




Working without walls

An insight into the transforming government workplace

The image shows a bright, open-plan office space. The walls are made of light-colored bricks. There are three large, multi-paned windows at the top. A yellow rectangular light fixture is mounted on the wall between the middle and right windows. Below the windows, there are three large, arched doorways. In the foreground, a woman is sitting at a white desk on the left, working on a laptop. In the center, two men are sitting in light blue armchairs around a small round table, talking. On the right, a woman is sitting in a light blue armchair reading a magazine. The floor is a light-colored, polished surface. There are several potted plants in the space. The overall atmosphere is modern and collaborative.

‘More than seven miles of internal walls were removed as part of the Treasury redevelopment project. This physical change was symbolic of much deeper cultural, business and technology transformation within the Treasury, where numerous time-bound organisational barriers were removed to support the more agile and dynamic organisation that is evolving today’

Paul Pegler, Her Majesty’s Treasury

Working without walls

An insight into the transforming government workplace

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Foreword

Workplaces are changing, and nowhere more so than in the UK government today. These changes are bringing better environments using new technology, improved processes, more focused and intensive use of resources, and the potential for much greater flexibility; all of which is helping to reform and improve the delivery of public service. Reform of Britain's public services is at the centre of this government's agenda and my vision is for a civil service that transforms its own ability to deliver and acts as a catalyst for change throughout the public sector.

There are real cultural changes happening at the heart of the civil service that are affecting what we do and how we do it. We recognise that our workplace affects the way we work and the sense of pride and value we feel as individuals and teams. The projects outlined in this book are a real measure of the enthusiasm and commitment that my colleagues and I have for developing the work environment that will help deliver the objectives we have been set.

My own experience, as the champion of the Treasury redevelopment project, confirms there are tangible benefits to be gained from workplace and organisational change. The Treasury project illustrates vividly the way the geography of an organisation can reinforce its culture and its management aims. Through the new building we have managed to create a sense of a modern, outward looking department, an organisation with an appetite for change. The building has developed a sense of inclusiveness, breaking down traditional hierarchy.

It has promoted communication, both formal and informal and has encouraged flexible ways of working. Above all it has fostered a feeling of self-confidence and presented an attractive image to the talent we need to recruit.

Co-produced by the Office of Government Commerce and the international workplace and design consultancy DEGW, this book offers good practice advice, thinking points, successes and learning based on expertise and experience willingly shared by the contributors for the benefit of others. I trust the examples described here will be the first of many.

Sir Andrew Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service, May 2004

About this book

The UK government workplace has taken a variety of forms, from the opulence of its early incarnations to the more familiar drab and dreary post-war tower blocks with their long dark corridors and rows of cellular offices. Its work environments have not, however, been often considered as either innovative or progressive. For a large part of the last century it lagged behind the private sector which has tended to occupy better buildings, with better fit-outs, that better support their working practices.

Today things are changing. Across government a host of workplace projects are underway that are embracing not just physical change but integrated business, organisational and cultural change. The work environment is no longer viewed as a passive overhead but as a powerful and integral aspect of government business, which, given the right attention and investment, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of public service delivery.

In many ways the UK government is now leading the way in workplace design. It is looked to by overseas governments as a model for the future, and is influencing the private sector in its approach. This book can be best described as a celebration of these achievements and evolving good practices and a means by which to educate and inform those embarking on workplace change.

The book falls broadly into three sections: Part 1 looks at the historical context and the catalysts for change in the government workplace; Part 2 examines the current themes influencing the design of these workplaces; and Part 3 explores the practical aspects of understanding, achieving, and sustaining successful workplace change. Each chapter or section can be read independently for specific information and learning points, or in sequence as part of the developing story.

In addition to the main authors, many individuals, organisations and projects have contributed to the content and richness of this book. The book has, in particular, drawn extensively upon the following five main case studies which illustrate some of the best work taking place in government today, and with which OGC and/or DEGW have been closely involved:

- The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) purpose-built office complex in Cheltenham
- Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) redevelopment of their Head Office at 1 Horse Guards Road, London
- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) Main Building redevelopment, Whitehall, London (due for occupation Summer 2004)
- The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Head Office refurbishment at Trevelyan House, London
- The Scottish Enterprise Headquarters purpose-built office complex at Atlantic Quay, Glasgow

This book aims to provide an accessible publication that captures and explores current UK government workplace developments and emerging good practice in order to inform, encourage and support wider improvement and innovation.

Aimed at senior managers, including permanent secretaries, chief executives and business change leaders, as well as heads of estates and facilities, the authors hope the insights from the case studies included in this book will provide a starting point for those thinking of embarking on similar organisational change projects and perhaps also give some reassurance that others have already successfully been there, done that and survived to tell the tale.

About the authors

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Tim Allen, DEGW Tim is an associate director in workplace change management at DEGW and has been directly involved with many of the projects discussed in this book. Tim worked previously for Boots The Chemists as a project manager in their award-winning head office co-location project. Tim often speaks on the issues around organisational communications in times of change.

Felicity Swaffer, DEGW Felicity is a workplace consultant and methodologist. During her time at DEGW she has been involved in a number of government workplace projects. Felicity carried out the post-occupancy evaluation of the new Treasury building, and is now working with the MoD to collect benchmarking data to support future post-occupancy evaluation of Main Building.

Bridget Hardy, OGC A chartered surveyor by profession, Bridget leads the Workplace Strategies Team in the Successful Delivery Directorate of the Office of Government Commerce. She leads on development of OGC's strategy for improving central civil government's effectiveness and efficiency in procurement and use of workplace resources. She is responsible for identifying and supporting embedding of best practice, and through her wide network of contacts within government is working to create knowledge sharing opportunities. She is also a leading member of the Worldwide Workplace Web W4, an international knowledge sharing network for public sector real estate professionals.

Richard Graham, OGC Richard manages the development of property and construction best practice and guidance projects – specifically in the area of 'workspace' – in the Office of Government Commerce's Successful Delivery Directorate. He joined OGC from its predecessor PACE and was previously a project sponsor responsible for the effective delivery of major government construction and refurbishment projects within the Property Holdings Directorate of the Department of the Environment.

PART 1

Why government workplaces are changing

CHAPTER 1

The evolving government workplace

Historical context

The office as a place of work has been in existence now for well over two hundred years, and the UK government office workplace has played an important part in that history. Home to the civil service, the administrative arm of the government, it provides the base from which UK government policies are formed and delivered. Over the years it has had to respond to many political demands and changes as well as embrace evolving technologies, working practices and social attitudes.

However, the government estate has developed over time in an ad hoc fashion and government departments and agencies have traditionally been housed in a diverse mix of accommodation, ranging in age, quality and structural form. In addition the often reactive nature of maintenance of the government estate has meant that at the turn of the 21st century, many civil servants remained housed in poor quality offices unable to support the modern working practices of government today.

Origins of the government workplace

The origins of the government workplace can be seen in London in such magnificent pre-20th century architectural structures as Somerset House and the imperial buildings which line Whitehall. Close to Parliament, these buildings formed the 'corridors of power' that still house today a number of the major government departments.

The classical exterior of Somerset House and the elaborate facades of the Whitehall tradition all project an impression of power and status also reflected in the internal structures of these government buildings. With palatial ministerial suites, high ceilings and long, wide corridors leading to numerous small enclosed offices, these buildings were designed to support highly status driven, top-down government structures.

The welfare state

The creation of the welfare state between 1945–50 significantly increased the role of government in many spheres of public life. By 1950 the civil service workforce had doubled, bringing with it vastly increased bureaucracies to manage government administration.

Buildings designed to house this growing population were of a distinctly different type to those built in earlier, more opulent times. The post-war 'modernist monoliths' projected the austere and functional style of post-war architecture. Buildings such as the Department of the Environment's Marsham Street complex were massive, purpose-built structures designed to house an entire department or agency under one roof. In addition, during this time the government began to occupy a number of modest and anonymous commercially developed office blocks around Victoria.

The internal layouts of these office environments did not, however, break with tradition. Typically, the top floor still housed large ministerial suites with grand views, with the remaining floors divided into cellular offices arranged along central corridors and sized according to the grade of the intended occupant(s). Collectively, all these characteristics served to encourage what is today a general public perception of unnecessary bureaucracy and inefficiency.

It was also during this time that government accommodation expanded to include public caller offices. Established as a 'front door' to public service, these offices, including jobcentres and housing offices, are important as they are the first clearly branded government working environments, on the basis of which many public perceptions about the nature of government have been formed over the years.

right 70–72 Whitehall in 1899; The Houses of Parliament, Westminster



Rationalisation

The Thatcher government (1979–93) began a rationalisation of the civil service and the outsourcing of a number of key functions to the private sector. In addition, there was a drive to regionalise jobs and relocate whole departments to areas like Yorkshire, Wales and the North East to support regional economic regeneration and to avoid the costs of prime-location offices in the South East.

By this time the private sector had already begun to recognise and embrace the idea that the layout of the physical office environment has a significant impact on the functioning of an organisation, with demonstrable financial and commercial consequences. This led a drive towards designs which encouraged openness, collaboration and flexible use of space in the workplace.

Innovations in workplace design within the private sector were not immediately acted upon within Government. While the 1990s saw a number of Fundamental Expenditure reviews within major government departments, little attention was paid to the workplace – with initiatives focused instead upon issues such as management style and process improvement.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, this was in part a consequence of the centralised control of government property (through the Property Services Agency) which provided little incentive for individual departments and agencies to think about their workplace at a strategic level. For those government organisations housed in historic buildings, which are not only structurally difficult to reconfigure but also often of listed-building status, improvements were typically short-term – with incremental attempts made to modify office accommodation which was becoming, by this time, both outdated and unsuitable for modern working practices.

Facilitating change

Thus, within the public sector, the legacy of the public sector building stock combined with very significant pressures of public accountability and tightly controlled capital asset expenditure budgets has, until recently, acted as a significant impediment to changes in the nature of the government workplace.

The decentralisation of property responsibilities to individual departments in 1996, combined with the establishment of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) in the late 1990s as a means of procuring both building and facilities management services from the private sector has had a catalytic impact upon the pace of change in the nature of office accommodation within the public sector. Faced with increasingly obsolete buildings with their crumbling fabric, inadequate information technology (IT) infrastructure and inability to support fast and cost-effective organisational restructuring, a number of government organisations recognised the need to make radical changes to the nature of their working environments. Through PFI, some have been able to fund the large scale schemes needed to renew the fabric of their buildings and reconfigure their working environments. Others have used smaller scale opportunities to bring about change. Whatever the route, they have seized the chance to create new environments that better support modern working practices, to bring about organisational change and to help develop a more open, collaborative and customer-focused culture.

right Department of the Environment, Marsham Street 1971–1996

at the turn of the 21st century, many civil servants remained housed in poor quality offices unable to support the modern working practices of government today



CHAPTER 2

The business of government

Forming the administrative arm of government, the civil service is charged with the responsibility of advising the government of the day and implementing the government's policy and the decisions of Parliament.

Developed during the 19th century in accordance with principles of neutrality, anonymity and permanence, the civil service role and structure changed little for well over a hundred years. Horizontal boundaries divided civil servants into grades with vertical boundaries apportioning civil servants among the various government departments. Each department operated along a strictly hierarchical structure within clearly defined policy responsibilities and consequently they remained mutually autonomous: diverse in both their structures and practices.

Since the 1980s, however, the machinery of government has undergone fundamental transformation with successive waves of structural and management change and it is now on the threshold of a further programme of radical reform.

A revolution in Whitehall

The *Financial Management Initiative* launched in 1982 stressed the importance of 'value for money', the adoption of private sector management techniques, and the pursuit of specific policy goals and performance targets. This was accelerated with the *Next Steps* programme, which transferred many delivery functions to semi-independent executive agencies, transforming the civil service from a monolithic, centrally organised bureaucracy into a model with a clear separation between a policy-making centre and a delivery role in the hands of agencies. Ranging from huge clerical operations like tax collection or the payment of social welfare benefits to research laboratories and the regulation of environmental or health and safety matters, there are today about 140 executive agencies, employing three quarters of all civil servants.

There has also been the emergence of non-departmental public bodies (NDPB's) or 'quangos', executing governmental functions but staffed by appointees rather than civil servants. These include executive and advisory bodies, tribunals, administrative agencies, and a variety of regional and local bodies. Such bodies operate at arm's length from government but come under the general oversight of a sponsoring department.

Modernising government

As we enter the new millennium, many of the generally accepted business practices that have served for most of the 20th century (hierarchical organisational structures, paper-based record keeping and communication) are being challenged. As a result of an ever-increasing drive to maintain a competitive edge, the private sector is having to re-think how it conducts business – and so too is the public sector.

Technological developments, including widespread use of the internet and e-mail communication, have had a significant impact. e-government initiatives such as the creation of websites providing access to key documents, forms and a host of information, provide a relatively simple, flexible and cost-effective way to keep customers informed about government activity and improve communication. Ambitious targets are in place to ensure government business will be carried out on-line. These initiatives are transforming the way government works and interacts with its customers and contribute significantly towards greater efficiency and flexibility in working practices.

Delivery and reform

Whilst progress has been made under the earlier civil service reform programmes, the principal challenge today is to shift focus from policy advice to delivery. Delivery means outcomes. It means project management. It means adapting to new situations and altering rules and practice accordingly. The civil service is being reshaped into an instrument of empowerment; quick to adapt to new times, working in partnership with others, to deliver clear outcomes that demonstrate to the public a clear return on its investment.

The flexibility and innovation being seen today and the experiences and lessons learnt, will be key to the successful evolution of the government workplace in responding to these challenges.

Flexibility

Flexibility is critical for all organisations as they attempt to find ways to respond to an increasingly dynamic business environment. Government organisations have not been immune to these pressures. The climate for government work today is characterised by growing public expectations about standards of service and by a much greater degree of scrutiny and transparency than ever before. At the same time, pressures on public spending are growing, as is the impatience to see the results of previous investment.

The need for efficiency gains, improved service delivery and greater overall responsiveness have led to new approaches to delivery of services within government. These have included increased openness, collaboration, communication, flexible working and the breaking down of hierarchies to make more project working possible and to enable more teams to collaborate across departmental boundaries. In order to achieve this greater structural agility, people, information and communication technology (ICT) and, critically, the workspace need to complement each other so that overall flexibility can be realised.

Attracting new skills

A key objective of the projects discussed throughout this book is the attraction of the 'bright young things' to the civil service of tomorrow, adding new skills to the expertise already available. Through better recruitment, more training on people – and project – management techniques, improvements in delivery capability can be achieved. There is a clear vision for 2005 set out by Sir Andrew Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service:

Civil service 2005

- 1 A civil service respected as much for its ability to deliver as for its policy skill
- 2 A civil service which is able to develop long-term plans and make sure they work
- 3 A civil service that is valued by the public not only for the services it delivers, but for its values of:
 - integrity and trust
 - impartiality and readiness to serve all citizens and governments
 - recruitment and advancement on merit
 - a make-up that reflects the society it serves
- 4 A civil service which young people and those successful in other walks of life want to join and work with

The redesign of the government workplace is an important part of this change. As highlighted in Chapter 1, many government organisations today are housed in poor quality, highly cellular buildings which are not only unappealing working environments to potential new recruits, but also do not support collaborative working styles or allow for sufficient flexibility in team working. For those government organisations that have embarked on workplace change projects, the development of high quality, efficient and effective workplaces to help support organisational transformation in a way which represents value for money over the lifetime of the asset, has been a key objective.

Future challenges

As to the future, new challenges will continue to emerge – demographic and social trends are creating a more diverse, agile and demanding workforce, where work-life balance concerns and career aspirations are light years away from those that existed when the civil service was founded. Developments in e-business and flexible working (ideas which are further developed in Chapter 5) are creating new roles for, and a new emphasis on, the office workplace. The Lyons Review and Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review of 2004, are challenging conventional notions about the location of government work and demanding radically more efficient ways to do government business. Together these reviews challenge the traditional approach and offer an opportunity for a fresh look at how and where government work is done. The flexibility and innovation being seen today and the experiences and lessons learnt, will be key to the successful evolution of the government workplace in responding to these challenges.

right Whitehall – the heart of government in the UK



CHAPTER 3

Using the workplace to drive business change

Making the connection

Increasingly, it is being recognised that the physical workplace can have a significant impact on business efficiency and effectiveness. Put simply, the workplace can either support or hinder day-to-day operations, as well as help the process of change and improvement. However, many office occupants do not fully recognise the extent to which their physical workspace and its characteristics such as layout, appearance, comfort and functionality, affect their ability and motivation to work and the quality of the work they do.

The workplace has been especially ignored by business managers who, if they think of it at all, consider it at best a neutral backdrop to business activities and a necessary addition to the costs of running the business, too often only becoming 'visible' when things go wrong. What is so frequently missed is the idea of the workplace as a resource that can act as a positive lever of change and improvement. The impact of the working environment is subtle, but organisations looking to change and improve must understand its influence and develop their workplaces to exploit and maximise business benefits. Conversely, the continued pursuit of workplace cost-cutting through the provision of less space and reduced facilities or quality will always have its limitations and ultimately it will have a negative impact on the effectiveness of staff, which will result in a significantly greater cost to the organisation than any cost savings achieved.

New thinking

However, attitudes are changing. Considerable publicity and shared experiences around the impact of good design, new developments in technology and the take up of new ways of working to support a better work/life balance, have raised awareness of the workplace as a valuable and influential resource.

Today, enlightened managers are responding by turning their workplaces into drivers for change. As set out in Chapter 2, the modernisation of government is leading to a better focus on business objectives that also support organisational aspirations around greater efficiency, increased effectiveness and improved image – mirroring and evolving developments in the private sector. These visions are being realised by concentrating efforts on providing the right culture, management style, business processes and infrastructure to attract and retain the best people and support them in doing their work well. The workplace is part of this essential infrastructure, closely aligned to work activities and organisational culture, making it possible for people to work in new and different ways and creating a strong visual expression of the organisation's values.

People, process and place

The illustration below shows the interrelationship between *people, process and place*. Successful organisational and business change demands attention to all three elements, challenging traditional approaches to change which often ignore the role and dynamic of the physical environment. Arguably, 'place' has the strongest psychological impact on people and behaviours allowing it to become a key catalyst for wider change.

Workplace performance

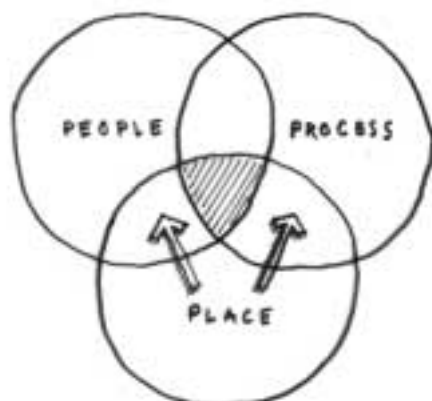
Three commonly recognised ways for workplace change to contribute to business effectiveness are by improving the productivity of the workforce, by offering value for money in the use of resources, and through the expression of organisational values and brand. As context for the remainder of this book, it is worth briefly exploring these three topics further.

Efficiency

Value for money is about getting the right balance of cost and quality to meet user requirements. This means workplaces that use space efficiently, that are efficient to run and maintain over their whole life cycle, are energy efficient and sustainable, and which support people in their work. Even when a workplace is no longer needed by the business it should be re-usable by others.

Improving working environments in this way requires investment in refurbishment, fit-out, furniture and technologies that may initially appear unaffordable. In practice, the savings that can be made through rationalising an estate and selling property assets often provide the funding for the other

The interrelationship between people, process, and place



improvements. This is not always an option, however, and in these instances the case must be made by balancing whole-life cost savings and value gains against initial investment. This is where the use of pilot schemes and the evaluation results from other projects give useful evidence and guidance (pilots are discussed in Chapter 10 and sharing best practice in Chapter 12).

Lowest cost does not necessarily give best value, and organisations that actively manage both the cost and quality of their workplaces are likely to get the best long term value from them.

Effectiveness

Making a direct connection between workplaces and productivity is problematic. Many experts believe there is a link, but it is difficult to prove. There are problems in trying to determine which aspects of the workplace most affect the productivity of people using it and how that productivity can be measured in a way that can be related to established business measures such as cost or output (this issue is explored in a joint research project by DEGW, CBPB and Arup for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment: *Office Design and its Impact upon Business Performance*). This is especially so where the 'business products' are policy or advice, as is the case for most central government departments.

Obvious 'hygiene' factors such as temperature, lighting, cleanliness and access to basic facilities such as a workstation and supporting technologies are the foundation for an effective workplace, without which it would be difficult to get work done at all, but it is harder to identify factors that make people more productive once their basic needs are fulfilled. Since each business is different and the work people undertake differs, it follows that one solution does not fit all – complicating the goal of establishing general rules about which factors of the workplace make people more productive.

The key to designing an effective workplace is always to start with the work itself – to understand in depth what people do, how they do it, how they interact with others, and how the work might be done better. Managers need also to identify the work practices, management style and organisational culture that best support that work and the organisational vision.

The workplace, including supporting technologies, can then be moulded to fit and support the desired

changes in work activities and behaviours. Not only does this maximise effective work, it is also likely to result in a more empowered workforce who find it easier to meet their targets and achieve a balance of work and personal time.

Expression

The way a building looks inside and out, has a profound affect on what people think about the organisation it houses and how they relate to it. Organisations need to think about what sort of image they wish to create and the values they wish to express physically in buildings and workplaces. In government today those values include: interaction and service to the public; openness and accountability; professionalism and authority; prudence and value for money; and being modern, 'in-touch', forward looking, accessible and responsible.

