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**To what extent has the adoption of flexible mobile
working transformed staff operations within
Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy?**

Sarah-Jayne Evans

A dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of
Chester, for the degree of Master of Business Administration

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Abstract

For many years Central Government has investigated ways in which to streamline Local Government Authorities (LGA), in order to provide better value services to its citizens. Following a Local Government Review (LGR) of two-tier councils, six district councils and one County Council were merged to form two unitary councils; namely Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council.

This study investigates the extent of staff operation transformation following the adoption of flexible mobile working initiatives within the Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy. The adoption of such initiatives allows the organisation to tackle issues of accommodation, staff well-being and service delivery.

To do this, the researcher uses a mixture of inductive and deductive approaches (supported by a contemporary literature review and a conceptual model), in order to investigate the research aim. Following a phenomenological philosophy, the researcher “seeks an understanding of human behaviour” (Hagyard & Keenan, 2006; Saunders *et al*, 2009, p. 116) to support the investigation into the extent of staff operation transformation. The data collection for this study is achieved through a research strategy of a survey approach, in which the researcher employs the use of two questionnaires distributed to two groups of respondents.

Employing the methodological considerations from Chapter 3 leads the researcher to believe that the extent of staff operation transformation at this stage (year 1) is substantial. The researcher deduces this as the majority of employees adapt their work practices to suit working in a flexible, mobile manner. Staff efficiency is increased, their work-life balance is improved, and, they now have a choice of where they work from. In addition, the organisation benefits from tangible changes, such as reduced sickness absence, reduced overall travel costs, and improved use of existing office space. However, at the end of this report, in order to improve the benefits realised thus far, the researcher presents seven recommendations, to further promote the adoption of flexible mobile working within the organisation.

Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously for any academic purpose. All secondary sources are acknowledged.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research organisation; it reveals the research question with justification for the research. It briefly depicts the research methodology, and outlines the remaining chapters in which the researcher answers the research question.

1.1 The research organisation

Cheshire East Council is a public sector organisation that came into existence on the 1st of April 2009 following a Local Government Review (LGR). Cheshire East Council is formed from the preceding authorities of Congleton Borough Council, Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council, Macclesfield Borough Council and half of Cheshire County Council. The confirmation of the decision to create a unitary authority was announced in December 2007.

Cheshire East Council is the third largest unitary authority in the North West (next to Manchester and Liverpool), it has an area of 1,116km², an electorate of over 280,000, with 81 Councilors representing 27 wards. It also holds a net budget of £235 million and has approximately 14,000 staff (Cheshire East Council, 2009).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher focuses on a single service area within the new authority, ICT Strategy, and investigates how they use flexible mobile working initiatives to tackle issues of accommodation, staff well-being and service delivery.

ICT Strategy currently employs 30 staff undertaking varied duties within the departments of Commissioning and Planning, ICT Security, Information Management, Technical Strategy and Planning, Business Development and Programme Management.

1.2 Research question

Council office workers traditionally undertake a conventional approach to “doing a day’s work.” Employees are required to arrive at a specific office building and undertake their duties within a specified set working pattern. However, in recent years, the demands from Central Government to make substantial efficiency

savings, provide clients with better access to services, along with the need to balance the employees home life, has forced local government organisations to become more flexible in their approach to service delivery. In an attempt to meet this demand, public sector organisations have turned to, what is now known as, flexible mobile working.

The researcher herself is engaged in flexible mobile working from the perspective of a user, undertaking her daily duties from any of the organisational offices, or from her home. It is this experience, along with the organisational drive, that inspires the researcher to find out:

To what extent has the adoption of flexible mobile working transformed staff operations within Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy?

The objective of this study is to:

1. Understand contemporary literature and terminology that, collectively, formulates flexible mobile working.
2. Investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.
3. Explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working.
4. Compare and contrast research objectives 2 & 3 with research objective 1.
5. Draw conclusions and, if appropriate, formulate recommendations for furthering the availability and adoption of flexible mobile working across the service.

1.3 Justification for the research

In order for the new unitary authorities to begin service (on the 1st April 2009) employees from the seven councils are assigned to either Cheshire East Council or Cheshire West and Chester Council. The assignment of staff is based on a ratio of staff to population. Therefore, as Cheshire East Council is slightly larger than

Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East Council is assigned 51% of staff and Cheshire West and Chester Council is assigned 49% of staff.

This assignment of staff leads to an imbalance of properties, as traditionally all the office accommodation is located in the west. This is acceptable for Cheshire West and Chester Council as they have enough accommodation for their staff.

However, Cheshire East Council now has more employees than available accommodation, along with a considerable number of new employees that are now required to commute to the opposite side of the county to attend work. Consequently this impacts on the various travel networks, as well as having an adverse affect on the environment.

To counteract these issues, Cheshire East Council implements a strategy that is believed to be both efficient and effective, allowing staff to work flexibly, whilst maintaining effective service delivery. It is also recognised that the way in which people carry out their daily duties needs to change.

An investigation into Human Resource (HR) policies and Information Communication Technology (ICT) identifies new ways of streamlining processes whilst allowing staff to work more efficiently and effectively.

The investigations have directed Cheshire East Council to develop new HR policies and introduce new technologies, whilst changing the organisational culture, and the mindset of managers and staff in their approach to working.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) promotes and encourages the use of these new policies by stating:

“Cheshire East is committed to enabling employees to work more flexibly. The new Cheshire East Council flexible mobile working policies aim to support greater flexibility in ‘where, when and how’ employees work whilst ensuring organisational objectives and service requirements are achieved” (Cheshire East Council, 2009).

In order to understand the full impact of the policy and technology changes throughout Cheshire East Council, research of policy within each service area is

required. However, due to the time available for this study, the research is limited to how employees adapt their approach to work in order to adopt the flexible mobile working initiatives within Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy.

1.4 Methodology

The research methodology is discussed in more detail within Chapter 3, below is an outline of the key points.

Research Approach

The research approach of choice is deduction first (literature) then induction (building theory), as the researcher is able to get a “feel for what’s going on in order to better understand the problem” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 126).

Research Philosophy

The research philosophy of choice for this study is interpretivism. Saunders *et al*, (2009, p. 116) state “It is necessary for the researcher to understand the differences between humans.”

Research Strategy

The research strategy of choice is the survey approach. “The survey strategy embraces empirical research, involving the idea of going out there to find details of tangible things that can be measured and recorded” (Denscome, 2004, p. 6).

1.5 Outline of the chapters

Chapter 1 – Introduction. This chapter presents information on the research organisation, reveals the research question (with justification for the research), and briefly depicts the research methodology. Finally, the chapter concludes with definitions and a glossary of terms.

Chapter 2 – Literature review. This chapter reviews contemporary literature in order to define what flexible mobile working is. It examines flexible working and mobile working in the Public and Private sectors, and the methods of delivering flexible mobile working, as well as the enablers and barriers to implementation. Finally, the chapter explores the impact of organisational culture and change

management and leadership, resulting in a conceptual model which reveals the interconnecting themes of the research topic.

Chapter 3 – Methodology. This chapter fully describes the research methodology used throughout the research study; including the approach, the philosophy, the strategy and the rejected methods. The chapter continues on to describe the research design, it maps the research instruments to the conceptual model and reveals the steps taken to ensure the research validity, reliability and objectivity. Finally the chapter illustrates the ethical considerations that the researcher adopts to uphold the safety, security and anonymity of all participants, as well as the data the researcher collects.

Chapter 4 – Findings. This chapter analyses the respondents, and reveals a carefully selected sub-section of the data collected, via the research instruments, in order to achieve objectives 2 and 3

Chapter 5 – Conclusions. This chapter focuses on a critical evaluation of the adopted methodology; it analyses, compares and contrasts the responses from the questionnaires with the literature review in Chapter 2. It draws conclusions about the research objectives, and reveals the extent of staff operation transformation. Finally the chapter reviews the limitations of the study and presents opportunities for further research.

Chapter 6 – Recommendations. In order to further the adoption of flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council, this chapter presents the recommendations formulated within the conclusions of chapter 5, which links to the literature review and the conceptual model within chapter 2.

1.6 Definitions & Glossary of Terms

<u>Term Used</u>	<u>Definition</u>
24/7	24 hours per day, 7 days a week
2002 Employment Act	Government legislation on Employment
3G	Third Generation Technology

Barriers	A condition that makes it difficult to make progress or to achieve an objective
BT	British Telecom
Carbon footprint	Amount of greenhouse gas emissions released into the environment
CCC	Cheshire County Council
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Change Agent	The person who undertakes authorised changes within an organisation
Enablers	Capabilities that allow an enterprise to advance
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
HFX	German organisation who introduced flexible working to the UK
HR	Human Resources
Humanistic	Behavioural psychology – the needs of the employee
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LGA	Local Government Authority
LGR	Local Government Reorganisation
Mobility Technology	Equipment that can be used off-site
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
Organisational Culture	How the organisation is perceived/wants to be perceived
Psychological Contract	The perceived unwritten contract between an employee and an employer
Project Nomad	Government Lead Flexible Mobile Working Scheme
Tablet PC's	Device smaller than a PC with similar capabilities
UK	United Kingdom
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity
WorkwiseUK	Organisation created to bring together many organisations to support and promote smarter working

1.7 Summary

This chapter presents information on the research organisation, reveals the research question with justification for the research, briefly depicts the research

methodology, and outlines the remaining chapters in which the researcher answers the research question. The following chapter reviews the contemporary literature available on the subject of flexible mobile working and its interrelated themes.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on objective 1 as set out in the introductory chapter:

1. Understand contemporary literature and terminology that collectively formulates flexible mobile working.

The study is centred on research from various sources including:

Journals: Employee relations journal, International Journal of Public Sector Management, Managing mobile work – insights from European practice.

Publications: ACAS, Civica Connect, CIPD, HSE, Project Nomad.

Key texts: Cameron, E., & Green, M., (2009); Erneq, J. M. (1992); Harrison, R. & Stokes, H. (1992); Hayes, J. (2007); Stredwick, J. & Ellis, S. (2005).

Undertaking this research ensures that further understanding is gained of the principles behind the implementation of flexible mobile working.

2.1.1 Parent disciplines/fields/themes

The key themes of this literature review include: what flexible mobile working is; flexible mobile working in the Public and Private sectors; methods of delivering flexible mobile working; enablers and barriers to implementation, and the impact of organisational culture, change management and leadership.

2.2 What is flexible mobile working?

Flexible mobile working is a term used throughout Public (especially local government authorities) and Private sector organisations to unite two initiatives; namely flexible working and mobile working.

Flexible working is a phrase that “describes any working pattern adapted to suit your needs” (Directgov, 2009), it offers “...a wide range of work styles and employment practices...which differ from the traditional 9-5 full time job with a permanent contract” (Flexibility.co.uk, 2009).

Mobile working is illustrated as “... a person moving and executing tasks anywhere and at any time, with the help of wired and wireless technologies and in a flexible manner” (Andriessen & Vartiainen, 2006, p. 14), supporting this view is Hampshire Council, they advocate mobile working is about “giving people the tools to let them work anywhere at any time” (eHampshire, n.d., p. 2).

Research indicates that combining these initiatives addresses the issue of increasing demands on organisations, provides clients with better access to services outside normal office hours and promotes efficient, effective working, whilst allowing employees to take charge of their own working pattern. Literature further argues that this aids employees to have a better work-life balance and cater for their own well-being needs, as well as their families (Project Nomad, 2004b, pp. 5-10).

2.3 Flexible working within the Public and Private sectors

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Public sector organisations, such as Local Government Authorities (LGA) employ flexible working practices to provide clients with better access to services, and to promote efficient and effective working. They also utilise it as an incentive to, “attract and retain a wider pool of employees” (Branine, 2004, pp. 136-137) by attempting to offset the disparity in salary between the Public and the Private sector. In addition, literature notes flexible working “[allows] people to work in ways that enable them to balance earning a living sensibly with all other demands on their time...” (Stredwick & Ellis, 2005, p. 1). ACAS (2009) support this view, as it enables employees with

dependants, or other home life pressures, to undertake their work in a way that is non detrimental to both the organisation and the employee. Consequently these actions encourage staff well-being as the pressures of everyday life are reduced.

As well as offering a balanced way of working, it is often reported that another driver of flexible working initiatives is “to result in a significant improvement in absenteeism” (Project Nomad, 2004b, p. 30) as flexible working offers a way of allowing employees to work from home whilst they are feeling unwell, and, as a result, the business does not forfeit a day’s work.

Furthermore, by providing an alternative to office based working, organisations can “[make] better use of existing office space and property portfolios” (Project Nomad, 2004b, p. 47). For example, if employees are working from another location on a regular basis, (home or client) it reduces the daily office headcount, therefore the business may decide to employ a policy of hot-desking. “Hot-desking is the practice of employees not having an allocated desk but sitting at any desk that is available” (HSE, 2003, p. 68). Consequently, the business requires less office space which subsequently introduces the opportunity to reduce the accommodation portfolio by relocating to smaller premises.

All of the above also applies to implementing flexible working in the Private sector. For example; organisations such as British Telecom (BT) introduced flexible working after examining their business needs for the future. They could see the “business was becoming global, society was becoming more demanding, and people wanted 24/7 access to services” (Waters, 2004).

BT also report that through internal research they have found the impact of flexible working to be a “tremendous business benefit... homeworkers are 20% more productive... have an average of 3 days sickness... 98% of the women on maternity return to work against the UK average of 75% which saves recruiting 500 people every year along with saving £6,000 on accommodation costs per homeworker” (Waters, 2004).

However, “in order to exploit flexible working to its full potential, it is important to establish a sound flexible mobile working initiative. Allowing access to appropriate computing and communication devices away from the office, is vital in the success of a flexible mobile working implementation, as is providing appropriate training in order for the users to become as efficient as possible” (personal communication, 10 December, 2009).

From this research it could be argued that both the Public and Private sectors implement flexible working for similar reasons; to attract and retain employees, encourage staff well-being and to enable clients to have improved access to services, as well as to reduce overheads such as accommodation and sickness absence.

2.4 Mobile working within the Public and Private sectors

Investigations into the adoption of mobile working in Public and Private sectors reveal that “mobile working is one of the keys to working successfully and effectively in the future, the technology is simple to use and offers a cost effective solution to other working practices” (Project Nomad, DVD, 2003).

Project Nomad continues by explaining that “the use of technology makes data collection in the field easier, so information flows through effectively, it reaches the right people, and cuts down the mountains of paperwork. It does not however reduce the level of the workload, but it does facilitate more time to be spent out on site, consequently producing increased levels of throughput” (Project Nomad, DVD, 2003) vis-à-vis maximising efficiencies wherever possible.

Reynolds (2009) supports the efficiency view. He documents “the adoption of mobility technology can radically improve efficiency of remote workers out in the field and as a result eliminate unnecessary journeys, save very large sums in fuel and reduce the amount of paper used in day-to-day activities by a huge amount.” This raises awareness of the environmental impact and generates ideas about reducing the organisational carbon footprint. This is further affirmed through a survey undertaken by Facilities Innovation (Puybaraud, 2007, p. 17). It states “With the rising importance of cutting travel and making business in an

environmentally friendly way, flexible [mobile] working appeals to organisations as a way to reduce the carbon footprint.”

Again the research implies that both the Public and Private sector adopt mobile working for similar reasons; to ensure employees use their time effectively, to achieve maximum efficiencies, to reduce travel time and fuel bills, and, to acquire ecological savings which are rapidly becoming as important as reducing overheads. As a result, these actions achieve additional government targets and green agendas.

2.5 Delivering flexible mobile working

As previously mentioned, for organisations to be able to fully deliver and support flexible mobile working initiatives, there is an underlying dependence on the utilisation of various technologies.

Studies reveal a marked increase in the communication and technology available to support the flexible mobile working needs of organisations. Options include mobile phone technology. For example; “General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), and Third Generation (3G) technologies, through to mobile computers (i.e. laptops, hand held devices and tablet PCs) using communication technology such as Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi)” (Project Nomad, 2004a). This growth is expected to continue with “technological change bringing many more benefits in the future” (OECD, 2003, p. 93).

Research published in 2008 by Civica Connect, (a company specialising in assisting organisations to improve service delivery and efficiency), reveals many deployments of such technology include; investigators using laptops to combat fraud by entering statements whilst on site. Call centre staff making use of GPS tracking to monitor vehicle positions, PDA’s assisting pest control officers by allowing them to enter job details on site, and, receive the details of their next job in real-time. Police officers adopting voice activation controls to receive information from the Police National Computer database, thus reducing congestion on the airwaves, especially at peak times, along with Councils using voice over internet protocol (voip) systems, to allow employees to provide office cover from external locations at no extra cost.

However, it is not only technological deployments that are needed to support flexible mobile working. Organisational and service area processes require reassessment along with "... a review of HR policies and procedures, ...training of employees and managers..., not just for the use of IT but also in the competences needed for remote working" (Project Nomad, 2004b, p. 5). Legal issues of "data protection, copyright, software licensing, health and safety, the working time directive, freedom of information act and risk management" (Project Nomad, 2004 c, p.11) also necessitate re-evaluation. Preparing the organisation, as well as the employees for the changes they are about to experience, often reduces the barriers associated with new ways of working and supports a successful implementation of flexible mobile working.

