



Reference: EIR4327

Request:

1. Please provide all information relating to your staff returning to working from council offices following the lifting of Covid restrictions.

As this return to the workplace will involve staff travelling, possibly by car etc, please also provide all information about how this return reconciles and aligns with the council declaring a climate emergency and the expectation for staff to actively reduce their carbon emissions.

CLARIFICATION: _I am not asking for information provided to staff. I am asking for information about staff returning to the workplace. Such as records of internal discussions about the return. Any risk assessment conducted. Records of reasons to bring staff back into the workplace._

**The approach to how the Authority has protected the employees in its care and maintained essential services to residents during the pandemic, has been a complex, carefully considered and dynamic process, that continues to this day.

It may be helpful to note that nearly two thirds of the Authority's teams, have been in a workplace or community setting, delivering services throughout the pandemic, where there was no other way of providing those services.

There has been no universal decision or mandate for all teams to return to an office or community location by a specific date, who work for North Tyneside Council.

Our approach has always been to follow national guidance, and following successful completion of the Government Roadmap to Recovery, stage 4, and further Government guidance issued on 14 July 2021, on how people could work safely in work based settings, we asked every manager to have a further individual wellbeing conversation with every member of their team. These conversations have helped managers and teams safeguard the wellbeing of every employee but also use this information to weigh up the overall benefit, of continued working at any location. In addition risk assessments for operations and buildings continue to be reviewed and updated.

Many colleagues, who were working from home, expressed a preference to return to a workplace and have done so, under the current Government guidance.

All managers have had to assess and balance the cumulative impact of team members working remotely, upon the effective delivery of services to our customers; again Government guidance has directed this.**



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2. Then secondly, considering the council has declared a climate emergency, any information held about how this will impact on the ability of staff to reduce their carbon footprint._

****Response re: climate emergency****

Whilst the Authority has declared a climate emergency and will continue to encourage a reduction in fleet and staff mileage, this has to be considered in the context of the borough's overall carbon footprint and the organisation's business need. The Carbon footprint of all of the authority's activities equates 2% of the borough's overall carbon footprint. Also important to note is, two thirds of our staff aren't office based and are therefore required to either attend work or travel around the borough to carry out their duties, in effect it is impossible to eradicate staff and fleet miles from our activities. Evidence also suggests that there is a greater carbon footprint associated with individuals working from home arising from increased domestic electricity, gas and water consumption. In this complex equation, business need becomes the primary driver.

And in such a diverse organisation as a Council it is appropriate that service managers determine business need whilst considering overall carbon reduction targets.