



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WORKSMART WEST LOTHIAN

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER AND SUPPORT SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Executive on progress of the Worksmart West Lothian (mobile and flexible working) project and to recommend approval to progress to the implementation phase.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the progress being made on the Worksmart project, and to note that the associated capital investment will be included in the annual capital programme update by the Head of Finance, which will be reported to the Council Executive on 29 June 2010.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

Focusing on our customers' needs
Providing equality of opportunities
Developing employees
Making best use of our resources
Working in partnership

II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

The Council's Carbon Management Plan, part of our responsibilities under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 which sets out the way in which the Council will reduce its carbon footprint.

III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

The Council's Ten Year Office Accommodation Strategy, which outlines the dependency on mobile and flexible working to enable rationalisation of Council office properties. Worksmart will involve capital costs of £2.389 million, and one off revenue costs of £406,000 which are required to provide the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the project and deliver the associated revenue savings.

IV Consultations

The Edinburgh, Lothian, Borders and Fife (ELBF) Shared Service forum which provides information about the progress that neighbouring councils are making with similar mobile and flexible working initiatives.

Pilot exercise undertaken across services from

January to March 2010 which enabled the requirements and solutions to be determined.

Discussions with Trade Unions.

The report was endorsed by the P&R PDSP at its meeting held on 18th June 2010.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

1. BACKGROUND

The Council's Modernisation Programme, of which this project is a component part, is designed to deliver significant, and scalable, transformational improvement in both efficiency and effectiveness and to underpin a progressive organisational culture.

Over the last few years preparatory work has been undertaken to investigate the adoption of mobile and flexible working within West Lothian Council. Both the Diagnostic Pathway Exercise (supported by the Improvement Service) and more detailed mobile working studies have identified that significant financial benefit could be achieved by moving towards new workstyles at the same time offering, where appropriate, flexibility to employees in relation to times and place of work.

2. PROPOSAL

The new work styles that are being proposed will transform the way our work is managed. Performance management will move from attendance hours to become outcome based, with management and staff focused on the needs of the customer, service and employee. No longer tied to a fixed desk staff will be empowered to work closer to where and when the service demand occurs. The proposal covers 4 elements – our people, processes, technology and physical environment.

2.1 OUR PEOPLE

For the Worksmart Project to deliver its objectives support needs to be provided to staff and managers. HR policies will be amended to reflect changes in working practices and training will be made available to support employees and managers to implement new working practices.

Proposals for Worksmart which affect staff and managers include:

- Dedicated corporate policies, which support and promote mobile and flexible working
- Removal of core time hours. The pilot experimented with a 7am – 8pm window, which was adopted successfully.
- Management training modules will be developed to support managers in the move towards outcome based performance management.
- Provide staff with technical training support to ensure that they are adequately prepared to adopt the workstyle. A technical trainer will be assigned to the implementation project team to ensure that all staff adopting Worksmart are equipped with the knowledge they need to make the most of the tools available to them.
- Redesign of Home working / Flexible working request process to replace the current ad-hoc system.

2.2 PROCESSES

The Worksmart pilot exercise demonstrated that an average of 8% productivity was gained through simply removing some operational barriers and equipping staff with limited additional technology.

The pilot identified numerous small processes that would act as a barrier to achieving maximum productivity benefits. It is expected that the vast majority of process redesign would be of this nature. An example of this type of simple change would be the experience of the dog warden during the Worksmart pilot who by changing her working practice to start her working day from home and making use of drop-in areas across the authority was able to save almost an hour and a half of productive time each day, roughly 20%.

The Worksmart rollout will be supported by an implementation team including process improvement staff trained in lean systems thinking methodology. This targeted support will enable business processes to be redesigned with a target 15% productivity gain.

2.3 TECHNOLOGY

The success of the Worksmart project is highly dependent on technology and IT Services have designed a range of technical solutions to support full deployment of Worksmart based on the Council's IT strategy and the results from the pilot exercise. Over a number of years the council has made significant investment in IT solutions and these are utilised as far as possible in the Worksmart solutions.

The solutions have been designed around the needs of the various workstyles which will be adopted and include retrospective encryption of existing laptops ensuring protection of sensitive data and aiding data protection.

Technologies to be utilised include:

- Virtualised Desktop Environment which allows access to users' applications and data, essentially replicating their 'office' pc, from any location with internet access. It is likely that only a subset of Worksmart adopters will require this technology and that other users will be able to make use of simpler remote access technology.
- A Room & Desk Management System system will be required to book drop in zones and desks. Using an electronic system will enable users to book desks and meeting rooms allowing for a flexible use of all space within the council's buildings.
- Application and Intranet Development is required to facilitate remote and flexible use of existing systems of which there are some 200 across the Council. There will be collaborative workspaces provided to facilitate sharing of information within and between groups of mobile workers.
- The Council Intranet will be redeveloped to provide mobile & flexible workers with support during their working hours, giving them access to information in a quick and easy way.
- Evidence from the Worksmart pilot showed that staff do not use all available tools to their potential, e.g. Outlook calendar to schedule and plan work. The implementation team will include a training resource to support staff in the use of technology and to ensure maximum benefit is achieved from its use.
- The Lone Worker Solution is currently used by 275 members of staff across the authority and will be extended to mobile & flexible workers as required.

2.4 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

To ensure our office space is maximised we require to move away from the model of a fixed desk for every member of staff.

It is proposed that a desk and room management system will enable flexible workers to book desks in their desired location, utilising desks that would otherwise be unused as a result of e.g. leave or illness. A recent desk utilisation study within the Civic Centre reported in excess of 30% free desk space at any one time.

'Drop in zones' will be set up at key locations across West Lothian in Strathbrock Partnership Centre, County Buildings Linlithgow, Armadale CIS office, Bathgate (St David House until the new Lindsay House is complete) and Whitburn CIS office creating opportunities for staff to work closer to where they need to be to deliver the service.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that staff who are able to work in a mobile and flexible manner will achieve a 15% gain in productivity. As a result of staff being able to base themselves closer to where they are required to be significant savings are also expected to be made from a reduction in business mileage claims.

For the financial benefits to be realised it is essential that investment is made in our physical environment and technology. The total capital investment required for the Worksmart project is summarised as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
ICT Hardware Requirements	204	173	67	444
ICT Software Improvements	275	440	85	800
ICT Remote Access	65	11	0	76
Desktop Virtualisation	81	482	0	563
Optitime & Cognitio	114	22	0	136
Lone Worker Solutions	69	61	0	130
Alterations to Properties	200	30	10	240
Total Capital Investment	1,008	1,219	162	2,389

The required capital investment is incorporated into the general services capital programme update and is seen as an essential component of the overall package required to deliver ongoing revenue savings through mobile & flexible working. It is anticipated that the net realisable productivity and mileage savings from these new methods of working will generate in excess of £3 million per annum.

E. CONCLUSION

In the backdrop of the current economic climate, mobile and flexible working represents an opportunity to make cashable savings while protecting service provision.

The new workstyles will transform the way we undertake our work, and performance management will move to be outcomes based with a focus on the needs of the service, employee and customer.

The importance of flexible working and its suitability for assisting in the delivery of strategic change is greater than it has ever been.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: None

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