2.6 Enablers and barriers to implementing flexible mobile working

As detailed above, with any new initiative there are specific enablers and barriers that need to be discussed and addressed.

Brodts & Verburg (2007) carried out five case studies across Europe in an attempt to discover a number of enablers and barriers to the successful implementation of mobile work initiatives. The case studies revealed enablers to be "adequate skills, sufficient commitment and a systematic preparation." Conversely they found barriers to be "changes of work processes and work styles... [along with] organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face interactions" (Brodts & Verburg 2007, p. 63).

Literature recognises that there are many ways to combat the barriers. However it would seem that the most prominent recommendation is to have "a good communications plan" (Thompson, 2008). "Effective communication is at the centre of any strategy for the management of distance working" (Edwards, 2009, p. 7).

A further possible obstacle to implementing change successfully, is the psychological contract; Argyris (1964, as cited by Hayes, 2007, p. 203) "first defined the psychological contract as the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship of their obligations implied in the relationship." Hayes (2007, p. 204) expands on this stating "If employees feel that their

employer/managers have kept their side of the psychological contract, they are likely to respond by displaying a high level of commitment to the organisation. If, on the other hand, they feel that the organisation has failed to keep its side of the bargain, they may respond by redefining their side of the psychological contract. They may invest less effort in their work be less inclined to innovate and less inclined to respond to innovations or changes posed by others.” This can present a major impact on the delivery of new system implementations and could cause the project to be classed as a failure.

Robinson (1996) believes that “A fundamental and important unanswered question is what role trust plays in the experience and effects of psychological contract breach.” She continues to say “...Trust in one's employer may influence an employee's ...reaction to [a] perceived breach.” Further studies conducted by Atkinson (2006) concurs with Robinson, “It seems that trust is a key element within the content of the psychological contract and understanding this more fully can only help in exploring and perhaps managing the employment relationship.” Therefore it would seem that trust is an important part of the psychological contract. However, Robinson (1996) adds that “empirical study of the psychological contract breach remains in its infancy,” therefore; it is proposed that more investigations are required to provide a deeper understanding of the perceived psychological links between employer and employee.

Humanistic concerns, including stress related aspects of flexible mobile working, are discussed by Cooper (2005). She states “many people will have to overcome their intrinsic fears about using new office technologies in their homes or at varied locations... more stress will result from dealing with machine breakdowns, keeping up to date with new software, training on the latest equipment... isolation... [conflicts of] work time and personal time... [and] to ensure that work is not regarded by other family members as an intrusion into family life.”

It could be said that these characteristics obstruct the adoption of flexible mobile working; however, with appropriate training, organisational support and self-help mechanisms the obstruction should only be minor to the organisation and the employee. This view is reflected in Cooper's positive concluding statement; “The future of flexible [mobile] working does not have to be a “doom and gloom”

scenario; it can prove to be a liberating experience, giving choice and control to the individual – but individuals have to arm themselves with the right skills and attitudes, and engage in a constant programme of personal development” (Cooper, 2005). White (2007) shares this idealistic view and suggests that “The successful implementation of a flexible [mobile] working scheme will not only ensure a balance between work and life, but in turn could be vital to the overall survival of the organisation.”

2.7 Organisational Culture

Study indicates that in addition to the enablers and barriers, a change in organisational culture is also required for the successful implementation of a flexible mobile working initiative, together with a robust change management programme and strong leadership.

“Organisational culture is the pattern of beliefs, values, rituals, myths and sentiments shared by the members of an organisation. It influences the behaviour of all individuals and groups within the organisation”

(Harrison & Stokes, 1992, p. 1)

Flood & Jackson (1991) expand the description by adding “[culture is] extremely important in all organisations because it determines how organisations react... culture can act as a conservative restraining force or can generate innovation.” This view is still pertinent today, in a more recent implementation experience, Hawkins (as cited by Everett, 2009) discovered that “[flexible mobile working is] a major cultural change for managers, as work becomes output based rather than measuring the amount of time taken and so there are big trust issues.” Hawkins (as cited by Everett, 2009) concludes the article expressing “the single biggest challenge is changing the organisational culture and ensuring that people are comfortable working in different ways to those they’re used to... changing the technology is the easy bit.”

To combat these issues it is noted that a top-down support approach is needed, starting with the CEO. This approach is documented as being fundamental in a study by Wilkinson, Fogarty and Melville (1996, p. 71) they observed “...facilitative

leadership of commanding officers... were strong and [an] extremely important culture-forming influence.” It is further advocated in the case study that the continuous use of training and development programmes are essential to establish and embed a culture change.

Cameron and Quinn (1999), provide an Organisational Cultural Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to help organisations diagnose their organisational culture and plot their organisation on the competing values framework. The framework was developed in 1983 by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (cited by Cameron & Quinn, 1999) and contains four dominant culture types (see appendix 1). The framework is subsequently used within Cameron and Quinn’s six step process of designing a culture change which is readily available for organisations to adopt.

It is envisaged that by following Cameron and Quinn’s process (see appendix 2), “resistance to culture changes can be minimised, [as] it will engage the involvement of those affected, assist to clarify the new cultural emphasis, identify what is to remain unaltered and generate specific action steps that can be initiated to create momentum toward culture change” (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, p. 77).

2.8 Change management and Leadership

For organisations to evolve effectively it is believed that a rigorous change management process is required along with strong leadership. It is documented that “the rate of change and discovery outpaces our individual ability to keep up with it. The organisations we work in or rely on to meet our needs and wants are also changing dramatically, in terms of their strategies, their structures, their systems, their boundaries and of course their expectations of their staff and their managers” (Cameron and Green 2009, pp. 1-2).

Gilbert (1998), cited by Erneq, (1992, p. 276) prescribes that organisations should not passively submit to external changes, but should manage, and even provoke, the necessary internal transformations in the organisation. Erneq (1992, p. 277) continues with “while the purpose and end result of planned change is the development of the whole organisation and not just its component parts, the process consists of carrying out changes in component parts. Evaluation of the

impact of planned change... [allows the change agent to] demonstrate that organisational change has been achieved.” Therefore, it would appear from this research, careful consideration and, possibly, modular implementation processes are required in order to ensure successful adoption of change.

In addition to this, contemporary literature identifies numerous approaches in which to assist the change management process. Cameron & Green (2009, pp. 110-136) reveal that there are many models that can be drawn upon to support organisational change (see appendix 3 for the models depicted below), for example:

Kurt Lewin’s (1951) three step process model of unfreezing, changing behaviours and refreezing, allows issues to be raised in order to move to a new desired state, and then reinforces the new state in order to maintain this new level, rather than reverting back to the original behaviours.

John Kotter’s (1995) eight step model is derived from a study of 100 different organisations. The research highlights eight key lessons learned which are converted into the model to address issues about making change happen, communicating the vision and keeping up the communication levels throughout the whole change process.

Peter Senge *et al’s* (1999) systemic model is used to understand why sustaining significant change is so elusive, “we need to think less like managers and more like biologists.” Their guidelines include start small, grow steadily, don’t plan the whole thing and expect challenges.

However, Cameron & Green, (2009, pp. 118-120) also note that each model is flawed in some respects as they do not appear to tell the whole story. Hayes (2007, p. 88) attempts to tackle this issue by indicating that in any change strategy there are key elements required to ensure a successful implementation (see appendix 4) and, providing these are addressed, the change should be manageable.

Further studies by Pagon, Banutai & Uroš Bizjak (2008), indicate that to be able to implement successful change a “competent leader is required with the appropriate

capabilities and skill sets.” This enables them to choose the most suitable model specific to the implementation, keep the implementation process on track whilst driving the change through the organisation, and have an understanding of the people within the organisation. Morrison adds, leaders of change need to understand people rather than change (1994, p. 353 cited by Hughes, 2006, p. 146).

In support of this view, The Office of Government Commerce [OGC] (2008, p. 71) state that, “the combination of strong vision and senior leadership is arguably the single most important ingredient in the successful change management programme. The presence of a well-respected senior project sponsor will make or break the workplace project.” This opinion is mirrored by Denton (1996, p. 7). He states that “CEO buy-in must be dramatic, consistent and persistent.... If change is to have a chance, the boss must buy-in [in addition to this] there must be dramatic and sustained proof of its importance to the CEO.”

To this end it could be argued that all three examples are correct, and that a successful implementation can be achieved by the amalgamation of a strong vision from a senior leader who understands the people, and has the ability to choose the right implementation model.

2.9 Conceptual model

The conceptual model is formulated by bringing together various theories, philosophies, terms, models and frameworks in order to better understand the impact of flexible mobile working initiatives adopted throughout Public and Private sector organisations.

The key themes within the model include:

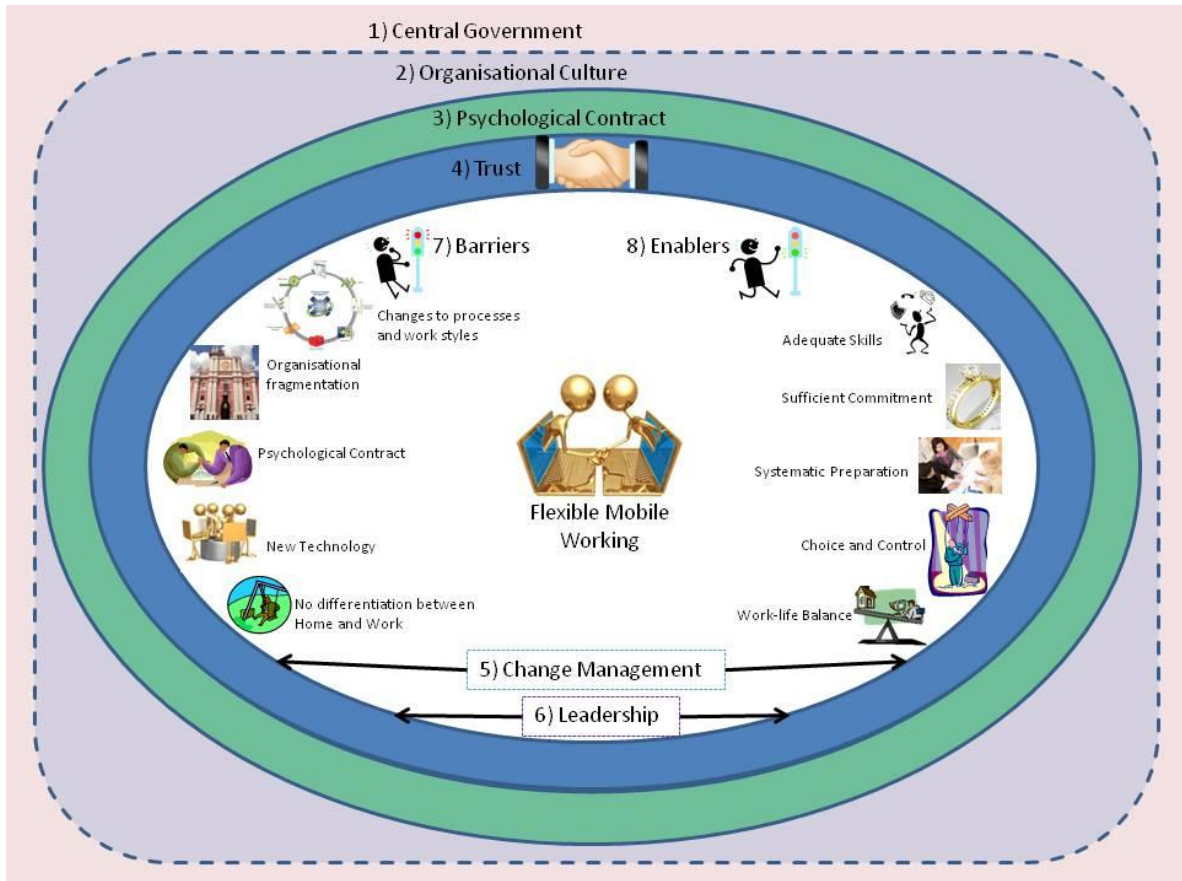
1. Central Government; the major influencing factor in the adoption and drive towards implementing efficient and effective working. It has ultimate control of the actions and budgets assigned to local government authorities. (OGC, 2004)
2. Organisational culture; influenced by Central Government and determines how organisations react (Flood & Jackson, 1991). To assist in changing the

organisational culture, a framework such as Cameron and Quinn's (1999) six step process should be employed.

3. Psychological contract; organisational culture impacts on the psychological contract, if employees feel their employer/manager has kept their side of the psychological contract they are likely to respond by displaying high level of commitment. Alternatively, if they feel the contract has been broken, they may invest less effort in their work, be less inclined to innovate and less inclined to respond to innovations or changes posed by others (Hayes, 2007; Robinson, 1996; Atkinson, 2006).
4. Trust; an integral part of the psychological contract – it is a two way process and, without it, irremediable damage can be caused to the organisational image as well as the delivery of services – trust is both an enabler and a barrier. (Robinson, 1996; Atkinson, 2006)
5. Change management; the rate of change and discovery outpaces our individual ability to keep up with it (Cameron and Green 2009, pp. 1-2). Change management ensures the organisation does not submit passively to external changes, but should manage, and even provoke, necessary internal transformations (Gilbert, 1998 as cited by Erneq, 2009).
6. Leadership; leadership is particularly important as, without CEO buy-in, change does not have a chance of success “There must be sustained proof of its importance” (Denton, 1996). “The combination of strong vision, and senior leadership is arguably the single most important ingredient” (OGC, 2008).
7. Barriers; barriers to flexible mobile working include changes to work processes, work styles and organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face interactions. The perception of the psychological contract being broken, along with stress and fears of learning new technology, can also inhibit the adoption of flexible mobile working (Brodt & Verburg, 2007; Hayes, 2007; Cooper, 2005)

8. Enablers; enablers to flexible mobile working include; adequate skills, sufficient commitment, better balance of workload for mobile workers, increased safety levels, balancing earning a living sensibly with all other demands on [staff] time and developing ones own positive attitude to new ways of working can contribute to the survival of the organisation. (Brodt & Verburg, 2007; Stredwick & Ellis, 2005; White, 2007; Cooper, 2005)

2.9.1 Conceptual Model



2.10 Summary

This chapter describes what flexible mobile working is; investigates flexible mobile working in the Public and Private sectors; explores methods of delivering flexible mobile working; illustrates the enablers and barriers to implementation, and the impact of organisational culture, change management and leadership. The following chapter details the research methods employed to obtain sound, consistent and dependable data from the respondents.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on objectives 2 & 3 as set out in the introductory chapter:

2. Investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.

3. Explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working.

The chapter details the methodological considerations regarding the research approach, the philosophy and the research strategy. It describes the methods used to undertake the research and the methods rejected.

In addition this chapter depicts the research design; including respondent selection, the creation of the research instruments, data validation, and consideration factors such as reliability, objectivity, and instrument validity. It also shows the wider aspects of ethical considerations, such as the ethical process employed, authorisation to use the data, researcher and respondent personal safety, respondent anonymity and the secure storage of data.

3.2 Methodological considerations

3.2.1 Research Approach

The research approach adopted for this study is a combination of both deduction and induction.

“A deductive process involves the collection of evidence in order to prove or disprove a hypothesis whereas induction is an empirical process that develops a general rule from the observation of particulars”
(Hagyard & Keenan, 2006).

For this study the researcher combines the approaches in order to form a theoretical framework (deduction), leading to the framework being later applied when developing the aims and objectives of the research, and when deciding which methods of data collection are most appropriate. Once the data is collected and analysed, the researcher is then able to formulate her own theory (induction) (Page, 2009, p. 10). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 127) support the

combination of the approaches as in their experience they have found that it is often advantageous to do so. They also believe that the induction approach allows the researcher to “study a small number of people in order to collect data and develop a theory as a result of the data.” This is indeed appropriate for this study as the target number of respondents is limited at thirty eight.

3.2.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy chosen is phenomenological or interpretivism.

It is written that the phenomenological or interpretivist approach “seeks an understanding of human behaviour and an empathic understanding of human action where it is necessary for the researcher to understand the differences between humans” (Hagyard & Keenan, 2006; Saunders *et al*, 2009, p. 116). To this end, specific questions are built into both research instruments in order to confirm or deny the characteristic and behaviour assumptions made by the researcher whilst she is engaged with the target audience.

From the responses, the researcher should subsequently obtain a better understanding of how open to change each individual is and how much of an impact changes of this nature have on each person. Therefore the researcher argues that gaining an appreciation of the psychological state of mind for each respondent is an important part of the learning process.

3.2.3 Research Strategy

The research strategy implemented is the survey approach.

Denscome (2004, p. 6) writes “the survey approach is a means to view a research topic comprehensively and in detail whilst obtaining data for mapping.” The researcher considers this approach as a means of providing the respondents with a structured, anonymous response mechanism that is both unobtrusive and secure.