Government departments rightly wish to avoid being charged with wasting taxpayers' money on ostentatious accommodation for civil servants. In the past the result, though, has often been drab and unwelcoming buildings conveying an image of dull and unhelpful policies and services. As highlighted in this book, the government is now learning the lesson that workplaces that look right as well as being functional and cost effective are better value. Well designed workplaces require care, but need not cost more. In the longer term they help attract and retain the best quality people, and encourage better interaction with customers and the public in general.

Common themes

In trying to maximise productivity, get value for money and use the workplace for effective expression of the organisation's values, each business will come to a slightly different solution. However, there are several common themes that are relevant to all organisations. These are the focus of Part 2.

Identifying aims and objectives and understanding how these can be realised through workplace change is important, but equally, the processes by which change is managed are crucial to success. The processes needed to bring about, reinforce and exploit the change, and to measure its success are addressed in Part 3.

Multiple perspectives of the workplace

Dr Michelle Hynd, Scottish Enterprise

In discussions with various people from different organisations over the years, the same question emerges repeatedly: 'so, what is the magic formula for designing and implementing a successful, innovative workplace that reflects the ideal workstyle?'. An answer is always anticipated around some secret recipe for change with defined ingredients such as '1 inspirational leader; 40 members of staff; 20 hot desks; 15 wireless laptops; and don't forget the bright green and orange walls!'

Where people are involved things are never that simple. There has been much research and debate about the influence of the physical environment and its links to effective working – and whether it can be a driver, motivator or merely a hygiene factor in times of organisational change. I propose that it can be all and none of these simultaneously. The interpretation, acceptance and attitude towards physical workplace change for any individual is shaped by their unique personal experiences and situation. There are likely to be multiple perspectives of the physical environment and its role and value in times of change held within an organisation at any time. Therefore the pursuit of the ultimate single physical and workstyle solution to suit all is clearly both inappropriate and unachievable.

Without doubt, the physical environment has an impact on people and their work that must be exploited. The extent of research undertaken over the decades demonstrates the interest and fascination in this topic. But what we find is a wide range of complex views, partly reflecting the values and circumstances of their time.

Looking back over the last century, classical organisation theorists like Taylor viewed the physical environment as an integral part of the structure and system of an organisation, intrinsically linked to worker output and efficiency. Those with a more humanistic bent such as Mayo and Herzberg believed organisational effectiveness was influenced by attention to social needs, rather than the physical environment. Management theorists such as Peters, Handy and Drucker recognise the physical environment can contribute positively to organisational effectiveness, but only as one

of a mix of variables. From the perspective of the built environment some, such as Lee and Dovey, consider the physical environment to strongly determine behaviour and influence change, whilst others such as Becker, Laing, Duffy and Steele believe the physical environment can contribute in this way, but only when integrated with the right social and technological interventions.

The image and identity aspects of the physical structure are also open to multiple interpretations – and often ones not intended by designers or managers. The positive intentions of management, in times of change, can often be negatively misinterpreted, confounded by ineffective or poorly timed communication – for example where the context and role of new worksettings are not properly explained and as a result are seen by staff purely as a cost-cutting exercise or the latest workplace fad.

So, in considering the quest for that secret recipe for successful workplace change, it is clear that we cannot view the physical environment in isolation from the organisational context of the time and the nature of the business, work activities and culture. And it is important to recognise and build on the diversity we find and resist the temptation to stifle it. This means engaging with people, but not pandering to every perceived requirement; providing choice and variety to reflect the true dynamism of their work; enabling flexibility to match the demands of their evolving business; and providing stimulation to inspire and motivate. Is such a workplace recipe possible?

I firmly believe that today a workplace can be created for every organisation that allows every individual, or group of individuals, to use it harmoniously in different ways to match specific needs and mood on any given day. This will certainly require physical changes but, more importantly, also significant mindset change at all levels. So we need to add that important ingredient to our 'recipe' too. And it's how you use and mix the ingredients that really counts. As any good chef knows, this requires skill, patience and experience. I, for one, am still learning and have now developed a real taste for the ultimate workplace.

CHAPTER 4

Government trendsetters


Over the past decade an increasing number of government organisations have responded to the need for change, and have grasped the opportunity to effect such organisational change through the refurbishment or redevelopment of their workplaces. Led and supported by determined individuals ranging from senior leaders to facilities or property teams, there are now a number of important workplace projects that are turning much of the generally accepted thinking about the government workplace on its head.

Crucial to making the most of these opportunities has been an understanding of the potential impact of the workplace on the way an organisation functions, and its interconnectedness with the information, communication and technology (ICT) infrastructure, the human resource management framework and the organisational structure. The approaches taken and methods adopted by these organisations provide

useful guidance to others hoping to achieve similar results for their organisations. Throughout the following chapters numerous case study examples will be used to illustrate real examples of the achievements of workplace change projects within government today (see key below).

The five main projects introduced in this chapter also reappear as case studies throughout the book. They have been selected as good practice examples, based on the strength and clarity of their vision, their business-driven focus for change, and their successful implementation of a quality workspace to support the business of the organisation.

The projects selected represent a mix of new build and refurbishment schemes across the UK. While some workplaces are complete and have been occupied for a number of years, others are in the process of completion at the time of writing.

 <i>GCHQ</i>	Government Communications Headquarters
 <i>HMT</i>	Her Majesty's Treasury
 <i>MoD</i>	Ministry of Defence
 <i>OGC</i>	Office of Government Commerce
 <i>SE</i>	Scottish Enterprise
 <i>DfT</i>	Department for Transport
 <i>DWP</i>	Department for Work and Pensions
 <i>DH</i>	Department of Health
 <i>DTI</i>	Department of Trade and Industry
 <i>HA</i>	Highways Agency
 <i>MO</i>	Met Office
 <i>ODPM</i>	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Government Communications Headquarters

●●● GCHQ

building m² (NIA*)

main building 92,500 m²
supporting attached
buildings 11,000 m²
total 103,500 m²

headcount

c. 4,500

completion date

Occupation from
Sep 03 to Aug 04

location

Cheltenham

type of project

PFI

architect

Gensler

PFI partner

Integrated
Accommodation
Services Plc

contact

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*Net internal area

GCHQ has undergone substantial change over the last few years. This includes the co-location of its headquarters organisation (previously awkwardly split across 50 buildings on two separate sites four miles apart) into a purpose-built complex which they started to populate in September 2003, with decant of staff scheduled to complete August 2004. Opened in September 2003, the new HQ (often referred to as the 'Doughnut') was designed to support the organisation's complex technical infrastructure and to enable the staff to work together more effectively. More than just a new building, it is a physical manifestation of the cultural aspirations of the organisation.

In early 2000, Lt Gen Sir Edmund Burton was asked by the Cabinet Secretary to review every aspect of GCHQ's business management and planning process. His concluding recommendation was for the creation of *'Blueprint'*, a rolling five-year strategic vision based on aspirations of the workforce, and articulating a shared vision for operations, management and culture. *Blueprint 2005* was issued in late 2000, and is reviewed and updated each year as the starting point for all business planning. *Blueprint* also stands with a change programme introduced in 1998 (*Lead21*) to promote cultural change through leadership and management development.

The new accommodation programme began in 1997 with the premise that a key enabler for organisational change was a new working environment that would better support staff, and allow for maximum flexibility in working styles. Following an assessment of the options, ministers approved a PFI solution and

a contract was signed in 2000 with Integrated Accommodation Services (IAS) consortium for the development and 30 year management and operation of a single headquarters building. The objectives of the new working environment were to allow staff to interact more freely and effectively, share knowledge more efficiently and react more quickly to requirements thus providing a better service. The accommodation has been designed to support quick and easy restructuring of teams with the open plan floor plates, improved communication opportunities and spaces allocated strictly by business need. To embed this aim within the organisation GCHQ have now, for the first time, incorporated spatial/work environment needs as part of its business planning process – managers now have to 'bid' for workspace resources in addition to the other key resources of workforce and budget in the annual planning round.

'The Benefits Profile indicated that less than 20% of the 43 identified benefits would be delivered by start of move and only 50% by move completion. To lose momentum now would risk a 50% failure.'

Lovell Elliott, GCHQ

right 'The doughnut' – GCHQ's new headquarters; 'Family day' induction to the new building



Her Majesty's Treasury

●●● HMT

building m² (NUA*)

22,500 m²

headcount

1,100

completion date

19 August 2002

location

Central London

type of project

PFI

architect

Foster & Partners

PFI partner

Exchequer Partnership
Plc

contact

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*Net usable area

This project involved the redevelopment of Government Offices Great George Street (GOGGS), a grade II* listed landmark, to house all Treasury staff in one building. By the 1990s its physical condition had deteriorated and needed complete refurbishment to meet modern standards while still respecting its heritage and position in the Whitehall landscape.

In 1999, as part of a PFI agreement, Exchequer Partnership Plc was granted the lease of the building and a contract to provide high-standard, serviced office accommodation for the next 35 years. The western end of the building was refurbished and the Treasury took occupation of the newly named 1 Horse Guards Road (1 HGR) in July 2002 – a month before schedule.

The principal aims of the redesign and redevelopment were to make more efficient use of the internal space, change the character of the building to facilitate team working, improve circulation and access for staff and to modernise building services in order to provide value for money, low-energy office accommodation. More than seven miles of internal walls were removed to allow all staff to be accommodated in either perimeter team spaces or larger open plan areas around the internal courtyard. In addition, a wide range of high quality shared collaborative spaces have been provided on the

ground floor, and throughout the open plan working area. The Treasury building has achieved an 'excellent' BREEAM rating for its environmental standards. It was short-listed for the 2003 Prime Minister's Award for Better Public Buildings and was winner of the 2003 BCO Refurbished Workplace of the Year Award.

Specific aims and objectives outlined in the vision for the new building were to create a space to:

- provide a high quality, efficient work environment that offers sufficient flexibility for the future
- enable the Treasury to work collaboratively, openly, creatively and innovatively
- foster good internal and external communications
- project a modern, professional and welcoming image.

The post-occupancy evaluation report *HM Treasury – 1 Horse Guards Road: Post Occupancy Evaluation* (DEGW, 2003) found that the project met all these objectives. 83% of survey respondents believed that the new workplace provided a better working environment than previous Treasury accommodation and many commented that the improved facilities and increased interaction made the department feel totally different. When questioned staff were unanimous in agreeing that the building encourages collaboration and is improving communication and knowledge sharing.

right The new landscaped courtyard at the Treasury



'Quality accommodation is essential to quality services. This project has delivered what Treasury has needed for many years: an efficient, modern workspace that will enable us to improve further the services we provide.'

Sir Andrew Turnbull

Ministry of Defence

●●● MoD

building m² (GIA)*

100,000 m²

headcount

3,300

completion date

summer 2004

location

Whitehall

type of project

PFI

architect

HOK

PFI partner

Modus Plc

contact

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*Gross internal area

The Ministry of Defence Main Building occupies the site of the 12th century Whitehall Palace. The existing building was designed in 1915 by Vincent Harris but, delayed by world wars, was only built between 1939 and 1959. It is Grade 1 listed on account of its unique design, location and the historical features preserved from earlier buildings retained within it. Originally occupied by the Board of Trade and the Air Ministry, in 1964 it became the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence. In 1996, the MoD started a project to repair and refurbish the deteriorating fabric and in 2000 under a PFI agreement, Modus, a consortium of developers and service providers, was granted a 30-year lease and service contract to provide a high quality serviced working environment.

For the MoD the redevelopment of Main Building is part of a wholesale rethink of how the head office works and serves the department, whose functioning relies heavily on the knowledge and expertise of its people and on access to collective information. The previous accommodation of cellular offices, multiple sites and separate IT platforms was seen as a hindrance to the less hierarchical, collaborative team working and knowledge sharing that the MoD wanted to encourage. Hence the new workspace will provide a more open plan working environment with one central IT system for the 3,100 occupants, who are a mix of both military and civilian staff.

The redevelopment of Main Building is therefore much more than a building project: it is truly a business transformation. The building is clearly seen at the most senior levels in the MoD as a catalyst and enabler, actively supporting cultural and organisational change: a better building, better

equipped, with better processes and working practices resulting in better decisions, faster. An associated change management programme has been branded '>home' (head office modern environment). Running from July 2002 to April 2005, with phased reoccupation of the building from May to September 2004 the >home programme brings together four concurrent strands of change: working together in open plan; leading and managing change; information access and management through IT; and process and working practice improvement. >home is an exemplary change management programme for staff, encompassing preparation for, and familiarisation with, the new building and working practices and subsequent measurement of the benefits it has achieved.

'We're creating an environment that will enable people to work flexibly in project teams and task teams. We will have more approachable senior managers because they are seen to be present on the floor, and I think it will fundamentally change the way in which we relate to one another.'

Ian Andrews, 2nd Permanent Under Secretary
(Senior Project Sponsor)

below left to right
Exterior view; New open working environment for the MoD; Computer generated image of south concourse of Main Building



Office of Government Commerce

●●● OGC

building m² (NIA*)
3,300 m²

headcount
290

completion date
May 2003

location
Central London

type of project
refurbishment
prime contract

**interior designers
and space planners**
AMA Alexi Marmott
Associates

managing consultants
Turner and Townsend

contractor
Wates

contact
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*Net internal area

below left to right
Trevelyan House;
Reception; A mix of
formal and informal
meeting spaces

OGC was formed in 2000 from six previously separate entities – three government agencies and three units of the Treasury – each with their own history, culture, identity and portfolio of offices. In 2002, with the key objective of reinforcing its new culture and identity, OGC decided to rationalise its London headquarters to a single location in Trevelyan House, near Westminster. Six floors were refurbished during 2002–3, becoming fully operational in May 2003.

Although on a very different scale from the major construction projects described in the other case studies, OGC had similar aims. It intended to use its workplace refurbishment to support its business needs and act as a catalyst for improvement and change. The primary objectives were to build a common OGC identity, support business integration, modernise and improve the working environment and reduce running costs.

As a result of the project OGC has been able to make a 20% reduction in space use overall and 25% reduction in space per workstation. The building now supports around 290 staff with 279 workstations using a combination of allocated desks, hot desks and touchdown facilities. OGC expects to realise significant running cost savings as a result. In addition, the cost of churn has been significantly reduced, through the use of standard furniture and ICT workstation configurations, wheeled pedestal pods and a significant reduction in on-site storage.

Other key benefits relate to improving the working environment to modern standards, including the use of flexible workspace to suit modern ways of working

and to promote integration and communication between teams and divisions. The new Trevelyan House offices offer a variety of working environments, including breakout spaces for refreshments, areas of soft seating, touchdown points, individual quiet rooms, allocated desks, and a mix of formal and informal meeting rooms (several with video-conference or presentation facilities).

Staff reaction has been good. Post-occupancy evaluation found that 84% of staff now rate their work environment as excellent or good, with the breakout areas and meeting rooms the most highly rated. Although the refurbishment involved a reduction in the overall space per workstation, the increase in the proportion of space given over to communal facilities combined with a clever use of colour and uninterrupted views to perimeter windows to promote a sense of openness and light throughout the building means people are very satisfied with the space. Occupants also report that the space promotes more interaction and communication and some believe it has improved their productivity.

‘Delivered on time and within budget, this has been a model of how a successful project should work; an example for others to learn from.’

Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer (quoted at the official opening of Trevelyan House on 2 July 2003).



Scottish Enterprise

●●● SE

building m² (GIA)*

11,100 m²

headcount

700

completion date

September 2001

location

Glasgow City Centre

type of project

Lease – 20 years

architect

BDP

developer

Bellhouse Joseph

contact

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*Gross internal area

Scottish Enterprise is a government agency responsible for the economic development of lowland Scotland (it has a sister organisation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise) – embracing activities ranging from inward investment, international trade development, entrepreneurship, business and industry development, physical infrastructure, skills development, careers support and lifelong learning. It operates through 12 regional offices and a headquarters based in Glasgow.

Scottish Enterprise was formed in April 1991 through a merger of the Scottish Development Agency and the Training Agency. An early ambition of its then chief executive was to establish a single new headquarters building to help modernise the organisation, embed a single culture and improve its public identity and interface. In 1996, an award-winning *Workplace of the Future* pilot was implemented to build on Scottish Enterprise's earlier *New Ways of Working* initiatives and to test out future concepts effectively in preparation for the occupation of its new space – which the organisation and its 700 staff eventually moved into in September 2001.

The new building, sited in Glasgow's riverside regeneration area is almost identical in size to the old premises yet layout and design provide more capacity for future growth and accommodated the integration of Scottish Enterprise with Careers Scotland shortly after the move. The integration of these groups within one building is a good example of the opportunities for innovations in working practice created by a new working environment, and serves as an exemplar to the business community in Scotland and beyond. Scottish Enterprise's approach – in terms of its preparation and support of staff prior

to the move, and review of achievements post-move, as well as the working environment itself – has provided guidance and inspiration to an extensive range of both public and private sector organisations and visitor numbers to the new building have increased by around 50% over the first two years of occupation.

A comprehensive post-occupancy evaluation was carried out six months after the move to the new headquarters and provided a valuable insight into opportunities created by the new working environment, as well as some of the important adjustments – more of which feature later in this book.

Similar to a PFI, the new building and its servicing is provided through a 20-year arrangement with a developer-based consortium. The design and philosophy of the new headquarters building has continued to support the organisation as it has continued to evolve – providing flexibility to meet ongoing business and organisational challenges, including a further organisational merger, centralisation of key support roles and changing operational priorities.

‘Two of the most important influences on the success of the overall project were a strong vision from the top and the decision to pilot new workplace concepts at an early stage.’

Dr Michelle Hynd

below left to right
Glass facade at Atlantic
Quay; Atrium view
highlighting the light
and openness at
Scottish Enterprise
Headquarters; Café
space



PART 2

Themes of influence and change



CHAPTER 5

New workstyles

The changing nature of work

In the 250 years since the onset of the industrial revolution, working practices have changed dramatically. At the beginning of the 19th century most people worked from home, producing goods for sale or barter. Today, over 50% of the UK's workforce are office workers.

As organisations have grown and evolved over time so have the range of activities and types of work people undertake on a day-to-day basis. In any organisation there will be considerable variation between employees in the amount of time they spend interacting with others or working alone, their need for space to concentrate, the types of tools they require for their work and the amount of time they spend working away from their desk and working outside the office.

However, for many organisations, these variations are not reflected in the types of working environments they provide for their employees. Often individuals are provided with only a desk, office or meeting room to conduct their work, with the allocation of offices more about reflecting hierarchy through ownership of enclosed space than about providing a working environment that best supports working practices. As outlined in Chapter 1, this has long been the case for the government office.

In today's economy, knowledge is a growing commodity. It is becoming increasingly important for many organisations, especially government, to create working environments which support interaction and collaboration between employees to allow knowledge to be shared whilst still allowing sufficient space for concentrated and confidential work, helping to break down many of the established hierarchies and silos that inhibit flexibility across teams.

Supporting new workstyles

The introduction of richer work environments that better reflect the diversity of modern office work has been a key element in a number of recent government workplace change projects. In addition to a dedicated desk, staff are typically also able to choose alternative work settings to find the most appropriate environment to match the tasks they are performing. This might involve moving to quieter or enclosed space for concentrated and focused work or conversely, moving to more informal shared spaces to aid interaction and collaboration.

The chart opposite was developed by the University of Reading and provides a useful model of the evolution of office space to support and encourage flexible working practices and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government estate. The majority of projects discussed in this chapter are at stage 3 of this model, but beginning to move into stage 4.

