MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**		
DATE:	**25 APRIL 2024**	**REPORT NO:**	**CFO/22/24**
PRESENTING OFFICER	**DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEGAL, NICK MERNOCK**		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	**NICK MERNOCK**	**REPORT AUTHOR:**	**NICK MERNOCK**
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	**STAFF ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM**		
TITLE OF REPORT:	**EMPLOYEE WORK/LIFE BALANCE**		

APPENDICES:	**NONE**

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Members an update on the introduction of the Hybrid Working Policy and the feedback received from employees following the initial twelve months trial with the new policy.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members;

   a) note the presentation; and

   b) provide all suitable feedback and appropriate scrutiny of the Hybrid Working Policy.

Introduction and Background

3. Following full consultation with its employees, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service sought to trial a process of formal hybrid working as an extension to the existing flexible working arrangements available to staff.

4. The Authority had utilised home working during the COVID pandemic and employees had sought its extension in some capacity following the removal of the lockdown period.

5. The presentation will provide to Members:

   - an insight into the staff consultation that led to the introduction of the Policy

   - an overview of the various working options open to our employees

- details of the feedback from staff following the circulation of two surveys seeking feedback on the trial; and

- an opportunity to ask further questions and seek any clarification.

Equality and Diversity Implications

6. An EIA was completed and agreed for the Hybrid Working Policy.

7. The feedback has been positive in relation to all equality considerations of this Hybrid working Policy.

Staff Implications

8. The introduction of this Policy and the extension of flexible working were built following feedback from staff, and as part of the organisations response to recruitment and retention issues following the ending of COVID restrictions and the changes to the employment market.

9. It also provided options for our employees to address the economic challenges being faced following cost of living increases and salary restraint.

Legal Implications

10. At the moment, hybrid working is a trial and so does not constitute any contractual change.

11. It has clear guidance that prescribes who is eligible and criteria to consider to address any equality challenge.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

12. The costs of the trial have been limited, as the majority of equipment required to deliver homeworking has already been procured during the working from home lockdown periods.

13. Feedback from staff is that it has been beneficial to them from an economical basis with reduced travel and care costs.

Risk Management and Health & Implications

14. The Policy has an appeal process to allow any employee who is unable to work within this procedure to challenge the decision.

15. A self-assessment is required from each employee in relation to their home workspace.

Environmental Implications

16. The policy has an impact on environmental issues as it reduces the carbon footprint with less travelling to work.

Contribution to Our Vision: ***To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.***

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

17. The policy has proven very popular, and so enhances organisational engagement and staff satisfaction.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

MFRA **M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **A**uthority

MFRS **M**erseyside **F**ire and **R**escue **S**ervice