The research instrument contains open and closed questions, a number of which provide the opportunity for the respondents to add their own comments, whilst several other questions employ a rating scale for ease of use. This also reduces the time taken to complete and return the responses. Easy access to the research

instruments is also a factor in the survey approach, as the many methods that can be used within the approach are deployable, and returnable, by remote access or electronic means.

3.4 Rejected data collection methods

The researcher identifies the rejected methods below as a means of comparing and contrasting academic literature. This identifies methods deemed unsuitable for this particular research. This process assists the researcher to obtain the best data possible by applying the most appropriate methods for this study.

1. The Case Study is rejected as a research method as it is difficult to replicate the events being observed. Consequently this prevents the possibility of recreating the situation; it also precludes the validation of the study being called into question.
2. Focus Groups (6-12 or mini focus group 4-5) are excluded, as the researcher wishes to ensure that the answers being returned are from individual experiences, rather than the possibility of answers being influenced by a proposed group think.
3. Document, discourse and conversation analysis is rejected, as although with Cheshire East Council, there is much documentation and discussion of business cases, policy changes and self help guides, there is insufficient documented organisational experience regarding the extent of the transformation of staff operations. This also applies to the organisational approach and staff stakeholder views and practices pertaining to flexible mobile working.
4. Narrative / life history (storytelling) is rejected, due to the issue of non focused responses. Although a great deal can be learned from individuals recounting their experiences, this study is focused on the actual events experienced. Therefore the lack of structure to this data collection method, and length of time required to conduct the individual interviews, is deemed non viable at this time.

5. Observation is rejected as each individual respondent would be required to be observed within a variety of flexible mobile working patterns of activity; including working from their own home. This could be seen as an invasion of privacy or could place the respondent, and/or the researcher, in an inappropriate situation together with other legal/moral considerations (i.e. health and safety). This could, in turn, generate unwillingness for respondents to take part in the study.
6. The recording schedule method is considered, as it enables the researcher to “pin people down to a specific scheduled timeframe whilst enabling the researcher to obtain the data instantly and provide an opportunity to deal with any ‘misunderstandings’ straight away” (Gillham, 2000, p.79). This method, however, is very time consuming and the availability of staff is limited, it is, therefore, rejected.

3.5 Research design

As mentioned, the research strategy implemented is the survey approach. The survey approach lends itself to a multitude of data collection methods; for example, postal questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, document surveys and observational surveys. Each of these data collection methods can be administered in person, remotely, or electronically as the researcher deems appropriate.

For this study, the researcher chooses to electronically administer two electronic postal questionnaires (see appendices 5 & 6); any follow up questions are subsequently raised via telephone conversations.

A questionnaire is “a series of structured questions which address a specific topic or issue... Used to find out what, how much, how many, and how often...” (Hart, 2006).

Questionnaire 1 centres on investigating the organisational approach to flexible mobile working, whilst questionnaire 2 concentrates on exploring staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working.

Academic literature reports that the use of questionnaires is appropriate when straightforward, relatively brief, uncontroversial information is required, when the social climate is open enough to allow full honest answers and when respondents can be expected to be able to read and understand the questions (Denscome, 2004, p. 145). The researcher's engagement with the target audience to date permits her to believe that the respondent's answers are open and honest, and is assured that they are able to easily read and understand the questions posed.

3.5.1 Questionnaire advantages and disadvantages

Although the researcher chooses to electronically administer the questionnaires, there are both advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered when using this method.

Advantages include time saving; as there is no waiting for the general mail to be delivered to/collected from the target audience, encouraging a higher response rate; the respondent can easily get in touch with the researcher and discuss any queries the respondent may have; the target audience is in immediate receipt of the questionnaire; the researcher can add a read receipt to acknowledge the target individual has read the email containing the questionnaire; it is easier to send a follow up message asking for the completion of the questionnaire and it can also be regarded as a cost effective and ecologically sound publishing mechanism as it does not use paper, printing, envelopes or stamps; therefore assisting to reduce the carbon footprint.

Disadvantages include the target audience may read the email and decide not to participate and/or delete the message; individuals may read the email, become distracted and forget to complete or return the questionnaire; participants may regard this request as a low priority and miss the deadline for returns and, it is easy to ignore any follow up messages.

3.5.2 Respondent selection

The research organisation, Cheshire East Council currently employs circa 14,000 staff. As a whole, the research organisation is too large for this study, therefore two groups of respondents are selected by adopting the process of multi-stage sampling.

“Multistage sampling involves sampling at several levels. A random sample is first selected for some group of units and then another random sample is pulled from within the population of units first selected”

(Moeller, 2009, p. 232).

Denscome (2009) illustrates an example of multistage sampling by drawing a comparison with departments within an organisation. This analogy supports the researcher’s sampling strategy and is guiding the researcher to identify the following two groups of respondents;

Group 1; a cross section of Senior Management Team and previous flexible mobile working project panel members (now disbanded) artificially formed into a department. This group is in receipt of questionnaire 1, as their organisational role includes advocating the adoption of flexible mobile working wherever possible. Therefore, they are best placed to provide research on the organisational approach to flexible mobile working. By its nature, the group is small with eight members and, although they are wide spread throughout various service areas across Cheshire East Council, they are accessible by electronic and telephone communication.

Group 2; the Cheshire East ICT Strategy Team is a department that is naturally formed within the research organisation containing both Cheshire East ICT Strategy Team Managers and their staff. This group is in receipt of questionnaire 2, as their role is to undertake their duties after having transformed their working pattern to one of flexible mobile working. This places them in the best position to provide research of staff stakeholder views and practices of flexible mobile working. By its nature the group is small with thirty members. Although group 2 have a common office base in Crewe, they can be expected to work from a variety of locations across Cheshire East Council as well as the neighbouring partnership

authority of Cheshire West and Chester Council. Group 2, are also accessible by electronic and telephone communication.

3.5.3 Questionnaire construction

The researcher constructs two questionnaires, conscious that, in order to achieve the best possible outcome, a balancing act of engaging and maintaining a rapport with the target audience is essential. This includes informing the individual of how they came to be selected, what the purpose of the research is, how they contribute to the research as well as disclosing the security and anonymity aspects of the study as suggested by Oppenheim (2005, p.121-122), and Peterson (2000 p.30). (See appendix 7 for a sample email sent to the respondents)

Peterson (2000, p.13) also recommends using a seven step framework to construct an effective questionnaire. This enables the creator to systematically review the information requirements, develop, prioritise, reassess, formulate a list of potential questions to satisfy the information requirements, and to determine the type of questions to be asked. Once the formulation of the potential questions is complete, the creator is able to determine the structure and finally evaluate the questionnaire.

For this study, the two research instruments contain questions developed by the researcher using Peterson's seven step framework; along with a number of previously peer reviewed, and academically accepted questions, adapted from two specific studies, namely Facilities Innovation Flexible Working Survey 2007 (Puybaraud, 2007) and the University of Reading Flexible working in Central Government; leveraging the benefits (Gibson & Luck, 2004).

To avoid breach of copyright, the researcher wrote to both organisations to obtain authorisation from the authors agreeing to the inclusion / adoption of their questions from their studies, however only 1 acceptance is received from the University of Reading (see appendix 8), no communication at all is received from Facilities Innovation. This may be due to the organisation since being acquired by Johnson Controls.

In this investigation, the researcher predominantly uses closed questions that incorporate both dichotomous questions which establish a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer, or pre-determined answers using a rating scale. This decision is taken to reduce the time required to complete the document, make it as easy as possible for the respondents to answer the questions, and to aid the analysis process. However, due to the range of response to some of the questions, the researcher includes a selection of closed questions with an option for the respondent to specify their own answer should none of the predetermined categories pose the correct value.

When using closed questions there are some considerations that need to be addressed, such as the ballot effect and the position effect. Peterson (2000, p. 39) writes, the ballot effect occurs "if a particular answer will overwhelm other possible answers, [if this is true,] then it is best to remove that choice or even rewrite the question to ask for the next best option." The position effect is regarded as "the result of people choosing a particular answer more or less frequently because of its position within the hierarchy of the alternative answers" (Peterson, 2000, p. 42).

To avoid these concerns, it is recommended that various versions of the questionnaires be produced in order to randomise where the popular response is. For example, if the most popular response is 'travel' at position three of five then, on a different version of the questionnaire, make 'travel' position five of five and so on. That way you can average out the impact of the position effect. (Peterson, 2000, p. 42)

Open-ended questions are used cautiously in the questionnaires. These questions allow the respondent to answer with a description of the event to keep them engaged, and on the researcher's side, thus compelling the respondent to complete and return the questionnaire. However, "the analysis of open-ended questions can be time consuming as a multistage process is often required to identify trends" (Peterson, 2000, p. 35).

Finally, in each questionnaire, the researcher uses one important open-ended question as a further hook to ensure the respondents are aware of their importance, and valid contribution to the research. For example;

Group 1 is asked “*Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve the organisational approach to flexible mobile working?*”

Group 2 is asked “*Are there any changes you would like to make to the current system that may improve your experience of flexible mobile working?*”

Phrasing the questions in this manner ensures that the researcher is not promising anything she cannot deliver. It provides an opportunity for the respondent to have a voice, knowing that their recommendation will be anonymously fed back to the organisation in order to improve on the current flexible mobile working initiatives.

3.6 Mapping the questions to the Conceptual Model and Literature Review

The researcher employs the use of a framework which ensures all aspects of the literature review and the conceptual model is captured within each questionnaire.

The tables on the next page map out each of the questions asked in relation to the conceptual model and the literature review. (See appendices 5 & 6 for the research instruments)

3.6.1 Questionnaire 1, Organisational Approach

Conceptual model reference	Question number	Literature review Reference
1 Central Government	3, 4, 7,	OGC 2008
2 Organisational Culture	5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 19,	Flood & Jackson 1991; Harrison & Stokes 1992; Wilkinson, Fogarty & Melville 1996; Cameron & Quinn 1999; Everett 2009
3 Psychological Contract	4,	Argyris 1964 as cited by Ernecq; Hayes 2007
4 Trust	4, 7, 24, 25,	Robinson 1996; Atkinson 2006
5 Change Management	1, 2, 15, 16, 20, 21,	Lewin 1951; Ernecq 1992; Gilbert 1998; Kotter 1995; Senge <i>et al</i> 1999; Hayes 2007; Cameron & Green 2009;
6 Leadership	6, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21,	Denton 1996; Morrison 1994; Hughes 2006; Pagon, Banutai & Uros Bizjak 2008; OGC 2008;
7 Barriers	4, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31	Cooper 2005; Brod & Verburg 2007; White 2007;
8 Enablers	4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 22, 23,	Cooper 2005; Brod & Verburg 2007; White 2007;

3.6.2 Questionnaire 2, Staff Stakeholder Views

Conceptual model reference	Question number	Literature review Reference
1 Central Government	7, 8	OGC 2008
2 Organisational Culture	2, 3, 9, 19, 21	Flood & Jackson 1991; Harrison & Stokes 1992; Wilkinson, Fogarty & Melville 1996; Cameron & Quinn 1999; Everett 2009
3 Psychological Contract	11, 14, 16, 28, 29, 30	Argyris 1964 as cited by Ernecq; Hayes 2007
4 Trust	26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Robinson 1996; Atkinson 2006
5 Change Management	17, 18, 22, 23, 37	Lewin 1951; Ernecq 1992; Gilbert 1998; Kotter 1995; Senge <i>et al</i> 1999; Hayes 2007; Cameron & Green 2009;
6 Leadership	17, 20, 21, 22, 23	Denton 1996; Morrison 1994; Hughes 2006; Pagon, Banutai & Uros Bizjak 2008; OGC 2008;
7 Barriers	3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 20, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36	Cooper 2005; Brod & Verburg 2007; White 2007;
8 Enablers	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 38	Cooper 2005; Brod & Verburg 2007; White 2007;

3.7 Questionnaire Validity

To ensure the research instruments are validated, the researcher undertakes the following procedures:

Question creation: The questions are based on ideas developed by the researcher using Peterson's seven step framework and the results of two specific studies.

Study 1; a flexible working survey undertaken by Facilities Innovation in 2007 (Puybaraud, 2007) and study 2; University of Reading Flexible working in Central Government; leveraging the benefits (Gibson & Luck, 2004). The use of the two studies enables the researcher to incorporate questions that have already been peer reviewed, and accepted within the wider academic environment.

Rating scale: The specific rating scale used within the questions is based on the Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree and Strongly Agree (Likert, 1932 as cited by Peterson, 2000, p. 75). The researcher removes the undecided option as she does not wish to provide opportunity for the respondents not to answer the question.

Panel review: A panel of individuals is used to assess whether each measurement question is 'essential', 'useful but not essential' or 'not necessary' as recommended by Saunders *et al* (2007, p. 373). The researcher also asks the panel to consider and respond to the following questions:

- Is this question really relevant to the topic?
- Is the question asked in the right way?
- Does this question relate to the literature review and conceptual model?
- Are the questions easy to understand?
- Are there too many questions?
- Are there enough questions?

From the feedback, the questionnaires are amended and reviewed once more, before being sent to the target audience.

3.8 Data Validation

In order to uphold the integrity of the research instruments, the researcher creates the questionnaires using an excel workbook and utilises security aspects of the software. For example, password protection, data validation and allowing users to edit specific cells within the protected workbook. The data is further validated by the use of drop down pick lists which ensures the respondent is only able to choose from a finite number of results. The use of error alerting is also combined within the questionnaires, providing assistance to the respondent when entering data into a protected cell, or into a cell that requires the respondent to choose from a pick list. The aim of the security is to prevent the respondents altering the questions and to minimise the opportunity to enter spurious responses, thus making it easier to analyse.

3.9 Reliability

In this study the following reliability methods are used:

Test and re-test: Hart (2006) describes test and re-test as a quantitative method, however, the test and re-test method is utilised in this study when creating and piloting the qualitative research instruments. Unfortunately, it is not possible, at this stage, to fully utilise this method as the timeframe is too limited to resend the questionnaires. As a consequence, it is not possible to establish if the same results would be returned.

Internal consistency: The researcher uses a mechanism of response correlation to compare responses to specific questions within the questionnaire, therefore measuring consistency across all the questions, or a sub group.

Alternative form: Litwin (1995, p. 13) suggests using alternative form as a way of using different worded items to measure the same attribute. To incorporate this aspect, the questionnaire contains questions that are asked in both a positive and a negative way. This allows the researcher to check if the views of the respondent are consistent or, identify if the respondent may have completed the questionnaire in a non considerate manner, and, as a result, randomly selects the answers to the questions just to fill out the form.

3.10 Objectivity

The researcher herself undertakes her own duties in a flexible mobile manner, she is aware, therefore, that she must detach herself in order to remain unbiased whilst analysing the results, and, when suggesting any further recommendations. This is supported by Flick, (2006, p. 13) who states “in order to obtain objectivity, it is necessary to design studies in a way that excludes the researchers influence as far as possible.”

3.11 Ethical considerations

Kimmel (1988, p.40) describes “ethical problems in social research [as a reflection] of concerns about proper conduct related to the processes and consequences of research and procedure.” In order to address these issues and to ensure that open, honest and unbiased results are obtained the researcher adopts the following procedures:

Authorisation; The ICT Strategy Manager is approached for the initial acceptance of the study. Further authorisation is requested, and subsequently granted, for sending out the questionnaires to Senior Managers and ICT Strategy team members.

Personal Safety; The researchers, and the respondents, personal safety is not compromised by this research as it is administered electronically and is accessible from any location the targeted respondent is able to access their emails.

Anonymity; Respondents are reassured that all responses are gratefully appreciated, and are treated in the strictest confidence. At no time are the names of any respondents published or referred to in a way that could identify them.

Storage of data; In order to reduce any issue of lost papers the questionnaires are administered electronically via email. The returned data is then stored in a secure, password protected file share area on the organisational network. Once the research is completed all data will be permanently deleted.

3.12 Summary

This chapter details the methodological considerations regarding the research approach, philosophy and strategy used to undertake the research. It depicts the

research design, creation of the research instruments, validation processes and the ethical considerations adopted throughout this study. The next chapter analyses the respondents and reveals a carefully selected sub-set of the data collected.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the results of the data collected via the research instruments in order to achieve objectives 2 and 3, as set out in the introductory chapter:

1. *Investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.*
2. *Explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working.*

To do this, the chapter analyses the respondents and reveals the responses from the research instruments through use of narrative and chart representation.

An analysis of the findings along with research conclusions are reserved for discussion in Chapter 5.

4.2 Analysis of respondents/non-respondents and response rate

8 questionnaires are distributed to group 1, and 30 questionnaires are distributed to group 2; making a total of 38 questionnaires. The number of responses totals 23 (61%) over a 2 week response period.

Analysis of group 1 discovers that out of the 8 organisational approach questionnaires, 7 responses are received. Of these 4 are male and 3 are female, 5 are senior managers and 2 are project staff. This equates to an 88% response rate which is higher than the average.

Analysis of group 2 reveals that out of 30 staff stakeholder questionnaires, 16 responses are received. Of these 10 are male and 6 are female, 4 are managers and 12 are staff. This equates to a 53% response rate which again surpasses the average. The researcher is disappointed, however, with this result as there is potential for respondent bias.

