

Hybrid Working at Spelthorne Borough Council

Hybrid working is an important element of our:-

- Strategy for adapting to and thriving in the new working environment following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Commitment to supporting a positive work-life balance for our employees.
- Maximising available desk space.

As an employer Spelthorne benefits from hybrid working by building a more productive, healthy, and stable workforce. A hybrid workplace model mixes in-office and remote work to offer flexibility and support to employees but all in line with business need.

The greatest advantages of hybrid work to date are:

- improved work-life balance/staff well-being.
- more efficient use of time.
- control over work hours and work location. Hybrid working provides the flexibility for employees to work in ways that are most effective for them e.g. allows preferences for early morning or later in the day if role permits so maximising productivity
- burnout mitigation.
- higher productivity and engagement at work.
- improves recruitment and retention of staff. Spelthorne has examples of where we have retained skilled staff due to flexibility of working from home.
- ability to recruit from a wider pool of staff geographically. Without offering hybrid working we would struggle to recruit and retain office/professional staff.
- reduced sickness.
- reduced carbon emissions and cost of travel.
- ability to better match jobs to skills so more attractive to candidates if flexible working. Externally provided with an example of an organisation where the Chief Executive decided to allow only one day at home for a particular role that could work remotely leading to potentially skilled candidates withdrawing from the application process for the advertised position.

When Spelthorne formally rolled out hybrid working after the pandemic it was recognised that there are challenges to hybrid working but many of these can easily be overcome by effective management: -

- a)** having the right tools to be effective at work – we delivered suitable equipment including office chairs to homeworkers at the beginning of the pandemic and these still enable staff to work successfully from home.
- b)** feeling less connected to the organization's culture, - most staff are expected to come in two days a week, if fulltime, and during those days most teams organise a team meeting to ensure relationships are maintained and collaboration is ongoing. We also hold monthly all staff meetings to update staff on general issues and hold monthly manager's briefings to discuss any issues.
- c)** On site we have meeting rooms and space with full remote capable facilities including cameras for small staff meetings to take place and ensure full team interactions.
- d)** Spelthorne has in place a continuous performance management system whereby managers set team member's targets and hold a formal meeting every 3 months on progress against targets and regular monthly meetings to cover all work and personal issues to ensure staff are happy and productive. Measurement of performance is focused on outputs and outcomes which vary from service to service. Outputs can be based on phone call statistics and work trays emptied, number of cases dealt with per month, key performance indicators achieved within a service, or defined outcomes on key activities identified within targets. Also, if appropriate we can track activity electronically.
- e)** Reducing our desk space in 2019 reduced our office space by 43% and as staff numbers have increased in key areas supporting the business e.g housing, there would be insufficient space to accommodate all staff at one time. Reducing the office space saved energy and costs terms of space heating and lighting plus provides a better working environment for staff when in the office.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2022 showed that more than three-quarters (78%) of those who worked from home in some capacity said that being able to work from home gave them an improved work life balance in February 2022. Half reported it was quicker to complete work (52%) and that they had fewer distractions (53%). Almost half also reported improved well-being (47%).

For businesses from the ONS study the most common reason for using or planning to use homeworking as part of a permanent business model (among

businesses who reported this) was improved staff well-being (60%), followed by reduced overheads (43%) and increased productivity (41%)