requirements of the role (e.g. Library Assistant, Receptionist, Caretaker, Care Assistant).
- **Limited Hybrid:** A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace but due to certain responsibilities/client demand the employee will be required to visit Council buildings or schools on a regular basis with little notice (e.g. Social Worker, Planning Control Officer).
- **Flexible Hybrid:** A role which can be undertaken as effectively remotely as in the workplace.
- **Roaming:** A role which requires the employee to consistently carry out over 50% of their work at various public and private locations across the county (e.g. Building Control, Environmental Operative, Mobile Librarian, Cycling Instructor)

2.2.3 Work style categorisation will be the responsibility of the Corporate Manager subject to approval from the relevant Corporate Lead Officer. Role categorisation will be monitored by the People and Organisation Service and Customer Contact Service.

2.3 Hybrid Working Application

2.3.1 Working in a hybrid way is an optional benefit. Any arrangement for working from home should be voluntary on the part of the employee and with the agreement of their line manager, taking account of the requirements set out in this policy.

2.3.2 The availability and extent of hybrid working will depend upon service demands, requirements of the role as well as the personal circumstances of the individual employee. Any hybrid working arrangement must not impact detrimentally on the quality and continuity of service provision in any of the Council's functions and activities. The needs of the service must be the over-riding priority when considering any hybrid working application.

2.3.3 Employees who occupy a post which has been designated as Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid or Roaming may make an application to work in a hybrid way by completing the Hybrid Working Application Form. The application should be dealt with as soon as possible and no later than within three months of submission.

2.3.4 When considering any application, Line Managers should refer to the guidance on Ceri Net. Once the Line Manager has reached a decision, this should be recorded on the application form and forwarded to their Corporate Lead Officer for final approval.

2.3.5 All applications will be subject to monitoring by the Customer Contact Service for the purposes of ensuring information security and acceptable digital connectivity.

2.3.6 Employees can only make one hybrid working application a year in accordance with Flexible Working employment legislation, unless circumstances relating to the refusal of their previous application have changed.

2.3.7 Where a hybrid working application has been refused, employees can submit an appeal. Appeals must be submitted by completion of the relevant form, available from Ceri Net. Appeals will be considered by a Corporate Director, whose decision will be final.

2.4 Withdrawal of Hybrid Working

By the employee

2.4.1 Employees may decide at any time that they no longer wish to work in a hybrid way and would prefer to work in a fixed office. In this event, employees should complete a 'Withdrawal of Hybrid Working Request Form' and are required to provide their Line Manager with a minimum of 4 weeks' notice in order that necessary arrangements can be made.

2.4.2 Depending on logistical considerations, there may be a delay in providing a dedicated fixed desk.

By the employer

2.4.3 Hybrid Working is a discretionary benefit. The following are reasons why hybrid working may be withdrawn (this list is not exhaustive):

- Work circumstances: e.g. work location, changes in technology or other service reasons that result in hybrid working no longer being viable.
- Employee health: Where concerns arise that employee health is being negatively affected it may be necessary to withdraw hybrid working, either temporarily or permanently, following advice and guidance in an occupational health report. professionals.
- Disciplinary reasons: If hybrid working is withdrawn as a result of a disciplinary concern which relates to hybrid working, then the provisions of the Council's agreed Disciplinary Procedure will apply and no notice may be given. The right of appeal against such a decision is provided within the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Capability reasons: Where there is concern about the capability of the employee hybrid working may be temporarily suspended to enable the Line Manager to provide further training/evaluation at the workplace. Where capability concerns persist hybrid working may be permanently withdrawn.
- Change of address: There is no automatic right to continue hybrid working at a new address. Employees must report a change in address to their Line Manager in order that they may determine whether the new address is suitable for home working.
- Change of post: There is no automatic right to continue hybrid working in the event of a change of post. Continuation of hybrid working will be in agreement with the new Line Manager subject to the standard application assessment.

2.4.4 Employer led withdrawal of hybrid working must be with agreement of the relevant Corporate Lead Officer, in consultation with a Human Resources Officer.