To ensure the data analysis is unbiased, a response rate of 60% is preferred. Therefore, approval to proceed with group 1 is granted, approval to proceed with

group 2 is granted (post discussion with the research supervisor). The researcher takes this into account in Chapter 5, when the results are further analysed.

4.2.1 Non respondents

1 x group 1 member declined to take part stating that *“as they are no longer involved in the organisational approach to implementing flexible mobile working post LGR, they do not believe that they are in a position to comment on Cheshire East Council’s strategy.”*

3 x group 2 members declined to take part reporting that *“their work is not of a nature that makes it possible to work in a flexible mobile manner.”* The researcher would challenge this, as the work being undertaken is office administration. Accordingly, with the correct tools and training, it should be possible to work in a flexible mobile manner.

The profile of the 14 x group 2 non respondents is a mixture of 3 managers and 11 staff, of which 8 are male and 6 are female.

4.3 Research Instruments

Questionnaire 1 to group 1 has 31 questions divided into 2 sections.

Section 1 relates to the organisational approach to flexible mobile working, investigating flexible mobile working practices; the influence of Central Government; the main reasons for implementing flexible mobile working; constraining factors; additional benefits observed once flexible mobile working is implemented, along with any changes group 1 would like to make in order to improve the organisational approach.

Section 2 relates to the staff stakeholder views investigating work-life balance; organisational vision; senior management support of both staff and the flexible mobile working initiative; preparing staff for change, in order to reduce barriers and increase enablers associated with change; training; the psychological contract related to trust; communication and perceptions of staff related to non visibility and subsequent ‘career suicide’. Out of 7 respondents there are only 3 questions from 2 respondents that are unanswered.

Questionnaire 2 to group 2 has 38 questions also divided into 2 sections: Section 1 relates to establishing the pattern of work before the introduction of flexible mobile working, and the transformation of working styles, including travel, sickness and caring for dependents. It furthers the work-life balance questions by investigating separating work life from home life, productivity and the engagement of officers.

Section 2 is a direct copy of the questions from questionnaire 1 in order for the researcher to undertake direct correlation analysis. Out of 16 respondents there is only 1 question from 1 respondent that is unanswered.

4.4 Findings for each research question

All response rates are rounded to the nearest whole number. 2 sample questionnaires, and their responses, are outlined in full in appendices 5, 6 & 9.

4.5 Organisational approach to flexible mobile working

In order to establish the organisational approach regarding flexible mobile working, various questions and statements are posed to group 1. The following statements and charts represent a selection of their responses.

4.5.1 Central Government

Question: Has Central Government influenced the adoption of flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council?

57% of group 1 believe that the catalyst is only due to the Central Government decision to re-organise the two-tiered local authority of Cheshire.

Specific group 1 responses include:

Yes in that LGR decision brought about the need for it as there were not enough desks for the staff that transferred. But beyond that, no hardly at all.

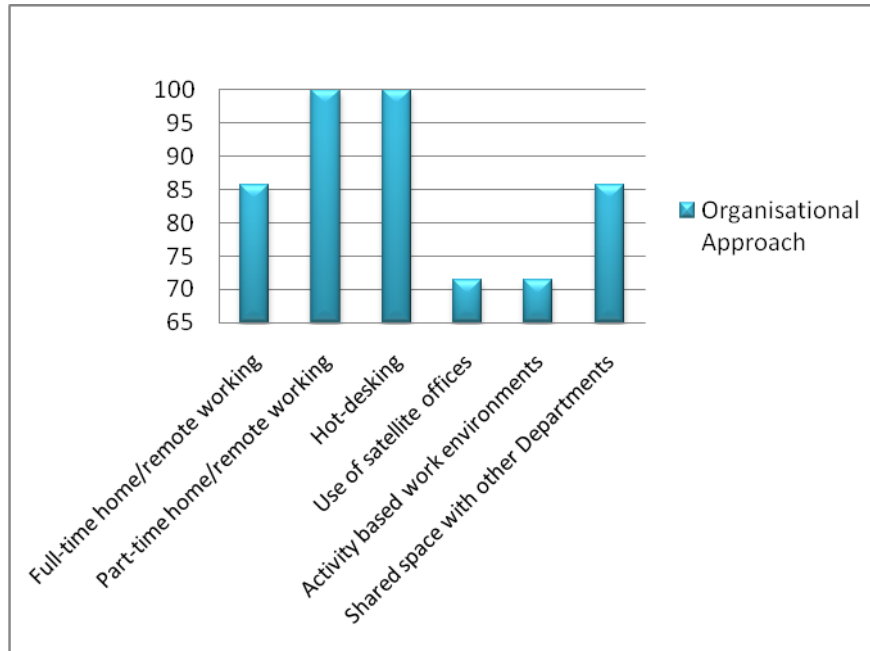
Central Government has provided governance around adopting FMW and CEC have applied this within service to enable a more flexible approach to work life balance

Only in terms of legislation change from April 09 which allowed people with children under 16 to request the right to work flexibly

The LGR decision to create the new authority has proved a catalyst for increased flexible mobile working. This is due to relocation of staff into Cheshire East Borough and the travelling distance from home has meant that working flexibly has eased some of the travelling required and travelling expense issue.

4.5.2 Flexible mobile working practices

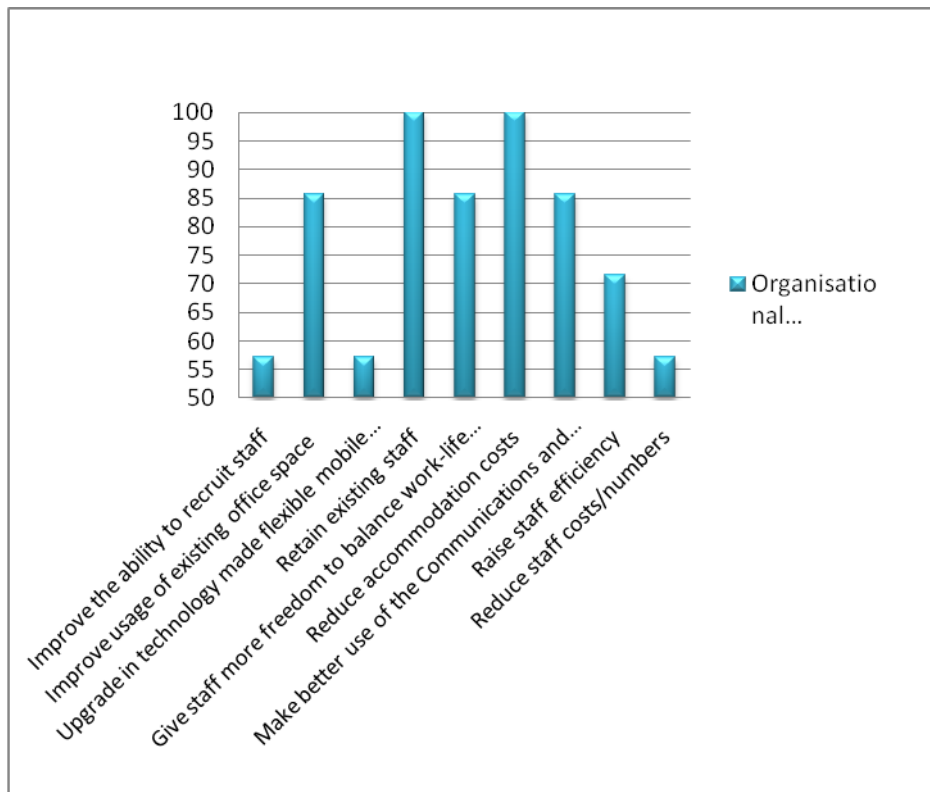
Question: Which flexible mobile working practices have you introduced?



This chart (through the opinion of group 1) indicates that the organisation has chosen to implement part-time home/remote working and hot-desking as their joint 1st practice of choice. The use of satellite offices and activity based work environments is their joint 2nd choice, with full-time home/remote working and shared space with other departments as their 3rd joint practice.

4.5.3 Main reasons for introducing flexible mobile working

Question: What were the main reasons for considering the introduction of flexible mobile working?



Group 1 identifies the top 3 reasons for implementing flexible mobile working as:

- Joint 1st Retain existing staff and reduce accommodation costs
- Joint 2nd Improve existing use of office space and make better use of communications and IT capabilities
- 3rd Raise staff efficiency

However, a supplementary question is asked of group 1 to identify the most important reason from the list. 43% of the respondents indicate it is to improve the usage of existing office space. Interestingly, this response ranks joint 2nd in the previous question.

4.5.4 Implementation lead

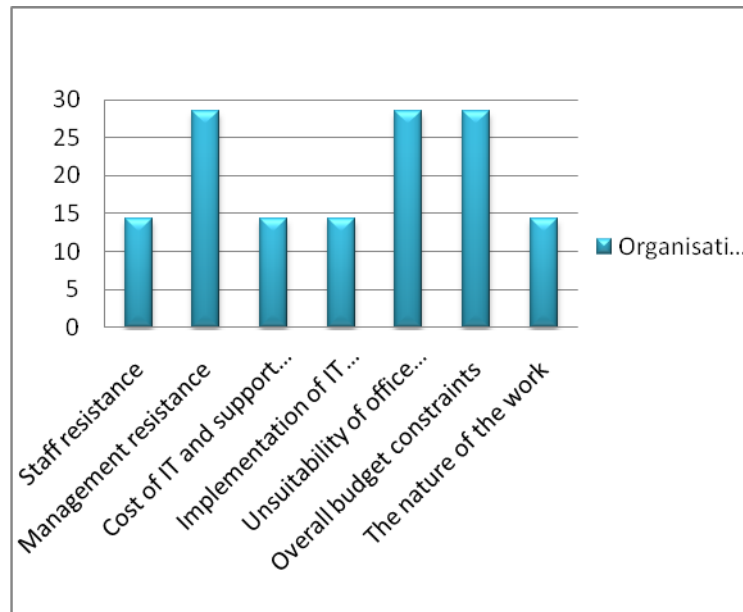
Question: Which function or department took the lead in the implementation of flexible mobile working?

57% of group 1 reveals that within Cheshire East Council, it is a process of departments jointly leading the initiatives.

- e) Other: 57%
 Workgroup made up of HR/IT/Property
 Joint initiative between all of the above
 HR & IT
 Property before vesting day, HR after vesting day

4.5.5 Implementation constraints

Question: Which aspects constrained the implementation of flexible mobile working?



These results show that, for group 1, the major constraints are equally divided between unsuitability of the office portfolio, the overall budget constraints and management resistance with 29%.

4.5.6 Business Impact

Question: What has been the organisational impact to date in relation to flexible mobile working?

Although it is generally regarded as too early to tell, these results show that the majority believe:

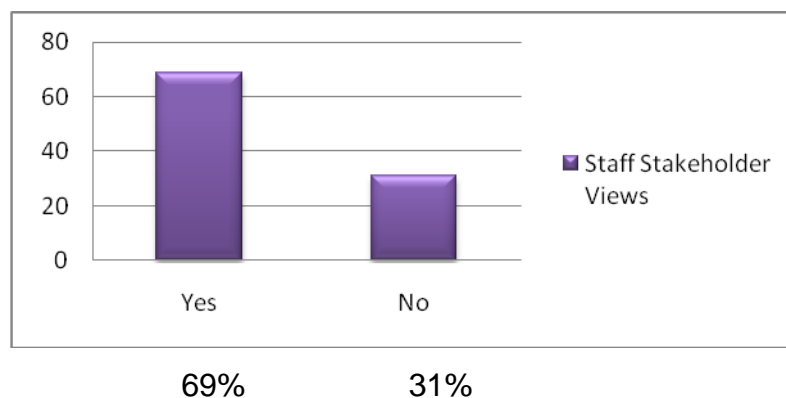
- Office occupancy costs has decreased
- IT and Communications costs has increased
- Communication changes has increased
- Staff efficiency has increased

Subsequent discussions with group 1, indicate they believe that the increase in IT and Communication costs is due to the initial budget outlay for the equipment. Over time it is envisaged that this cost will reduce as productivity and efficiencies continue to improve.

4.5.7 Implementation benefits

Question: Have there been any additional benefits to moving to flexible mobile working?

Interestingly, group 1 has identified a 2% decrease (from 6% to 4%) in sickness absence since implementing flexible mobile working. This is attributed to responses provided from group 2 as they state that they opt to work from home rather than take day(s) off when feeling unwell.

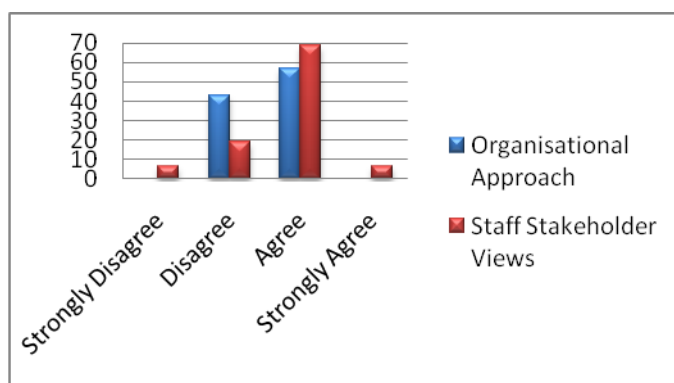


Group 1 are also asked to identify any other such benefits. Their response is as follows:

- a) *Reduction in CO²*
- b) *Reduced the impact that bad weather has on peoples ability to travel*
- c) *Reduce staff travel costs in the long term*
- d) *Provides greater choice over where people work from*
- e) *Increased productivity within teams allowing staff to complete tasks outside normal working hours when permitted to do so*
- f) *Fall in sickness absence from 6% to 4%*
- g) *Staff can more easily co-locate with services (getting closer to the customer)*

4.5.8 Culture

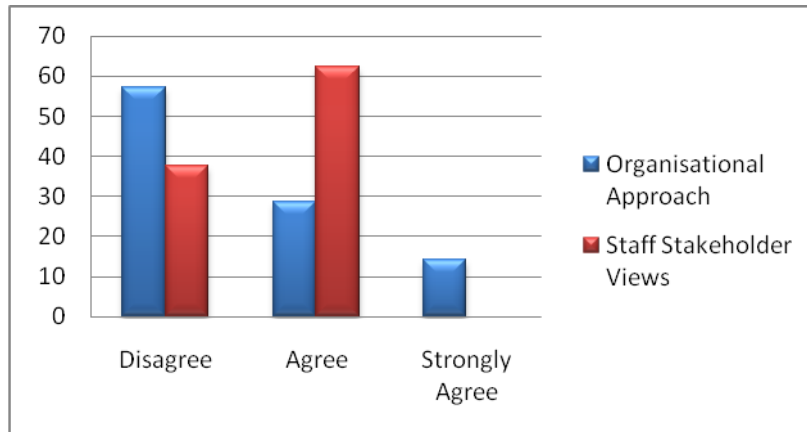
Statement: The organisational culture has changed to embrace flexible mobile working.



From this data it is evident that 75% of group 2 believe the culture has changed, but nearly half (43%) of group 1 are not convinced that the culture has indeed changed. It is group 1's remit to ensure that the CEO's message of culture change is supported by middle management in order to make effective use of flexible mobile working practices.

4.5.9 Communication

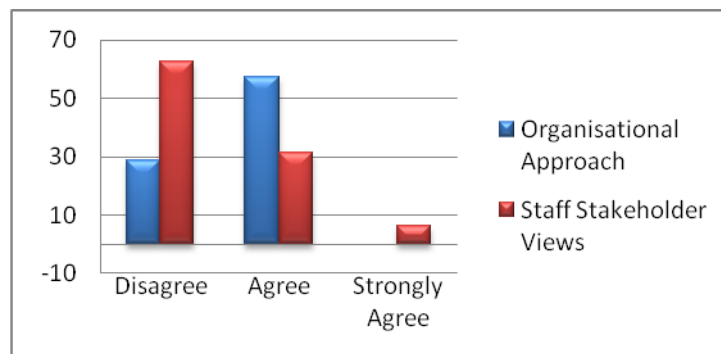
Statement: There is a strong communications plan within the organisation for implementing flexible mobile working.



The results show that the majority (57%) of group 1 do not believe that the organisation has a strong communications plan. Conversely, the majority (63%) of group 2 do believe that there is a strong communications plan.

4.5.10 Organisational fragmentation

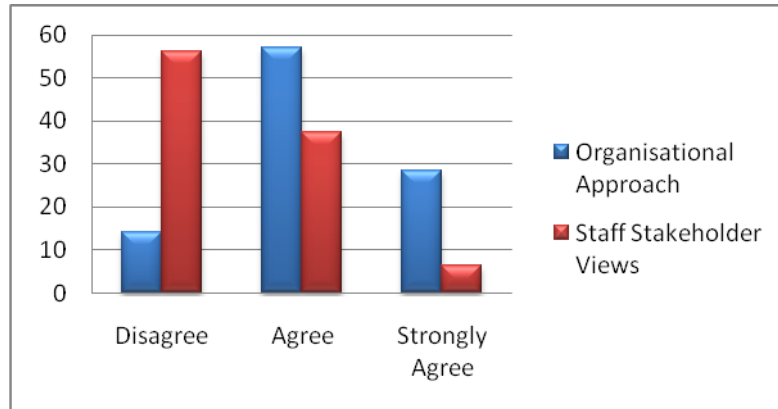
Statement: There is no organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face contact.



