

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Cabinet	16/09/2021

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Workplace Strategy 2021-2024

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Workplace Strategy 2021-2024 to Executive Cabinet for consideration and approval.
2. To seek agreement to progress the Workplace Strategy.

Recommendations to Cabinet

3. That the Workplace Strategy is approved and progressed to support the future efficient operation of the organisation.

Reasons for recommendations

4. To realise the social, economic, and environmental benefits of new ways of working in line with the changing operating context and workforce expectations.

Other options considered and rejected

5. To revert back to pre-Covid-19 working practices. This option has been rejected based on the opportunities presented to modernise our approach and in line with feedback from staff.

Executive summary

6. The Workplace Strategy is the beginning of an ambitious plan and programme of works to transform where and how the council will work over the next three years. The aim and vision of the Workplace Strategy is to “To provide a high quality, modern, fit for purpose workplace for all staff that enables mobility, flexibility, productivity, and collaboration across the council whilst supporting behavioural and cultural change to adopt new ways of working’.

7. The strategy has been developed based on the experience of working through the Covid-19 pandemic, best practice, and feedback from staff. It aims to achieve flexibility and efficiency while maintaining productivity and performance. It sets out the vision, priorities, objectives, principles, and approach to developing our working places and practices for the future. Alongside the strategy is an action plan with key workstreams and success measures to guide implementation and achieve the strategic objectives.
8. The Workplace Strategy will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and interact with other key strategies and plans including the Digital Strategy and Organisational Development programme as key elements to ensuring the technology is in place and the workforce are enabled to operate successfully.
9. The Workplace Strategy can be seen at Appendix One

Corporate priorities

10. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

Background to the report

11. The global pandemic and associated restrictions prompted a major change in public behaviour with more people than ever using technology to work, socialise, shop and access services. Our staff and customers now have different expectations and it's important that we change our approach to keep pace and take advantage of emerging opportunities to modernise and improve.
12. The strategy has been developed based on research and best practice to maximise the social, environmental, technological and economic benefits. Extensive consultation has also taken place with staff through surveys and briefing sessions to gather feedback and shape the strategy, indicating strong support for the proposed approach.

Summary of the strategy

13. The purpose of the Workplace Strategy is to support the Council to deliver a working environment and working model that will best meet the needs of the organisation and our employees. It will make the most of technology and assets as well as driving a positive organisational culture to ensure the Councils continue to provide high quality services to the residents of Chorley and South Ribble. It will be a shared strategy that will be implemented across Chorley and South Ribble to achieve a consistent approach, with the implementation tailored to the needs and identities of each Council.

Vision and principles

14. The vision for the Workplace Strategy is to "To provide a high quality, modern, fit for purpose workplace for all staff that enables mobility, flexibility, productivity, and

collaboration across the council whilst supporting behavioural and cultural change to adopt new ways of working’.

15. A number of principles have been identified to ensure the success of the strategy and to ensure we maintain the delivery of excellent services to our customers including:

- 50% of our office-based workforce will be accommodated for at any one time within a more flexible and agile office setting, with home, mobile and hybrid working increased and encouraged based on business need.
- Staff will be available to work and respond in line with service need, whether they are working from the office or at home. This means answering the phone and responding to emails, attending meetings and appointments.
- Staff will maintain expected levels of individual performance, productivity and positive working relationships with their team, service and line manager.
- Staff will be enabled to work seamlessly with the right technology and standardised equipment.
- All services will have a minimum workplace presence on normal working days to be managed locally.
- We will have four future working states (office/onsite worker, mobile worker, hybrid worker and home worker) to identify different types of staff, how they will work and the different support they may need.
- SMT will be accountable for ensuring that working practices are effective and managers will be responsible for maintaining oversight of their teams and services.

How we will deliver the vision

16. There are 4 key elements to the delivery of the strategy: People, Assets, Technology and Processes

17. Each element will have its own objectives, programme of works and sub projects. Together these elements will form the Workplace Strategy.

18. Each council will have their own separate implementation programme that reflects the position of each organisation and progresses activity to deliver the future way of working vision by 2024. The objectives of each element of the Workplace Strategy will be met by the delivery of the projects as shown in in Appendix Three – Delivery and Implementation.

Outcomes and benefits

19. The strategy will deliver extensive benefits including greater efficiency, improved customer experience, increased staff morale, better user of assets with potential for income generation as well as environmental benefits. The outcomes framework and approach to evaluation is included at the end of the strategy document.

Climate change and air quality

20. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda: net carbon zero by 2030, reducing waste production, limiting non sustainable forms of transport, limiting, or improving air quality.

Risk

21. It is important that staff are supported through the changes to obtain staff buy in and achieve the desired cultural change. Organisational development and training will be aligned to support with the change in how we work.

22. Technology is critical to ensuring the success of the strategy and future ways of working. The Digital Strategy and ICT plan will be closely aligned to the delivery of the Workplace Strategy to ensure a coordinated approach to implementation.

23. There will be costs associated with transforming our office sites and consolidating buildings for commercial or regeneration opportunities

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

24. Chorley Council has included within its capital programme £1.3m for investment in its workplace assets. This budget will be reviewed as part of the implementation of the strategy across the 4 key elements to delivery.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

25. There are no concerns from a Monitoring Officer perspective. Many public and private sector organisations will be similarly looking at how best they deal with the post Covid world. Extensive consultation with employees has already taken place about this strategy. Clearly is important that such an inclusive approach should continue as ideas and proposals develop further.

Appendices

Appendix One – Workplace Strategy

Appendix Two – Additional Personas

Appendix Three – Delivery and Implementation

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