2.4.5 The employee will be given a reasonable period of notice to make any necessary arrangements.

2.5 Attendance at the workplace

2.5.1 As per our principles of Hybrid Working, an employee who has been granted hybrid working status can choose whether they work at home or in the workplace on any given day, subject to the needs of the service.

2.5.2 Employees in posts which are eligible for hybrid working, but who do not have hybrid working status, may not work from home and must attend the workplace.

- 2.5.3 There will be occasions when hybrid employees will be required to attend the workplace as required by their Line Manager. Reasonable notice (minimum 24 hours) must be provided.
- 2.5.4 If a hybrid employee experiences connectivity issues which they have been unable to resolve within 30 minutes they must inform their Line Manager. Line Managers must determine whether the employee can continue working productively without a connection or whether the disruption in connectivity is such that the employee is required to attend a Council building to ensure continuity of work. Travel time to a council building to resume work will not be classed as working time nor will it be classed as a business-related journey. Depending on the circumstances, employees may be required to record a break in working time under the Council's flexi-scheme arrangements or as Annual Leave or Flexi Leave.
- 2.5.5 Hybrid working employees will not have a dedicated personal space in any workplace and will instead have use of a hot desk. A hot desk refers to a designated workstation for employees to use at any time. All hot desk use should be recorded using the desk booking system.
- 2.5.6 Employees in posts which are eligible for hybrid working, but have chosen to have fixed working status, will have dedicated personal space in the workplace to ensure their productivity.
- 2.5.7 The Council will operate a clear desk policy in all of its offices which operate a desk booking system. This will apply to all desks, including fixed and hot desks.

2.6 Childcare and Caring Responsibilities

- 2.6.1 Hybrid employees must note that the ability to work from home is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. As with all Council employees, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place to avoid conflict with work performance.
- 2.6.2 Reference should be made to the following policies, which offer options and support to staff in such circumstances:
- Work Life Balance Policy
 - Carer's Policy

2.7 Travelling

- 2.7.1 In all but exceptional circumstances the contractual location of hybrid employees will be a Council location, which will be noted on their contract of employment.
- 2.7.2 In line with existing business travel arrangements, the commute between home and the contractual work location will not attract travel allowances. Business-related journeys will be claimable when employees deviate from their usual home to work journey.
- 2.7.3 Journeys to attend team meetings located at other Council buildings will not be classed as business-related journeys unless the employee has been directed to

undertake the journey by their line manager. It is essential that every effort is made for these meetings to be held virtually.

- 2.7.4 To meet our commitment of reducing our carbon footprint, employees will attend out of county meetings virtually. Where this is not possible out of county travel must be approved by their Corporate Director.

2.8 Locations when working remotely

- 2.8.1 The expectation will be that hybrid employees will undertake work remotely from their home address or any other address included in their Hybrid Working Application.
- 2.8.2 There may be occasions where employees wish to work from an alternative location for short durations, e.g. one working day. This may be done with prior agreement from their Line Manager.
- 2.8.3 There may be occasions where employees wish to work from an alternative location for extended periods e.g. one week or more. In this circumstance, a 'New Remote Work Address Form' must be completed and approved by the Corporate Line Manager.
- 2.8.4 Where the employee has asked to undertake work from an alternative location and is unable to work productively (such as experiencing unresolvable equipment, connectivity issues) they may, depending on the circumstances, be required to take Annual Leave or Flexi Leave or record a break in working time under the Council's flexi-scheme arrangements.
- 2.8.5 Employees are not able to claim business travel from their alternative location and should wait until they return to their normal home address(es), as recorded on their Hybrid Working Application, before arranging repair of their equipment.

2.9 Communication and contact

- 2.9.1 Hybrid employees should receive the same level of information, with the same frequency, as those without hybrid status. Contact needs to be two-way, so it is important that open channels of communication are set up and maintained. Regular contact will also allow the line manager to pick up on any issues of concern and offer appropriate support.
- 2.9.2 Hybrid employees should be contactable, normally via Teams, email and/or Skype, for the duration of their agreed working hours. An employee's Skype status should not be placed to 'Do Not Disturb' without prior agreement from their line manager.
- 2.9.3 Employees must keep their Outlook calendar up to date and provide their line manager with review access.
- 2.9.4 In line with our hybrid working principles and our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint, all internal meetings will be held virtually by default. All participants dialling in to a virtual meeting from an office building must do so individually (even if they are sitting next to each other) to ensure equality of presence in the meeting.
- 2.9.5 To replicate in-person meetings as far as possible employees must have cameras on for all virtual meetings, unless there is prior agreement from their line manager

or meeting Chair. Employees are expected to be dressed as you would when attending the office.