The majority (57%) of group 1 do not believe that there is any fragmentation, whereas the majority (63%) of group 2 do believe there is fragmentation happening.

4.5.11 Isolation

Statement: There is no feeling of isolation when my staff are working from another location other than the central office.



86% of group 1 do not believe that an isolation issue exists, however the majority (56%) of group 2 do feel isolated whilst working in a flexible mobile manner.

4.6 Staff Stakeholder views and practices to flexible mobile working

In order to establish staff stakeholder views regarding flexible mobile working, various questions and statements are posed to group 2. The following statements and charts represent a selection of their responses.

4.6.1 Working patterns and practices

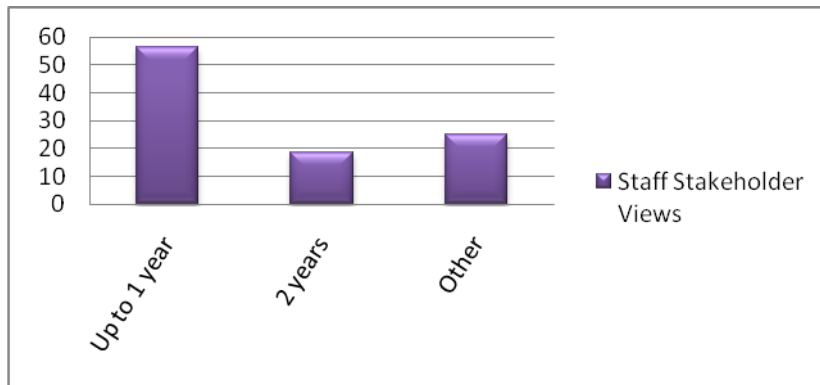
Question: What is your employment contract type?

96% of group 2 respondents work full-time, with only 1 respondent (6%) working term-time only.

Question: How many hours are you contracted to work each week?

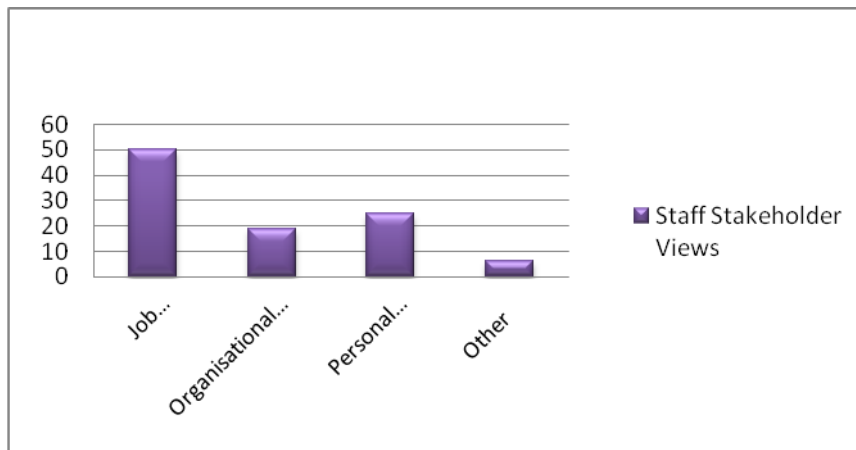
100% of respondents work a 35-40 hour week.

Question: How long have you been engaged in flexible mobile working?



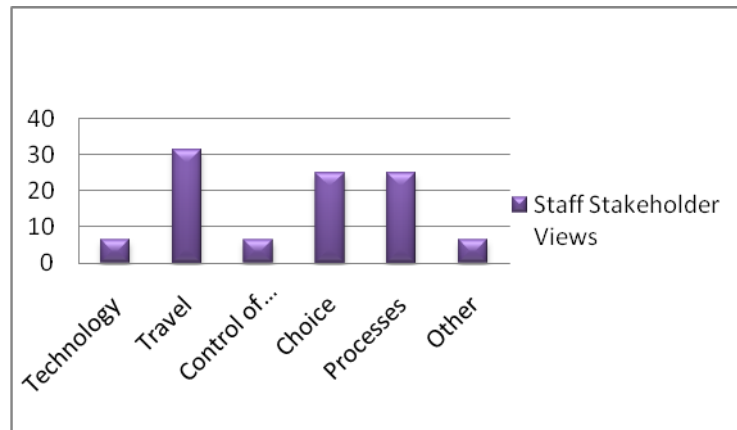
57% of respondents report that they have been engaged in flexible mobile working for up to 1 year, 19% have been engaged in flexible mobile working for 2 years and 25% of respondents have been engaged in flexible mobile working beyond 2 years, with the results revealing the time frame ranges between 3 to 8 years.

Question: What was the main reason for engaging in flexible mobile working?



The majority (69%) of respondents identify that the main reason for engaging in flexible mobile working is a change in job requirements/organisational policy. 25% of the respondents who have worked in this manner for 3 to 8 years highlight their reason as personal request and 6% as other

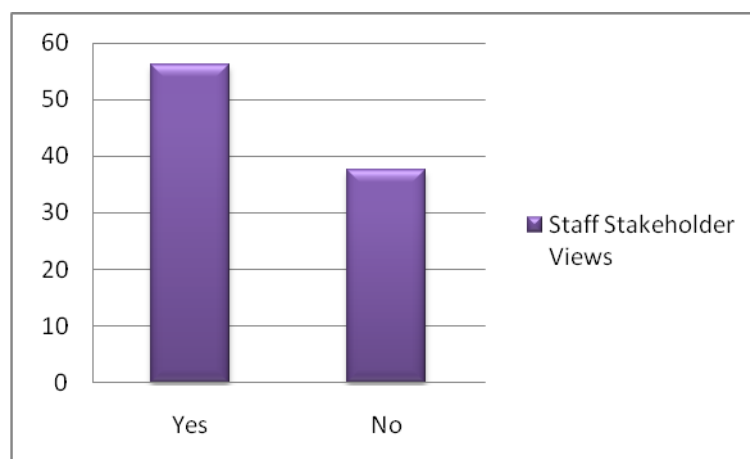
Question: What is the main difference between the way you work now compared with the way you worked before you were engaged in flexible mobile working?



The results show that the majority (31%) of respondents experience travel as the main difference between the way they worked before the introduction of flexible mobile working, with choice and process changes ranked equal 2nd at 25%. A subsequent question reveals that the number of office based days is decreased for 50% of respondents to now only spending 4 days in the office.

4.6.2 Caring for dependents

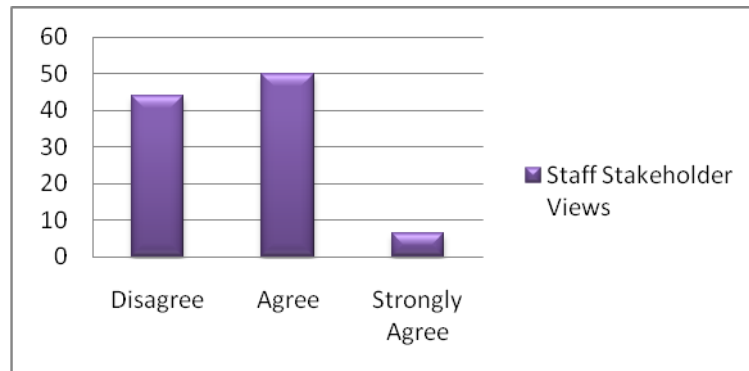
Question: Has flexible mobile working enabled you to care for dependents more effectively?



56% of respondents agree that they are now able to care for their dependents in a more effective manner.

4.6.3 Work-life balance improvements

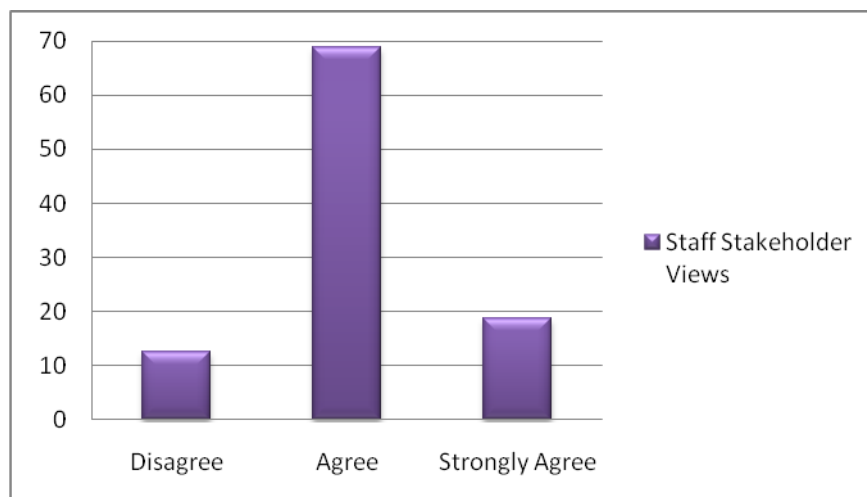
Statement: Your work-life balance has improved



These results show that the majority (56%) of group 2 do have an improved work-life balance but, surprisingly, only by a very slim margin as nearly half (44%) of the respondents disagree. This result is attributed to the responses received from the following question.

4.6.4 Flexible mobile working allows you to working longer hours

Statement: You now work longer hours due to 'finishing things off at home'



88% of group 2 declare that they regularly 'finish things off at home'. Subsequent conversations lead to a disclosure that undertaking work in this manner is a way of releasing the pressure on the current workload.

4.6.5 Improvements to user's flexible mobile working experience

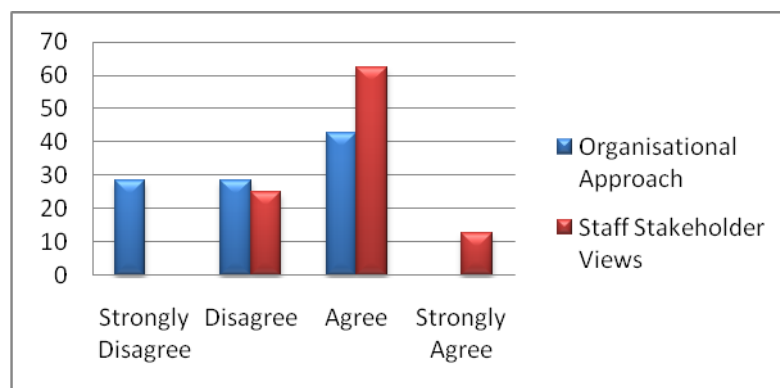
Question: Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve your experience of flexible mobile working?

The changes group 2 would like to see are:

1. *The use of desktop based video conferencing technologies*
2. *The use of more technology and faster links*
3. *Better use of telephony – more conference calls, divert office number to mobile*
4. *More efficient technology – issues with 3g*
5. *Greater trust and consistency by senior management in the implementation of flexible mobile working*
6. *Have optional service providers in case, for example, Vodafone reception is poor in your mobile area*
7. *Dependency less on subjective assessment of trust and development of more objective framework for measurement of outputs.*

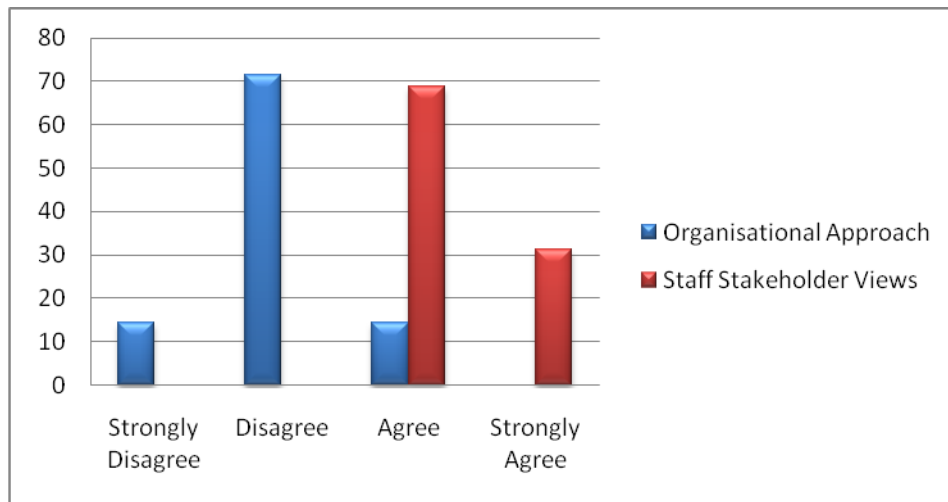
4.6.6 Flexible mobile working competencies

Statement: All staff has been fully trained in the use of the provided technology to support their flexible mobile working activities.



58% of group 1 do not feel that staff (including senior managers to the CEO) are in receipt of appropriate training whereas, the majority (76%) of group 2 do believe they are appropriately trained.

Statement: All staff have adequate skills to undertake flexible mobile working



85% of group 1 do not agree that all staff have adequate skills; this corroborates the views to the previous question. Conversely, 100% of group 2 do believe that they have adequate skills to undertake flexible mobile working.

4.7 Summary

This chapter analyses the respondents, and, through use of narrative and chart representation, reveals the responses from the 2 research instruments. Full results are outlined in appendix 9.

The next chapter focuses on a critical evaluation of the adopted methodology; it analyses, compares and contrasts the responses from the questionnaires with the literature review in Chapter 2. It draws conclusions about the research objectives, and reveals the extent of staff operation transformation. Finally the chapter reviews the limitations of the study and presents opportunities for further research.

5. Analysis & Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The study within this chapter focuses on a critical evaluation of the adopted methodology; an analysis of the Chapter 4 findings along with undertaking objectives 4 and 5 as set out in the introductory chapter

4. Compare and contrast research objectives 2 & 3 with research objective 1.

5. Draw conclusions and, if appropriate, formulate recommendations for furthering the availability and adoption of flexible mobile working across the service.

By drawing conclusions, it is envisaged that the extent of the transformation of staff operations, through the adoption of flexible mobile working, is attained.

5.2 Critical evaluation of adopted methodology

5.2.1 Research approach, philosophy and strategy

The combination of the deduction and induction approaches enables the researcher to systematically devise the aims and objectives of the research. The researcher is also able to bring about a decision of which data collection method to use, in order to glean accurate data from the targeted audience of thirty eight staff. The results culminate in two questionnaires sent to two specific groups of respondents.

The phenomenological philosophy allows the researcher to obtain a better understanding of how open to change the research audience is. The researcher anticipates that group 1 is in favour of change and, therefore, easily embrace new forms of working. This is found to be true in the responses provided by group 1. The researcher also believes group 2 is slightly more hesitant to embrace the changes due to the number of changes occurring, as the researcher anticipates, group 2 do embrace change, though to a lesser extent.

The research strategy together with the survey approach ensures the respondents have a structured and flowing mechanism of response. The researcher feels this

enables the respondents to be open and honest, whilst providing their opinions freely and without any fear of being exposed at any stage.

5.2.2 Research instruments

The research instruments, on the whole, are deemed successful data collection tools, as the researcher is able to collate data that reflects the flexible mobile working project; how staff undertook their work before flexible mobile working was introduced and how their working patterns and practices have changed since the adoption of flexible mobile working.

However, the response rate is lower than the researcher anticipated. Initially, the response from group 2 is immediate with six questionnaires returned the same day. This leads the researcher to think that a really positive rate of return is occurring; unfortunately this is not the case as only six responses in total are received within the first week. After 1 week the researcher sends out a follow up e-mail to the target audience, including a thank you to the respondents thus far. A telephone call to a colleague is also made, asking them to urge people to respond. Disappointingly and, although the researcher has been engaged with the target audience for some time in a previous secondment, only 16 out of a possible 30 responses are received within the allotted 2 weeks. This equates to a 53% response rate which, although surpasses the average, literature notes that a result less than 60% can introduce a slight potential for respondent bias.

The construction of the research instruments is time consuming. Once the researcher devises the questions, she wishes to ensure that no spurious responses are able to be submitted. This requires knowledge and understanding of the data protection and validation facilities within Microsoft Excel. To make it as easy as possible for the respondents to complete the questionnaires, the research includes user instructions on the document. However this still results in four subsequent conversations regarding how to activate the protected cells.

5.2.3 Data collection timing

During the course of this research an organisational survey was sent to all Cheshire East employees, of which the researcher was unaware. Had the

researcher been aware, then the researcher's questionnaires would have been timed earlier in order to improve on the response rate.

Notwithstanding these issues, the data collected, and the methods used, do provide the researcher with sound, consistent and dependable data in which she draws upon to answer the research aims.

5.3 Analysis/conclusions about each research objective (aim)

In order to find out "To what extent has the adoption of flexible mobile working transformed staff operations within Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy?" there are five objectives:

1. Understand contemporary literature and terminology that collectively formulates flexible mobile working.
2. Investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.
3. Explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working.
4. Compare and contrast research objectives 2 & 3 with research objective 1.
5. Draw conclusions and, if appropriate, formulate recommendations for furthering the availability and adoption of flexible mobile working across the service.