●●● SE

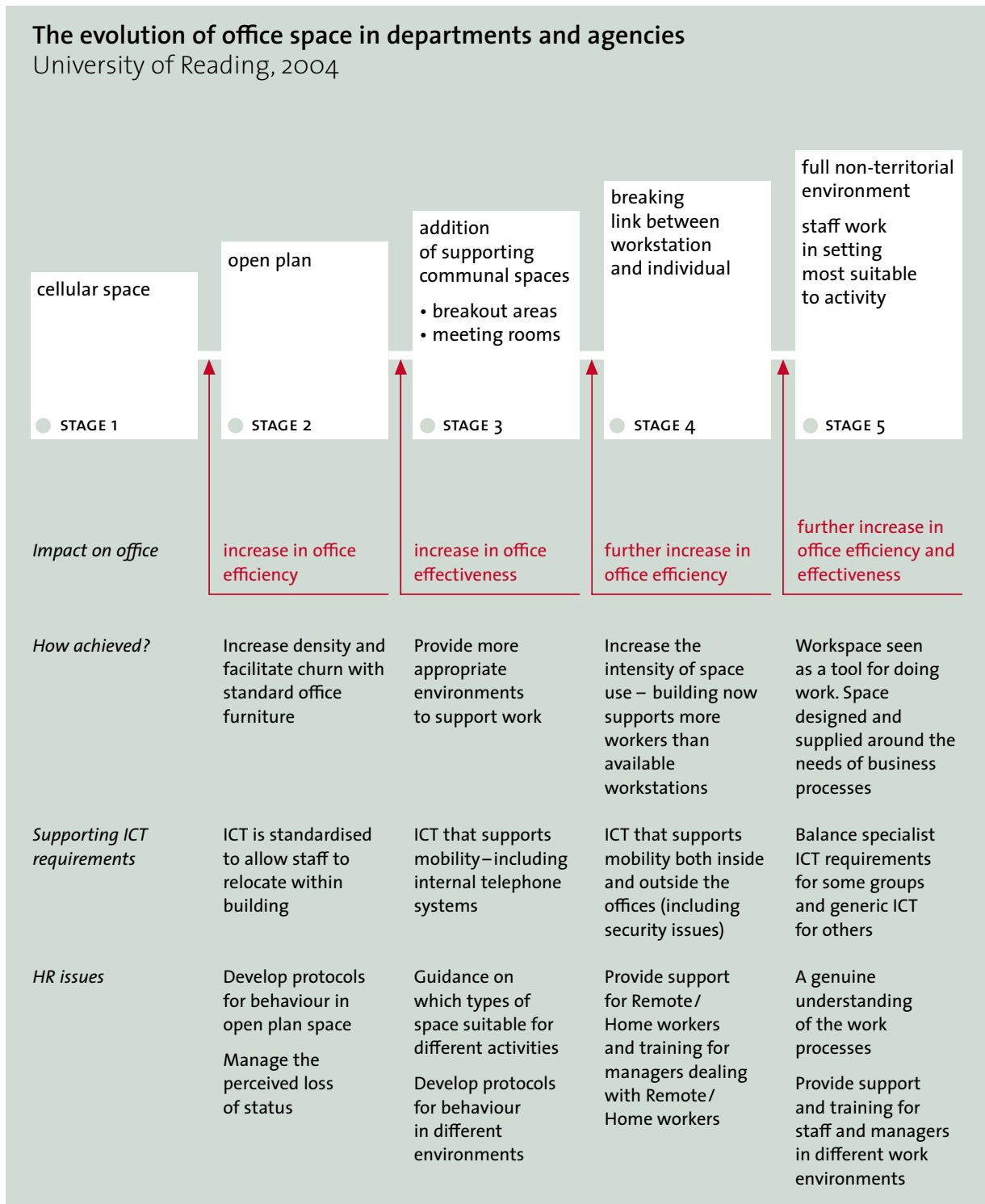
Scottish Enterprise introduced a range of new worksettings to support the evolving workstyles of their staff as part of their move to new headquarters in Glasgow. This was based on earlier pilot activities and wider staff consultation. Among the new worksettings were bookable hot desks and hot offices, touchdown facilities, study booths, flexible project spaces, 'oasis' social/service centres, an innovation theatre (for team brainstorming) and a range of informal meet spaces, including a large café facility. This was in addition to the provision of more traditional meeting and conference rooms and dedicated desks (for those not involved in hot-desking). In the interest of enhancing interaction, collaboration and visibility amongst staff and promoting a single status working environment, no dedicated offices were provided in the building.



Informal meeting space
at Scottish Enterprise

The evolution of office space in departments and agencies

University of Reading, 2004





Director General at work in 'home' office

●●● ODPM

In order to provide a better working environment for the team and to save space (and costs), ODPM (then DTLR) redesigned their Housing, Homelessness and Planning Group. The new space included a smaller 'home' office for the Director General, and space for the team to have a large 'kitchen table' as their main base, a smaller quiet room, a reception/ breakout space and a meeting room which could also provide additional work settings. The new environment brought the team closer together and even enabled new staff to join without further changes to the layout or consequent additional costs.

●●● OGC

In its Norwich office, OGC piloted the use of a wireless office. A team of seven people, with a manager, was relocated to a single open plan office, and equipped with mobile furniture and IT equipment connected to the network through a wireless LAN (local area network). Computers were placed in specially designed 'pods' loaned for the trial, with moveable mountings and space for flat screen, keyboard and mouse. The pods could be wheeled to any location with power connection, and other furniture could be drawn up to create the required workstation.



Before and after: transformed mobility in OGC wireless pilot

●●● OGC

OGC's experience in moving to a greater degree of open plan working suggests that senior people moving out of cellular offices can benefit from DECT (Digitally Enhanced Cordless Telephony) telephone facilities to allow them to walk to nearby quiet rooms for private conversations. Other staff generally found the combination of a desktop telephone with voicemail and redirecting facilities and a mobile phone sufficient to meet their need for mobility. In OGC's experience, when team members are grouped in allocated desks and where colleagues are available and willing to answer calls, it can be preferable not to use voicemail so that caller queries can be answered immediately. The use of voicemail is managed locally by mutual agreement depending on team preference.



Mobile telephony

A guide to the variety of different work settings (supporting communal spaces) that might be introduced into the workplace is provided as a menu on page 29. Such spaces can vary according to whether they are: formal or informal; confidential or open; owned by an individual or shared; quiet or noisy. The menu is by no means exhaustive, and for any organisation the types of spaces implemented need to reflect their existing, or desired, workstyles and culture.

Given government's current renewed focus on openness and communication, many of the alternative work settings introduced into these new working environments are designed to support collaborative work, and are discussed separately in Chapter 6. Equally important, however, are spaces which support individual focus, concentration and reflection, and which provide a contrast to the dynamic, collaborative workplaces. Many organisations have found that without introducing quiet spaces, quiet zones or booths designed primarily for individual work, staff find it difficult to concentrate in the workplace, and have resorted to working from home or other locations away from the office.

Mobility within the office

As people begin to move around the office selecting the appropriate environment for their work, it is important that these worksettings are furnished with the appropriate tools. Providing computers in spaces such as quiet booths and touchdown areas and setting up roaming log-in profiles will enable staff to complete more tasks away from their desk.

The introduction of mobile technology is another way to support employees' use of alternative work settings. Network points throughout the building, particularly in worksettings for quiet or collaborative work, can enable laptop users to access to their files wherever they need or want to. Wireless networks and LANs (Local Area Networks) add further flexibility to mobile workstyles. Whilst this is not entirely new and is common practice in many smaller private sector organisations, particularly in the creative industries, it is much less widespread in larger corporations and organisations such as government departments as security concerns are often a key issue.

It is also important to consider how staff can be contacted while away from their desk, and how unanswered telephone calls will be dealt with (eg voicemail, group pick-up). The use of mobile telephony is often a good way of allowing people more flexibility in their choice of work location.



A quiet retreat in OGC

●●● OGC

Individual quiet working rooms feature in OGC. These are enclosed rooms, containing a desk and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) facilities, big enough for one person to work in quiet concentration and located close to the open plan areas, but shielded from them by full height double glazed walls and door that effectively cut out the majority of external noise. The rooms are air-conditioned and have individual lighting. The glazed walls have a frosted pattern to give users a sense of privacy, whilst still allowing others to see which rooms are in use. Although use of the room indicates a wish to work undisturbed, some staff have taken to using rooms on other floors, away from their immediate team areas. They can be contacted by mobile telephone, but are protected from non-urgent interruption. The rooms are too small to be attractive for long-term use, so are unlikely to be appropriated as substitute offices.

●●● SE

In 2001, as part of its evolving flexible working programme, Scottish Enterprise expanded its hot-desking arrangements to directly involve around 55% of its staff when it moved to its new headquarters in Atlantic Quay, Glasgow. This radical move followed the successful introduction of a pilot workspace, as well as pre-move preparation and training. In order to ensure staff could work in the setting of their choice, bookings were automated through Euphoria, a workplace booking system which allowed staff to log-in from any PC within the building, as well as from strategically placed touchscreens or even from home. A concierge-style service was also introduced to provide telephone and 'walk-up' support and management for the new working environment, including the booking of workspaces.



Euphoria booking system at Scottish Enterprise

Hot-desking and hotelling

Often, when additional worksettings are provided to better support working practices, there are opportunities to review whether the desks need to be allocated on a 1:1 ratio, particularly when staff are already spending significant periods of time out of the office during their working day. Concepts such as hot-desking (shared use of non-assigned desks) or hotelling (a more formal approach for shared workspace, typically involving advance booking) initially used for visitors or very mobile staff have been implemented for a wider body of staff by a number of government organisations. Such working environments can provide not only an opportunity to reduce accommodation costs, but also a means of creating greater fluidity and flexibility within the organisation.

Sophisticated booking and tracking systems can be employed to support hot-desking, providing an important infrastructure to ensure that these new choices, and the flexibility and freedom they allow, do not result in confusion or undermine effective communications and working.

The adoption of the new workstyles and initiatives can be liberating, but they do require careful planning and preparation. New disciplines and protocols may need to be adopted, along with a significant change in mindsets and styles of management, in order to succeed. The use of pilots and change management programmes can be very powerful ways of assisting these transformations and are often essential to the successful realisation of the project. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.



right OGC touchdown hot desk



Settling into a new space at GCHQ

●●● GCHQ

GCHQ has introduced desk sharing for staff moving to its new headquarters building in Cheltenham. This is a reflection of both an increasing headcount within limited space and evolving workstyles. However, such working practices did present cultural and emotional challenges for staff who have become accustomed to 'owning' a desk, regardless of workstyle. To help overcome this, a local 'buddy group' system was introduced to provide a more friendly and reassuring approach to this new concept. Desks are shared at group level, rather than divisional or corporate level – with the groups themselves working out the precise arrangements to meet individual, as well as team, needs and preferences. Co-operation between groups is encouraged and managed at the corporate level to enable cross-team sharing when required. In some cases, all group members are involved in this practice, in others only some participate by mutual agreement.

●●● DTI

The Department of Trade and Industry has successfully piloted a flexible workspace concept for its 500-strong Energy Group in its main headquarters building to support a greater degree of flexibility, openness, interaction, team-working, sharing and mobility. The office environment is designed to support the different ways in which staff work and provides an average of eight desks for ten staff in a completely open plan environment. The project is backed by appropriate ICT including laptops and a new telephony system which allows calls to be redirected to wherever individuals are. As well as traditional workstations in team space areas, there are quiet rooms, project working areas, café extensions and touchdown spots providing network connections to ensure there is no need to be tied to a desk. The concept is now being extended across the rest of the DTI headquarters building during 2004–5 as part of its overall estates strategy to provide flexible accommodation for 2,250 staff.



'Softspace' area in the DTI Energy pilot

right
DTI Headquarters
Building, 1 Victoria
Street, London

Flexible working patterns

Mobile technologies are also increasing the ease of working in locations remote from the office. Lightweight and portable hardware devices, such as laptops and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) and communication tools including mobile phones, video-conferencing and e-mail, are making it increasingly possible to work anywhere, at any time. The growth of wireless technology will accelerate this trend dramatically over the coming decades.

Today, employees might work from locations including customer or client sites, on trains or planes, at touchdown centres in airports or hotels, or at home. Often this work can take place outside the traditional nine-to-five office hours. This increased flexibility in the time and place of work offers many people the opportunity to balance the demands of their working and personal lives, although this must be carefully managed to ensure the best outcomes for both the organisation and the individual. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has provided extensive guidance on work-life balance over the past few years and the implementation of policies and systems to support it have been the focus of attention for a growing number of organisations.

There has been an increase in the introduction and take up of flexible working practices, creating new models of working and new patterns of using office workspace. There has also been greater recognition, management and support of remote working practices, including working from home. The UK government was perhaps initially slow in responding to many of these opportunities, hampered partly by concerns over the viability of managing geographically dispersed teams and overcoming the belief that 'if you are not at your desk you are not working'. However, in line with evolving legislation, many departments and agencies are now embracing flexible working practices with vigour.



●●● DfT

The Department for Transport is piloting flexible working as a way both to reduce rising accommodation costs and to support their staff in developing an appropriate work-life balance. It was important to the department that they balance both business and individual needs. DfT developed an approach which uses business analysis techniques to assess the ability of the work to sustain a range of flexible working patterns. This enables the department to manage staff expectations about flexible working practices more easily. The result is a policy that the introduction of flexible working must be supported by a viable business case. No one would be forced to change their working pattern. Changes to working patterns would be agreed between individuals, team members and managers. A post implementation review of the pilots has shown that flexible working practices have no negative impact on the business and both staff and managers report many positive outcomes.

‘It has allowed better, less interrupted thought to more important pieces of work. I would also say that on average I feel fresher and more in command of myself and my team.’

A manager’s view – recorded during DfT’s post-occupancy review

There has also been considerable research – much of it government sponsored, including the University of Reading’s *Report on the Impact of Flexible Working on Core Government Offices* (2000) and recent follow-up study *Flexible Working in Central Government: Leveraging the Benefits* (2003) to understand the trends, issues and benefits for organisations and individuals around flexible working. These studies confirm the growing take up and recognition of the opportunities around flexible working practices within government over the past few years, including a shift from ad hoc strategies to the implementation of formal policies. The 2003 Reading report indicates that while a number of government organisations have overcome early concerns around the management of remote workers and performance evaluation this still remains an issue for some organisations, although the major challenges to flexible working within government today are Information and Communications Technology (ICT) implementation, security and cost of infrastructure.

●●● HA

As part of its flexible working initiative, the Highways Agency ran a homeworking pilot from December 2001 until 2004. The objectives of the pilot were to test out the value and relevance of homeworking practices for the organisation and to better understand the operational, technology and policy implications of this 'new way of working'. Four teams were involved, each with a mix of homeworkers and office-based staff. The homeworkers typically spent around a third of their time at home, a third 'on the road' and a third in the office. A mutli-disciplined project team was established and a programme of preparation, support and evaluation activities was designed and undertaken to support the project, with a comprehensive review undertaken in 2004.

Overwhelmingly, the pilot was a success from the viewpoint of participating staff – with better work/life balance and improved personal performance cited as the key benefits. The wider team also realised positive business impacts – with customer feedback suggesting staff were more available and that they felt better serviced. Internal teamwork and communications presented some challenges and adjustment to existing practices, as well as the development of appropriate policy and technology support.

The pilot practices are now continuing on a permanent, formalised basis for those involved. The formal wider roll-out of homeworking is still being considered, mindful of the wider opportunities and implications highlighted by the pilot. This includes considerations around the technology infrastructure and support requirements, the impact on the size and nature of office accommodation and links to other flexible working practices. In addition, the pilot highlighted significant levels of ad-hoc homeworking already taking place across the organisation, which needed to be better understood, supported and aligned to the formal homeworking policy.

Home working


Home working is gaining popularity within government, with many organisations offering staff opportunities to work at home. This trend is set to increase as issues with remote technology and management techniques are overcome.

Of course, there are many factors to consider when introducing such initiatives. The degree to which working at home 'fits' the employee is of prime importance and considerations here can include the nature of their job, the suitability of their home environment and the possession of the right personal disciplines and skills to work alone without the stimulus and support of colleagues. In addition, it is important to ensure that the individual is supported by appropriate technology and good communication protocols, so that they are not isolated from the wider organisation.

It is also necessary to consider how the introduction of such initiatives might affect the wider organisation. The use of pilots involving a sample of the workforce can be an effective way to test these issues. Pilots are discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.



example of
homeworking
environment



Sample menu of alternative work settings

The following menu provides examples of some of the most common concepts being introduced into new workspaces to better support the diversity of modern working practices

owned desk A workstation typically with fixed PC and fixed assigned telephone for staff based in the office at a desk most of the time.

owned office An office typically with a fixed PC/assigned telephone for staff who are office-based most of the time – and regularly need the facilities provided by an office, in terms of privacy, confidentiality and concentration.

hot desk (shared desk) A desk used by a number of staff, who use it for only part of their time as they are often at meetings or away from the office. Can be set up with a PC or alternatively for laptop use. Can be either bookable or used on a ‘first come, first served’ basis.

hot office An office which operates on the same basis as a hot desk, additionally supporting the need for occasional privacy, confidentiality or concentration.

touchdown workbenches These support short-stay, drop-in style working, with fixed PCs or connections for laptop users. Often placed near entrances or circulation routes, and made available to visitors. Often designed for stand-up, rather than sit-down use.

quiet booth/study booth/carrel Semi-open or enclosed hot desk, located in quieter areas to support concentration, typically used on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. Can be set up with a PC or alternatively for laptop use.

team table An adaptable table to support team working – may be owned by a team or project or used as a shared ‘hot’ worksetting for a varying number of people (eg one or two when it is quiet and up to eight when it is busy). Typically set up to support laptop use.

formal meeting rooms An enclosed room, for meetings, with formal table and chairs – typically well equipped in terms of technology support, enabling conference calls, presentations, video conferencing etc. Furniture might also be very adaptable, to allow different styles of meetings to be held. Normally used on a bookable basis.

informal meeting area/social space/breakout space These are open, semi-open or even enclosed meeting space – with a more informal feel, perhaps with softer furniture. Often located in atriums or near main circulation and coffee points, though could form part of a quiet zone. Typically set up to support laptop use. Usually non-bookable.

quiet area/zone/room These are dedicated areas designed to support reflection and concentration. Might comprise of a range of worksettings and PC/laptop options but typically no fixed telephone provision. Will have specific protocols around its use to support quiet and uninterrupted work (for instance no use of mobile phones or ad hoc meetings).

project or creative space This is open or enclosed space, designed and dedicated specifically for project, team working and brainstorming activities – typically be set up to support interaction, as well as individual work. Its furniture and fittings may be mobile and flexible to accommodate this. Electronic whiteboards and pinboards can feature to assist the development of ideas and sharing of knowledge. Such space may be allocated to a team or project to ‘own’ for a particular period of time. Typically set up for laptop use, without telephone handsets.

hub space This is a dedicated area for photocopying, printing, post etc – normally centrally located and partly enclosed to reduce noise to other areas. May be incorporated with coffee points, notice boards and informal meeting to provide a social and interactive focus.

CHAPTER 6

Openness, communication and collaboration

Breaking down barriers

For organisations today, the ability to communicate fast and efficiently amongst employees outside the confines of traditional structures and hierarchies is increasingly important. By harnessing technology and designing working environments which facilitate communication and collaboration, substantial business benefits such as faster decision making and greater responsiveness can be achieved.

This is of particular importance to government. The past decade has seen a growing drive, both within the UK and across Northern Europe, towards increased openness, transparency and accountability in the provision of public services. For a number of departments business change has been, or is expected to be, achieved through workplace projects supported by effective change management programmes which remove both cultural and physical barriers to effective communication and actively support and promote the desired practices and behaviours. Typical changes might include reducing the number of cellular offices in the building, creating new and open informal meeting areas, improving opportunities for virtual communication and changing mindsets to create a more collaborative and sharing culture.

Harnessing ICT

New forms of information and communications technology (ICT) offer a host of opportunities to enhance collaboration. Virtual communication tools such as video conferencing and mobile telephony enable faster communication from a range of locations. E-mail provides opportunities to disseminate information to large numbers of staff, keep people updated on relevant issues, or keep geographically dispersed teams

●●● GCHQ

At GCHQ, informal meeting spaces are provided throughout the new building, including the circular street feature, where increased interaction and visibility of staff has become quickly evident – with instances of staff seeing each other for the first time in years being reported. An extreme example of this novelty is captured by one senior member of staff who stated that ‘it took 40 minutes to buy a sandwich’, simply because of the number of colleagues he met and engaged with in business-related conversation. Staff are already having to learn to become focused and discriminatory in managing these encounters.

●●● MoD

The MoD has used the move back to their redeveloped head office in Whitehall as a catalyst for broader organisational and cultural change. To support improvements in available technology the ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) IT training programme was introduced for all staff. This will help ensure everyone has a common, minimal level of computer and software literacy, and help the organisation to maximise the business value of its technology by supporting more effective organisation-wide communications and collaboration.

●●● OGC

OGC offers staff bright and colourful breakout areas where staff can greet visitors, meet informally or take a break. Situated at the entrance to each floor, the small tables, soft seating and availability of refreshments in breakout spaces makes them an attractive and well-used work setting. Their location adjacent to the touchdown points used by mobile staff also enhances the effectiveness of these spaces as places where OGC staff from different teams and different locations meet, exchange ideas, and identify opportunities for collaboration.

An attractive meeting space in OGC breakout area





Met Office internal street showing café/bar in foreground

●●● MO

To encourage staff to chat and share ideas in their new head office, the Met Office has designed the main work areas and meeting rooms around an indoor 'street'. Working floors are accessed via the street, which has balconies and walkways on upper levels with informal seating to facilitate ad hoc meetings. Staircases lead to street level where a café provides further seating and a restaurant offers a wider choice of food. A newsagent, shop, ATM, access to the library and a leisure suite are also located here— all maximising the potential for bumping into colleagues, exchanging information and sparking creativity.



OGC meeting room

●●● OGC

OGC uses a meeting room booking system based on its e-mail and calendar software. All OGC staff have access to this system and can book meeting rooms in its London or Norwich offices at the same time as inviting colleagues. At OGC all electronic calendars are accessible, so room availability is easily identified and matched with attendee availability. The system specifies the number of people the room will accommodate, encouraging the use of appropriate spaces. A healthy culture has developed where people are not afraid to politely interrupt an over-running meeting and take possession of a room they have pre-booked. The positive effects have been to improve meeting time-keeping, reduce the length of some meetings and even-out meeting room use across the working day.

●●● HMT ●●● SE

Café spaces have proved incredibly popular as meeting spots at both the Treasury and Scottish Enterprise. Post-occupancy evaluations indicated that these were one of the most successful aspects of the buildings, in terms of utilisation, staff satisfaction, and increased opportunities for interacting with colleagues.



Treasury staff networking in the café

in touch. Intranets and internet sites are also key information sources, and can provide forums for both formal and informal virtual communications. Leading government organisations are today addressing ICT issues as part of wider workplace change projects, with the aim of improving communication both within and between government organisations.

The implementation of ICT tools can improve the performance of a business. However, the extent of their impact will of course depend on the appropriateness of the technology, how easy it is to use, and the organisation's readiness, and ability to use the tools provided.

It is also important not to rely too heavily on ICT. Electronic communication as a business tool is not infallible, and pitfalls can include increasingly complex decision making through the involvement of numerous parties, misunderstanding of messages, or time delays as important messages are not picked up or are even ignored. An over-reliance on websites as a means of information dissemination can also lead to the deterioration of other effective means of communication, such as simply talking to each other. As a consequence, there is also now a renewed focus on the importance of designing spaces to facilitate face-to-face exchange through increased physical proximity.