- 2.9.6 When attending virtual meetings with partners and service users, employees must apply a corporate background (available from Ceri Net).
- 2.9.7 Employees must not, under any circumstances, give details of their home address or telephone number to clients/customers or third parties. An employee's home must never be used for the purpose of holding work related in-person meetings and external mail should always be directed to Council offices and not to the employee's home address.

2.10 Equipment

ICT Equipment

- 2.10.1 In line with recommendations made by the ICT Service, our hybrid employees will be provided with the necessary ICT equipment to work efficiently remotely. Employees will need to accommodate the recommended equipment in their home.
- 2.10.2 Requests for ICT equipment over and above the standard recommendation will be subject to approval by the ICT Service. There may be occasions where additional equipment is recommended following medical and/or health and safety advice. Approval will be subject to consultation with the People and Organisation Service and the employing service.
- 2.10.3 In the event of enforced homeworking as a result of a local or national decision, Line Managers are responsible for ensuring employees are provided with the opportunity to take suitable ICT equipment home, thereby allowing them to work effectively remotely for as long as the enforced homeworking is in place.

Workstation Equipment

- 2.10.4 Employees can use their own furniture e.g. desks, chairs, provided that it is compliant with health and safety requirements as identified in the Council's DSE Assessment.
- 2.10.5 Additional workstation equipment may be provided to an individual should a workstation DSE Assessment deem this necessary or due to the requirements of the role.
- 2.10.6 Additional equipment may also be provided for staff who require reasonable adjustments as determined by occupational health.
- 2.10.7 In most circumstances, and in addition to their home workstation set up, equipment will be provided at the place where they indicate that they predominantly work and not across multiple sites.

2.11 Health and Safety

- 2.11.1 In addition to the employer's statutory duty of care, employees have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others while they are carrying out work activities, regardless of the work location.

- 2.11.2 Hybrid employees will have the same health and safety duties as other employees and will be required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst working from home. All employees must comply with all health and safety instructions issued by the Council.
- 2.11.3 A DSE Assessment will be carried out by all hybrid employees, supported by their line manager. This will need to be reviewed if any substantial changes are made to the working environment or working arrangements, or if the employee's physical needs change. Employees must fully participate in completing the necessary risk assessment paperwork and review this with their manager. If the employee has any complex health or physical needs, the health and safety team can support with a specific workspace assessment.
- 2.11.4 Hybrid employees have a responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home. There must also be adequate ventilation, sufficient electric point access and lighting.
- 2.11.5 Employees must report to their line manager any work related incident, accident or near miss which has occurred at home, in line with current arrangements.
- 2.11.6 Employees should report any health and safety concerns to their manager, as soon as possible.
- 2.11.7 Managers should focus on, and prioritise, employee well-being. Employees should contact their manager if they have any concerns regarding well-being. Advice can be sought from the Council's Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer. The employee assistance helpline, Care First, is also available.
- 2.11.8 Hybrid employees should ensure that the general fabric of the home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which they work, is/are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work e.g. electrical sockets. Employees should ensure that no equipment is left to charge unattended and that the correct charging device is used in relation to each item of equipment. Any electrical equipment provided by the Council should be visually inspected by the employee regularly for signs of wear, scorching, overheating, cable faults etc. Any defects should be reported to their line manager as soon as possible so that a replacement can be arranged.
- 2.11.9 Hybrid employees will be required to bring work equipment into a specified Council building for PAT testing, when requested to do so.
- 2.11.10 Managers should seek advice regarding any specific concerns around health and safety issues as all health and safety requirements must be appropriately addressed.

2.12 Data Protection, Security and Confidentiality

- 2.12.1 Maintaining the security of the information we process is vital and those working away from a Council office are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation and Council policies, just as if they were working in a Council office.