Objective 1 is accomplished in Chapter 2, the literature review, with key findings presented in this chapter.

The methodology used to achieve objectives 2 and 3 is depicted in Chapter 3, with the findings revealed within Chapter 4.

In this chapter, the data collection findings of objectives 2 and 3 are analysed, compared and contrasted with the literature review and conceptual model in Chapter 2 to achieve objective 4.

Objective 5, the conclusions are also drawn within this chapter with recommendations presented in Chapter 6.

5.3.1 Analysis of objective 1

Understand contemporary literature and terminology that collectively formulates flexible mobile working.

Summary of findings:

Literature review (Conceptual Model Themes 7 & 8)

This objective is accomplished in Chapter 2, the literature review. The key academic points pertaining to the objective are, however, detailed below.

The combination of flexible mobile working initiatives enables organisations to provide better access to services outside the normal office hours, promote efficient and effective working (Project Nomad, 2004b, pp. 5-10), and to attract and retain a wider pool of employees (Branine, 2004, pp.136-137). It also allows people to work in ways that enable them to sensibly balance earning a living with all other demands on their time (Stredwick & Ellis, 2005, p. 1).

Through the use of flexible mobile working, organisations have seen additional benefits such as reduced absenteeism and have gained the ability to downsize their property portfolios (Project Nomad, 2004b, pp. 30-47). It is also expected that many more benefits will continue to be experienced year on year with the introduction of new technology (OECD, 2003, p. 93).

Even though there are many positive experiences recorded, literature documents that some resistance is still being experienced from some managers and staff. The resistance relates to changes of work processes, work styles and organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face interactions (Brodt & Verburg, 2007, p. 63). Changes of this nature, if not adopted correctly, adversely impacts the psychological contract thus, resulting in a perceived breach. Any perceived breaches of this nature including trust may cause the employee to invest less effort in their work, be less inclined to innovate and less inclined to respond to innovations or changes posed by others (Robinson, 1996; Hayes, 2007, p. 204).

5.3.2 Analysis of objective 2

Investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working.

Summary of findings:

The following findings are as a result of questions posed only to group 1.

Central Government Influence (Conceptual Model Theme 1)

Literature reports that Central Government has influenced the adoption of flexible mobile working practices within LGA's, as their drive to provide citizens with better access to services along with the promotion of efficient and effective working (OGC, 2004) increases year on year. However, group 1 believe that the catalyst for Cheshire East Council is solely due to the Central Government decision to re-organise the two-tiered local authority of Cheshire. If the Central Government decision had not been taken, then Cheshire East Council would not exist, therefore, negating the pressure to alleviate the issue of office accommodation caused by an increase in employees.

Flexible mobile working practices (Conceptual Model Theme 8)

There are many flexible mobile working practices that can be introduced; Cheshire East Council has chosen to implement part-time home/remote working and hot-desking as their joint 1st practice of choice. The option to implement part-time home/remote working mirrors the practice implemented for over 20 years by BT (Waters, 2004), with the HSE (2003) advocating hot-desking as one of their choices.

When questioned about the main reason for considering flexible mobile working, the response from group 1 is two-fold; 'retain existing staff' which is suggested as a benefit by Branine (2004), and to 'reduce accommodation costs'. Interestingly when asked to distinguish the most important reason for implementing flexible mobile working, group 1 opted for 'improve use of existing office space'. This is noted as one of the benefits by Project Nomad (2004b) and is depicted as Cheshire East Council's joint 2nd consideration for implementing flexible mobile working.

Implementation leads (Conceptual Model Themes 6 & 8)

When implementing flexible mobile working there is often one particular department that leads the initiative (personal communication, 10th December 2009). Conversely, within Cheshire East Council, it is a process of departments jointly leading the initiatives and, by doing so, the organisation benefits from an enrichment of knowledge. The participants are then able to use that knowledge to discuss real life experience as well as develop their learning in a wider collaborative manner.

Implementation constraints (Conceptual Model Theme 7)

Within Cheshire East Council, the major constraints to implementing flexible mobile working are equally divided between unsuitability of the office portfolio, the overall budget constraints and management resistance. This is reflective of research undertaken by Everett (2009) as she too identifies that people are a constraining factor. Even so, Cooper (2005) believes that this issue can be remedied by undertaking appropriate training and development initiatives. In response to this, group 1 suggest that although training is offered, perhaps the training is not appropriate. As a result, the training requires a process of re-evaluation in order to make certain that appropriate training is provided.

Business Impact (Conceptual Model Theme 8)

It is documented that implementing flexible mobile working has positive effects on a range of processes within the organisation (Waters, 2004; Reynolds, 2009). This is supported by group 1's response, which, although they generally regard it as too early to tell, their response identifies:

- Office occupancy costs has decreased
- IT and Communications costs has increased
- Communication changes has increased
- Staff efficiency has increased

Further discussions with group 1 indicate that the staff efficiency increase is attributed to being able to collect data in the field more easily, thus ensuring the data is accurate and flows effectively. This opinion concurs with research by Project Nomad, (DVD, 2003). Group 1 also believes that the increase in IT and

Communication cost is due to the initial budget outlay for the equipment. Therefore, over time, it is envisaged that this cost will reduce as productivity and efficiencies continue to improve.

Implementation benefits (Conceptual Model Theme 8)

Flexible mobile working initiatives produce benefits which include both intangible and tangible outcomes. The tangible outcomes experienced include a reduction in sickness absence (Project Nomad, 2004b). Interestingly group 1 has also identified a decrease in sickness absence since the adoption of flexible mobile working. The decrease currently stands at 2%, and is attributed to a response from a subsequent question posed to group 2, in which they express that they do opt to work from home rather than take day(s) off when feeling unwell.

Group 1 also acknowledge that they now experience other benefits which include: a reduction in the organisational carbon footprint, a reduction in the impact that severe weather conditions has on staff attendance and service delivery, reduced organisational travel costs overall, as well as, offering an increase in choice of where people work. These experiences concur with the writings of Reynolds (2009) and Puybaraud (2007).

Group 1 and Group 2

The following findings are as a result of questions posed to both group 1 and group 2 to identify if there is a difference of opinion.

Culture (Conceptual Model Theme 2)

Organisational culture can act as a restraining force or can generate innovation (Flood & Jackson, 1991). This theory is supported, as culture as a restraining force is experienced by 43% of group 1 and 25% of group 2. As literature states, “the single biggest challenge is changing the organisational culture and ensuring that people are comfortable working in different ways to those they’re used to” (Hawkins as cited by Everett, 2009). This also includes a review of the HR policies and the removal of outdated policies that hinder the adoption of flexible mobile working.

Group 1's remit is to ensure that the CEO's message of culture change is supported by middle management. To rectify this issue, group 1 should report the findings back to the CEO in order for her to reinforce the message relating to where flexible mobile working fits within the organisational strategy.

Communications (Conceptual Model Themes 5 & 6)

"A good communications plan" (Thompson, 2008) is the most prominent recommendation for the implementation of successful change management. From the perspective of group 1, the results show that the communications plan is not as strong as it could be, as the majority (57%) disbelieves that the organisation has a strong communications plan. Conflictingly, the majority of group 2 (63%) do believe there is a strong communications plan. It is evident from these findings that, further work is required to rectify this issue at an organisational level.

Organisational fragmentation & Isolation (Conceptual Model Theme 7)

Reduced face-to-face contact introduces organisational fragmentation (Brodt & Verburg, 2007). Interestingly, the minority (43%) of group 1 and the majority (63%) of group 2 are supporting this theory as they are experiencing organisational fragmentation. Interestingly, the majority (57%) of group 1 do not believe organisational fragmentation is occurring. A subsequent discussion reveals that this is attributed to the way in which group 1 regularly work on their own, due to the nature of their job. Consequently they are not witness to the fragmentation that occurs and are therefore not aware that it is happening.

This theory is carried through to the issue of feeling isolated when working in a flexible mobile manner. Cooper (2005) explains that the feeling of isolation is a barrier to implementing flexible mobile working and has an impact on the efficiencies and effectiveness of staff. Again results reveal that 86% of group 1 do not believe that an isolation issue exists, however, 56% of group 2 do feel isolated whilst working in a flexible mobile manner.

Further discussions again reveal that group 2's feeling of isolation is also attributed to the way in which they work. Traditionally, their job involves a more collaborative process, discussing work with colleagues on a regular basis. This aspect is removed to a degree whilst working in a flexible mobile manner, as a

concerted effort is required to make contact with others rather than being able to look up and speak; nonetheless, both the organisational fragmentation and the feeling of isolation needs to be addressed by members of group 1 in order to ensure service delivery is not affected.

5.3.3 Analysis of objective 3

Explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working

Summary of findings:

The following findings are as a result of questions posed only to group 2.

Working patterns and practices (Conceptual Model Themes 7 & 8)

Although there is little literature to support the following working patterns and practice statements, the researcher believes that, in order to establish the extent of transformation, an understanding of how staff operated prior to the adoption of flexible mobile working is crucial to the study as it provides a baseline from which to measure.

Group 2 are asked to comment on their employment contract and longevity of working in a flexible mobile manner, identify the reasons for engaging in flexible mobile working whilst highlighting the main reason for the engagement. Finally, group 2 are asked to state what the main difference is between the ways they work now to the way they worked before. These questions result in the following responses:

94% of respondents are contracted to work full time and undertake a 35-40 hour working week. This is the same as their legacy council service.

57% of respondents report that they have worked in this manner for 1 year or less which is representative of the new organisations existence. 19% of respondents have worked this way for 2 years and 25% of respondents for 3 to 8 years, again, because of their legacy council service.

The majority (69%) of respondents identify that the main reason for engaging in flexible mobile working is a change in job requirements/organisational policy, whilst 25% of the respondents who have worked in this manner for 3 to 8 years highlight their reason as personal request and 6% as other.

The majority, (31%) identified travel as the main difference between the ways they work now to the way they worked before. 50% state that the number of days they are office based has decreased, with 63% now only spending 4 days in the office. Further discussions reveal that this is attributed to the relocation of all ICT Strategy staff from their various legacy authorities, which spanned the whole of Cheshire, to the new building at Emperor Court in Crewe. These findings support Reynolds (2009) view of efficiency as he documents “the adoption of mobility technology can... eliminate unnecessary journeys and save large sums in fuel.” Group 1 has already disclosed that the organisation’s overall travel cost has reduced.

5.3.3.2 Caring for dependants (Conceptual Model Theme 8)

Literature explains that working in a flexible mobile manner allows people to arrange their working patterns in order to care for dependents more effectively (Stredwick & Ellis, 2005; ACAS, 2009). This is found to be true as 56% of respondents agree that they are able to care for their dependants in a more effective manner, which subsequently prevents the organisation from losing time and productivity.

Group 1 and Group 2

The following findings are as a result of questions posed to both group 1 and group 2 to identify if there is a difference of opinion.

Work-life balance (Conceptual Model Themes 7 & 8)

The successful implementation of a flexible mobile working scheme will not only ensure a balance between work and life, but in turn could be vital to the overall survival of the organisation (White, 2007). The results from the respondents show that the majority (56%) of group 2 do have an improved work-life balance but, surprisingly, only by a very slim margin as nearly half (44%) of the respondents disagree. This disagreement is attributed to the response received from a subsequent question where the majority (88%) of respondents reveal that they now work longer hours due to finishing things off at home. That being said, a further question also reveals that the majority (88%) of respondents do feel that they have more choice and control over their working pattern.

Research undertaken by Cooper (2005) documents, family members may regard working from home as an intrusion into family life if it is perceived that work and family life merge. However this should not be an issue for the majority (63%) of respondents as they believe that it is important to separate their work life from their home life, even though, as mentioned, 88% of respondents do regularly finish things off at home.

Improvements to user's flexible mobile working experience

(Conceptual Model Themes 3, 4 & 8)

In order for flexible mobile working initiatives to improve, the researcher invites improvement suggestions from group 2. The changes the respondents would like to see are related to trust and technology. These suggestions are supported by the findings within the literature review:

Trust - as Atkinson (2006) states "it seems that trust is a key element within the content of the psychological contract" without it the employee/employer relationship can breakdown. Interestingly, although 100% of both groups believe that trust is a major factor when working in a flexible mobile manner, there are three respondents that do feel trust is an issue, therefore for them, the researcher suggests that the psychological contract is in danger of being breached.

Technology - is giving people the tools to let them work anywhere at any time (eHampshire, n.d.). There are many technologies available that profess to making flexible mobile working easier but, without financial backing to undertake appropriate localised testing, the technology will not progress within the organisation. OECD (2003) investigates such technologies and states that "technological change [will be] bringing many more benefits in the future." It is therefore recommended that further investment in flexible mobile working technologies is established in order to continuously improve service delivery.

Flexible mobile working competencies (Conceptual Model Themes 7 & 8)

To ensure staff work in an effective and efficient manner whilst flexible mobile working, it is important that all staff are appropriately trained and adequate skills developed (Cooper, 2005; Brodt & Verburg, 2007). The responses reveal 58% of

group 1 do not feel that employees (including senior managers) are in receipt of appropriate training, whilst 76% of group 2 do feel they are adequately trained; 85% of group 1 do not agree that staff have adequate skills whereas 100% of group 2 do feel that they have adequate skills.

From the results it is apparent that there is a wider underlying issue. If employees do not have appropriate training or adequate skills to work in an effective and efficient manner whilst flexible mobile working, then the delivery of services within the organisation, as well as to the citizens, is in danger of being compromised. That being said, as group 2 do believe that they have appropriate training and have developed adequate skills to undertake flexible mobile working, the danger of services being compromised is consequently reduced.

5.4 Conclusion about the research aims

From the research undertaken, it is evident that flexible mobile working is a complex field of study. Cheshire East Council adopts flexible mobile working to address the issues of staff retention and accommodation costs, as well as to exploit the capabilities of the IT and Communication Infrastructure. To do this Cheshire East Council implements part-time home / remote working and hot-desking. Research to date illustrates that this is in line with other organisations as an initial step into developing a wider flexible mobile working strategy (HSE, 2003; Waters, 2004).

Since the adoption of flexible mobile working, Cheshire East Council experience many benefits such as; an increase in staff productivity; an increase in staff efficiency; a decrease in office occupancy; a 2% decrease in sickness absence; a decrease in the carbon footprint; a decrease in the effect that severe weather has on attendance and service delivery as well as reduced overall travel costs (Branine, 2004; Waters, 2004; Project Nomad, 2004b; Puybaraud, 2007).

Again, in agreement with academia, the findings reveal that flexible mobile working has improved employee's work-life balance by allowing people to work in ways that enable them to balance earning a living sensibly with all other demands on their time (Stredwick & Ellis, 2005; ACAS, 2009). This enables employees with dependants, or other home life pressures, to undertake their work in a way that is

non detrimental to both the organisation and the employee. Subsequently this provides organisations with the ability to continue to consistently deliver services to its clients.

Underpinning the ability to work in a flexible mobile manner is the various technologies used to achieve remote working (Project Nomad, DVD, 2003). It is expected that with the constant introduction of new technology, many more benefits will continue to be experienced year on year (OECD, 2003, p. 93). In spite of this, flexible mobile working cannot be successfully adopted without significant thought and review of organisational policies and processes (Project Nomad, 2004c, p. 11). These include legal issues, acceptable use of technology humanistic concerns, culture, and change management and leadership.

As both literature and the study findings reveal, there is some resistance still being experienced from some managers and staff relating to changes of work processes and work styles, organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face interactions (Brodt & Verburg, 2007, p. 63), feelings of isolation (Cooper, 2005), and feelings of distrust (Robinson, 1996; Atkinson, 2006) from managers. They continue to use the original methods of performance measurement, (i.e. measuring the time taken to complete a task) rather than changing to the more suited method for managing flexible mobile working of output driven measures (Hawkins, as cited by Everett, 2009).

The culmination of these issues results in some staff feeling that there is a breach of the psychological contract. A breach of this nature can prove detrimental to the delivery of services, as the employee invests less effort in their work, is less inclined to innovate, and is less inclined to respond to innovations or changes posed by others (Hayes, 2007, p. 204).

Organisational culture is as a major component in the successful adoption of any change as it can act as a conservative restraining force or can generate innovation (Flood & Jackson, 1991). It is reported that “the single biggest challenge is changing the organisational culture, and ensuring that people are comfortable working in different ways to those they’re used to” (Hawkins, as cited by Everett, 2009). However, it is evident from the responses within the study that

for some the culture is an issue, but for others it is not. In order to assist the organisation in creating the culture that they wish to have, it is recommended that Cameron and Quinn's (1999, p. 77) Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument is used to help diagnose the current culture in preparation for a further culture change.

The above is also true of change management and leadership. Research undertaken suggests that for organisations to evolve effectively, "a competent leader is required with the appropriate capabilities and skill sets" (Pagon, Banutai & Uros Bizjak, 2008). Wilkinson, Fogarty and Melville (1996, p. 71) suggest that a top-down message from the CEO is received on a regular basis in support of the initiatives to achieve continued collaboration from middle management.