Bringing people together

For each of the five major case studies featured in this book, the first step in improving communication across the organisation has been the co-location of staff in one building. Bringing staff together in this way offers new opportunities for increased interaction and collaboration, particularly at the informal level as individuals 'bump into' and share information with colleagues previously located in entirely separate buildings.

Environments that echo everyday physical settings, such as wide central corridors and large gathering places (streets and piazzas) can prove effective in increasing the likelihood of informal, often unplanned, yet valuable conversations that take place between colleagues.



Typical view of flexible workspace at the Met Office

●●● MO

The Met Office's move to a new head office in Exeter provided the chance to drive a radical change in workspace design by commissioning a significantly more open plan environment. The large floor plates have allowed teams to be grouped together close to the other teams with whom they work. This encourages greater interaction and knowledge sharing with a view to further improving internal processes and services to customers. The creation and delivery of new services to a growing client base is vital for the Met Office's future success as a business.

●●● SE

Scottish Enterprise designed its new head office to facilitate a high level of hot-desking and collaborative working across the building. But the creation of team areas to provide a sense of identity and belonging was also emphasised. These areas provide a base both for team members with permanent desks and those who are more mobile. Post-occupancy evaluation revealed that the preferences of hot-desking staff were normally to be based near team colleagues, revealing some important, although perhaps not surprising, perspectives on the focus of their collaborative working. Broader cross-organisation working and conversations were occurring, however, although generally through informal meeting, social (café) and project spaces, rather than desk-based worksettings. The lively, extensively used ground floor café area was the most significant visual manifestation of such organisational-wide cross fertilisation. In addition the internal atrium staircase connects teams across all floors.



Entrance to Atlantic Quay, Scottish Enterprise

In all of these projects, considerable attention has been paid to designated shared settings that help facilitate collaborative working within the building. These might include traditional spaces such as formal enclosed meeting or conference rooms. In addition, an increasing number of organisations are implementing informal breakout spaces, including restaurants and cafés which encourage staff to interact and meet on a more informal and social basis.

The meeting culture

When providing a range of formal and informal meeting settings, it can be useful to assess the existing meeting culture. More open working environments can encourage informal communication, reducing the need for formal meetings, but staff must feel comfortable working in this way. Where formal meetings are appropriate, it is important to question whether they need to be held in enclosed rooms or in more relaxed spaces as openness and creativity are often encouraged in less formal situations.

It is also necessary to address any inappropriate use of meeting rooms – such as rooms booked but not used or two people using a 12-person meeting room – to ensure that the enclosed spaces provided are available to the people who need them. Centralised or electronic meeting room booking systems and policing of bookings where the occupants do not use the room can help manage the bookable meeting spaces within a building.

Open working environments

Alongside the provision of shared spaces for collaboration, opportunities for improved communication are being sought in areas accommodating individual worksettings, such as the owned desk or office. The tradition of cellular space allocation linked to grade rather than function, the physical signalling of status within the workplace, has presented significant barriers to communication through reinforcement of notions of hierarchy and separation of team members from each other and from managers. Open plan working environments are increasingly being implemented, often with senior grades sitting alongside the rest of the organisation.

By co-locating teams, and improving adjacencies between groups that work closely, many government organisations are achieving better information and knowledge exchange.

In open plan environments it is important to facilitate team cohesion, particularly when encouraging people to work in a range of spaces in and outside the building. Cohesion is also a key consideration when introducing desk sharing.



Scottish Enterprise welcome booklet

●●● DTI ●●● SE

Protocols in the DTI Energy pilot have been developed following extensive consultation and workshops with staff. They have been set out in the Office Etiquette Guide, which addresses issues including noise management, clean and clear desks, consideration of others and communication protocols. Scottish Enterprise also produced a booklet to help clarify and communicate the protocols to support harmonious working in their new headquarters building. These were similarly agreed through staff workshops and consultation.

Scottish Enterprise chose to incorporate the protocols into a booklet that also provided a comprehensive general guide to their new building and its facilities. This successfully introduced the protocols in context and positioned them as a natural aspect of the working environment. The booklet was distributed to staff before the move on the basis that staff would be more inclined to read it at that stage.

●●● HMT

During consultation prior to their move Treasury staff were worried about the potential for distraction and lack of privacy in an open plan office. Much Treasury work involves close concentration, so in response to these concerns work 'booths' were provided, separated from the main space by glazed partitions. Post-occupancy evaluation has revealed that these spaces are not actually required. Because a good mix of work settings have been provided and because people follow the office etiquette that requires them to move away from a desk to an informal meeting area to have discussions, or simply chat, the main open plan areas are sufficiently quiet for most considerative work. The majority of booths are now being removed to increase available workspace.



View through open environment at the Treasury

Balancing interaction and privacy

The open plan environment is not a recent development in the government workplace. However, where open environments have been implemented in the past, physical barriers to communication such as high screens between desks, piles of files and paper, strategically placed filing cabinets and even plants, have often slowly and deliberately built up to shield and separate individuals from their colleagues.

Such practices often reflect individuals' very real desire for privacy, particularly when unused to working in open environments. Extreme versions of open plan (often referred to as 'prairies') as demonstrated in many call centres, do not adequately support work that requires not only collaboration but also concentration and, in some cases, confidentiality.

As discussed in Chapter 5, study booths and soundproof meeting or interview rooms or even designated open working areas can provide confidential and quiet spaces for staff. Privacy can also be safeguarded through shared protocols. Behavioural signals such as moving to a new work location, or opening or closing doors can all be used to indicate whether an individual is in an 'interactive' or 'private' work mode. Leadership from senior members of staff, through adherence to agreed protocols, is of critical importance in ensuring that such open and collaborative working environments function effectively. Further guidance on protocols is provided on page 35.

It is also necessary to address the noise levels in open plan areas, and agree where noisy work should take place, how to handle unanswered phone calls and the use of mobile phones. Softer furnishings and upholstered privacy screen or partitions can significantly help to moderate noise levels.

●●● HMT

Since opening its redeveloped offices at 1 Horse Guards Road, the Treasury has experienced an unprecedented increase in the number of visitors to its building, reflecting a new sense of pride in its workplace and an enthusiasm to host meetings and invite visitors. Approximately 90% of visitors have been from fellow government bodies, and have used both formal spaces (such as the conference rooms) and informal spaces (such as the restaurant) to hold meetings and events. This degree of openness and collaboration was not possible in the Treasury's previous environment where a lack of facilities, a sense of embarrassment and less open mindset prevented such opportunities. Interestingly, 10% of visitors to the new Treasury building have been from the private sector – the majority simply coming to experience and learn from this dynamic new government workplace.

Changing space and culture

It is crucial to recognise that simply being able to interact more easily with more people does not mean communications are of better quality, or that increased productivity will be a direct consequence. In order to achieve significant change, it is often necessary to engage in wider change management programmes, which ultimately seek to re-engineer the internal structures and processes of the organisation. A typical focus of these might be on improving communication and collaboration through new and more open styles of management, breaking down of hierarchical and functional barriers, and moving the organisation towards project based working practices.


Improving external communications

The case studies featured in this book also demonstrate that by providing attractive workspace with comfortable, high quality informal and formal meeting spaces, government departments and agencies are also managing to improve communication with others outside their own organisations, from both the public and private sectors.

Where different departments share a building or site, the value of shared informal meeting spaces can be significant. The forthcoming occupation by the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise of the former Treasury building in Whitehall, adjoining the new Treasury at 1 Horse Guards Road, will provide a unique opportunity for these organisations to collaborate formally and informally in new ways using their new shared working environments.

right Informal working in the Treasury restaurant





Guidance on protocols

Protocols (also referred to as etiquette or ground rules) can take many forms, and cover a whole range of issues relating to the use of space. They may be very strictly defined, or they may be looser, more flexible 'principles'. In all cases they should be agreed and shared by staff across all levels in order to best support the use of space by an organisation and instill a sense of ownership to avoid any sense of 'rules' being imposed. For guidance, some real examples of protocols developed recently for new working environments are themed and listed below.

Sharing worksettings

- Do not think of your workstation as your only worksetting – make use of other spaces in the building which may be more suitable to the work you are doing
- At the end of each day, or when leaving your workstation for a prolonged period of time, please tidy away all papers and belongings to ensure that others can use this space
- Study booths are for temporary use only and should not be a base for the whole day. Possessions and papers should be cleared away after use or when working elsewhere away from the space
- Do not book meeting rooms or any worksettings unnecessarily and cancel any bookings no longer required in a timely manner to allow others to use these resources
- Meeting room bookings are considered void if the intended occupants do not arrive within 15 minutes of the booked time
- Please leave meeting rooms as you would wish to find them
- Where possible or sensible (eg privacy not an issue) hold meetings in open spaces rather than unnecessarily using enclosed meeting rooms

Privacy, concentration and comfort

- Working behind closed doors signals privacy is required, and others should not interrupt unless it is urgent
- If carrying a cordless phone keep it with you at all times.
- Set mobile phones to a discreet ringtone. If a cordless or mobile phone is left unattended others have the right to turn that phone off
- When speaking on a mobile phone move to a space where you are not likely to distract others
- Do not shout or conduct loud conversations in open plan areas
- If a short conversation at the desk is prolonged move to an alternative work area which is more comfortable and which will minimise distraction to others
- Do not use speakerphones in open plan areas
- Assume all screen and paper information is confidential unless you are explicitly invited to view it. Use password screensavers for additional security

Health and safety

- Before use, adjust all elements of your workspace for ergonomic comfort (particularly pertinent for shared 'hot' worksettings)
- If using a laptop machine for more than one hour plug into a suitable desktop screen and keyboard or 'comfort kit'

Visitors

- Visitors should be made aware of and encouraged to adhere to the protocols of the space
- It is the responsibility of the host to ensure their visitors understand the protocols

CHAPTER 7

The less-paper office

More open working environments should encourage greater communication and interaction amongst their occupants which organisations hope will, in turn, facilitate the sharing of knowledge within and between teams. To support easier access to information, organisations try to reduce the amount of paper they retain, and encourage staff to maintain records in an electronic format that can be accessed more widely and more quickly. This should also reduce the volume required for paper storage in the immediate workspace, increasing the efficiency of space use.

From 'paperless' to 'less-paper'

The paperless office has been heralded for quite some time. The expansion and greater integration of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into the workplace was to see the demise of the Taylorist office where paper processing is king. In this virtual future everyone would e-mail electronic documents which recipients would view on-screen and on the move – and the need for something as old fashioned as paper was outdated.

In the real world things are not this simple. Organisations have a desire to reduce the amount of paper they keep (due to both cost of space and aesthetics), but this is in conflict with the majority of people who still prefer to access and read information in the hard copy format. Today, it is more realistic to speak of the 'less-paper office' which not only recognises the new forms of document storage made possible by ICT, but also that paper is, at least for the foreseeable future, an integral part of day-to-day work.

Tackling the paper legacy

The accountability of the public sector has historically been a driver for paper-heavy processes that ensure a full audit trail of policy and project consultations, discussions and decisions. This has, in turn, bequeathed a legacy of large volumes of paper that are seen to belong to the organisation rather than an individual and which consequently have an indefinite life span. The public sector, so often described as risk-averse, now has to grapple with the risks associated with changing audit trails, as part of its attempts to reduce paper, rationalise space and develop more efficient processes.

●●● MoD

Planning for only 1.6 linear metres of personal on-floor filing space in the new MoD head office has meant a managed programme of paper reduction for the organisation. For an organisation that has relied on paper holdings for much of its history, this has been a radical change for staff. They have, however, been supported by external consultants who have helped with the introduction of electronic records management systems and by a new culture that relies less on retaining hard copy 'proof' of actions. Staff have also had the opportunity to see the new storage units to understand more clearly what space is available and how documents will be stored. A document reduction guide was issued by the project team that highlighted what could be destroyed and what should be retained as 'corporate memory' and be appropriately archived. Teams have also held 'black bag days' where there has been a collective effort to sort out and dispose of accumulated redundant documents.



right, from above
View of original
MoD workspace;
View of new MoD
workspace



New technology
at the Treasury

●●● HMT

HM Treasury had introduced an electronic document management system a few years before their decision to redevelop their workspace. However, as part of the change programme for the new environment, the department initiated a further drive to encourage people to file more documents electronically. This was partly to reduce the amount of paper holdings, but also to encourage the good practice of storing information in a more easily and widely accessible format. The in-house information team put a great deal of energy into meeting teams individually and chatting through specific issues as an encouragement for a wider use of the system.

Reviewing the policies and procedures of document management can be one of the most challenging aspects of workplace change projects and yet very practically, it can be the make or break of how a new workspace works.

The introduction of new flat screen technology as part of workplace change can also deliver benefits to staff. Choosing the 17" flat monitor/panel screen in portrait setting allows an individual to read an A4 document at life size, which can encourage the reading of more documents on screen instead of on paper.

Paper is certainly a space-consuming way to store information. Organisations will undoubtedly have people storing multiple copies of documents, paper versions of electronically held documents and documents that are past their sell-by date in terms of usefulness. This is partly due to a lack of time and inclination to clear out documents but is often also a consequence of organisational cultures that emphasise and promote the need to file documents so that they can be produced in the event of an enquiry. However, some organisations especially in the private sector, now favour the destruction of documents, where the reduced cost of storage space outweighs the potential risk that the information may be needed in the future.

Reviewing the policies and procedures of document management (or filing and storage) can be one of the most challenging aspects of workplace change projects and yet very practically, it can make or break the success of a new workspace.

Electronic document storage

However much we might focus on where to store the paper we have around us, the real debate is about ease of access to information. With the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2002) and the Data Protection Act (1998), there is a much greater need to be able to track information and retrieve it easily. With increasing demands on work time and a populace more demanding of faster responses from its public services, being able to access the right information quickly has never been more important. Hence electronic document and records management systems have been introduced as part of many workplace change programmes; these provide an integrated approach to the reduction of paper holdings and a greater use of electronic storage and retrieval systems.

●●● GCHQ

As part of its preparations for co-locating to its new headquarters – and as part of its comprehensive change programme – GCHQ embarked on a 'Prepare to Fit' programme. This comprised an organised, well supported effort to reduce unnecessary hardcopy filing, paperwork, equipment and technology, together with improved exploitation of new technologies and use of off-site storage. Teams and individuals were given specific targets and more than 150 'Prepare to Fit' clear-out sessions were held by local business units. During this period, paper waste disposal increased by 60% and the disposal of equipment rose by 250%! This initiative has enabled the creation of a more open, flexible and attractive working environment in the new building.

●●● SE

For Scottish Enterprise, reduction of hard copy filing and storage was understood to be critical to the success of a new office environment providing shared, alternative worksettings. To facilitate the rationalisation and reduction of hardcopy material, including transfer to electronic format, Scottish Enterprise set all staff a target allocation of 1.5 sq metres of new storage per person. Support was available to assist staff in achieving this, including showing staff the new storage solutions. New storage provision was allocated on a team basis, allowing flexibility between individual needs and team requirements.



New storage solutions at
Scottish Enterprise

Appearance

A reduction in the use of paper is often also driven by a desire to improve the appearance of the physical environment. As discussed in other chapters, there is increasing recognition that the design and ambience of the workspace has an important impact both on the individual and on productivity. Many organisations are now attempting to strike a more appropriate balance between provisions of space for people and paper; the former being a far more important asset. The use of storage space away from working areas is now encouraged, with archival areas located in basements or off-site proving an attractive alternative to multitudinous cabinets in open plan space. As well as improving the appearance of the space, value is enhanced by the cost saving of storing paper away from expensive (often central London) real estate. And yet there is an ongoing cultural battle to prise people away from personal storage. Building confidence that people can access what they need when they want it is an intrinsic part of the workplace change project.

Legitimising clear outs

The lack of interest in clearing out filing and storage is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of driving the less-paper office project. The activity of reviewing document holdings is not one that attracts a great deal of enthusiasm and as a result, organisations have to work hard on this topic. Activities such as 'clear out days' and 'black bag days' are often employed to create a sense of communal spirit in the task and are linked with rewards such as dress-down days, post-clearing team socials and prizes for those clearing out the most rubbish or archiving the most material. The importance of senior management sponsorship of this topic cannot be over-estimated. For the task to be taken seriously and not to be overridden by other pressing priorities, it is vital that management is seen to be playing its part and gives permission for time to be taken from core tasks.

Ideally, the good management of documents is an ongoing part of business-as-usual. Traditionally, the civil service has an excellent reputation for record keeping and filing. Where there is plenty of storage space combined with a culture of retaining documentation for audit trails this poses little difficulty, but can result in reduced emphasis on the importance of ongoing file management. This can make it all the more difficult when a clear out becomes a necessity, as decisions have to be made about what to retain and what to destroy, and there is a danger that important documents will be overlooked and thrown out.

●●● SE

As part of its award winning Workplace of the Future pilot, Scottish Enterprise introduced hot-desking and other new shared worksettings, like hot offices, touchdowns and study booths, for the first time. Key to the flexibility of these new spaces was the need for staff to clear them after use to allow others to work there – so a clear desk policy was introduced. As most staff had become accustomed to their own, often personalised and cluttered desks and offices, this was a clear challenge.

To assist the process, the pilot incorporated a ‘conciierge’ or workplace guardian whose duties included the handling of space bookings and ensuring that the clear desk policy was adhered to. Initially, left items were collected and locked away – which though not popular at first, did help staff adjust their working practices. Over time staff soon valued the role of this policy and actively supported the conciierge in this context. Interestingly, suggestions for also applying this policy to staff with dedicated desks came out of the pilot evaluation as a means of enhancing the overall flexibility and appearance of the space. The clear desk policy has now continued beyond the pilot into the new headquarters building for all shared worksettings – and those with dedicated desks are encouraged to follow at least a ‘tidier’ desk policy, particularly mindful of the larger, more open shared floorplates.

If the drive for less-paper in the office is part of a relocation project, the need for advanced planning is crucial. People need to visualise the volume of storage space that will be available to them in their new workspace. Those driving the projects described in this book have worked hard to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the types and location of storage space available and have provided help with the paper reduction process. The final logistical element is often to ensure that the quantity of packing crates provided for the move itself does not exceed the amount of storage space available at the destination. This ensures that the initial positive impact of the new workspace is not diminished by a mountain of crates and nowhere for their contents to go.

Clear desk policies

In an attempt to maintain the appearance of a new working environment and, more practically, to discourage the retention of unnecessary paper many organisations operate a clear desk policy, whereby the contents of each desk are packed away by the occupant into allocated personal or shared storage systems before they leave. For organisations employing worksettings which support nomadic workstyles such as hot-desking or hotelling the maintenance of a clear desk policy is crucial to ensure that shared workspaces do not become ‘owned’ by an individual over time.

Often clear desk policies are the result of security concerns rather than aesthetic or work practice reasons. For security reasons the Cabinet Office recommends a clear desk policy (referring to appropriate storage of classified documents), and all departments have to conform to ISO/IEC 17799:2000 (BS7799 Part 1) and as such are required to implement this policy. Such policies have clear benefits, but must be monitored and enforced, and the burden of being tidy must be seen to fall equally on everyone.

ISO/IEC 17799:2000 (BS7799 Part 1) – 7.3.1 Clear desk and clear screen policy

‘Organisations should consider adopting a clear desk policy for papers and removable storage media and a clear screen policy for information processing facilities in order to reduce the risks of unauthorised access, loss of, and damage to information during and outside normal working hours. The policy should take into account the information security classifications ... [and] the corresponding risks and cultural aspects of the organisation.’

●●● SE

With its move to the more open working environment of its new headquarters, Scottish Enterprise took the opportunity to radically reduce the quantity of its printers, as well as improving their quality. Previously, the average ratio of printers to people was 1:4, partly reflecting the highly cellular environment. This changed to a ratio of around 1:25 with the introduction of new Shared Oasis zones (two per floor), which also provided photocopier, fax and shredder facilities, drinks vending, notice boards and informal seating. Experience showed that this arrangement increased movement and interaction across the work floor and also discouraged unnecessary printing (ie staff only printed what was really important, instead of every e-mail as a routine). Some local based printers were provided on an exceptional basis to meet specific needs.

There are a number of benefits to clear desk policies but maintaining them requires discipline both on the part of the employee and the organisation as a whole (see opposite). As people settle into their new space, work pressures, time constraints and deadlines can all take their toll and lead to the gradual accumulation of paper. Company wide initiatives originally employed in preparation for the move to a new space should be continued and supported post-move.

The benefits of centralised supports

The co-location of support facilities can also be an effective way of reducing the amount of paper filing generated in the first place. By reducing the number of printers per floor and centralising these facilities away from the immediate workspace organisations can not only achieve significant space savings, but also reduce the amount of material printed for convenience, such as e-mails. This design solution also increases social networking as people meet while using the printing or photocopying facilities.