2.12.2 Managers must agree at the outset with their staff as to how confidential or sensitive information will be handled when working in hybrid ways.

2.13 Allowances

2.13.1 The employee will not be eligible to claim expenses for hybrid working and should weigh up the benefits of hybrid working when considering that no reimbursement for household bills will be provided. This includes, but is not limited to, broadband, heating, lighting, water, landline connection etc.

2.14 Insurance

2.14.1 Equipment provided by the Council as part of the hybrid working arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy, where it has been declared to the Insurance Team.

2.14.2 Hybrid employees are advised to contact their own insurance company to inform them that they will be working at home.

2.14.3 Liability insurance arranged by the Council will operate once risk assessments are completed satisfactorily. Risk control measures identified during risk assessment must be addressed prior to the hybrid working commencing.

2.14.4 Employees undertaking their duties remotely are covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Policy. Any work-related accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's incident reporting guidelines.

3. Other Policies

3.1 Recruitment & Selection Policy

3.1.1 In all but exceptional circumstances Line Managers should aim to hold interviews virtually.

3.2.2 Line Managers may hold face to face interviews if they believe there is strong justification in doing so.

3.2 Work Life Balance Policy

Home Working

3.2.1 Whilst this interim policy is in place it will supersede the 'Home Working' provisions contained within the Council's Work Life Balance Policy.

Flexi-time Scheme

3.2.2 All flexi-time scheme arrangements outlined in the Council's Work Life Balance Policy will remain in force subject to the following amendment to the Scheme parameters which will apply to Hybrid status employees only:

With agreement from their Line Manager, and in line with the needs of the service, hybrid employees may fulfil their contractual hours between a bandwidth of 6am - 9pm, Monday to Friday, with

at least 4 core hours worked between 9am and 5pm each working day. This will be on a pro-rata basis for part time employees.

3.2.3 The scheme parameters as outlined in the Council's Work Life Balance Policy will apply to all other employees.

3.2.4 Where any employee (hybrid status or not) is frequently recording working hours in excess of their carry over entitlement, Line Managers must hold a meeting to discuss with the employee to identify the reasons for this.

3.3 Sickness Absence Policy

3.3.1 Normal sickness absence reporting procedures will apply.

3.3.2 Return to work meetings may be held virtually with employees. Consideration will be given on a case by case basis as to whether other sickness absence meetings are held virtually or face to face.

3.4 Inclement Weather Policy

3.4.1 The Inclement Weather Policy will not apply to hybrid employees.

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Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



This **Integrated Impact Assessment tool** incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS: (Policy/Change Objective/Budget saving)

Proposal Title	Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Policy				
Service Area	People & Organisation	Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards	Strategic Director	James Starbuck
Name of Officer completing the IIA	Geraint Edwards	E-mail	geraint.edwards2@ceredigion.gov.uk	Phone no	01545 572019

Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal

The Hybrid Working Strategy was developed setting out the principles and implementation process of a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. The needs of the service will always be the over-riding priority when considering any hybrid working possibilities.

The Interim Hybrid Working Policy has been developed to provide detailed information around what hybrid working means for the Council. It will support employees and their managers in implementing hybrid working by providing practical advice and information, enabling employees to work from home effectively, productively and safely.

Who will be directly affected by this proposal? (e.g. The general public, specific sections of the public such as youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits, staff members or those who fall under the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act and for whom the authority must have due regard).

Employees who were previously office based but have been working from home since March 2020.

VERSION CONTROL: The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Author	Decision making stage	Version number	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
	<i>e.g. Budget Process, LG, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.</i>			<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a</i>

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



				<i>proposal. Have you considered and applied the sustainable development principle and Well-being Goals?</i>
Geraint Edwards	Scrutiny	V1	30/05/2022	

COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: Which of the Council's Strategic Objectives does the proposal address and how?

