1   Swindon Leadership Training Workshops

Leadership Training Outline Agenda

1. Background briefing - summary of progress to date in Alternatives to Travel within the organisation.

2. Express need to find common principles, recognising that different departments will have different needs.

3. Break into groups to discuss and feedback three foci:
   a. List up to ten tasks each manager's team engage in;
   b. Identify those tasks that CANNOT be carried out using Alternatives to Travel (and encourage others to suggest solutions from their experience);
   c. Of the remainder, make concrete plans for what they will do to encourage change.

4. General discussion on how success can be measured/monitored.

Findings: Transport Delivery and Landscape Group

- Four attendees, one operational/customer-facing role.

- Some staff already work from home when necessary, as most staff are local, this can just be for ½ a day if required.

- It was felt that some staff like the separation between home and work and that home does not always provide the optimum working environment.

- On the other hand the high-density offices made it easier to focus on particular tasks such as report writing at home; in a quieter environment.

- The concept of remote hubs (i.e. job centre, leisure centre etc) which was part of the original 'New Ways to Plan' programme; was seen as a potentially good balance between having a work environment and keeping separation from home, whilst not travelling further distances than necessary.

- There was concern from the group that there was an expectation from their managers, that as team leaders, they should be in the office managing their teams; rather than working from home/remotely. However, when team leaders/project managers took days out of the office, or periods of leave, they generally arranged for other team leaders/project managers to be in the office and available to staff.

- Swindon is a fairly compact area and therefore many staff live fairly close to their office, meaning that the time savings generated from home and remote working may not be as great as other larger County Councils.

- It was felt that Swindon's partners also needed their contracts to specify that they should aim to reduce their travel where possible.

- Homeworking should be offered to staff as a benefit and an additional option to increase their flexibility, not sold as a cost saving exercise by Swindon.

- Homeworking was seen to have benefits in offering flexible work hours, for example around dropping children off at school. It was felt that this could help with job retention.

- In general it was felt that staff were currently able to work from home when required, however the group did agree that they could discuss this more with staff and potentially offer 0.5 - 1 day of homeworking a week, if staff wanted this option. One way to manage this was felt to be utilising task outputs rather than time outputs.

- **Action 1:** Ask all staff 'in an ideal world how would you like to work, how many days in the office and how many from home'. If possible try to accommodate some/all of this.

- **Action 2:** Have a discussion with peers/staff on moving away from a time management/output system to a task management/output system.

- **Action 3:** Look out for employees' natural breakpoints (i.e. new starters, having children, moving house, children leaving the home, maternity returnees) and discuss alternatives to travel such as home and remote working at these times.

Findings: Locality Group

- Three attendees, two practitioner managers and one business support manager.

- The locality group based at The Meadow is already working remotely and staff are usually off-site to carry out visits and appointments.

- All staff have laptops and most have a fob to access the network remotely. Staff work very autonomously and there is a high level of trust between managers and staff.

- It was felt that locality staff are generally already working in a task-focused rather than time-focused manner.

- Homeworking was seen as beneficial, in particular to save long commute journeys, however it was felt that staff and managers still needed to come into the office to maintain the feeling of team working. It was also felt that it was important that managers were seen by staff.

- It was felt that some staff like the separation between home and work and that home does not always provide the optimum working environment.

- However, it was felt that tasks such as reading and responding to emails and paperwork could easily be carried out at home or remotely. One outstanding issue is gaining access to the secure network from schools, to allow staff to enter their notes directly onto the system from these locations; this is currently being looked into.

- Overall, it was assumed that health visitors were planning their days to minimise journeys and combine clustered visits, however this could be reiterated to staff.

- In general it was felt that staff were currently able to work from home when required, however the group did agree that they could discuss this more with staff and reinforce the messages that were disseminated as part of the relocation.

- **Action 1:** Ask all staff 'in an ideal world how would you like to work, how many days in the office and how many from home'. If possible try to accommodate some/all of this.

- **Action 2:** Follow-up 6 months after the move to ensure messages given at the time of relocation are explicit not implicit (i.e. staff don't have to come into the office every day,

paperwork can be done from home, site visits carried out on way to office – the working day doesn't have to start and finish at the office).

- **Action 3:** Look out for employees' natural breakpoints (i.e. new starters, having children, moving house, children leaving the home, maternity returnees) and discuss alternatives to travel such as home and remote working at these times.

- **Action 4:** A longer-term action is to look at increasing the use of technologies such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing, webinars and Skype. It was felt that travel and cost savings could be achieved from the use of Skype for meetings/briefings/seminars.