To assist in the process of change, there are many different change models that can be employed (Cameron & Green, 2009, p. 118-20, see appendix 3), though caution should be applied to ensure that all key elements are included in the change management implementation plan, this is not easy as within each individual change programme, the key elements will differ (Hayes, 2007, p. 88).

That being said, it is proposed that no matter what barriers to implementation arise; all of them are able to be reversed with careful planning, good communication, appropriate training and continuous development of staff and managers (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, p. 77; Cooper, 2005; Project Nomad, 2004b, p. 5).

5.5 Conclusion about the research question

To what extent has the adoption of flexible mobile working transformed staff operations within Cheshire East Council ICT Strategy?

Employing the methodological considerations from Chapter 3, leads the researcher to believe that the extent of transformation at this stage (year 1) is substantial.

The researcher deduces this as the majority of employees adapt their work practices to suit working in a flexible mobile manner. Staff efficiency is increased, their work-life balance is improved, and, they now have a choice of where they

work from. In addition, the organisation benefits from tangible changes such as reduced sickness absence, reduced overall travel costs, and improved use of existing office space.

In order to improve the benefits realised thus far, and to further adopt flexible mobile working within the organisation, the following seven recommendations (which are fully presented in Chapter 6) are proposed:

1. Training; review and investment in flexible mobile working training, for staff and senior managers.
2. Culture; investigate the issues of the organisational culture.
3. Communications; re-establish the CEO's flexible mobile working directive.
4. Organisational fragmentation and isolation; investigate the organisational fragmentation and isolation being experienced.
5. Trust; investment in development of trust via output driven measures.
6. Technologies; investment in development of new technologies.
7. Research; revisit the research in 18 months.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Limitations to the study include:

- Range of Literature; the range of literature available on the combining subject of flexible mobile working is limited as many of the titles found either in libraries, electronic databases or via the internet relate to either flexible working or mobile working, but not as a combined initiative.
- Number of respondents; Due to the time factor, the researcher is only able to investigate one service area out of the whole organisation. As the organisation currently employs circa 14,000 staff, the researcher believes that it will be beneficial to repeat the research with a wider audience and a larger time frame in order to obtain an overall picture of the extent of transformation.

- Word count; the researcher found that the plethora of data collected from the research instruments revealed many interesting points, however, due to the limitations of the study word count, she is only able to report on the most relevant topic areas. In doing so the researcher is aware that the reporting must be balanced in order to avoid introducing bias.

5.7 Opportunities for further research

Although recommendations are discussed within Chapter 6, the researcher believes that the following opportunities for furthering the research should be considered:

- Repeat the questionnaires in 18 months time in order to avoid any future staff survey.
- Send the questionnaire to the same audience to find out if any improvement has been made.
- Increase the target audience size to compare and contrast with original data as well as glean fresh data.
- Increase the target audience to include front office staff as well as back office staff.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter completes objective 5 by formulating appropriate recommendations post analysis of the findings and drawing conclusions within Chapter 5.

5. *Drawer conclusions and, if appropriate, formulate recommendations for furthering the availability and adoption of flexible mobile working across the service.*

By proposing the recommendations it is envisaged that the benefits realised thus far will improve, and flexible mobile working will be further adopted throughout Cheshire East Council.

6.2 Recommendations

To improve the benefits thus far, and to further adopt flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council, the researcher recommends the following actions:

1. Training; Investment, development and training of all staff in the effective use of flexible mobile working technology. Undertake an audit /gap analysis of skills to highlight what training is required and who needs it. Understanding the proper use of technology ensures that as little time as possible is wasted waiting for the technology to connect, synchronise and get on-line. (OECD, 2003; Project nomad, 2004b; Cooper, 2005; Brodt & Verburg, 2007) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 5, 6, 7 & 8
2. Culture; Investigate the issue of culture change by use of Cameron and Quinn (1999) Organisational Cultural Assessment Instrument (OCAI) and subsequent use of their six step process of designing a culture change to ensure that resistance to change is minimised. (Flood & Jackson, 1991; Wilkinson, Fogarty & Melville, 1996; Hawkins as cited by Everett, 2009) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 2, 5 & 6
3. Communication; Re-establish the CEO's flexible mobile working directive via a revised communications plan to show sustained proof of CEO buy-in. The plan should include a directive for middle managers to encourage their staff to adopt flexible mobile working at the earliest opportunity in order to capitalise on the benefits already proved in the 1st year of operation. (Denton, 1996; Wilkinson, Fogarty & Melville, 1996; Thompson 2008; Edwards, 2009) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
4. Organisational fragmentation and isolation; Investigate the issue of organisational fragmentation and isolation, as removing these issues will ensure that employees engage completely with their duties and fully demonstrate efficient and effective working. (Cooper, 2005; Brodt & Verburg, 2007) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 7 & 8

5. Trust; Investment in the development of staff and managers to use tangible output driven performance measures. This will encourage trust between management and staff as management is able to clearly demonstrate any under achievement and take appropriate action, likewise, any over achievement can be appropriately rewarded. (Argyris, 1964, as cited by Hayes 2007; Robinson, 1996; Atkinson, 2006; Hayes, 2007; Hawkins as cited by Everett, 2009) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 3, 4, 5, 6 ,7 & 8
6. Technology; Investment in the development of new flexible mobile working technologies, including desktop based video conferencing, faster links and the possibility of using more than one service provider for the use of 3G technology, thus increasing efficiencies further. Technological growth is expected to continue with “technological change bringing many more benefits in the future” (OECD, 2003) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 7 & 8
7. Research; Repeat the research in 18 months time and analyse the findings to establish if any further changes / improvements have taken place. (Peterson, 2000) This relates to the conceptual model theme numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

The implementation of such actions is beyond the remit of the researcher. However, the researcher is submitting the recommendations to the ICT Strategy Manager for review.

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Appendices

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Appendix 1

Competing Values Framework

Appendix 2

Cameron & Quinn's six step change model

Cameron and Quinn's 6 steps to organisational culture change are:

- 1) Diagnosis and consensus for the present
- 2) Diagnosis and consensus for the future
- 3) What it means
- 4) Illustrative stories
- 5) Strategic action steps
- 6) An Implementation plan

Appendix 3

**Change Management Models as depicted
by Cameron & Green**

Kurt Lewin (1951)

John Kotter (1995)

Peter Senge (1993)

Appendix 4

Hayes Change Process, 2007

Appendix 5

Sample Questionnaire 1 for Group 1

Organisational Approach to Flexible Mobile Working Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for a research dissertation. The following questions and statements are used to investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.

Your responses are gratefully received and will be treated with the *strictest* confidence
Please e-mail your responses by 14th April, to: sarah.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Throughout this discussion the term 'flexible mobile working' has been used to combine the practices of 'flexible working' and 'mobile working' together.

Wherever possible, please use the drop down list to enter your selection

Password = FMW
(case sensitive)

Flexible mobile working Practices and Strategies

1) Which one of the following statements best reflects your understanding of flexible mobile working?

- a) Flexible mobile working allows work to be undertaken in the most appropriate place and at the most appropriate time.
- b) Flexible mobile working concerns the needs of employees by having a range of contracts and use of technology to suit their individual needs.
- c) Flexible mobile working is about moving to a more flexible mobile use of office accommodation in order to support the range of activities, which now take place within and outside the organisation.
- d) Flexible mobile working is a way to intensify the use of office accommodation and to improve staff productivity.
- e) Other (please specify) _____

2) Which of the following flexible mobile working practices have you introduced? (Please indicate all that apply)

- Full-time home/remote working _____
- Hotelling _____
- Part-time home/remote working _____
- Hot-desking _____
- Use of satellite offices _____
- Activity based work environments (e.g. different spaces for quiet work, touchdown areas, meeting rooms, with staff moving between areas) _____
- Shared space with other Departments _____
- One-stop-shop _____

3) Has Central Government influenced the adoption of flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council?

- If yes, please specify: _____

4) What were the main reasons for considering the introduction of flexible mobile working? (Please check all that apply)

- Reasons Considered
- External pressure (e.g. Central Government, competition, clients) _____
 - Improve the ability to recruit staff _____
 - Improve usage of existing office space _____
 - Upgrade in technology made flexible mobile working possible _____
 - Retain existing staff _____
 - Give staff more freedom to balance work-life commitments _____
 - Reduce accommodation costs _____
 - Make better use of the Communications and IT capabilities _____
 - Raise staff efficiency _____
 - Internal pressure (e.g. senior management initiative) _____
 - Improve communication with clients and/or contractors _____
 - Reduce staff costs/numbers _____

5) Please indicate from the list above, which is the most important reason for implementation:

Implementation of flexible mobile working

6) Which function or Department took the lead in the implementation of flexible mobile working?

- a) Human resources/personnel
- b) IT
- c) Property / facilities management
- d) Departmental line staff / management
- e) Other (please specify)

7) Which of the following constrained the implementation of flexible mobile working? (Please check all that apply)

Reasons considered	Major Constraint	Minor Constraint	No Problem	Don't Know
Staff resistance	_____	_____	_____	_____
The need to be seen	_____	_____	_____	_____
The need to change staff contracts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Management resistance	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cost of IT and support infrastructure	_____	_____	_____	_____
Implementation of IT solutions	_____	_____	_____	_____
Unsuitability of office portfolio	_____	_____	_____	_____
Continual change (e.g. lack of stable environment)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Overall budget constraints	_____	_____	_____	_____
Insufficient time for implementation process	_____	_____	_____	_____
The nature of the work	_____	_____	_____	_____
Difficulty making a credible business case	_____	_____	_____	_____

8) What training was offered to ensure the success of the flexible mobile working initiative? (Please outline below)

Impact of flexible mobile working

9) Overall, what has been the impact of flexible mobile working on costs, productivity and morale? (Please check one answer for each question)

	Higher	Lower	About the same	Don't know
Staff productivity is....	_____	_____	_____	_____
Staff morale is....	_____	_____	_____	_____
The total annual cost of physical and technological infrastructure is.....	_____	_____	_____	_____

10) What has been the impact to date in the following areas? (Please estimate % change if known)

	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Too early to tell/Don't know	Can you estimate % of change?
Office occupancy costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Facilities management costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
IT and communication equipment costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication Changes (telephone bills etc)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ability to recruit and retain staff	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Staff efficiency	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
"Client" satisfaction with service delivery	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please Specify)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11) Have there been any additional benefits to moving for flexible mobile working? (Please outline below)

12) Which ONE of the following statements best reflects the success of the flexible mobile working initiative?

- a) There have been significant benefits in moving to flexible mobile working. Staff welcome the opportunity to manage their own work scheduling and managers have seen a positive impact on output.
- b) Although flexible mobile working has been widely accepted, there are still groups of staff and managers who do not like the new approach. The wider benefits have yet to be achieved.
- c) Although we have seen some reduction in costs (e.g. accommodation) there is still resistance and the impact on staff morale has not been wholly positive.
- d) Other (Please specify)

13) Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve the organisational approach to flexible mobile working?

If yes, please specify

Compare and Contrast

The following questions will be used to compare the views of management with employees
Please rate the following statements using the scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree in the drop down lists provided:

- 14) It is easy to separate working life from your home life whilst working from home _____
- 15) The organisation has a strong vision regarding flexible mobile working _____
- 16) There is sustained proof of senior management adoption of flexible mobile working _____
- 17) The organisational culture has changed to embrace flexible mobile working _____
- 18) Senior Management show commitment to flexible mobile working _____
- 19) Systematic preparation for the adoption of flexible mobile working has been undertaken within your service area _____
- 20) There is a strong communications plan within the organisation for implementing flexible mobile working _____
- 21) All staff have been fully engaged in the process to implement flexible mobile working _____
- 22) All staff have been fully trained in the use of the provided technology to support their flexible mobile working activities _____
- 23) All staff have adequate skills to undertake flexible mobile working _____
- 24) Trust is a major factor in the adoption of flexible mobile working _____
- 25) I trust my staff to manage their own workload when flexible mobile working _____
- 26) The communication between my staff and myself is effective whilst flexible mobile working _____
- 27) Communication with my staff whilst flexible mobile working is better than when you are working in the central office _____
- 28) There is no feeling of isolation when my staff are working from a location other than the central office _____
- 29) There is no organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face contact _____
- 30) Conference calls are regularly used to communicate with multiple colleagues at the same time _____
- 31) Flexible mobile working is lessening staff chances of promotion _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please save the spreadsheet and e-mail your responses by 14th April, to:

sarah.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 6

Sample Questionnaire 2 for Group 2

Flexible Mobile Working Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for a research dissertation.

Your responses are gratefully received and will be treated with the *strictest* confidence
Please e-mail your responses by 14th April, to: sarah.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Throughout this questionnaire the term 'flexible mobile working' has been used to combine the practices of 'flexible working' and 'mobile working' together.

The following questions and statements are used to explore staff stakeholder views and practices related to flexible mobile working and investigate the organisational approach to flexible mobile working within Cheshire East Council.

Please answer the questions using the drop down lists provided

When prompted to please
enter the password
Password = FMW
(case sensitive)

- 1) How long have you been engaged in flexible mobile working?
If other please specify: _____
 - 2) What was the reason for engaging with flexible mobile working?
If other please specify: _____
 - 3) What is the main difference between the way you work now, compared with the way you worked before you were engaged in flexible mobile working?
If other please specify: _____

 - 4) What is your employment contract type?
If other please specify: _____
 - 5) How many hours are you contracted to work each week?
If other please specify: _____
 - 6) On average how many days per week are you office based? _____
 - 7) Has the number of your office based days increased, stayed the same or decreased in the last 3 years? _____
 - 8) Have the number of business journeys decreased since you started flexible mobile working? _____
 - 9) When feeling unwell, have you worked from home rather than take a day(s) off sick? _____
 - 10) Has flexible mobile working enabled you to care for dependents more effectively? _____
- Please rate the following statements using the scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree in the drop down lists provided:*
- 11) It was easy to adopt the new working practices of flexible mobile working _____
 - 12) You now work longer hours due to 'finishing things off at home' _____
 - 13) You now have more choice and control over your working pattern _____
 - 14) Your work-life balance has improved _____
 - 15) It is easy to separate your working life and your home life whilst working from home _____
 - 16) It is important to physically separate your work life from your home life _____
 - 17) The organisation has a strong vision regarding flexible mobile working _____
 - 18) There is sustained proof of senior management adoption of flexible mobile working _____
 - 19) The organisational culture has changed to embrace flexible mobile working _____
 - 20) Senior Management show commitment to flexible mobile working _____

- 21) Systematic preparation for the adoption of flexible mobile working has been undertaken within your service area _____
- 22) There is a strong communications plan within the organisation for implementing flexible mobile working _____
- 23) You have been fully engaged in the process to implement flexible mobile working _____
- 24) You have been fully trained in the use of the provided technology to support your flexible mobile working activities _____
- 25) You have adequate skills to undertake flexible mobile working _____
- 26) My manager trusts me to manage my own workload when flexible mobile working _____
- 27) Trust is a major factor in the adoption of flexible mobile working _____
- 28) I display high levels of commitment to the organisation _____
- 29) I put every effort into my work _____
- 30) Since engaging in flexible mobile working I feel less inclined to respond to innovations _____
- 31) The communication between yourself and your manager is effective whilst flexible mobile working _____
- 32) Communication with colleagues whilst flexible mobile working is better than when you are working in the central office _____
- 33) You feel isolated from your colleagues when working from a location other than the central office _____
- 34) You experience organisational fragmentation from reduced face-to-face contact with colleagues _____
- 35) You regularly use conference calls to communicate with multiple colleagues at the same time _____
- 36) Flexible mobile working is lessening your chance of promotion _____

Again, please answer the questions using the drop down lists provided

- 37) Which one of the following statements best reflects your understanding of flexible mobile working?
 - a) Flexible mobile working allows work to be undertaken in the most appropriate place and at the most appropriate time.
 - b) Flexible mobile working concerns the needs of employees by having a range of contracts and use of technology to suit their individual needs.
 - c) Flexible mobile working is about moving to a more flexible mobile use of office accommodation in order to support the range of activities, which now take place within and outside the organisation.
 - d) Flexible mobile working is a way to intensify the use of office accommodation and to improve staff productivity.
 - e) Other, please specify: _____
- 38) Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve your experience of flexible mobile working?
If yes please specify: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please save the document and email your response by 14th April to: sarah.evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 7

Email to respondents

Dear All,

I am writing to ask for your kind assistance with a university research project. The aim of the research is to find out; to what extent has the adoption of flexible mobile working transformed staff operations of ICT Services within Cheshire East Council?

To do this I have attached a questionnaire which I would like you to complete and return to me no later than 14th April 2010.

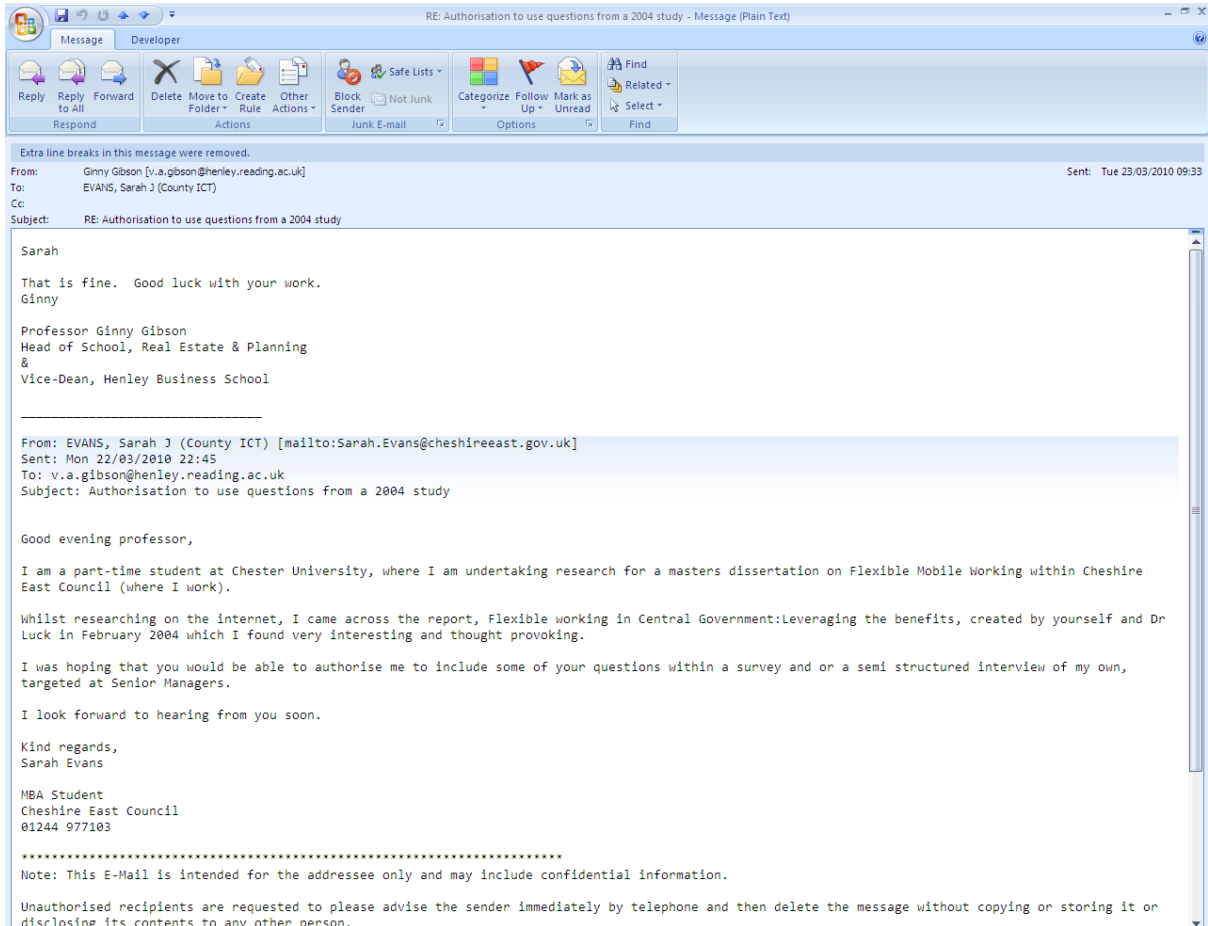
Your response is gratefully appreciated and will be treated with the strictest confidence. At no time will the names of any respondents be published or referred to in a way that could identify anyone. The records of this study will be kept private and will be stored securely, only I will have access to the records.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of this research.

Thank you very much
Sarah Evans

Appendix 8

Authorisation to use secondary data University of Reading



RE: Authorisation to use questions from a 2004 study - Message (Plain Text)

Message Developer

Reply Reply Forward Delete Move to Create Other Block Safe Lists Categorize Follow Mark as Find
to All Respond Actions Junk E-mail Options Select

Extra line breaks in this message were removed.

From: Ginny Gibson [v.a.gibson@henley.reading.ac.uk] Sent: Tue 23/03/2010 09:33
To: EVANS, Sarah J (County ICT)
Cc:
Subject: RE: Authorisation to use questions from a 2004 study

Sarah

That is fine. Good luck with your work.
Ginny

Professor Ginny Gibson
Head of School, Real Estate & Planning
&
Vice-Dean, Henley Business School

From: EVANS, Sarah J (County ICT) [mailto:Sarah.Evans@cheshireeast.gov.uk]
Sent: Mon 22/03/2010 22:45
To: v.a.gibson@henley.reading.ac.uk
Subject: Authorisation to use questions from a 2004 study

Good evening professor,

I am a part-time student at Chester University, where I am undertaking research for a masters dissertation on Flexible Mobile Working within Cheshire East Council (where I work).

Whilst researching on the internet, I came across the report, Flexible working in Central Government:Leveraging the benefits, created by yourself and Dr Luck in February 2004 which I found very interesting and thought provoking.

I was hoping that you would be able to authorise me to include some of your questions within a survey and on a semi structured interview of my own, targeted at Senior Managers.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards,
Sarah Evans

MBA Student
Cheshire East Council
01244 977103

Note: This E-Mail is intended for the addressee only and may include confidential information.
Unauthorised recipients are requested to please advise the sender immediately by telephone and then delete the message without copying or storing it or disclosing its contents to any other person.

Appendix 9

Questionnaires 1 and 2 Raw Data

Group 1 Organisational Approach									
23/04/10 Number of respondents = 7									
2	Q2 Which of the following flexible mobile working practices have you introduced? (Please indicate all that apply)								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %							
	Full-time home/remote working	86							
	Hotelling	0							
	Part-time home/remote working	100							
	Hot-desking	100							
	Use of satellite offices	71							
	Activity based work environments	71							
	Shared space with other Departments	86							
	One-stop-shop	0							
4	Q4 What were the main reasons for considering the introduction of flexible mobile working? (Please check all that apply)								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %							
	Improve the ability to recruit staff	57							
	Improve usage of existing office space	86							
	Upgrade in technology made flexible mobile working possible	57							
	Retain existing staff	100							
	Give staff more freedom to balance work-life commitments	86							
	Reduce accommodation costs	100							
	Make better use of the Communications and IT capabilities	86							
	Raise staff efficiency	71							
	Reduce staff costs/numbers	57							
5	Q5 Please indicate from the list above, which is the most important reason for implementation:								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %							
	Improve usage of existing office space	43							
	Retain existing staff	14							
	Reduce accommodation costs	14							
	Raise staff efficiency	14							
7	Q7 Which of the following constrained the implementation of flexible mobile working?								
	Organisational Approach # Major Constraint	Organisational Approach % Major Constraint							
	Staff resistance	14							
	Management resistance	29							
	Cost of IT and support infrastructure	14							
	Implementation of IT solutions	14							
	Unsuitability of office portfolio	29							
	Overall budget constraints	29							
	The nature of the work	14							
8	Q8 What training was offered to ensure the success of the flexible mobile working initiative? (Please outline below)								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %							
	Not Much Really - some input from HR	14							
	Technology One/One & Group training - functionality & making best use of new ways	14							
	Making Change Happen workshops	14							
	Human Resource Training - Management workshops for adjusting to change	14							
	Initially HR training offered - more to look at changing cultures	29							
	Training for managers on how to manager flexible teams and overcome problems whilst highlighting the benefits	14							
	Training for teams who were moving to flexible working to look at how they worked and how they could work in the future acknowledging that some people need to come to the office and are not suited to work anywhere else	29							
	Supervisor Training (STEPS)	14							
	Technology e-learning courses	14							
9	Q9 Overall, what has been the impact of flexible mobile working on costs, productivity and morale? (Please check one answer for each question)								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	
	Higher	Higher	Lower	Lower	About the Same	About the Same	Don't Know	Don't Know	
	Staff productivity is....	5	71	0	0	0	0	2	29
	Staff morale is....	4	57	2	29	2	29	1	14
	The total annual cost of physical and technological infrastructure is....	2	29	3	43	0	0	2	29
10	Q10 What has been the impact to date in the following areas? (Please estimate % change if known)								
	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	
	Increased	Increased	No Change	No Change	Decreased	Decreased	Too early to tell / Don't Know	Too early to tell / Don't Know	
	Office occupancy costs	0	0	0	0	4	57	3	43
	Facilities management costs	0	0	1	14	2	29	4	57
	IT and communication equipment costs	3	43	0	0	1	14	3	43
	Communication Changes (telephone bills etc)	3	43	0	0	0	0	4	57
	Ability to recruit and retain staff	1	14	1	14	0	0	5	71
	Staff efficiency	3	43	0	0	0	0	4	57
	"Client" satisfaction with service delivery	1	14	1	14	0	0	5	71
	Other (Please Specify)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	14

	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %
11 Q11 Have there been any additional benefits to moving for flexible mobile working? (Please outline below)		
Reduction in CO2	1	14
Reduced the impact that bad weather has on peoples ability to travel	1	14
Reduce staff travel costs in the long term	1	14
provides greater choice over where people work from	1	14
Increased productivity within teams allowing staff to complete tasks outside normal working hours when permitted to do so	1	14
Fall in absence from 6% to 4%	1	14
Staff can more easily co-locate with services (getting closer to the customer)	1	14
12 Q12 Which ONE of the following statements best reflects the success of the flexible mobile working initiative?		
a) There have been significant benefits in moving to flexible mobile working. Staff welcome the opportunity to manage their own work scheduling and managers have seen a positive impact on output.	0	0
b) Although flexible mobile working has been widely accepted, there are still groups of staff and managers who do not like the new approach. The wider benefits have yet to be achieved.	5	71
c) Although we have seen some reduction in costs (e.g. accommodation) there is still resistance and the impact on staff morale has not been wholly positive.	1	14
d) Other (Please specify)	1	14
13 Q13 Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve the organisational approach to flexible mobile working?		
Yes	3	43
No	4	57

Get rid of the more odd HR policies such as the negative mileage policy whereby staff have, in effect, to pay to work at home

There seems to be more resistance from middle managers than senior managers to allow staff to work from home, for example, feeling that staff need to provide some justification for this requirement. A lack of trust in staff, this needs to be changed.

Group 2 Staff Stakeholder Views
13/04/10 Number of respondents = 16

	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
1 Q1 How long have you been engaged in flexible mobile working?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Less than 6 months	2	13
6 months	3	19
1 year	4	25
2 years	3	19
Other	4	25
2 Q2 What was the reason for engaging with flexible mobile working?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Job requirements changed	8	50
Organisational Policy	3	19
Personal Request	4	25
Other	1	6
3 Q3 What is the main difference between the way you work now, compared with the way you worked before you were engaged in flexible mobile working?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Technology	1	6
Travel	5	31
Control of workload	1	6
Choice	4	25
Processes	4	25
Other	1	6
4 Q4 What is your employment contract type?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Full-time	15	94
Part-time	0	0
Term-time only	1	6
Compressed hours	0	0
Home-worker	0	0
Job sharing	0	0
Other	0	0
5 Q5 How many hours are you contracted to work each week?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
less than 5	0	0
5-10	0	0
10-15	0	0
15-20	0	0
20-25	0	0
25-30	0	0
30-35	0	0
35-40	16	100
Other	0	0
6 Q6 On average how many days per week are you office based?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Zero	0	0
One	0	0
Two	0	0
Three	1	6
Four	10	63
Five	5	31
7 Q7 Has the number of your office based days increased, stayed the same or decreased in the last 3 years?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Increased	1	6
Stayed the same	7	44
Decreased	8	50
8 Q8 Have the number of business journeys decreased since you started flexible mobile working?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Yes	7	44
No	6	38
Same	3	19
9 Q9 When feeling unwell, have you worked from home rather than take a day(s) off sick?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Yes	11	69
No	5	31
10 Q10 Has flexible mobile working enabled you to care for dependents more effectively?	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Yes	9	56
No	6	38
11 Q11 It was easy to adopt the new working practices of flexible mobile working	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Agree	12	75
Strongly Agree	4	25
12 Q12 You now work longer hours due to 'finishing things off at home'	Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
Disagree	2	13
Agree	11	69
Strongly Agree	3	19

13	Q13 You now have more choice and control over your working pattern	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	2	13
	Agree	8	50
	Strongly Agree	6	38
14	Q14 Your work-life balance has improved	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	7	44
	Agree	8	50
	Strongly Agree	1	6
15	Q16 It is important to physically separate your work life from your home life	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	6	38
	Agree	6	38
	Strongly Agree	4	25
16	Q28 I display high levels of commitment to the organisation	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	0
	Agree	6	38
	Strongly Agree	10	63
17	Q29 I put every effort into my work	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
	Disagree	0	0
	Agree	7	44
	Strongly Agree	9	56
18	Q30 Since engaging in flexible mobile working I feel less inclined to respond to innovations	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Strongly Disagree	3	19
	Disagree	10	63
	Agree	3	19
	Strongly Agree	0	0
19	Q37 Which one of the following statements best reflects your understanding of flexible mobile working?	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Flexible mobile working allows work to be undertaken in the most appropriate place and at the most appropriate time.	11	69
	Flexible mobile working concerns the needs of employees by having a range of contracts and use of technology to suit their individual needs.	1	6
	Flexible mobile working is about moving to a more flexible mobile use of office accommodation in order to support the range of activities, which now take place within and outside the organisation.	0	0
	Flexible mobile working is a way to intensify the use of office accommodation and to improve staff productivity.	2	13
	Other, please specify:	2	13
20	Q38 Are there any changes you would like to make in order to improve your experience of flexible mobile working?	Staff Stakeholder Views #	Staff Stakeholder Views %
		Responses	
	Yes	7	44
	No	9	56

Group 1 and Group 2 Staff Stakeholder Views

13/04/10 Number of respondents =

7

16

	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
1 Q14 & 15 It is easy to separate work life balance				
Strongly Disagree	1	14	1	6
Disagree	2	29	5	31
Agree	4	57	10	63
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
2 Q15 & 17 Strong Vision				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	2	13
Agree	7	100	12	75
Strongly Agree	0	0	2	13
3 Q16 & 18 Sustained Proof SMT adoption of FMW				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	2	29	3	19
Agree	5	71	11	69
Strongly Agree	0	0	2	13
4 Q17 & 19 Organisational Culture Change to embrace FMW				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	6
Disagree	3	43	3	19
Agree	4	57	11	69
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	6
5 Q18 & 20 SMT Show Commitment to adopting FMW				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	3	19
Agree	5	71	12	75
Strongly Agree	2	29	1	6
6 Q19 & 21 Systematic Preparation				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	14	4	25
Agree	5	71	11	69
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	6
7 Q20 & 22 Strong Comms plan				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	4	57	6	38
Agree	2	29	10	63
Strongly Agree	1	14	0	0
8 Q21 & 23 Staff have been Fully Engaged in process to implement				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	2	29	4	25
Agree	5	71	12	75
Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
9 Q22 & 24 Staff have been fully trained				
Strongly Disagree	2	29	0	0
Disagree	2	29	4	25
Agree	3	43	10	63
Strongly Agree	0	0	2	13
10 Q23 & 25 Staff have Adequate skills				
Strongly Disagree	1	14	0	0
Disagree	5	71	0	0
Agree	1	14	11	69
Strongly Agree	0	0	5	31
11 Q24 & 27 Trust is a major factor				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	5	31
Strongly Agree	7	100	11	69
12 Q25 & 26 Trust to manage own workload				
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	2	13
Agree	2	29	5	31
Strongly Agree	5	71	9	56

13	Q26 & 31 Effective communication btwn mgmt & staff	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Agree	3	43	13	81
	Strongly Agree	4	57	3	19
14	Q27 & 32 Communication is better when FMW	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	6
	Disagree	2	29	15	94
	Agree	3	43	0	0
	Strongly Agree	2	29	0	0
15	Q28 & 33 Feel isolated	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Disagree	1	14	9	56
	Agree	4	57	6	38
	Strongly Agree	2	29	1	6
16	Q29 & 34 Org fragmentation	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Disagree	2	29	10	63
	Agree	4	57	5	31
	Strongly Agree	0	0	1	6
17	Q30 & 35 Conference calls regularly used	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Strongly Disagree	2	29	1	6
	Disagree	1	14	8	50
	Agree	3	43	7	44
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
18	Q31 & 36 Lessening promotion	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Strongly Disagree	6	86	2	13
	Disagree	1	14	13	81
	Agree	0	0	1	6
	Strongly Agree	0	0	0	0
19	Q37 Which one of the following statements best reflects your understanding of flexible mobile working?	Organisational Approach # responses	Organisational Approach %	Staff Stakeholder Views # Responses	Staff Stakeholder Views %
	Flexible mobile working allows work to be undertaken in the most appropriate place and at the most appropriate time.	6	86	11	69
	Flexible mobile working concerns the needs of employees by having a range of contracts and use of technology to suit their individual needs.	0	0	1	6
	Flexible mobile working is about moving to a more flexible mobile use of office accommodation in order to support the range of activities, which	1	14	0	0
	Flexible mobile working is a way to intensify the use of office accommodation and to improve staff productivity.	0	0	2	13
	Other, please specify:	0	0	2	13