Boosting the Economy	A key aim of this strategy and policy is to develop a flexible and hybrid workforce able to balance their work and home lives whilst still delivering high quality services, thereby enabling them to contribute to the Council's Strategic Objectives.
Investing in People's Future	A key aim of this strategy and policy is to develop a flexible and hybrid workforce able to balance their work and home lives whilst still delivering high quality services, thereby enabling them to contribute to the Council's Strategic Objectives.
Enabling Individual and Family Resilience	A key aim of this strategy and policy is to develop a flexible and hybrid workforce able to balance their work and home lives whilst still delivering high quality services, thereby enabling them to contribute to the Council's Strategic Objectives.
Promoting Environmental and Community Resilience	A key aim of this strategy and policy is to develop a flexible and hybrid workforce able to balance their work and home lives whilst still delivering high quality services, thereby enabling them to contribute to the Council's Strategic Objectives.

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. These need to include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the judgement you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation will have a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- *Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users*
- *Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys*
- *Local population data from the census figures (such as Ceredigion Welsh language Profile and Ceredigion Demographic Equality data)*
- *National Household survey data*
- *Service User data*
- *Feedback from consultation and engagement campaigns*
- *Recommendations from Scrutiny*
- *Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities*
- *Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors, 'Is Wales Fairer' document.*
- *Welsh Language skills data for Council staff*



2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the five sustainable development principles, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its development?			
Sustainable Development Principle	Does the proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not, explain why.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the principle?
Long Term Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future.	Yes. Long term planning has been embedded throughout the development of this strategy and policy. The initial phase of the strategy is 2022 – 2027, whilst the policy is interim for a period of 18 months, this is to allow for regular review to ensure effectiveness and building a solid foundation for further developments. Overtime, this will allow for the best use of resources and space requirements.	The strategy document sets out success measures to be monitored to ensure targets are being met. The aim of the strategy and policy is to establish new ways of working and service delivery in the short, medium and long term.	
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.	Yes. We have collaborated with key stakeholders throughout the development of the strategy and policy – see below	See below	
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.	Yes, key stakeholders have been involved. The strategy was developed following a large staff engagement exercise, and an estimated 74% of those affected by the strategy engaged in the Process. The policy was developed through a workstream which our trade union partners were part of and so have been involved from the early stages. Corporate Managers were engaged in the Process and their feedback requested during the policy development stage	Evidence of involvement with staff, corporate managers, and trade unions exists from the formulation of the strategy and policy.	As the policy is only in place for an interim period there will be regular reviews to assess its effectiveness and respond to any issues identified.

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



<p>Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	<p>Yes, the engagement exercise with staff and regular engagement with trade unions has highlighted areas where it would not be possible for employees to work in a hybrid way due to personal, broadband infrastructure or space limitations.</p>	<p>Providing that the needs of the service are not affected the employee will decide where to undertake their work, whether at home, in the office or a mixture of both.</p>	<p>As the policy is only in place for an interim period there will be regular reviews to assess its effectiveness and respond to any issues identified. Technological advancements will be reviewed to assess effectiveness in supporting staff to work in a hybrid way where they choose to do so.</p>
<p>Integration Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three.</p>	<p>Yes. We have considered how the policy will impact staff across the Authority. Their roles have been assessed on suitability for hybrid working whilst ensuring high quality service delivery. Where possible, staff will be able choose where they undertake their work. A reduction in travel, both commuting and business, due to hybrid and virtual working will have a positive impact on the Authority's carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Evidence of involvement with staff, corporate managers, and trade unions exists from the formulation of the strategy and policy.</p>	<p>As the policy is only in place for an interim period there will be regular reviews to assess its effectiveness and respond to any issues identified.</p>

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3. WELL-BEING GOALS: Does your proposal deliver any of the seven National Well-being Goals for Wales as outlined on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. We need to ensure that the steps we take to meet one of the goals aren't detrimental to meeting another.			
Well-being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts-	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
3.1. A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs.	The strategy and policy is intended, through the implementation of a hybrid working model, to develop a digitally skilled and flexible workforce able to balance their work and home lives whilst also maintaining high level of service delivery. Over time a reduction in travel costs and office space requirement will allow resources to be utilised in a more beneficial way.	The implementation of the strategy and policy will be subject to regular monitoring and review	The increasing cost of living challenges will require monitoring and as the implementation roll out develops. The reduction in travelling costs for employees may not be offset by the cost of increase energy usage for those choosing to work from home. Each employee will need to make an assessment weighing up all factors, supported by input from their line managers.
3.2. A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change).	By adopting hybrid working and further developing virtual meeting technology the aim is reduce the need for employees to undertake commuting or business mileage.	The number of claims for business mileage will be monitored regularly	
3.3. A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood.	The implementation of a hybrid working model will provide employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives whilst also maintaining high level of service delivery. This flexibility is expected to reduce sickness absence and improve employee health and wellbeing.	The sickness absence rates and other measures will be monitored regularly	
3.4. A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected.	Individual Services will undertake community engagement programmes to enhance service delivery through adopting new technology or improved spaces.		