Atlantic Quay, Scottish Enterprise's new headquarters located in the waterfront regeneration area, Glasgow





Guidance on clear desk policy

Benefits can include:

- Clean, modern, innovative workplace appearance
- Improved security of documents and information
- Improved ability for others to access information (ie if properly filed and stored and not 'lost' on people's desks)
- Facilitation of more flexible working practices, in particular the use of hot desks and shared worksettings, where is it essential; but also to allow vacant 'owned' desks to be used, if staff are on holiday or sick
- Reduced fire and health and safety risk (including clearance of floors, corridors and under-desk areas)
- Improved image and identity
- Improved sense of light and spaciousness (and reduction of 'artificial' barriers)
- Increased personal organisation and information management
- Improved psychological wellbeing – sense of being in control of work

Key considerations in the implementation of clear desk policies include:

- If adopted, policies should ideally extend across all staff, not just hot-deskers or mobile workers
- Definition of 'clear' needs to be well understood (by both staff and cleaners), consistent and logical
- Policy should be extended to floors, window sills, corridors, under-desk areas, top of filing cabinets
- Papers and clutter left on desks etc needs to be cleared to enforce new policy – consider how it might be done and by whom? An initial 'safety net' (where papers are retained somewhere and not destroyed straight away) can be useful during the first few months
- Provision of minimal but modern desk trays and accessories might be considered for 'owned' desks, where some organised papers may be left
- Pleas for more storage for filing to enable clearer desks should be challenged – staff should be encouraged to clear out other materials, which might be in excess of real need
- Some means of desk personalisation ought to be allowed (temporary for hot-deskers) – use of screen savers, mouse-mats allowing inserts, stick on photos etc might be considered
- Team level personalisation might be provided through banners and wall/glass imagery

CHAPTER 8

Identity and expression

Changing public perceptions

In the world today organisational notions of identity, expression and brand are changing – with a reduced focus on highly visible external branding. In particular, there has been a move away from the occupation of expensive symbolic buildings in city centre locations both as a consequence of a need to reduce occupancy costs, and continuing terrorism fears generated post 9/11. Instead there has been a re-focus on the expression of identity and brand through the interior of the building – the workplace.

The three Es

As outlined in Chapter 3, expression is one of the three key ways the workplace can contribute to organisational performance. **Efficiency** (making the space work harder), and **effectiveness** (making the space work better for its occupants and the organisation) are also well understood drivers in workplace design, and have been the focus of many workplace change projects. More recently **expression** (using the space to reinforce organisational brands and values) has become a key consideration, and can make the difference between a functional workplace and an exciting and motivating workplace.

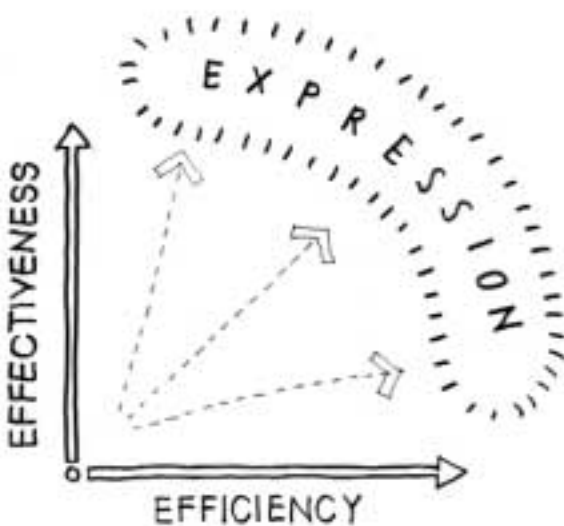
Expression of function, style and values through the workplace is a subject of growing importance to the government, particularly in the light of the drive towards increased openness and transparency in the provision of public services. As the case study examples in this book show, the workplace can be a useful tool both to provide improved connectivity to, and accessibility for, the public, as well as to help attract and retain key staff – especially new generations of workers who perhaps have greater expectations in terms of the look, feel and comfort of the workspaces that should be provided by their employers.

●●● HMT

For HM Treasury, changing its corporate image was a key target. The quality of its new workplace is considered a key selling point of the building, and is regularly quoted in advertisements for new officials. Since completion there have been hundreds of visitors to the building, which has become a venue of choice for external meetings. Its conference facilities are now also regularly booked for non-Treasury events. Visitors have praised the fact that 'staff are proud to show-off their building to other government officials, external business associates, and even family and friends.' As a trailblazing project, it is probably the most photographed and highly regarded central government office currently occupied and is an exemplar for others. Its impact derives to a great degree from its unexpected openness, light and informality which contrast strongly with preconceived notions of what a government department, and the Treasury in particular, is like.



Renewed identity for the Treasury learning centre



The three E's: appropriate and balanced attention to efficiency (minimising costs) effectiveness (adding value) and expression (conveying the right messages) are three key factors to successful workplace transformation



Jobcentre Plus,
Streatham, London

●●● Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an integrated service for all benefits claimants of working age – helping those who can into work and supporting those who cannot. It aims to provide customers with the means to contact the Department for Work and Pensions in the ways most convenient to them, including telephone and internet, through contact centres, 'Jobpoints' in supermarkets and prisons, 'Access to Work' business centres and a network of local offices. This is a true business transformation founded on streamlined processes and cultural reform supported by an integrated technology and workplace infrastructure. In local offices the Jobcentre Plus vision is reinforced through consistent, nationwide implementation of a design model developed in consultation with customers, staff and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). These offices will increasingly be used to focus services towards intensive personal help for customers in greatest need, so the design combines a welcoming, fully accessible, family friendly, professional environment with the privacy and security staff and customers need.

●●● SE

Scottish Enterprise deliberately designed the reception space at Atlantic Quay to provide an open view of a modern, collaborative organisation – with its successful working café area on full display to arriving visitors. Feedback from visitors and public revealed this presented a positive, modern and dynamic image of the organisation, although waiting visitors expressed frustration about being kept outside of this environment, and in particular the coffee it provided. Waiting time for visitors is now carefully monitored – with most being met within five minutes and, where appropriate, visitors can now access the coffee bar using visitors' cards.

View of the business
café on the ground floor
at Scottish Enterprise,
Atlantic Quay

Providing a front door

The notion that the 'front door' to public services should present a warm and accessible image is perhaps most clearly embodied in the re-design and re-branding exercises undertaken by Jobcentre Plus and its predecessors over the years. Today, a number of central government organisations are employing similar concepts to encourage the public into their buildings to learn more about the activities of the department and gain better access to its services. Two other examples are the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, where presentation material outlining their current activities is displayed; and the Armed Forces which has recently completed a new walk-in recruitment centre in central London.

Other departments are also opening up to the public through large and open reception spaces which provide a warm and welcoming image, and which can even be used to provide glimpses of government working life. Reception areas provide an important first impression for visitors and staff alike, so warrant careful consideration and attention. The use of glass, and the provision of sightlines into collaborative workspaces can do much to enhance the perceived accessibility of government, and are a far cry from the dark, enclosed receptions of the past.

Dealing with security concerns

One of the biggest challenges for government in opening up the workplace is, of course, security. The threat of terrorist activity has unfortunately become an aspect of modern society, and a fine balance needs to be achieved between providing an open and accessible public sector organisation and ensuring that staff are, and feel, safe and protected in their workplace.

Clearly, the ability to make such changes varies depending on the function of departments but the advances in electronic security entry and tracking technologies can help to make even the tightest security appear less visible and can lessen the detrimental effect on image and identity.





Treasury main entrance

●●● HMT

At HM Treasury, reception security arrangements were reconsidered to present a softer approach. The roles of uniformed security guards have been altered from a 'policing' function, to a 'meet and greet' function more in line with the role of the concierge in the hotel industry. In addition, electronic card-entry systems have been installed which provide additional, non-intrusive security for staff.



Landmark building for the Met Office Headquarters and Operations Centre

●●● MO

The image and identity for the new Met Office Headquarters and Operations Centre in Exeter was taken very seriously. Not only was the construction project itself undertaken within demanding environmental guidelines (sustainability and ecology of materials, whole life product costing and impact on the local environment) but elements of the design also reflect the Met Office branding. For example, benches in the building's landscaped grounds have a 'wave' form that mirrors those on the logo. The whole building attempts to underline the Met Office as a world leader in weather and environment but small design details, such as room identification in Braille, also point to care for the people who will use it. Before moving, staff were widely consulted about the adoption of behavioural protocols, with the opportunity to agree them locally for each floor. This exercise is to be repeated now that staff have practical experience of open-plan working.

Impact upon employees

Expression of brand and identity through the workplace can also have a significant impact upon the way in which employees experience the organisation they work for. Psychological studies point to the link between environmental design and wellbeing, and to the ways in which expression of identity can increase a sense of belonging. This may be at a personal level (display of personal effects) or team level (displays of work, internal branding), or organisational level (display of corporate brand or vision).

Particularly at the organisational level, the workplace can be used as a tool to reinforce the cultural aspirations and branding of an organisation. Good design can achieve this in a way nothing else can, as it can ensure that a message or statement is relayed continually, clearly and unambiguously to all those using a space. It is therefore critically important that the statement the design makes about that organisation is the right one. This issue therefore warrants careful consideration.

Using colour

One of the most effective means of expression is colour. Either a lack of or extreme preoccupation with corporate colouring has tended to dominate government workplaces to date. A more refreshing, experimental approach to colour is now emerging as a reflection of modern tastes and in recognition of the value of providing a stimulating and interesting working environment. Such development can also be used to strongly signal the message: 'this is not like the old office' and help encourage change and reform, including behavioural change.

Colour tastes can change and date rapidly. The over use or inappropriate use of colour can also become annoying or distracting. Sensibly, most recent government office designs have provided 'splashes' of colour on key walls or surfaces and through furniture or accessories, making future design changes easy and inexpensive.

Supported by good design and effective lighting, colour can also be used to express mood, supporting the notion of a varied office landscape with a series of worksettings for a range of quiet to interactive tasks. Colour is also often used to assist in wayfinding in larger buildings – helping to break up and distinguish different zones or sections of a workplace.



Imagery on island storage units at ODPM

●●● ODPM

The workspace design at ODPM reflects the work of the team in images that communicate the role of the unit within the department. The design elements were carefully chosen to provide context and colour and can be relocated easily and cheaply should the team itself move within the building. Ideas such as carpet tiles with photographic images, semi-transparent film providing visual discretion on glazed partitioning and more abstract imagery on boards on the back of island storage units generated a real sense of character and identity for the team.

●●● DH

After consultation with staff, the Department of Health, in their refurbishment of the fourth floor at Wellington House, opted for a bright red colour to emphasise the new look and layout. The vivid colour was used in the lift lobby and on selected internal walls, and was picked out in signage and flooring. This colour scheme combines with changes to lighting, layout, flooring and meeting spaces to create a dramatically different and distinct workspace for this pilot group within the building. The colour provokes strong reactions; the majority like it, especially because of the strong identity it brings – ‘Fantastic... you would never guess it’s the civil service... it gives me a real lift when I come in’. But for some the colour is too bright – even when used wisely and with consultation, it may not be possible to please everyone with colour.



Wellington House – a new look and layout for the Department of Health

●●● HMT

HM Treasury has a series of huge, bold and bright coloured banners in each of its nine lightwells. Each lightwell has several banners of a specific main colour with one contrasting banner in a colour matching the scheme of the next lightwell. This is not only to support staff and visitors in wayfinding and direction around the workspace, but also to offer a very visible splash of colour and interest across the open floorplates and main corridors.



Wayfinding through colour at the Treasury

‘Fantastic... you would never guess it’s the civil service... it gives me a real lift when I come in.’



Etched glazing at the Department of Health

●●● DH

At the Department of Health, the staff user group was involved in discussions on the naming of meeting rooms. As an aid to identification, instead of a traditional numbering system the meeting rooms were given the names of famous actors. These names are well known, and remind people of the local context of the nearby Old Vic and National Theatre. Names are inscribed artistically on the glass meeting room partitions to create attractive, highly visible signage as well as a degree of screening for the occupants

●●● GCHQ

GCHQ's new headquarters have incorporated a number of art features, including, in its entrance foyer, 'The Cipher Stone', a distinctive sculpture selected by staff from designs by a number of artists as a meaningful expression of the organisation. A colourful mural by a staff member features in the recreation room. Provision of space has been made for artwork in the building's circular street, to be filled as the organisation evolves in its new environment.



Cipher Stone at GCHQ

●●● MoD

Understanding that the move back to its redeveloped head office coincides with the MoD's 40th anniversary, the PFI partner to the MoD (Modus) has taken the opportunity to commission new artwork in commemoration. The timeline in the entrance area will track the history of the department through the last four decades. Modus has also commissioned other banners that will celebrate British military inventions. These will also form part of the new artwork in the building and will complement the existing MoD memorabilia of pictures, prints, plaques and models that serves to underline the long history of the armed forces.

Involving staff in design decisions

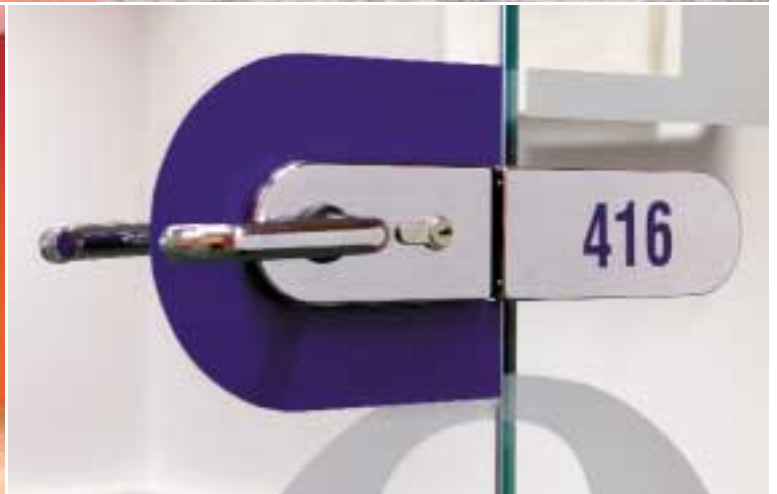
Without doubt, if staff have involvement in the design and style of the workplace they will have an increased sense of acceptance of it and pride and ownership in it – and, importantly, of the organisational changes it encourages. General awareness of design matters has also grown in recent times as a consequence of increased media attention and consumer choice. This has created a design-informed workforce that can provide useful input into decisions about the image of the workspace.

In this context effective staff consultation is therefore very important but needs to be managed with care. Too open a choice of colours, finishes and furniture, for example, is likely to result in inappropriate and unmanageable outcomes. The increasing use of professional interior design services, which incorporate a limited but manageable degree of staff involvement and choice (allowing staff, for example, to choose the colour of chairs or style of storage from a pre-defined range), is proving a more effective strategy.

A good approach is to create a consultation user group, with each member being representative of a specific part of the organisation. While this group is ultimately responsible for the design decisions made available to staff, it is tasked with ensuring that its decisions reflect staff preferences, and can provide a useful feedback mechanism between the project team and the wider organisation.

Artwork

Staff might also get involved in the selection of artwork. This can take many forms and has the advantage of being easy to change and evolve over time. Artwork might include manifestations on glass walls, hanging banners and projected imagery – all of which can add much to the identity and image of the workspace and can be used to reflect local staff views, values and 'sense of belonging'. Such artwork might reflect the organisation's role and operational activities or, conversely, provide a refreshing contrast from the office and business world, such as landscape or other abstract imagery.



The naming of rooms – design details make a difference at the Department of Health, where room names and numbers are used for artistic effect

CHAPTER 9

The drive for quality in design and procurement

Achieving quality in the design and procurement of buildings is high on the government agenda. As the largest client of the construction industry, the government is committed to the construction of high quality, value for money public buildings which are both sustainable and accessible by all. Best practice principles have been developed to help government clients achieve these goals and, as the projects featured in this book demonstrate, many departments and agencies have been successful in delivering exciting and effective workplaces. Today, the results and methodologies of government building projects are rightly being observed with interest by the UK construction industry and governments overseas.

New responsibilities, new choices

Up to the end of the 1980s, responsibility for central government property rested with the government's own multi-disciplined Property Services Agency, the ultimate successors of the Office of the King's Works. Developments in the management of the civil service together with pressure for departments to be more accountable for their own resources and expenditure set in train the transfer of property responsibilities to individual departments. By 1996 departments had taken over full control of the accommodation they occupied, becoming accountable for the first time for all their property decisions – driven first and foremost by their own operational needs.

These new responsibilities brought significant challenges but at the same time, provided the catalyst to develop alternative and increasingly innovative approaches to the procurement and management of property. All this at a time when government was being encouraged to look to the private sector for financing solutions. The emergence of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and other forms of Public Private Partnership during the 1990s offered departments the opportunity to buy-in services in circumstances where in the past these would have been carried out in-house or acquired through capital provision. This has offered the scope to increase value for money through working in partnership with the private sector, sharing risks and harnessing its skills, entrepreneurial flair and capital.



Better Public Buildings report, published by Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2000.

●●● Better Public Buildings Award

In 2001 the Prime Minister endorsed an accolade for Better Public Building in Britain to encourage and celebrate excellence in design for publicly commissioned and funded building projects. This special award is not just about promoting a few exemplars – it aspires to raise the quality of the average. The Award is made annually to a new building project of any size, commissioned by or on behalf of central or local government or by a grant-aided organisation.

‘100 years ago public buildings were often the pride of Britain’s towns and cities. Schools, railway stations, post offices and libraries set high standards of building design that the private sector tried to emulate. The best embodied a strong sense of civic pride. We know that good design provides a host of benefits.’

Tony Blair, October 2000

New ways of supporting the workplace

PFI has come a long way since its launch in November 1992, becoming one of the government’s primary instruments for procuring and delivering high quality and cost effective services. PFI is not simply about financing capital investment, important though that is, but about exploiting the full range of private sector management, commercial and creative skills; bringing the private sector more directly into the provision of public services. Freed from the need to engage in non-core activities, departments and agencies can concentrate their efforts on successful implementation of policy and delivery of services. Whilst accountability and the continuous pressure to demonstrate value for money to the tax-payer remain critical driving forces for the public sector, the need to improve the quality of service through the use of specialists in the management of service provision and in the delivery of these services has also emerged as a key driver. In outsourcing property services, the UK public sector has led the way in the development of Total Property Outsourcing to achieve improvements in estate flexibility whilst increasing the focus on those core competencies required to deliver the departments’ primary function. This is a trend that is being increasingly adopted here in the UK and abroad – in all sectors.



Flexible space – work in progress in OGC break-out area



The DQI website homepage and online questionnaire

Design matters

Design matters in the workplace – good design is about much more than style or appearance: it is about the integration of functionality, whole-life value in relation to maintenance, management and flexibility, sustainability and environmental impact, visual impact including relationship to context, and health and safety. It is about whether a building works well for all users and the community it serves. Throughout the working life of a building and beyond, good design will help to make services delivered within and from it more efficient and effective, and will enhance the experience of all who use and live with it.

Design Quality Indicator (DQI) is a pioneering process developed by the Construction Industry Council to evaluate the design quality of buildings. Important in evaluating workplace performance, it can be equally effective in assessing design quality as a project progresses from a brief through design to construction and use. The process of using DQI during the design phase has the added benefit of helping communicate the project values to users, clarify design strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities for improvement.

More information about DQI can be obtained from www.dqi.org.uk



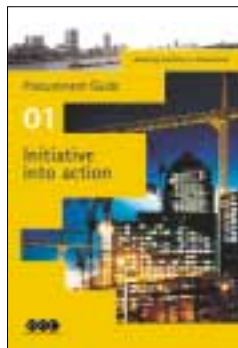
Staff discussions in the well-designed, attractive 'street' at the Met Office



OGC formal meeting rooms

●●● OGC

As part of its refurbishment project OGC used an integrated project team in accordance with Achieving Excellence in Construction, procured through an OGC buying.solutions framework agreement. OGC also took account of the Better Public Building initiative by championing good design, involving users and using independent client design advisers who were then novated to the integrated team.



OGC's *Achieving Excellence in Construction* guidance

In 2000 the Prime Minister insisted on a step change in the quality of new public buildings in Britain. The resulting *Better Public Building* initiative underlined the government's intention to ensure that its building programme – the largest for a generation – delivers a well-designed, high quality environment for the 21st century. The programme aims to guarantee that high standards of design, construction, delivery and performance are being widely achieved in public buildings and infrastructure projects.

Achieving Excellence

Quality outcomes in design ultimately benefit clients and suppliers alike (ie stakeholders, investors, developers, designers, contractors, occupiers and government) and it is critical that all parties recognise that the best option is not necessarily the lowest priced, although it may appear so in the short-term. To really achieve quality in the design and procurement of public facilities it is necessary to focus on the whole life cost of any facility – from the original idea, through design and construction, and including the maintenance and ultimate disposal of the facility.

Quality outcomes and value for money have been established as important principles of the *Achieving Excellence in Construction* agenda. Driven by the OGC, this is a strategy for sustained improvement in the performance of government construction procurement. The aim is to incorporate the range of initiatives that impact on construction projects and recommendations from diverse sources into one coherent strategy that will also help to achieve time and cost savings. This applies not just to new buildings but also to refurbishment and maintenance of infrastructure, individual buildings and public open spaces, with improvements in quality, sustainability, health and safety and managing the supply chain.



Areas of focus within *Achieving Excellence in Construction* include:

- use of partnering and development of long-term relationships
- shorter financial and decision-making approval chains
- improved skills development and empowerment
- the adoption of performance measurement indicators
- the use of tools such as value and risk management and whole life costing

More information about *Achieving Excellence* is available from OGC at www.ogc.gov.uk

‘In 1998, this was seen as a hugely ambitious undertaking and yet it has continued to deliver outstanding results. The scheme is a true partnership in the way the decision-making processes are structured and has delivered both effective property management and an excellent return on investment.’

Judges’ commendation on PRIME, RICS Property Management Awards, 2003

●●● DWP

In 1998, the Department of Social Security (now Department for Work and Pensions) transferred the ownership and management of its estate to the private sector under the PRIME agreement – a PFI contract. This included all freehold premises, responsibility for rental costs and dilapidation liabilities on leased buildings, and the cost of upgrading the buildings. All surplus space was also transferred for disposal. With a portfolio of 650 properties, covering 1.6 million m² DSS had massive property interests, greater than most quoted companies. PRIME represented the largest property transaction by a UK government department.

Key issues

- *Requirement for extensive refurbishment and maintenance – estimates had suggested that bringing the existing estate up to standard would cost some £393m over five years. The department could not afford this.*
- *Surplus space – the DSS had 158,000m² of vacant space, mostly leased, spread over 140 locations. This was costing the taxpayer over £12m each year with this figure expected to rise as more office space fell vacant.*
- *Inconsistent quality in facilities management services – the estate was serviced through a complex and fragmented network of at least 160 service contracts. These were managed mainly at local level and were inefficient and expensive; staff administration costs alone amounted to some £5m per year.*
- *Lack of flexibility – the department was tied to long leases and hard to sell surplus freehold properties. Many of its buildings were unable to accommodate new technology or adapt to changing operational needs.*
- *Drain on core resources – above all, the department wanted to get out of the property business and relinquish responsibility for managing the large estate so that it could concentrate on its core business: managing the social security system.*

Benefits Delivered

- *Transfer of risk – property-related risks were transferred to the private sector partner, Land Securities Trillium, including lifecycle capital expenditure, building maintenance, property and facilities management and the risks relating to occupational flexibility requirements.*
- *Flexibility – DWP now has the flexibility to downsize, modernise and move as required.*
- *The PRIME contract was extended in late 2003 to include the former Employment Service estate which became part of DWP on its establishment in 2001 – a further 1,078 properties.*
- *Improved service and reduced complexity – DWP now deals with a single service provider to whom all existing service contracts have been transferred. These include building management and maintenance, furniture and equipment maintenance, energy and utilities management, external and internal cleaning, landscaping, waste management, security and catering.*
- *Financial impact – according to the National Audit Office, PRIME is expected to deliver savings in the region of £560m over the life of the contract. This is 22% below the projected costs of continued public sector ownership of the estate. DWP’s own savings benchmark confirms that over the first three years of the contract the department saved £100 million against extrapolated pre-PRIME costs.*

For their work on PRIME, the Department for Work and Pensions and Land Securities Trillium were joint recipients of the RICS Property Management Awards in 2003 in both the Public Sector and in the Innovation categories.

●●● GCHQ

As part of the preparations for the move to its new headquarters building, GCHQ arranged a comprehensive training needs analysis for staff with disabilities, resulting in, for example, a physical familiarisation programme for visually impaired staff. Internal accessibility features include differing paving surfaces near core areas within the continuous street to aid wayfinding for the visually impaired. In response to staff feedback, wooden 'rails' were added to the glass barriers at the edges of floorplates overlooking the circular 'street' to alleviate the problem for vertigo sufferers.

GCHQ's partnership with disabled members of staff has been cited as a model of excellence by the Prime Minister who praised the way GCHQ has worked closely with staff to provide the facilities they need in its new building. He also highlighted GCHQ's work with Ability Net – a specialist organisation that advises on accessibility to information communications technology – in bringing about positive changes in the working environment: 'They have looked at absolutely everything from input and output devices to software solutions and the whole information systems process.'

Systematic reviews of a project at critical stages in its lifecycle are employed to ensure that all these aspects are accounted for as a project progresses from conception to completion. The use of the OGC Gateway™ process has now become a standard feature for all procurement projects in government, helping to ensure effective delivery of benefits together with more predictable costs and outcomes.

More information about OGC Gateway™ is available from OGC at www.ogc.gov.uk.

Accessibility

Over the last decade, issues relating to physical access in the workplace have been increasingly high on the agenda. The Disability Discrimination Act places duties to make reasonable adjustments to physical features to overcome barriers to access. An accessible environment is now an expectation of government and building users alike.

Accessible spaces are typically thought of as those allowing for wheelchair users. But definitions of disability are, of course, far broader than this and our understanding of 'accessible workspace' must also be broadened to include issues relating to sight or hearing impairment, and for other factors that might impact upon our ability to function in an environment, such as colour blindness, pregnancy or age. Increasingly, people with disabilities are no longer seen as a distinct group for whom special provision is to be made. Instead the move is towards an environment accessible to all, where disability is a normal component of the make-up of society.

Design at GCHQ takes into account the needs of all users



●●● **GCHQ**

At GCHQ's new headquarters the shell of each new task chair, one of which is provided for each of over 4,000 staff, is made from 36 recycled plastic two-litre soft drink bottles. The desk and table surfaces are made from 90% recycled wood and all steel products are made from 30% recycled metal.

●●● **HMT**

1 Horse Guards Road is predominantly naturally ventilated; its heavy masonry construction and high ceilings keep the air cool in summer, and fresh air is drawn into the building through perimeter windows. Heating is supplied by a CHP (combined heat and power plant) in the Whitehall District Heating System, the government's flagship community heating system, which supports all the main buildings in Whitehall, including Downing Street. CHP is a highly efficient technology for generating electricity and heat together. The use of CHP has resulted in the first year's electricity consumption being half the target benchmark set for a naturally ventilated corporate building.

For both heritage and environmental reasons, a priority during redevelopment was the re-use of existing materials whenever possible. Significant amounts of original timber were re-used, for example windows (92%), floor timber (70%), and all existing doors being refurbished and re-used.

The combination of these and a range of energy saving features has given the building an 'Excellent' BREEAM rating – a considerable achievement for a historic building.



Natural ventilation through the lightwells at HM Treasury

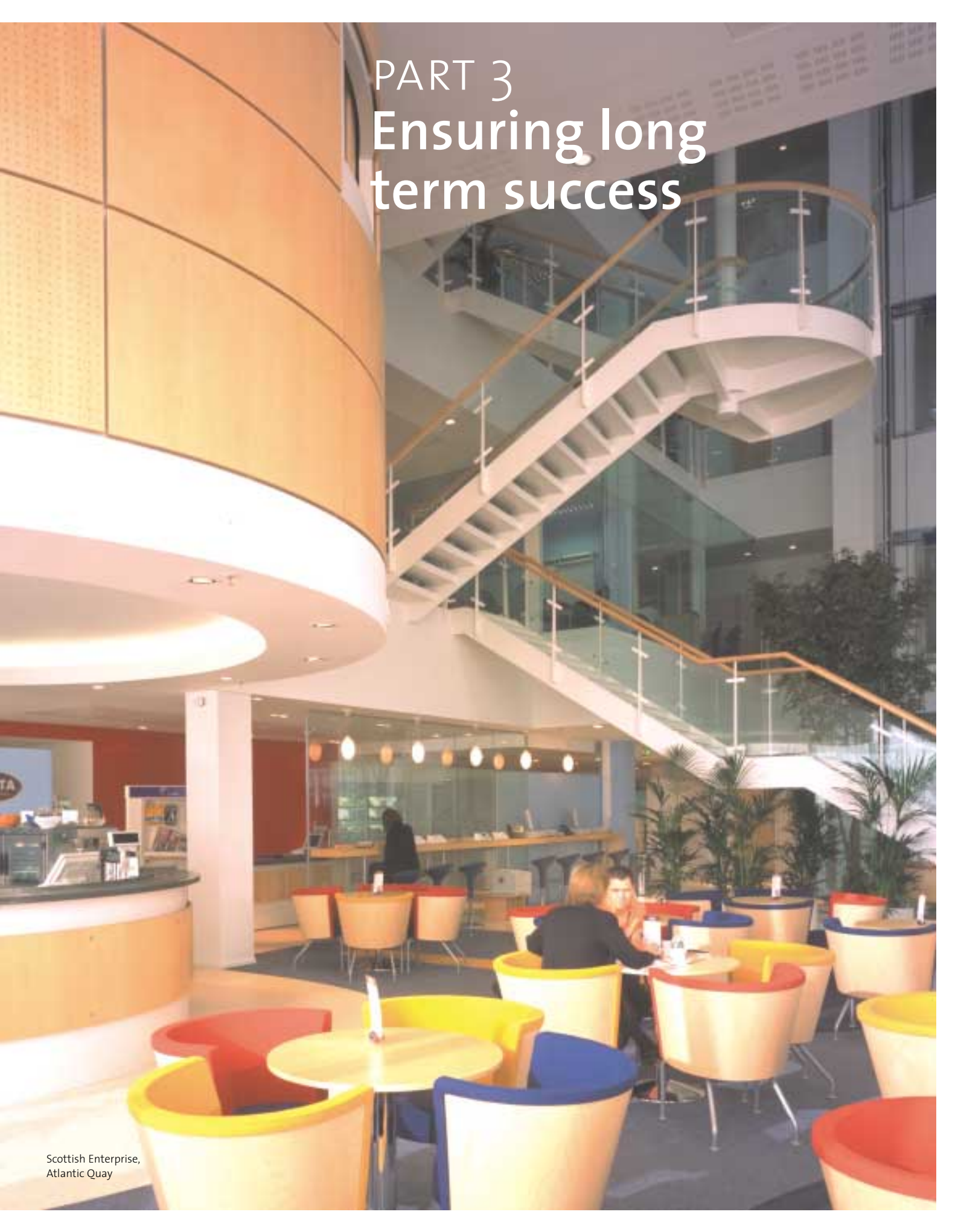
The sustainable workplace

Sustainability is a key issue of our time. Quite apart from the environmental and social benefits, the business benefits are increasingly apparent. As the world's finite supply of natural resources continues to diminish many organisations, particularly in the public sector, are under pressure to 'become greener' at all levels – from the use of recycled construction materials, sustainable energy supplies, and recycled office materials, to the establishment of working practices which reduce commuting time and resulting fuel consumption.

Government construction projects are subject to environmental assessments and the use of BREEAM (the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is widespread. Originally developed by the government in 1990, BREEAM has become the world's most widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of buildings. It assesses a building's performance in relation to management, energy use, health and wellbeing, pollution, transport, land use, ecology, materials and water consumption and efficiency.

PART 3

Ensuring long term success



Managing cultural change

Emotions of change

Experts in the world of managing culture change are quick to agree that workplace-related change can be one of the most difficult fields of organisational transformation. As a result it is often handled badly, mis-timed or even avoided. The problems are exacerbated by issues of emotional ‘comfort’ and ‘personal ownership’ which are often attached to existing environments, even when they are outdated, ineffective and inappropriate. Such attitudes towards existing workspace may, in part, reflect the sense of stability and status they provide today’s worker, caught in the ever-changing arena of organisational and business life.

Organisational change, in the form of policy, process or structure reviews are, of course, commonplace in the civil service and have become an accepted part of its culture over the decades. This is reflected in long established staff consultation processes in place through Union and Whitley Council structures. Indeed, the consultative nature of the civil service has resulted in decisions typically being made through committee, rather than individuals. Whilst helping to facilitate staff acceptance to change, this has also often resulted in delay and compromise, as well as a softening of the impact of change.

In this context, the transformation of government workspace, long considered a personal right or entitlement, can present an enormous challenge. However, a new model of consultation to facilitate such change is emerging through key current projects – striking a more productive balance between leadership and staff involvement.

‘This design has really produced what we wanted. There is a positive cultural change in that people have the working spaces based on their need rather than on old-fashioned ideas of status. Space is used efficiently, team working is better supported and there is plenty of space for private working and meetings. We are now looking at whether similar designs could be introduced in other areas’

Paul Gray, 2nd Permanent Secretary

●●● DWP – Adelphi pilot

DWP Estates and Land Securities Trillium transformed level three of their Adelphi office and updated the workspace to suit modern working practices and get better value for money. Research showed that the previous cellular offices were unoccupied for significant periods – up to 70% of the time. In the new environment, all staff are located in open plan workspace, including Paul Gray, the 2nd Permanent Secretary, and are supported by a variety of meeting rooms, quiet booths and informal breakout spaces. The overall feel is light, airy and surprisingly quiet. Importantly, around 20 to 30% more people can occupy the space, providing cost savings that repay the improvement costs.



Open plan workspace in DWP's Adelphi pilot

●●● HMT

HM Treasury made bold decisions about the nature of its future working environment at 1 Horse Guards Road, through strong leadership – supported by a senior champion in Sir Andrew Turnbull, the then Permanent Secretary, its senior director-level project board and its multi-disciplinary project team. This leadership provided an important sense of clarity and confidence in the project for staff.

Staff communication and consultation was, nevertheless, a key part of the project, with the emphasis being placed on how staff and teams would exploit the new workspace opportunities and make the changes work for them. A staff representative group, known as the 'People's Panel' was responsible for making decisions about issues like new office protocols and local support facilities – aspects that most directly affected their working lives.



Staff consultation at HM Treasury extended to include the restaurant

Handle with care

Clearly, where office change is limited to simple 'churn' moves and minor updates, cultural change is hardly a consideration, although basic communication is still important and is often overlooked.

However, where significant workplace change is planned (typically linked to wider goals of changing the organisational culture, as is increasingly the case today) then the communications and support around the process need to be managed with much greater care and skill. This is essential if the benefits of change are to be fully realised.

Recent major government workplace projects have demonstrated a clear understanding of the need to develop the workplace significantly and also to use the opportunity as a catalyst to stimulate and accelerate associated organisational and cultural change. Importantly, the early recognition of this is also being demonstrated through a more proactive and structured approach to workplace change programmes where issues, and reactions are anticipated to better support staff and minimise operational disruption.

Such projects, although they may be initiated by property or facilities management teams, are increasingly being given a high profile in the organisation with important and appropriate senior sponsorship and direction supported by a multi-disciplinary project team; all this recognises the all-encompassing nature of the change involved.

Staff consultation

With a strong project vision and direction, the balance between imposing and agreeing change is a delicate one. Clearly the staff consultation process must continue and this is typically facilitated through the use of team representatives or champions – conduits for local communication about the project.

Increasingly, the emphasis of such discussion is around the explanation of the rationale for new concepts and resultant new working practices and opportunities – ie 'how to get the best out of the new environment'. This is often best facilitated through well designed interactive staff workshops.



Met Office exterior

●●● MO

With their relocation from Bracknell to Exeter, the Met Office was keen to ensure that staff were given assistance not only with personal relocation issues such as housing and schools, but also to manage the issues arising from change to a new working environment. Communication and consultation were key: a managed programme of workshops, working groups, newsletters, web pages and building visits culminated in a series of building induction events prior to move day. The actual transition to the new workspace went remarkably smoothly.

●●● GCHQ

As a precursor to its physical co-location project in Cheltenham, GCHQ implemented a radical cultural change programme, Lead21 (Leadership in the 21st century). It was designed to address the people aspects of business flexibility and responsiveness, and aimed at a sleeker, more agile organisational model able to respond to a faster and less predictable business environment. A further objective was to promote the new culture throughout the organisation. Recognition of the need for culture change and a definition of GCHQ's future direction were communicated in 2000 in the GCHQ Blueprint. This rolling five-year vision for the organisation is a 'living' document that provides aspirational direction and is referenced for all strategic planning initiatives. Investment of staff time in change activities is seen as an important priority at GCHQ, with 5% of staff time (equivalent to 18 days) allowed for every member of staff to support the co-location project.

Checking Blueprint details at GCHQ



Protocols

This consultation process is often linked to the development and communication of new or adjusted workplace protocols or best practice, which help encourage new desired behaviours to ensure an effective and harmonious working environment. Protocols about clear desk policies are discussed in Chapter 7 but other issues for which protocols might be needed can range from use of telephones to meeting practices. With greater openness and sharing of work facilities, common courtesies come into play – for example, agreements around noise levels, clearing up areas after use and consumption of food in the workspace – see Chapter 6 for more guidance protocols.

Programme of change

The use of structured workplace change management programmes is now becoming common best practice. This very much builds on private sector initiatives, like the approach taken for British Airways' move to its Waterside head office at Heathrow in 1997, where staff were taken through a structured training and preparation programme to ensure readiness for the new working environment. On completion, staff were issued with 'passports' which allowed them access to the new building.

Ideally, such programmes begin with a detailed cultural assessment and analysis of needs, as well as a pre-change benchmarking exercise, so the magnitude of the benefits of the change can later be measured. They are also typically underpinned by a comprehensive, often multi-media (and strongly branded) communication strategy to help ensure all staff can be appropriately engaged. A good communication strategy must recognise that people have different communication preferences, so it should include the use of a variety of communication channels. In addition it must avoid the risk of inconsistency through established organisation briefing processes where the clarity of messages may be blurred.

Such approaches also help to distinguish and clarify these projects from the mass of competing communications and initiatives typically directed at staff. This is particularly relevant in government situations, where 'initiative fatigue' can be commonplace.



MoD's cartoon character 'Homer'

●●● MoD

The change programme devised around the opportunities arising from the MoD's redeveloped head office project was holistic, bringing together initiatives in technology, documentation, working practices and culture change and linked to firm business benefits.

Their programme was strongly branded as >home (head office modern environment) with a distinctive logo applied to all project communications in all media. An easily recognisable cartoon character, Homer, was used to provide a lighter touch as well as a sense of consistency and relevance to communications – with Homer shown following some of the experiences of staff such as attending training sessions, clearing out filing, using new technologies and furniture.

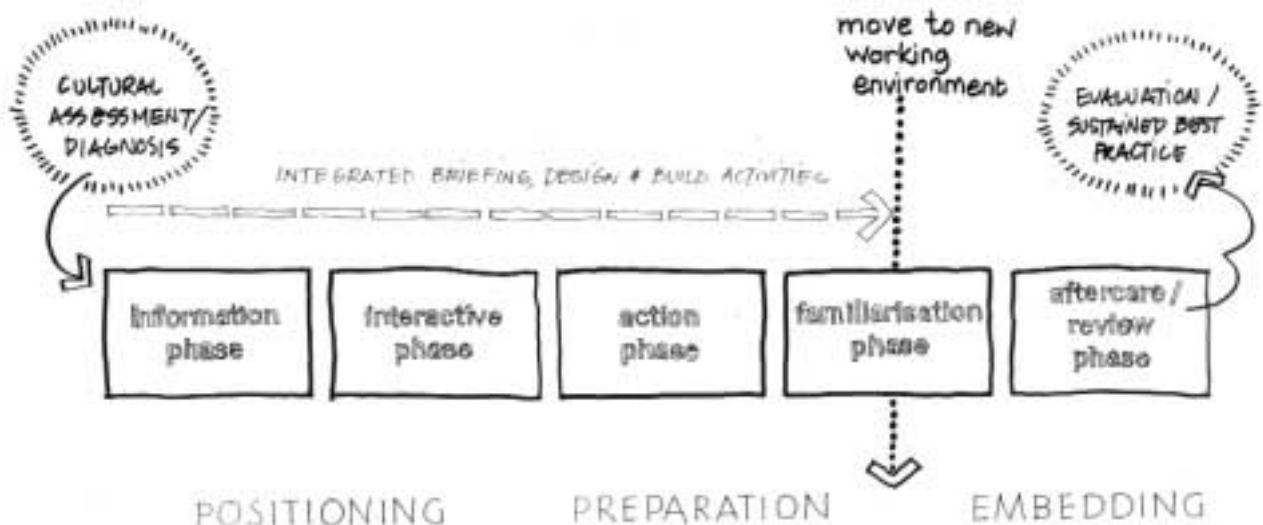


head-office-modern-environment

>home logo

A key principle is to time the communications and support activities with the needs of staff and the project – recognising the logical and emotional steps of making such transitions in terms of staff awareness and motivation. Typically this might follow a phased framework involving the following stages: an initial 'information' phase to aid understanding of rationale and context; an 'interactive' phase to support discussion and acceptance of change; an 'action' phase to initiate preparations and adjustments; a 'familiarisation' phase to provide practical support; and an 'aftercare' or 'review' phase to support the embedding of change in the new environment. A generic model for such a workplace change management project is provided in the diagram below .

Importantly, these programmes can be used to integrate the various strands of change that are going on – for example, technology, work process and/or work practice changes that are accompanying the move to a new office environment. This helps staff by avoiding confusion, clarifying the key linkages and reinforcing important overall project messages.



Generic model for workplace change management



Staff at GCHQ

●●● GCHQ

GCHQ regularly undertakes staff surveys to assess the ongoing understanding, acceptance and commitment to its organisational and cultural change initiatives. In addition to its annual departmental Staff Survey, a six monthly 'Change Readiness' survey was used to inform preparations for the co-location programme and is now being used to measure and assess the post-move adaptation and embedding of ongoing change.

●●● MoD

A tube-map style diagrammatic overview of the MoD's >home change programme was produced to help promote the 'big picture' of the programme and its component parts to staff – namely, workstreams focusing on working in open plan space, document management, IT skills, better work processes and new working practices. The milestones within the workstreams appear as 'tube stops' and whilst the 'routes' or workstreams come together to support the move to the new head office, significantly all workstreams continue after the move to develop and further embed the changes.

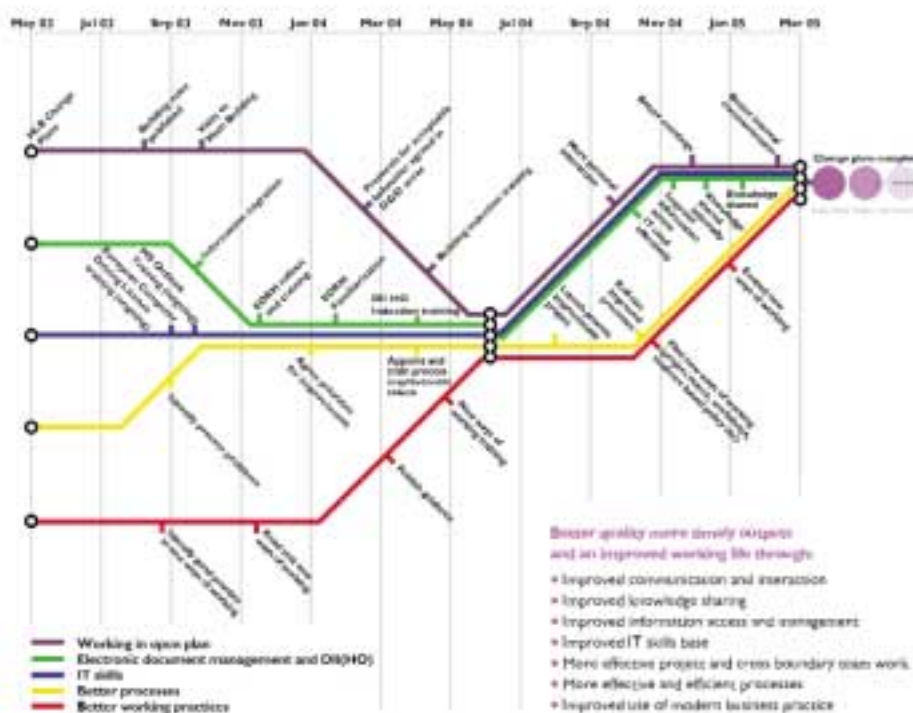
As the diagram on the previous page shows it is important that the change programme continues after the move or physical change to help embed the changes in working practices, process and behaviours. In many respects, the immediate post-change period is a critical stage: without adequate support and guidance it would be very easy for staff to revert to old ways, especially if there are teething problems.

Pilots

One powerful way of supporting workplace change projects and their associated cultural challenges is to undertake pilot activities. These have been used very successfully by a number of departments and agencies, including the MoD, HM Treasury, Scottish Enterprise, the Highways Agency and DWP.

Pilots typically provide an opportunity for a sample of staff to experience proposed future workplace concepts in reality and, in some cases, to influence their final design and detail. As a subset of the wider organisation, it is easier to provide the support needed to help these 'pioneers' adjust and maximise the new opportunities – learning lessons for the wider community, including determining any required adjustments to procedures and protocols. A successful pilot will also typically spawn a number of enthusiastic participants who can act as ambassadors for the wider project by spreading encouraging and positive messages to their peers to support the cultural changes involved.

MoD Tubemap overview of the >home change programme



●●● SE

Having established an award winning Workplace of the Future pilot (winner of the BIFM small office of the year award, 1996); Scottish Enterprise was keen, in the context of its planned move to a new headquarters building in September 2001, to understand how well the successful concepts embraced in that pilot could be taken on by the wider organisation.

An initial workplace utilisation study was undertaken in 1999, which highlighted the flexibility and mobility of staff and flexible workstyles within the traditional office environment. The findings of this were doubted and questioned by staff who felt that the study misrepresented their actual workpatterns.

To investigate further, Scottish Enterprise issued a 'reality check' workbook – a mix of explanation and questions to all staff – in February 2001 to test assumptions and encourage staff to think about their needs in a new context. As a result, the organisation was able to plan for a wide adoption of 'hot-desking' (with around 45% of staff stating at that stage that it was appropriate for them) and to understand where pre-move preparation and training might best be focused – which included sessions to help with the management of more mobile teamworking and provide support for novice flexible workers.

Workplace of the Future pilot, Scottish Enterprise



Conversely, there is a risk that if pilots are seen to fail for any reason the reputation and acceptance of the wider project can be damaged. Key to successful pilots are timing, investment, planning, support and the sample of staff chosen – as well as clear communications to clarify objectives and manage expectations. Quite simply, when piloting, aim to learn but not to fail. See page 63 for further tips on successful piloting initiatives.

Familiarisation

Conducting familiarisation visits around the new workspace shortly before staff move in can be a good way of allaying any fears or misconceptions staff may have about their new environment.

‘Showing people around a finished area of the building well before we moved back made the project real for them. Seeing the building work emphasised that the redeveloped building was going to be radically different. By trying out the desk and chair people realised that, although not palatial, their new accommodation would be modern and fit for purpose. And seeing and touching the storage cabinets brought home the need to reduce paper holdings. The most important thing, though, was to listen to people’s questions and make absolutely sure we answered them.’

Andrew McIlwaine, MoD >home programme

Investing in people

There are some excellent recent and ongoing models of workplace change management programmes within government departments and agencies – in most cases better structured than similar private sector projects, perhaps reflecting the stronger civil service ethos and commitment to investing in people and training.

Perhaps some lessons are being learnt from the past, too. There is an increasing recognition in government departments that without a properly structured and managed approach to change, it will not happen – or at least not in the manner and timeframe desired – and that the unique opportunities being presented to organisations at a time of change might easily be missed or squandered.

Managing cultural change

Dave Woods, Ministry of Defence

There seems to be a commonly held perception that the public sector is resistant to change. I don't believe this to be the case ... it is simply a complex issue!


Studies have shown that there is, on the whole, a high degree of commitment to public service from those who deliver it. This commitment, when combined with the human preference for doing a good job, builds a strong desire to do 'it' better.

This would tend to suggest an eagerness to embrace change for the better that contradicts the perception of change resistance. Two other factors need to be taken into account: an inherent wariness of 'change initiatives' and a procedurally oriented culture. The public sector has undergone a great deal of change over the last decade but unfortunately this change has often been packaged into initiatives, interpreted from current fads in the business world into a procedural form of 'this is the way it will be done now' with little support for the transition.

The first challenge in delivering change in the public sector is to overcome this wariness. I believe this can be done by directly targeting the suppressed desire for change, clearly setting out the reasons (the why) and in what way they will be able to deliver their job better (the what). To get this depth of understanding requires not just communication but people's involvement in defining and delivering the change, in deciding what needs to change and how the change should take place. This leads into the second challenge.

An understanding of the personal benefit of the change will open the door, but really tapping into the desire for change brings you up against a cultural fundamental of the public sector – the procedural approach: there is normally a set 'way of doing things' whether that be explicitly documented or tacit within the culture itself. This presents a paradox and a barrier to engagement through involvement: we want the group to define for themselves how the change should be delivered in order to generate true ownership, but culturally that is exactly what they are looking to be told, a procedure that they simply need to follow. I believe the answer here is to challenge and support the group, provoke ideas and offer models that can be taken by them and adapted to what will work best for them. Maintaining a focus on the outcome is essential for those attempting to oversee the change, so that they coach the group toward the goal rather than defining the path for them.

The result can be a change programme that will move people towards the organisationally defined goals, but defined by members of the group themselves with a high degree of ownership, since it is based on their ideas in a context that they know best. To make this possible, senior management needs to take a more flexible approach to change, set a clear strategic target then step back and allow groups to deliver the change towards that goal in their own way... oh yes, and they will need clear leadership by example, but that's another story.



Some tips on successful piloting

- Ensure there is an appropriate project team in place to manage the pilot which includes people from all relevant disciplines who are, or who have access to, key decision-makers. Team members might also get involved in the pilot to demonstrate commitment to their role.
- Be clear from the outset what the objective is – is it simply to allow staff to experience new workplace concepts in advance or to allow staff to test and influence/change those new concepts (or both)?
- Develop a business case to formally capture the objectives, benefits and outcomes and help justify any financial investment required (for example, space saved or processes streamlined).
- Ensure that pilot participants are fully briefed and understand the objectives and the thinking behind new concepts and changes involved in the pilot, including organisational and personal benefits.
- ‘Position’ the pilot appropriately. Try to create a ‘special’ identity for the pilot to distinguish it from other initiatives in order to avoid it being ignored and/or treated cynically.
- The pilot participants are the most important ingredients of the initiative. Support and encourage them to adopt the ‘spirit’ of the pilot – to be prepared to try new things, to support each other and to articulate the objectives, learning and benefits positively to others.
- Choose the pilot sample of staff carefully – if you are trying to influence the whole organisation, then selecting a representative cross section of the organisation is more powerful than selecting the most obvious or easiest teams. Ensure that senior management is involved and has opportunities to ‘lead by example’ and demonstrate commitment. Ensure that pilot participants include whole teams in order to test true teamworking and avoid creating artificial barriers to effective working.
- Discussion and agreement amongst the ‘pilot community’ about behaviour and etiquette should be encouraged to help ensure success. Protocols might be developed pre-pilot, then tested and refined through the process.
- Invest properly in the pilot to make it as physically and technically close as possible to the proposed new workspace or working arrangements. If this is not possible, be clear about this to manage expectations. If you have to compromise too much, consider whether it is worth continuing the pilot, as it might do more harm than good!
- The new workspace should feel deliberately different from other or previous workspaces and ideally should have a ‘wow’ factor to help influence behaviours and attitudes and instill a sense of change, excitement and interest.
- Consider placing facilities or functions in pilot workspace that would draw non-pilot staff or even visitors to the pilot area in order to widen experience and learning and to generate feedback from a broader perspective.
- Identify a ‘formal guardian’ to help uphold the principles of new workspace. Attention to filing and storage, in particular, will be key as will clear desk policies to support more flexible use of space.
- Plan the timing of your pilot to ensure maximum impact on the wider project – not too early, not too late – in order to capture the interest and curiosity of staff but leave sufficient time to draw conclusions and learn from the experience. However, also be aware of wider organisational issues and situations in order to avoid any inappropriate timing in that context.
- Pilot teams should be encouraged to regularly review how things are going, to share and document what they have learnt from their experience and to develop associated best practice.
- Formal evaluation of the pilot (both during and afterwards) is key to gaining maximum value from the exercise for the wider project. Pre-pilot benchmarking is also important to capture accurately where ‘people have come from’ and put findings in context.
- Ways in which positive behaviour and good practice can be rewarded should be explored and achievements celebrated. Events to launch pilots or to mark milestones might be considered.
- It is important that any pilot workspace and process is done properly – don’t skimp on budget, furniture, staff engagement etc – you don’t want to create a negative impression before you really begin.

CHAPTER 11

Maximising and sustaining the benefits of change

After the initial celebrations and successes of the construction and implementation of a new workplace, organisations often find it difficult to maintain the enthusiasm, resourcing and sponsorship to continue with the desired cultural and process change programmes. Often the initial project team disbands and individuals are re-absorbed into the organisation; the senior sponsor might have more pressing projects requiring attention, and the organisation generally breathes a sigh of relief that the project has 'finished'. In reality, this is actually where the challenge starts.

The two main issues are how to consolidate the changes into the organisation to ensure long-term permanence and success; and how to measure those changes and successes over time to understand their impact on the business.

In order for a change programme to be truly successful, it must be owned by the organisation and its people at all levels. Only when change,

progression and adaptability become 'business as usual' are the real benefits of workplace transformation reaped. Over the long term, the original vision and values of the new physical and cultural environments must be maintained to ensure that the new space can continue to support the organisation fully and respond to its need for flexibility over time.

At the minimum consideration should be made to maintaining key roles and processes, established as part of the workplace project, in order to support the wider change objectives and ensure that new practices are being properly embedded into the new working environment. Examples include continuing to have a senior sponsor and/or steering group as 'guardians' for all ongoing workplace considerations or continuing staff user groups to provide 'community' input to the smooth running and ongoing adjustment of the working environment.

Jobcentre Plus,
Streatham, London



Experience of PFI partnership

Paul Pegler, HM Treasury

As in the design and build stage, good interpersonal relationships are vital for the success of the operational phase. Both sides must have a mutual understanding of what it is they want to deliver and how they are going to deliver it. The client and PFI supplier teams at 1 Horse Guards Road were clear from an early stage that they wanted to provide a good service that was recognised as such by their customers (Treasury staff) and that strict adherence to contract performance indicators would not be allowed to get in the way of that. It will be important, as the 35-year term of the contract progresses that understandings such as this are built into succession plans on both sides.

There are 80 performance indicators against which each of the soft and hard service suppliers are judged on a monthly basis. If performance falls short then deductions are made from the monthly unitary payment of some £1.2 million. The system is designed to be self monitoring. Rather than adopt a clipboard approach to trying to check everything all of the time, a small in-house team concentrates on key areas such as the helpdesk and in addition, carries out an assessment of the effectiveness of the systems underlying service delivery on 10% of the performance indicators each month. We have thereby adopted an auditing role in managing risk as part of our contract management function.

Underpinning the performance indicators are method statements and monitoring methodologies. These were written over three years before the go-live date and although they have proved remarkably

robust, they have all been reviewed in the first 12 months of occupation of the building and amended to reflect the reality of the building as constructed as opposed to what was proposed in the design. This work has been carried out in the spirit of partnership and has delivered a product from which lessons have been learnt for the refurbishment of the second half of the building at 2 Parliament Street.

Inevitably, our ability to fulfil our function relies on a culture of trust, openness and honesty on both sides which has taken time to build and needs constant attention. This was a steep learning curve for all concerned in the early stages of the contract and despite a lot of preparation before go-live date, the unexpected inevitably occurred on a regular basis. Regular dialogue at all levels within and between the teams is the only way to build the relationship so that it is big enough to cope with such traumas.

Continuity of personnel has been invaluable as key players have been in place throughout design, construction and operational phases and therefore have an understanding of the thinking that lay behind the words printed in black and white in the project agreement. But complacency is an ever present danger. Facilitated workshops focusing on team working at all levels, including subcontractors, is one vehicle being used to maintain momentum. We are striving all the time to improve service delivery by continuing dialogue, challenge and understanding and by lifting our heads above the trenches of day-to-day survival to look to the future.

Managing the physical workplace

As the projects outlined in this book show, a number of government organisations are recognising the workplace as a pivotal factor in the achievement of organisational change. As a result, views on the management and maintenance of buildings and on the role of the facilities manager (FM) are changing.

During the 1980s and 90s there was often a pre-occupation with driving down costs – frequently at the behest of a Board who might have regarded the workplace only as a necessary overhead, simply as a base from which staff work. For facilities managers, the focus was on maximising the number of people housed in the available space and on squeezing the most from subcontractors and suppliers, who were continually asked to focus on cost when it came to contract renewal. Renewal timetables were issued on a biennial basis with the intention of encouraging greater competition between potential suppliers but often at the cost of developing a long-term vision and a good working relationship between supplier and client.

Currently, with the advent of PFI, the need to deliver whole-life business benefits from long-term service contracts means that the facilities management team – including client and supplier – is taking on the role of ‘maintaining the workplace vision’, and becoming a partner with senior management in focusing on business outcomes.

An area where the public sector has yet to make significant advances is in involving estate and facilities managers in strategic decision making. In the private sector there are striking examples of corporate real estate managers having an impact on business strategies – aligning a portfolio of property assets, facilities services and serviced workspace contracts can maximise the added value in terms of supporting business objectives while minimising the cost impact on the ‘bottom line’. In future, the focus of the facilities manager’s role is likely to be much less about pure efficiency measures and cost savings, and much more about better value from aligning the workplace and the business at a strategic level.

Partnering relationships in FM service contracts

PFI agreements have changed what it means to manage a workplace. When outsourcing services, it is particularly important for the client to build strong relationships with the supplier and to operate with them as a single team. The knowledge that parties

are contracting for a working partnership over a significant period (often spanning decades) increases the need for continuity and longevity. This helps to spur both parties towards a more open style of management that can benefit both sides and encourage a ‘win-win’ approach to problem solving. A prime example of this is the shift away from contractual input specifications to the common sense approach of managing an agreed output specification where the supplier uses its specialist knowledge to deliver the client’s desired result as efficiently as possible.

The PFI framework brings together the construction and operational divisions of the private sector partner to work with the client (especially in the concept and planning stages) to create a new working environment that supports efficient and effective delivery of facilities management services throughout the life of the contract. The role of the facilities manager as a stakeholder is therefore pivotal from early planning to service delivery.

Ownership of change

As discussed in Chapter 10, because the realisation of long-term business benefits relies on effective management of the business and its people within the new workplaces, senior management must ultimately ‘own’ both the change process and responsibility for delivering those benefits. The facilities manager can not do this alone. Both GCHQ and MoD have recognised corporate responsibility for the change programme and senior leaders are championing reforms. The benefits realisation plans in both these projects extend well into the future and, as people are beginning to move in and occupy their new working environments, the estates and project teams are handing over responsibility for the programme to other parts of the business. In some cases, project team members have transferred with the ongoing programme to ensure continuity in this transition.

Successful organisational change projects result in organisations that are able to respond to changing business needs. Continued – and evident – senior sponsorship of the project vision and its values post the construction and occupation phases will clearly demonstrate that the project is part of an organisational change programme where the physical environment is merely the catalyst.



At work in ODPM's
Housing, Homelessness
and Planning Group

Evaluating success

The case studies presented in this book demonstrate that a clearly articulated vision is one of the key elements of any organisational change project. It will not only provide clarity and direction at the outset, but also enable achievements to be measured. In other words, you need to know where you are going in order to know how far you have come. All these projects use a measurement and evaluation framework to test their success at delivering the intended benefits

Before you start

In the early stages of a project, it can be especially beneficial to undertake a benchmarking exercise. This will help to provide vital information about the current state of the organisation, and will benefit from a variety of data gathering activities. It will also help gauge the real perspectives of staff who at this point will have had little or no information about the project to cloud or distort their views.

Benchmarking exercises should ideally be asking the questions that will provide the comparative data for a post-occupancy evaluation (POE) to be undertaken perhaps around six months after the project completes (this is different from a post-project

review which assesses how well the project was managed). This timing allows for minor 'snagging' issues to be resolved and for the staff to develop a sense of belonging to, and knowledge of, the new workspace yet still remember the previous environment.

The initial exercise therefore needs to clearly focus on asking questions that can be repeated after the project in order to provide comparative information. Benchmarking might typically involve a number of activities such as distributing questionnaires to all staff and organising representative focus groups, interviews and workshops to provide a clear view of the current status of the organisation. The activities might also help articulate a collective vision for the future of the organisation and its culture.

In the early stages of a project, a Design Quality Indicator (DQI) assessment is a useful method of enabling stakeholders to express and balance their hopes and requirements, and of ensuring a common understanding of the objectives for the design of the building in terms of its functionality, build quality and impact (see Chapter 9). Further information about the DQI is available from the Construction Industry Council at www.dqi.org.uk.

Light, bright new workspace in OGC



'So you think it's all over' – delivering the benefits

Lovell Elliott, GCHQ

'We didn't undertake this Programme just to "survive the move". We've focused on delivering the capability and the decant, but that alone won't deliver the outcomes. We have to use these things to push forward the business change and realise the benefits, and then we need to pass the torch to the business.'

Alan Green, the GCHQ New Accommodation Programme (NAP) Business Change Manager (BCM), speaking in January 2004 to the programme team at an event to launch the 'consolidation and closure' phase of the programme.

Once our 12-month rolling programme of moves was underway in September 2003, the mood of project staff shifted from elation to ennui and uncertainty. We had been rapidly building momentum towards the start of the move and were now faced with months of repetitive activity – hopefully not broken by any exciting disasters – as we decanted the 23 'chunks' of people, followed by the less than exciting prospect of the programme closure task. Some of our most talented staff had been deployed to NAP to meet the enormous technical and business change challenges it posed, and the preferred working style of such people is not that of completing and finishing. Moreover, the department was beginning to want to focus its attention and resources elsewhere.

Yet, in some ways, this was the most critical time for the programme. The Benefits Profile indicated that less than 20% of the 43 identified benefits would be delivered by start of move and only 50% by move completion. To lose momentum now would risk a 50% failure.

The BCM Team of representative departmental leaders judged 'stopping change' not to be an option and the programme sponsor group called for a plan which would ensure successful continuation of decant, a shift towards consolidating what had been achieved, a managed run-down of resources and a handing over of the change torch to the business. Some three and a half months of effort (including work from some of those talented people before they were deployed to other critical programmes) was devoted to this and the 'consolidation and closure' plan was accepted in December. It involves:

- Reviewing user requirements that had previously been consigned to the bottom of the pile, and responding to requests to change what had been delivered. We are reassessing what can be delivered during the remaining lifetime of the programme, and what must be passed back to the business for delivery by others.
- Building on the new PFI partnering relationship, we are developing processes to deliver key services jointly.
- Above all, delivering new ways of working; aligning these changes with other programmes; and empowering the business to deliver all under the banner of 'corporate development' as we move towards our *Blueprint* vision.

So it's far from all over; the best is yet to come.

●●● SE

Scottish Enterprise undertook a rigorous post-occupancy evaluation (POE) around six months after its move to its new headquarters – in the Spring of 2002. The exercise used a range of activities to get a realistic and well-rounded picture of the current situation. These included staff interviews, workshops and a questionnaire, as well as observation such as a worksetting utilisation assessment. The outcomes provided an important benchmark for the organisation to measure future progress in its new environment. It also provided reassurance about the positive impact of new concepts, as well as some lessons about day-to-day practicalities – areas where some attention was required. Examples of the latter related to both the physical environment (such as layout and temperature extremes) and protocols (such as appropriate booking of rooms and desks). The timing of the evaluation allowed a reasonable settling-in/trying-out period, but also enabled certain issues to be rectified before they became too much of a problem. Some comparison with pre-move statistics was also made – providing some very favourable cost efficiencies, although direct comparison between the very different working environments was difficult.



During the project

The DQI can be re-run to ensure that as a design develops it continues to meet the stakeholders' requirements. Repeated use of the DQI helps to ensure success by keeping the outcome, in terms of meeting user needs, in focus at a time when the process of construction and other pressures could become overwhelming.

The OGC Gateway™ process is another staged assessment process designed to keep projects on track for a successful outcome. It ensures that at each stage everything that should be done is being done, with a view to preparing for the next stage, and ultimately the benefits the project aims to deliver (see Chapter 7). More information about the Gateway process is available from www.ogc.gov.uk.

At the completion of construction

At completion of construction the management of that phase of the project should be reviewed. This is called a post-project review (PPR). It is a chance for all members of the project team to air their views about what worked well and what can be learnt for future projects, while the project is fresh in their minds and before they disperse to other projects. The PPR does not give a measure of the success of the project, but the collected learning is valuable as a way of improving future projects, especially if there is to be a programmed roll-out of the new workplace concept.

More 'absolute' measures of success are set out in the government's *Achieving Excellence in Construction* initiative. This sets targets for departments in terms of project success measured as being on time, on budget, having zero defects and exceeding stakeholder expectations.

More information on *Achieving Excellence* is available in Chapter 9 or from OGC at www.ogc.gov.uk

Meeting room and balcony at Scottish Enterprise, Atlantic Quay

●●● HMT

Compared to earlier surveys, the 2003 Wellbeing Survey found resource and communication issues at work were perceived as a substantially lower source of pressure than is typical in most other organisations. It also noted a significant drop in the perception of 'being visible or available' as a source of pressure. Over three-quarters of respondents said they are '80% or more' productive. Staff retention has improved by 2% since the last survey in 2001, and average (non long-term) sick absence has reduced by two days per annum. There is a suggestion that these improvements are linked to the improved working environment – but further work would be required to establish definite cause and effect.

●●● OGC

The POE conducted at OGC's new offices has been useful in identifying areas of improvement as well as successes. As staff work more flexibly, desk occupancy has dropped, and the fixed telephony system is now seen to restrict movement. OGC are now looking to incorporate these lessons into the roll-out to other offices and to further accelerate change within the headquarters by encouraging staff to adopt more flexible work patterns, supported by appropriate technology. In addition, as a result of the POE, OGC are looking to make physical adjustments to the workspace to improve interaction across floors and increase the utilisation of some meeting and quiet rooms.

After occupation

After occupation, benefits should start to become evident and success can be measured. The best way is to compare with the pre-project benchmarks previously described but, even without such benchmarks, it can still prove very useful to carry out a POE in order to understand the finished product and to provide robust analysis of the value of time, money and resource that has been expended. The POE should provide a clear view of where, and how far, the organisation has moved culturally and of how well the new environment is supporting business objectives and staff needs. It should provide feedback about potential improvement areas to build upon the project success.

As one strand of evaluation, the DQI is valuable both as an indicator of overall 'design quality', and as a comparative measure that reveals how closely the finished product matches the stakeholders' needs as expressed at the project outset. Used in this way alongside the client-led POE user surveys, usage analyses and, importantly, the financial impact of occupancy costs, the business can build up a balanced view from a range of perspectives of how successfully the finished product is achieving the desired outcomes, and how it could be adjusted and improved. Repeated evaluation over time should be an integral part of the ongoing programme of change, as well as facilities management.

OGC assessed the success of its new worksettings using DQI and a post-occupancy evaluation



●●● HMT

Being in the vanguard of business focused workplace change, the Treasury has been keen to evaluate the success of its project from all angles. As well as the Wellbeing Survey, it carried out a thorough POE focusing on business change objectives, and an analysis of productivity gains through the Office Productivity Network. The success of the FM services is assessed continually through a framework of performance indicators that also impact on occupancy costs. The PFI partner carried out a DQI assessment as a 'Trailblazer' for the tool, and a post-project review (PPR) was also undertaken. These have been especially useful in allowing lessons to be learnt for the redevelopment of the other half of the building for another government department.

Focusing on improvements

When conducting POEs it is important to pay as much attention to the areas in need of further work and improvement as to the project successes. For many organisations, the completion of building works is only a first step on a long journey of change, and there will be much that can be done to the workspace to support this. In addition, by listening to staff, and acting upon their experience and suggestions, an organisation is far more likely to maintain the momentum of change following move-in.

Other surveys can also provide very useful feedback on how the new environment is supporting the business. The Treasury's Wellbeing Survey, for instance, measures the health, stress and productivity perceptions of staff in the new building, and bodies such as the Office Productivity Network provide data to allow comparison with other organisations. There are also awards of merit for the achievements of projects, such as the Better Public Building Award and the British Council of Offices (BCO) Awards, which will undoubtedly increase project profiles in recognition of their success. More information can be found at www.officeproductivity.co.uk and www.bco.org.uk.



External landscaping at the Treasury provides an alternative space for staff to work and relax

>home Programme: benefits management approach

Jonathan Hoyle, Ministry of Defence

From the outset the Main Building redevelopment project was about more than the renewal of physical and virtual environments – it was also about preparing staff to get the best from their new environment and work more effectively within it. The final 23 benefits targeted by the >home programme were developed through a series of benefits workshops attended by representatives from all levels within the programme and across head office, and are set out in the box below.

The benefits are split across four categories, and break down into two types:

- Enabling benefits – these are the ‘foundation’ stones upon which broader business change can take place, and which must be delivered first.
- Business benefits – these are the benefits head office can accrue if it is able to leverage the new environment, processes and skills base being delivered by >home. These largely comprise benefits for which responsibility has been devolved to individual business units who have developed ‘change plans’ in accordance with the >home team and who will continue to own the organisational change after the >home team has been disbanded.

As part of the process benefit owners are required to define targets to help demonstrate the realisation of each defined benefit. In addition, benefit owners are required to consider how such targets will be measured.

For some enabling benefits the measurement of success can be simply established by looking for physical evidence that a product, facility or service is either in place or functioning correctly. The measurement of business benefits is more complex. It often requires the assessment of improvements in capability or effectiveness that require greater judgement than a simple yes/no assessment. For us, the measurement of >home benefits require a variety of tracking tools, including the maturity models, a benchmarking survey, hard metrics and a post-occupancy evaluation.

>home benefit categories

Environment

- Improved, more adaptable, comfortable and attractive working environment
- Better facilities with improved business support
- More interaction enabled through environmental design
- Improved functionality, standardisation and access to information systems
- Improved ability to set up project-based and cross-boundary teams
- Improved knowledge sharing and creativity enabled through environmental design
- Faster, more accurate access to information and speedier information processing
- Improved external communication links

Skills and capability

- Improved baseline IT skills capability
- Improved baseline level competence in modern business practice and capability

Corporate development of head office

- A single head office building manned by less than 3,000 staff
- More visible and supportive leadership
- Common head office identity that people are proud to belong to
- Lower head office staff costs

HLB (business unit) exploitation of >home

- Improved interaction and communication
- Improved information and access management
- More effective use of IT
- Improved knowledge sharing
- More visible and supportive management style
- Improved modern business practice skills base
- More effective project-based and cross-boundary teams
- More efficient and effective processes
- Orderly draw-down to numbers targets



The benefits of workplace change

Workplace change can deliver a number of business benefits. The full range of benefits will only be realised as business processes, working practices, management style and the organisation itself change in response to the opportunities provided by the new workplace.

Create flexible modern work environments

Create environments that are conducive to efficient and effective working.

Benefits:

- Improved efficiency, personal productivity, team-working and communication
- Healthier, happier, more motivated workforce
- Refreshed brand identity and expression of values

Exploit technology as an agent of change

Optimise access to and effective use of information and communications technology, streamlining business processes and information management systems.

Benefits:

- Effectiveness and efficiency improves through location-independent working
- Better, quicker service delivery through customer focused media
- Improved output quality based on the best information

Share facilities, resources and information

Move to a team based approach to workspace, support services and filing.

Benefits:

- Better space utilisation
- Reduced paper storage
- Improved access to information and knowledge
- Reduced vulnerability to loss or abuse of information
- Improved service quality as knowledge is shared

Work more flexibly – enable and support working away from the desk

Enable staff to work wherever is best to get the job done.

Benefits:

- Reduced demand for desk and office space
- Reduced travel time and cost
- More flexibility to respond to work demands
- Staff can achieve a better work/life balance
- Attract, motivate and retain the best people for the job
- Improved trust and empowerment of people
- Better service delivery

CHAPTER 12

Lessons learnt

This book sets out to celebrate and share the achievements and emerging good practice of several leading UK government organisations – selected because they have turned their needs for accommodation into opportunities to support significant business change. They have achieved this by enabling and encouraging people to work differently and more flexibly and by adopting and expressing the new, more open and collaborative values associated with the ethos of modern public service.

Much of the art of driving change is to do with having courage, determination, and a belief that change is achievable. This is where the examples and evidence of others' successes and the support and encouragement of like-minded colleagues can make all the difference. These examples show what is possible, setting new 'norms' and standards that others aspire to match or exceed.

All the contributors to this book are committed to sharing experiences of their projects to benefit others – just as they themselves benefited from building on the knowledge and support of predecessors. Scottish Enterprise was a source of learning for DTI. MoD and GCHQ liaised closely on security issues. The Treasury, being a pioneer and because of its status in government, has inspired MoD, GCHQ, OGC and others and has been especially keen to promote the flow of information, ideas and lessons.

Meeting with others involved in similar projects and grappling with similar issues has been a source of

encouragement and inspiration for all the project teams featured here.

Knowledge sharing forums, such as DEGW's Government Forum and Workplace Forum, and OGC's focus groups and seminars have also offered formal and informal environments where contacts have been made and ideas exchanged. Through such forums, people have gone on to discuss more specific details one-to-one. Relationships have been built that have provided moral support during difficult stages of the projects.

Hosting and making site visits are important routes to inspiration and sharing. An even more valuable way of helping new projects is to invite experienced individuals to be part of project boards.

Important and objective lessons can be learnt by looking at the results of post-occupancy evaluations, post-project reviews, and other measurements of project performance. Numerical results can be especially persuasive, such as those relating to actual space/cost savings, productivity improvements, wellbeing indicators and satisfaction ratings. Chapter 11 provides more detail on measuring outcomes and summarises the benefits achievable through workplace change. Key learning points are also set out on page 77.

Contact details for the main departmental contributors (correct at the time of writing) are included with each case study introduction in Chapter 4.



The new team space at ODPM

'What I might have done differently'

Larry Woodman, HM Treasury

In a project of this size and complexity there is always the potential for things to go wrong. It is to the credit of the HMT project team, our project managers GTMS and Exchequer Partnership that this did not happen. However, hindsight identified several areas where we might have done things differently and more efficiently.


Firstly, I would point to the resources for the HMT team itself. We took a conscious decision that the core Treasury team should be very small (two individuals) and that we would surround ourselves with a first class team of professional advisers. We would then include others within the department as necessary. However, this meant that for a long period during the project a lot of information and knowledge was concentrated in the hands of the project sponsor and myself. It almost became a case of not travelling together in case of accidents! Other Whitehall PFI project teams had greater levels of dedicated resource. Getting the appropriate balance of delegation at the right time proved somewhat difficult as we were a bit reluctant 'to let go'. To lighten the load we could have set up more separate work streams with dedicated staff resources, but still reporting to us, in some of the key areas like furniture and storage and space planning.

Second, it turned out that the way we decided to approach the supply of office furniture for the new building made life much harder than we had anticipated. Because some 80% of our desks were perfectly serviceable, in common with hundreds of security cabinets, a decision was taken that we would not have new office furniture throughout. Only in the open plan areas around the west court would we have new, low-level storage and 20% new desks. The practicalities of ensuring the correct number of desks for the early series of weekend moves turned out to be a bit of a nightmare as many of them were in

the wrong place (ie still occupied) or unserviceable. Getting the old security cupboards re-sprayed to match the new furniture was also much more difficult in practical terms than we had envisaged. We managed everything on time but it was a close-run thing!

Another area where more resource could have been devoted, and at an earlier stage, was on filing and storage. The space planning exercise had identified that we were only able to fit an average of three linear metres per person of official storage (ie excluding personal storage in desk pedestals) on the office floors in the new building. Early estimates were that we had something comfortably in excess of double that. We therefore engaged a filing and storage consultant in a two-pronged exercise. First, to carry out a detailed audit of exactly what we did have in the department. We had hitherto relied on the teams giving us an accurate assessment of what they had but it was clear that this could not be achieved. The audit produced detailed evidence that we were facing the problem of having around six linear metres of storage per person that was supposedly essential. This was clearly impossible – and a major risk to the project. So, the consultants were engaged in the second stage of going round to talk to all teams with excess storage and working with them to produce action plans to ensure that everything fitted in on the day – which it did. Significant savings were achieved in the purchase of new storage cupboards.

But these are all overshadowed by what was a hugely successful PFI project. The Treasury project team worked extremely closely with its professional advisers and Exchequer Partnership to produce a tremendous building for the public sector, on time (in fact a month earlier than planned) and on budget.



Learning points

In a sense the whole of this book is about sharing the lessons learnt by the various projects it presents. However, in trying to draw together a summary of key lessons the authors have looked for those generic, common factors that tend to be present in the more successful projects, and also identified things to avoid.

Make sure the business owns the change

- Recognise and exploit workplace change as an opportunity for business change
- Engage with a senior champion who is committed to leading change from the top – this is essential
- Understand the business need, and direct the workplace change towards delivering business benefits
- Be explicit – set out and communicate a clear and consistent vision. Translate this into measurable objectives and outcome requirements
- Ensure sufficient resources and time are committed at the start
- Make sure a plan is in place so that after the workplace change is complete the organisation can take responsibility for realising the long-term benefits of the business change

Integrate

- Take an holistic approach – integrate estates, facilities, HR, ICT, finance and business development as stakeholders in a change programme
- Involve the people – the function of the workplace is to support them. Analyse what they do, how they do it and what they need. Build on their goodwill and knowledge
- Use expert advisers from the start, be open to innovation and learn from other projects. Include an experienced individual from a successful workplace change project on the board or steering group
- Build an integrated project team to deliver an integrated long-term solution supported by senior management

- Make sure appropriate HR policies, ICT connectivity and staff management techniques are developed in parallel to support the new ways of working

Manage and embed the change

- Test solutions using pilot schemes, and be prepared to learn from them
- Manage the change – prepare people for the new workspace. Offset disruption with compensating benefits
- Communicate – use presentations, workshops, focus groups, user groups, newsletters, posters, intranets and e-mail (amongst others)
- Encourage senior managers to set an example and reward those who embrace change
- Monitor, measure and maintain – assess improvements using ‘before and after’ measurement techniques; actively seek and monitor user feedback and be vigilant in maintaining high standards

Don't...

- Miss opportunities by focusing narrowly on the accommodation need
- Work in a silo
- Try to deliver ambitious change without a senior champion
- Start on a programme until you have a clear end vision
- Expect people to work differently without managing the change process
- Think the change is complete when the new environment is (this is only the start of delivering the benefits)
- Underestimate the amount of time, energy and resources required
- Despair – others have made it work, so can you!

CHAPTER 13

Postscript by Francis Duffy

Viewed from the analytical perspective of constitutional and architectural historians, London's governmental heartland provides ample evidence, layer upon layer, building by building, of the slow, usually stately, sometimes traumatic, always complex, and, some would argue, not entirely complete evolution towards open, transparent, democratic processes. In the Middle Ages, and even in the time of Mr Secretary Pepys, Whitehall was a hugger mugger medley of court, ecclesiastical, parliamentary, judicial, military and executive functions. The built fabric, whether designed by anonymous mediaeval masons, or by the King's Office of Works, or by Inigo Jones, William Kent, John Soane, Gilbert Scott, Powell and Moya, William Whitfield, or Michael Hopkins, cumulatively records the division of responsibilities, shifts in who wields what power for which purpose, responses to new requirements, the creation of new functions and departments, the continuing development of checks and balances, separations and amalgamations, opening up and closing down, rationalisation and renewal, indeed every step in the design and development of the apparatus of government. Much of Whitehall's architecture is a magnificent expression of Imperial confidence. Some is domestic in scale. Even the late and unlamented Marsham Street complex can be interpreted as an austere and not entirely ignoble episode in the creation of the welfare state. The story of Whitehall and of the changing relation of government to British society in its widespread and increasingly plural entirety is by no means over.

What lessons can be derived from this cumulative experience? What relevance does the history of the development of Whitehall have for the future?

The projects recorded in this book in Whitehall and elsewhere are best understood in the context of a millennium of continual change. When planning new space today to accommodate emerging governmental needs, taking the long view is particularly salutary because, among other factors, rapidly developing information technology is changing the way government operates as fundamentally as it is changing every other aspect of British society, business, culture, and economy.

Lesson one is that the government's programme and its stock of office space are inextricably woven together. Change one and the other must follow.

Lesson two is that the process of accommodating government's requirements for workspace is never complete. The quality and the quantity of office space needed will always change. Whatever design solutions are proposed, they must always be open ended.

Lesson three is that things can go wrong. The pathology of ill used office space is generally the result of unresponsive delivery systems that have relied for far too long on simplistic, rigid, and formulaic solutions. Constant feedback and re-evaluation of the appropriateness of office space to developing needs is always vital.

Lesson four is that strong and highly memorable architectural forms are by no means incompatible with splendidly responsive and workable office accommodation. Not least this is because the expressive function of architectural design, that is to broadcast and sustain long term organisational values, is as important as architecture's contribution to organisational effectiveness, and arguably much more important than efficiency and cost saving.

Lesson five is that no single governmental building is complete in itself. For an organisation as large as the civil service, the design problem is inevitably on a much grander and larger scale, much more like designing a city than conventional office design.

Lesson six is that not everything in the design of buildings, or for that matter in urban design, should be expected to respond to organisational change at the same rate. Some architectural components, usually interior design and furniture, respond very quickly to short term changes while others, such as structure and infrastructure, must anticipate and accommodate much longer term shifts in governmental needs.

Lesson seven is that the relationship between the design of individual organisational units and places

is going through a step change. The relationship is being fundamentally altered by ubiquitous information technology, by distributed ways of working, and by the changing relationship between real and virtual space.

These lessons are important because they demonstrate that new office buildings as well as the whole vast existing stock of government office space should be carefully designed to accommodate the vast array of changes that are inevitable as government develops day by day, century by century. However, the experience of the projects described in this book adds a very new, very important, and very exciting dimension to these lessons. This is that office design can do more, much more, than simply responding passively to change. These projects demonstrate that government is learning how to use office design much more actively to accelerate the changes it wishes to achieve. In other words government has discovered that architecture itself, properly delivered, can be a powerful catalyst of change.

Each of the experiences described in this book demonstrates in different ways at least some aspects of the following proposition.

The best way to get the best results out of office design for business purposes is not just to manage the design and building process – difficult enough as that is – to complete projects at the right quality, on time, on cost. The new and overriding objective must be to manage each step in the design and building process as a way of achieving a greater and higher order series of goals all of which are to do with using office space to best effect for business purposes.

What this book demonstrates is that change management linked to the procurement, design, and construction of a new building is an extremely powerful means of communicating, at each significant step in the process, to the hundreds and sometimes thousands of occupants involved, in order to demonstrate:

- what the values of the department are
- what really matters in the business of the department
- how everyone is expected to contribute
- how to rationalise operations
- how to exploit new technologies
- how to support people, bring them together, build teams
- how well each individual's talents and initiative are respected

These projects have been designed to teach everyone involved how to use the new resource of thoughtfully designed space to serve the public in a better, more efficient, more accessible, more responsive, and more transparent way.

Such results are not automatic. Nor are they guaranteed. In similar change management driven projects in the private sector it has been found that success depends upon four conditions: first, evident and sustained leadership; second, a systemic approach linking the deployment and management of human resources, of information technology, as well as of facilities; third, respect for data, feedback, and measurement; and, fourth, the active involvement in the process of large numbers of end users.

The astonishing degree to which the public sector, particularly but not exclusively under the PFI regime, has been able to take advantage of these opportunities and precedents is evident throughout this book. The implications for the design of individual new government projects are enormous. Even more important is the potential for the continuing renewal and revitalisation of the entire civil service stock of space, in Whitehall and elsewhere, in relation to emerging operational needs and expanding cultural aspirations.

Francis Duffy is an architect, a specialist in workplace design, and founder of DEGW.

Further information on case studies

see also pages 16–20 for main case study details.

●●● DfT

client
Department for
Transport
business analysis
Basis Ltd

●●● DH

client
Department of Health
**interior designers
and space planners**
AMA Alexi Marmott
Associates

●●● DTI

client
Department of Trade
and Industry
space planners
Pringle Brandon

●●● DWP

Adelphi
client
Department for
Work and Pensions
**strategy and
design concept**
DEGW

PFI partner
Land Securities Trillium

●●● DWP

Jobcentre Plus
client
Department for
Work and Pensions
architect/designer
Lewis and Hickey
PFI partner
Land Securities Trillium
**technical and
managerial advice
and support**
Bovis Lendlease

●●● HA

client
Highways Agency
consultant
DEGW

●●● MO

client
Met Office
architect/designer
Broadway Malyan
PFI partner
Stratus

●●● ODPM

client
Department for
Transport, Local
Government and
the Regions (now
Office of the Deputy
Prime Minister)
design
DEGW

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‘We moved minds, as well as offices – accelerating our business and cultural change by years. You realise just how much the old working environment held us back’

Dr Michelle Hynd, Scottish Enterprise

'There are real cultural changes happening at the heart of the civil service that are affecting what we do and how we do it... My own experience confirms there are tangible benefits to be gained from workplace and organisational change... This book offers good practice advice, thinking points, successes and learning based on expertise and experience.'

Sir Andrew Turnbull, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service

Government workplaces are changing. Across government, workplace projects are underway that embrace not just physical change but integrated business, organisational and cultural transformation.

Celebrating some of the best workplace projects taking place within government today, this book analyses historical context and the catalysts for change, highlights emerging best practice and summarises lessons learnt.

This book provides an accessible publication that captures and explores current UK government workplace developments and emerging good practice in order to inform, encourage and support wider improvement and innovation, across both the public and private sectors.