

Dynamic Working Policy

August 2025



Contents

Purpose	1
Our vision for dynamic working	1
Our aims	2
Dynamic working in Harlow	2
Dynamic working principles	3
Implementation timeline	3
Scope and expectations	4
Conclusion	4

Purpose

This policy sets out Harlow Council's approach to dynamic working. It replaces the council's current Hybrid Working Policy and meet's the outcome as stated in the Building Harlow's Future Plan that this year, we will:

“Ensure our places of work are humming with focussed activity and making the best use of our assets. By creating dynamic workspaces that encourage collaboration and innovation, we will reduce operational costs, enhance productivity, and create a more efficient, cost-effective council that delivers better outcomes for our residents.”

Given the council's ambitions and the drive for transformation, we must ensure that our workforce can deliver those ambitions and that can only be achieved with greater collaboration, innovation and face-to-face working.

Our vision for dynamic working

We are building a workplace that:

- Buzzes with purposeful activity
- Supports high-quality services and teamwork
- Enhances staff wellbeing and flexibility
- Reduces operational costs and maximises use of our assets
- Delivers excellent outcomes for residents

Dynamic working is not about remote working by default - it is about working well, together. That means being in the office most of the time, working collaboratively, and taking advantage of our high-quality workspaces.



Our aims

Make Our Workspaces Thrive

We will ensure our places of work are humming with energy and focus. Our high-quality workspaces will support collaboration, reduce costs, and enable innovation - helping us deliver better, faster services to residents.

Strengthen Culture and Collaboration

We will break down silos and unite staff under one vision. Through shared spaces, team interaction, and clear links between our missions and individual objectives, we will foster a stronger culture of shared purpose and delivery.

Drive Smarter Systems and Efficiency

Using cutting-edge technology, automated workflows, and simplified processes, we will modernise how we work. This will improve accuracy, responsiveness, and cross-team collaboration - enabling every team to deliver more, with less.

Dynamic working in Harlow

In order to achieve our ambitions, and be at our most effective we need to change our ways of working. This means that we will expect all colleagues whose roles are office-based to typically work a minimum of four days per week (Pro Rata for part time employees) in their contractual workplace.

We will do this in two stages to allow colleagues to plan and prepare for the new way of working:

- By 1st September 2025, staff will be expected to attend their contractual workplace at least 3 days each week.
- We will then work towards staff attending their contractual place of work at least 4 days each week by 1st January 2026.
- Office-based work will be the norm, not the exception.

Line managers should work with their teams to ensure that there are staff present in the office on each working day.

- Individual working patterns must reflect this expectation.
- This policy supports, but does not replace, existing flexible working arrangements (e.g., compressed hours or part-time contracts).
- Employees who are field-based or in non-office-based roles are likely to already be in the field or their place of work full time anyhow. If they are not however, this policy will move them to a position which reflects that of office-based staff.

Dynamic working principles

We operate under ten guiding principles:

1. **Customer First:** Service quality and access for residents are paramount. Office presence enables better coordination and responsiveness.
2. **Wellbeing Matters:** In-person interaction builds community, confidence, and cohesion. We will create healthy, inclusive environments where colleagues can thrive.
3. **Location:** The council has multiple sites and colleagues can work from the most appropriate council location or with partners to promote further collaborative working with the expectation that most staff will work in the civic centre.
4. **Empowerment:** Staff are trusted and supported to deliver, with professional judgment used to balance flexibility and service need.
5. **Productive Practices:** Meetings (1:1s, team meetings and all other such meetings) are to be held face-to-face. Staff are expected to help cover for absent colleagues and prioritise availability. Staff can support colleagues more effectively in person.
6. **Smarter Working:** We will reduce unnecessary emails, meet face-to-face where possible, and use Teams with cameras and branded backgrounds for virtual collaboration.
7. **Flexibility with responsibility:** Some flexibility is expected - but the emphasis is on being present in the office to support delivery.
8. **Connection First:** Talking face-to-face and building relationships are central to dynamic working.
9. **Culture and Inclusion:** In-person working reinforces our organisational culture and supports all lifestyles while ensuring delivery.
10. **Professional Boundaries:** Working from home is not a substitute for domestic responsibilities. Clear boundaries between work and home are essential.

Implementation timeline

- The policy comes into effect immediately with an expectation that staff will be working under the new policy on 1st September 2025.
- Between now and then, services will prepare for implementation through Directorate Management Teams (DMTs), ensuring alignment with operational needs.
- Recruitment adverts for appropriate roles will clearly state the four-day office working requirement.



Scope and exceptions

- Applies to all permanent, fixed-term, full-time, and part-time Harlow Council staff.
- Flexible working applications (e.g., compressed hours,) remain available. Further details can be found in the application for flexible working policy.
- Contractual flexible working arrangements already in place are unaffected.
- Community-based, site-based or operational staff whose roles require on-site presence are exempt from the four-day expectation but continue to follow service-specific arrangements.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for employees with relevant protected characteristics as appropriate.
- Colleagues may also be expected to vary their working from home days to cover for absent colleagues, undertake emergency work that necessitates on site working etc. This will be done where possible with prior consultation.

Conclusion

Dynamic working is central to our transformation as a council. By being visible, present, and connected, we can deliver high-performing services, drive cultural change, and build the future of Harlow - together.