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3.5. A globally responsible Wales			
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Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being.

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<p>3.6. A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.</p> <p><i>In this section you need to consider the impact on equality groups, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement.</i> <i>You need to consider how might the proposal impact on equality protected groups in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</i> <i>These include the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation.</i> Please also consider the following guide:: Equality Human Rights - Assessing Impact & Equality Duty</p>	<p>Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.</p> <p><i>Using your evidence consider the impact for each of the protected groups. You will need to consider do these groups have equal access to the service, or do they need to receive the service in a different way from other people because of their protected characteristics. It is not acceptable to state simply that a proposal will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone. You should demonstrate that you have considered all the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do you have to support this view?</p> <p><i>Gathering Equality data and evidence is vital for an IIA. You should consider who uses or is likely to use the service. Failure to use <u>data</u> or <u>engage</u> where change is planned can leave decisions open to legal challenge. Please link to involvement box within this template. Please also consider the general guidance.</i></p>	<p>What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p> <p><i>These actions can include a range of positive actions which allows the organisation to treat individuals according to their needs, even when that might mean treating some more favourably than others, in order for them to have a good outcome. You may also have actions to identify any gaps in data or an action to engage with those who will/likely to be effected by the proposal. These actions need to link to Section 4 of this template.</i></p>																
<p>Age Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Please tick ✓)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="76 994 786 1418"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Positive</th> <th>Negative</th> <th>None/ Negligible</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children and Young People up to 18</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>People 18-50</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Older People 50+</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Children and Young People up to 18			✓	People 18-50	✓			Older People 50+	✓			<p>The greater flexibility of working in hybrid or virtual ways will have a positive impact on employees who are in hybrid suitable roles as they will be able to decide which mix of virtual or office working is best for them. For those with caring responsibilities, this flexibility may mean that they have more availability to support those they care for.</p> <p>The proposal will have a negligible impact for those employees who are non roles not suitable for hybrid working.</p>	<p>Evidence gained from staff engagement exercises.</p>	<p>The policy in an interim arrangement to allow for the piloting of new ways of working and how this can be used to improve service delivery and the work live balance of employees. Regular reviews will be taking place throughout the interim period and a full review undertaken at the end of the period.</p> <p>Digital skills assessment, development and training opportunities to be made available to those employees who wish to improve competence to</p>
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																
Children and Young People up to 18			✓																
People 18-50	✓																		
Older People 50+	✓																		

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						better support hybrid working opportunities .
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Disability Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Please tick ✓)				The greater flexibility of working in hybrid or virtual ways will have a positive impact on employees who are in hybrid suitable roles as they will be able to decide which mix of virtual or office working is best for them. The proposal will have a negligible impact for those employees who are non roles not suitable for hybrid working. Where required and previously identified, specialist equipment will be made available in an office location in addition to equipment supplied to work from home.	Evidence gained from staff engagement exercises.	Employees will be supported in the event of a deterioration of impairment. Where required, a notification of a change to an employee's health will supported by a referral to occupational health for advice on reasonable or temporary adjustments including specialist equipment where required. The policy in an interim arrangement to allow for the piloting of new ways of working and how this can be used to improve service delivery and the work live balance of employees. Regular reviews will be taking place throughout the interim period and a full review undertaken at the end of the period.
Hearing Impairment	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Physical Impairment	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Visual Impairment	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Learning Disability	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Long Standing Illness	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Mental Health	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible			
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible ✓			

Transgender Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on transgender people? (Please tick ✓)				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing		
Transgender	Positive	Negative	None/			

