

MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	FULL AUTHORITY		
DATE:	15TH OCTOBER 2020	REPORT NO:	CFO/057/20
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	NICK MERNOCK	REPORT AUTHOR:	NICK MERNOCK
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	MIKE PILKINGTON AMANDA CROSS RIA GROVES		
TITLE OF REPORT:	AGILE WORKING POLICY		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A:	AGILE WORKING POLICY
--------------------	--------------------	-----------------------------

Purpose of Report

1. To advise members on the learning from the pandemic lockdown period, particularly in relation to the flexibilities afforded to staff through working differently, and to relay the knock on benefits to the service in relation to efficiency and effectiveness. The report goes on to recommend the adoption of an Agile Working Policy in order to maximise the benefits realised.

Recommendation

2. That Elected Members
 - a. Note the content of the report
 - b. Approve the adoption of the Agile Working Policy and supporting Guidance note.

Introduction and Background

3. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority recognises the need to develop modern working practices to enable employees to maximise their performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the business, whilst maintaining a good work life balance.
4. New technologies are making it easy to access information remotely, work from a variety of locations, whilst promoting a more joined up service. The Authority continues to develop its ICT Strategy to support this approach.
5. The Authority took some bold steps in relation to allowing Agile working during the last Lockdown, and speaking directly with staff, as well as undertaking a workforce survey we have been able to formulate the successes as well as

identify areas to further develop to enable us to advance a position where our employees in conjunction with their line managers can request a jointly beneficial way of Agile working.

6. The introduction of Agile working across the Authority may well realise financial savings for the Organisation following a period of bedding in, but will immediately provide an enhanced working environment for our staff, as well as building on our staff engagement through improved health and wellbeing by improved work life balance, flexible work locations and reduced travel.
7. The benefits of Agile Working for our employees;
 - provide an opportunity to manage their working day more efficiently;
 - increase engagement as a result of autonomy and trust at work;
 - improve work life balance;
 - enable them to work more effectively on a particular piece of work, where
 - concentration is important, by avoiding the interruptions that are part of the office environment;
 - reduce travelling time and related costs
 - increase their wellbeing, health and happiness – reduced stress, better sense of control
8. The benefits for the Authority can be seen as:
 - allows the Authority to continue to deliver its services at times of crisis such as COVID to our communities
 - allow the Authority to focus time and money spent on services not buildings to ensure delivering services takes priority over occupying buildings;
 - create an environment which allows employees to achieve an improved work life
 - balance, greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity;
 - result in reduced costs through reduced travel and expense claims;
 - lower our carbon footprint, through reduced emissions from reduced travel

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. The Agile Working policy will form part of a suite of policies to support employee ways of working, including an extant Flexible Working Policy and a Home Working Policy (yet to be developed) and will be available to all employees based on their ability to meet the basic assessment criteria in conjunction with their line manager.
10. The use of the Agile Working policy will be regularly monitored to ensure its usage does not knowingly preclude any specific work group.

Staff Implications

11. Whilst one size does not fit all for Agile working it will provide our employees with further opportunity to adapt their work approach in a flexible way be that during the current period of their COVID crisis or as part of future working to support the Authorities Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Legal Implications

12. The Authority will comply with all relevant insurance and health and safety requirements. The ability of employee to work agilely and any such implications will be considered by all managers.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

13. The introduction of Agile working has an initial potential cost in relation to the provision of any equipment to the employee to support home working. This will predominately be IT based and mobile phones. In certain circumstances the provision of furniture may be a requirement (Home Working).
14. The Authority has provided a number of mobile technology devices to our staff during the last period of lockdown, and will continue to review this situation as staff undertake Agile working
15. Whilst it is envisaged any additional Technology costs can be contained within current budgets, a further report will be brought to Authority to explain any additional cost incurred at a later stage.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

16. From an Environmental perspective this will support reduced travel, and use of Service vehicles. It will support reduced fuel and lighting bills, and at a later stage of implementation may well allow the Authority to reduce its building stock.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

17. The staff survey resoundingly confirmed that employees felt more engaged will the ability to be able to adapt the way they work. It will assist with future recruitment, as well as contributing to retention of employees. It will also contribute to employee engagement across the Authority

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
