Committee:	Dated:
Community and Children's Services Committee	08/03/2019
Subject: Introducing Agile Working	**Public**
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	**For Information**
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Summary

This report sets out arrangements to support service delivery by introducing an 'agile working' culture for Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) staff based at the Guildhall.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Over the last two years, the DCCS has experienced increasing pressures on its Guildhall office accommodation. Staffing increases have had to be accommodated predominately within the existing Guildhall allocation on the fifth floor. This has resulted in a shortfall of desks and facilities to support business needs – such as confidential meeting space.

2. In response, a departmental agile working programme is being implemented to manage this pressure. This includes making efficient use of space, moving away from the culture of owned desks and adopting a clear desk policy.

3. This programme of work is integrated into the wider Corporate Smart Working Programme. Led by the Surveyor's and Town Clerk's offices, a report that sets out proposals for this wider Corporation programme working will be submitted to Corporate Asset Sub Committee for consideration on 4 April 2019. This report will request funding for the Smart Working Programme.

4. Elements of the work to make efficient use of the DCCS's Guildhall office space are contingent on the approval of this funding.

Agile Working

5. Agile working involves creating a culture where staff are given the opportunity to introduce an element of choice as to where and how they work. This is in order to better meet the needs of service users and add to employee work and life balance. In delivering diverse resident-focused services, this agile approach will be beneficial for departmental staff who:
   - undertake the majority of core functions working directly with clients and service users in the community
   - are office based but may be frequently at meetings with colleagues or external partners.

6. This flexible working element of agile working is being rolled out as a pilot for the department's staff at the Guildhall. On review, the intention is to roll it out across the DCCS and inform similar programmes across the Corporation.

7. In use, agile working can be summarised as:
   - the HOW – choosing the best work methods and technology, for example meeting through Skype
   - the WHERE – choosing the best location for the work/activity being undertaken – for example, different buildings, in the field or at home
   - the WHEN – choosing the right working time arrangements that meet the needs of clients and of staff – for example, staggered working hours.

8. Agile working aims to improves the way DCCS staff manage and deliver services, resulting in:
   - greater flexibility that enables staff to provide the most fitting contact with service users at the right time
   - a reduction of costs, carbon footprint and unnecessary travel time to and from meetings with external partners
   - employees achieving an improved work–life balance, greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity.

9. This departmental approach aligns to (and pilots approaches to achieve) the objectives of the corporate Smart Working Programme to:
   - enable officers to have the best work–life balance possible while meeting business objectives
   - enable officers to adopt and optimise new technologies to meet business requirements
   - provide a work environment that enables officers to meet business requirements.

Actions and Timelines

10. Key actions to create an agile working culture and office environment are set out below.

11. **Maximising use of technology:** The Corporation's new technologies enable staff to access information remotely and work from a variety of locations. These include Skype for Business, which ensures that staff are fully contactable when out of the office, enabling meetings to be conducted by voice or video and documents to be shared and edited. Training to use Skype for Business has been provided to DCCS personnel based at the Guildhall.

12. **Agile working rules:** A guidance pack has been completed and provided to managers and staff that sets out the protocols and expectations when staff work away from the office. This was developed with Human Resources and makes clear that delivery of our services, particularly statutory functions, will always be the priority.

13. **Training for managers:** Training will be provided in March 2019 that enables managers to better assess business considerations before granting staff requests for off-site working. The training will also provide advice on how to maintain staff output and productivity when staff are not working from the office.

14. **Office re-design:** A redesign of the office space is planned to deliver new storage facilities, meeting spaces, and flexible working stations. The redesign will deliver the physical infrastructure to enable change. This element is subject to funding being approved by Corporate Resources Sub-Committee and, if approved, will take place between May and June 2019.

Conclusion

15. The DCCS is leading the development and implementation of agile ways of working as a means of better meeting the needs of clients and service users and improving the balance of work and life for staff. In doing so, it is supporting the development and implementation of a wider corporate approach.

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