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			Negligible	employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic		
			✓			
Marriage or Civil Partnership				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic		
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on marriage or Civil partnership? (Please tick ✓)						
Marriage	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Pregnancy or Maternity				The greater flexibility of working hybrid or virtually will have a positive impact on pregnant employees who will have the option of changing their work locations, making it easier to remain in work for longer, if they wish.		
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on pregnancy or maternity? (Please tick ✓)						
Pregnancy	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Maternity	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Race				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and		
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on race? (Please tick ✓)						
White	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
	Positive	Negative	None/			

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Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups			Negligible	home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic		
			✓			
Asian / Asian British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Religion or non-beliefs Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs? (Please tick ✓)				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic					
Christian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible						
			✓						
Buddhist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible						
			✓						
Hindu	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible						
			✓						
Humanist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible						
Jewish	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible						
			✓						
Muslim	Positive	Negative	None/						

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			Negligible			
			✓			
Sikh	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Non-belief	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Sex Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men and/or women? (Please tick ✓)				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic		
Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Women	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Sexual Orientation Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Please tick ✓)				The strategy and policy's aim of implementing a hybrid working model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home is aimed at all employees, regardless of this protected characteristic		
Bisexual	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Gay Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
	Positive	Negative	None/			



Gay Women / Lesbian			Negligible			
			✓			
Heterosexual / Straight	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Having due regards in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty - determine whether the proposal will assist or inhibit your ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality and foster good relations.

3.6.2. How could/does the proposal help advance/promote equality of opportunity?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to: ● Remove or minimise disadvantage ● To meet the needs of people with certain characteristics ● Encourage increased participation of people with particular characteristics

The policy is relevant to all employees who work in hybrid designated roles regardless of protected characteristics.

3.6.3. How could/does the proposal/decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

You should consider whether there is evidence to indicate that: ● The proposal may result in less favourable treatment for people with certain characteristics ● The proposal may give rise to indirect discrimination ● The proposal is more likely to assist or impeded you in making reasonable adjustments

Employees will be supported in the event of a deterioration of impairment. Where required, a notification of a change to an employee's health will supported by a referral to occupational health for advice on reasonable or temporary adjustments including specialist equipment where required.

3.6.4. How could/does the proposal impact on advancing/promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

You should consider whether the proposal with help you to: ● Tackle prejudice ● Promote understanding

The policy will promote understanding across the workforce and be subject to further engagement as the pilot period progresses, identifying efficient and effective working practices which contribute to service delivery improvements.

Having due regard of the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.

As a listed public body, Ceredigion County Council is required to have due regard to the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010. Effectively this means carrying out a poverty impact assessment. The duty covers all people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, including people with protected characteristics.

3.6.5 What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to the proposal?

Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.

The increasing cost of living challenges will require monitoring and as the implementation roll out develops.



What evidence do you have to support this view?

There is currently no clear evidence indicating one option being better than another. The costs will fluctuate throughout the year as home energy usage reduces during warmer months.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

The reduction in travelling costs for employees may not be offset by the cost of increase energy usage for those choosing to work from home. Each employee will need to make an assessment weighing up all factors, supported by input from their line managers. The employee will have the flexibility of choosing the option best suited to their individual circumstances.

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3.7. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh Language are promoted and protected. <i>In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This in order to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.</i>				Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Will the proposal be delivered bilingually (Welsh & English)?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The strategy and policy are bilingual policy and any engagement, communication or training will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
	✓					
Will the proposal have an effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Employees will have the same opportunity to the Welsh language whether this is by virtual means or face to face interaction		
			✓			
Will the proposal increase or reduce the opportunity for persons to access services through the medium of Welsh?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Access to bilingual services will remain the same as the current provision		
			✓			
How will the proposal treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The delivery of Welsh language learning by hybrid	An increase in the number of employees attending Welsh	The number of employees possessing Welsh language

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Will it preserve promote and enhance local culture and heritage?	✓			means will increase the opportunities available to employees who can access the lessons virtually, eliminating or reducing travel time and costs to attend	language lessons since when they moved online	skills will be monitored periodically
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4. STRENGTHENING THE PROPOSAL: If the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on any of the above (including any of the protected characteristics), what practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts as identified in sections 2 and 3?

4.1 Actions.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	Progress
The strategy and policy will be reviewed periodically and the implementation developed and the outcomes evaluated to ensure fairness and consistency	At no less than six monthly intervals and at the end of the 18 month interim period	People & Organisaition	
Training for line managers will inform that changes to the health of an employee with a disability will require human resources support	On a case by case basis	Human Resources	
Further employee engagement exercise to evaluate	After 12 months from initial implementation	People & Organisaition	

4.2. If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts please justify why.
(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination, immediate and potential, as a result of this proposal, the proposal must be changed or revised).

4.3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing.

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The interim policy implementation will be monitored on a six monthly basis during the expected 18 month period of its lifecycle, to provide statistics and service improvement evidence.

5. RISK: What is the risk associated with this proposal?

Impact Criteria	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very High
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Likelihood Criteria	1 - Unlikely to occur	2 - Lower than average chance of occurrence	3 - Even chance of occurrence	4 - Higher than average chance of occurrence	5 - Expected to occur
Risk Description	Impact (severity)		Probability (deliverability)		Risk Score
If policy is not implemented, risk to recruitment and retention of employees	3		3		9
Does your proposal have a potential impact on another Service area?					
The implementation of this strategy and policy will have a positive and cross-cutting impact for employees in all service areas					

6. SIGN OFF			
Position	Name	Signature	Date
Service Manager			
Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards		30/05/2022
Strategic Director			
Portfolio Holder			

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 26 July 2022

LOCATION: Hybrid Meeting

TITLE: Draft Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Working Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide feedback from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st June 2022

BACKGROUND:

Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council presented the Draft Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Working Policy to the Committee.

It was noted that the draft Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Working Policy evolved as a result of a project to review remote working practices adopted during the pandemic which included staff engagement whilst ensuring that service delivery remained the primary focus. Four workstyles were introduced as part of the strategy which range from Fixed, where the role requires the post holder to attend the workplace to Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid and Roaming. It was noted that 74% of employees took part in the review, of which over 90% stated that they were happy to work in a hybrid manner, that productivity had increased and that extending the flexible working bandwidth from 6am to 9pm had led to increased employee satisfaction. Employees can also request to opt out of the flexible working programme by completing an application form, and they can also appeal the decision if it is not approved.

Members raised matters relating to the following, which were answered during the meeting:

- Concern that a 74% response rate to the staff survey was relatively low;
- Emphasised the benefits of face-to-face recruitment;
- What safeguards are in place to ensure that managers don't e-mail staff outside of the flexible working hours and in particular during anti-social hours in particular and the possible expectation that Officers respond?
- Whether staff were paid an allowance for working from home?
- The impact on public satisfaction of the Offices being closed to the public;
- The impact of poor broadband;
- The welfare of staff and in particular isolation;
- The cost of digitization of documents;
- Whether home working risk assessments were undertaken?
- The impact of continued home working on the local economy;
- Whether there would be sufficient supply of hot desks for all staff that wanted to work from the offices?

- Whether other Local Authorities were undertaking similar reviews and adopting similar policies?
- Whether there were any planning implications for home working?
- When frontline services such as the cash offices would be re-opening?
- Could hybrid working attract future employees?
- Whether the 18 month review period was too long?
- How aspects of the policy could be amended if it was seen to be negatively affecting staff or the public?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to consider the following recommendations:

- To recommend the approval of the Hybrid Working Strategy by Cabinet
- To recommend the approval of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy by Cabinet

Following a vote, it was agreed to recommend that Cabinet endorse the Hybrid Working Strategy and the Interim Hybrid Working Policy subject to the following amendments:

1. Para 3.1.1 of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy – that line managers can hold interviews online and in person; but line managers should hold in person interviews for roles which require communications skills;
2. Para 3.1.2 of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy – line managers are permitted to hold interviews face-to-face if they believe that there is justification to do so;
3. Para 3.2.2 of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy – managers should monitor the use of their e-mails and the e-mails of their teams after 9pm and prior to 6am in order to ensure that pressure is not placed upon staff to work beyond these hours;
4. A recommendation that the employee review takes place after 6 months.

Councillor Rhodri Evans
Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee