



# Working beyond walls

The government workplace as an agent of change



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Bridget Hardy

Richard Graham

Paul Stansall

Alison White

Andrew Harrison

Adryan Bell

Les Hutton

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Office of Government Commerce  
Rosebery Court  
St Andrew's Business Park  
Norwich  
NR7 0HS

Phone: 0845 000 4999

International: (+44) 845 000 4999

E: [ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDesk@ogc.gsi.gov.uk)

DEGW

The Merchant Centre  
1 New Street Square  
London  
EC4A 3BF

020 7239 7777

[www.degw.com](http://www.degw.com)

Office of Government Commerce  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

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Designed by Duffy

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**Work is what you do, not a place  
you go. The next generation  
of workforce will know that and be  
ready and able to work anywhere.**

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# Foreword

Sir Gus O'Donnell

The civil service in the twenty first century is facing the challenge of meeting the demanding expectations of citizens for high quality services, increasing competition for the best quality workforce and, above all, the combined challenges of climate change and dwindling fossil fuel resources. This means the civil service must:

- bring services to citizens through the channels and in the places they want
- create sustainable ways of living and working for our staff that use fewer resources, and produce less waste and damage to the environment
- attract the best quality workforce by offering them a good quality work environment and the technology infrastructure they need.

There is no doubt that to respond to these challenges the government estate must change – and it is changing. *Working Without Walls* celebrated projects that have been ground breaking in making government offices more dynamic and effective – effectively breaking down the barriers within the office, between teams and between people. Now we have to go further. *Working Beyond Walls* looks ahead to where we could be in little more than a few years' time.

Work is what you do, not a place you go. The next generation of workforce will know that and be ready and able to work anywhere. Work has migrated beyond the conventional boundaries of time and

space into a wider environment and those who manage the government estate need to be prepared. The office is rapidly becoming just one of a network of workplace options, and for many people their work and personal lives are becoming more integrated. Technology now allows people to communicate virtually anywhere in many different ways, and members of the next generation are learning from birth to use this technology as second nature. They are already highly mobile, highly connected and comfortable mixing the real and virtual worlds.

This is a huge challenge but also an opportunity for rethinking the government estate as a strategic whole. By adopting distributed workplace networks, linked through technology, we can move the work closer to the citizens and deliver services more directly and immediately, we can allow people to work closer to where they live and to balance work, personal and community commitments more flexibly, we can enable people to work together without actually having to be together so reducing travel. By using workspace more intensively and wisely we can reduce our use of buildings and thus our impact on the environment, and by providing modern, flexible work patterns with excellent connectivity in good quality environments we should be able to attract the workforce the civil service needs in the twenty first century.

**Sir Gus O'Donnell**, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service, June 2008

# About this book

Frank Duffy

There is every reason to expect that government and the civil service do not need more office space but instead better workplaces, more intelligently distributed and far more intensively used. This little book carries a big message for pension funds, property investors, developers, letting agents, architects, space planners and the entire construction industry. Advances in information technology mean that the world of work is experiencing changes equivalent to the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the British way of life. The impact, if we get things right, could be more productive, more socially and economically beneficial and, most importantly, far more environmentally sustainable workplaces.

*Working Beyond Walls* explains through real case studies just how enormous are the opportunities to anticipate and satisfy the emerging appetite of millions of increasingly sophisticated, mobile, technologically aware users for better ways of living and working.

Places and spaces will become far more – not less – important, in our new world of technologically enhanced, knowledge-based work. The case studies in this book amply demonstrate that it is not just rentable square feet but a wider range of intelligent and responsive services that civil servants and other office occupiers want and are beginning to get. The genie is already well out of the bottle. The civil service, linked by the invisible cloud of information technology, is operating across spatial and temporal boundaries in a way that was hardly conceivable a decade ago. The unit of analysis is no longer the shorthand of office buildings and departmental boundaries – how anachronistic the term ‘headquarters’ already seems – but the sum total of all the many and varied spaces and places within which and between which highly mobile, electronically networked, knowledge workers are already operating successfully.

Even if some spaces and places continue to be departmentally owned they will not be used in conventionally static ways. Much more governmental space will be occupied on a short-term, *ad hoc* basis as business time horizons become more imminent. Homeworking will be important for many – not in the binary sense of choosing between the domestic environment and the workplace but as one choice in many in getting work done. Public and semi-public places – the café, the local arts centre, the library, the restaurant table, the airport lounge, the hotel lobby – already provide workers with office accommodation for free or at most for the price of a meal or a cup of coffee. That many such places are open and gregarious is also evidence of an emerging realization of the intellectual and commercial benefits of serendipitous encounters.

The implications of these case studies for the property industry, not least for architects and designers, are profound. The conventional, standardized, unidirectional supply chain through which office space is funded, developed and constructed will have to be reinvented as a more responsive demand chain – in the same way that hotels and retail are already, to some extent, changing patterns of user demand. And using workspace more intelligently will not just cut the cost of doing business: more intensive space use and the consequent reduction in demand for office space together with less intensive peaking in commuting patterns will become critical factors in achieving a sustainable environment.

The case studies provide invaluable precedents for more intelligent and productive use of spaces and places. Not only are the cases highly relevant today but they will provide historians in two or three decades’ time (if we are still here) with evidence of how energetically today’s civil service has addressed the huge social, managerial and political implications of technological and environmental change.

**Frank Duffy**, Co-founder of DEGW



## About the author organizations

The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) is an office of HM Treasury tasked with transforming government procurement and with driving up standards and procurement capability across central government.

OGC will do this by setting the right procurement standards and ensuring they are met, capitalizing on the government's collective buying power to achieve value for money, playing a stronger role in the delivery of major projects and improving the management and use of the government estate.

**Bridget Hardy**  
**Richard Graham**  
**Paul Stansall**

DEGW is the leading international strategic design consultancy with specific experience in using workplace design and change to inspire better business within government departments and agencies, local government, and the education and health sectors.

DEGW has a unique mix of architects, designers, project managers and researchers ready to support and advise on the changing nature of work and its impact on people, society, the environment and the economy. This mix of professional skills addresses a wide range of work related issues from long-term property asset management to the practical implementation of design concepts, new work practices and new technologies.

**Alison White**  
**Andrew Harrison**  
**Adryan Bell**



# Part 1

## The government workplace today

The government building stock is huge and disaggregated. At a time of great and accelerating change in workplace use and status, a reactive stance is neither practically nor ethically defensible. A previous publication by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and DEGW<sup>1</sup> presented a number of case studies of major projects in the public sector estate and found them, on the whole, successful in coming to terms with shifts in culture, value and technology, changes in government initiatives and new ways of working.

By concentrating on the experiences of these key organizations and their buildings, it showed that workplace changes and the forces that produced them, although vast, subtle and fast-moving, were nevertheless manageable. It also showed, however, that it was in the nature of change to present a moving target.

The years since 2004 have seen a proliferation of work and place factors that have to be resolved by the successful workplace – particularly key changes to the workplace relationship prefigured in the title, *Working Without Walls*, and now increasingly apparent across the civil estate.

**Left** Home Office, 2 Marsham Street

<sup>1</sup> Allen T., Bell A., Graham R., Hardy B. and Swaffer F., *Working Without Walls* (2004), OGC and DEGW, London.

# Chapter 1

## Working without walls – the workplace in transition

During 2003 the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and DEGW undertook a review of the government workplace and at the beginning of 2004 published *Working Without Walls*. The book showed a workplace in transition from often rather poor sub-private sector quality accommodation to projects that held out the promise of a work environment that could occupy its rightful place in the modern world of work – integrating business, organizational and cultural change in efficient, effective and expressive physical locations.

*Working Without Walls* traced the evolution of the government workplace from its roots in the civil service, through increasing scope and scale in the post-war period due to the creation of the welfare state and its embracing of many, but not all, of the innovations in workplace design in the 1980s, when the links between workplace design and organizational performance began to have a major impact in the private sector. It identified a clutch

### Figure 1.1: key themes of *Working Without Walls*

**New workstyles and ways of supporting them** – mobility within the office, hot desking, flexible work patterns away from the office, homeworking.

**Communications** – harnessing information and communications technology (ICT) for collaboration, bringing staff together in a range of shared spaces, balancing interaction and privacy in open plan environments, communications within and between organizations.

**Workplace as repository of identity and brand** – expression, image, security, staff involvement.

**Quality in design and procurement** – achieving excellence, accessibility, sustainability.

of pressing themes, among them new workstyles, the continuing expansion of IT and its effects, the internalization of branding and shifts in design and procurement (Figure 1.1). And it looked at these themes in the light of five substantial public sector projects – the heart of the book (see Figure 1.2).

A heightened level of significance was discernible in the work and place factors to be resolved by the government workplace – driven by accelerating change and cranked-up demands – but the book demonstrated that the workplace could deal with change. Overall the world as seen by *Working Without Walls* in 2004 was a difficult though manageable place. Things are different now.

### Figure 1.2: five key projects

The five main case studies highlighted in *Working Without Walls* were 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 organization.

- **Her Majesty's Treasury:** redevelopment of Treasury head office at 1 Horse Guards Road, London.
- **The Government Communications Headquarters:** purpose-built office complex in Cheltenham.
- **The Ministry of Defence:** main building development, Whitehall (occupied summer 2004).
- **The Office of Government Commerce:** head office refurbishment at Trevelyan House, London.
- **The Scottish Enterprise Headquarters:** purpose-built office complex at Atlantic Quay, Glasgow.



### Figure 1.3: size and worth of central government estate

The central government civil estate stands at 13.5 million square metres, of which 72 per cent is designated as offices or office/mixed use.

43 per cent by area is freehold or long leasehold, 29 per cent leasehold, 27 per cent delivered under PFI arrangements, and 1 per cent is serviced office accommodation.

The estate is managed and used by over 300 separate central government organizations.

In 2003 the total asset base across central government – fixed assets as well as property – was £220 billion.

The ambition is to dispose of between £6 billion and £7 billion surplus assets in central government from its total objective of £30 billion, and to achieve annual efficiency savings of between £1 billion and £1.5 billion by 2012/2013 from an estate that costs an estimated £6 billion a year to run.

The difference doesn't lie in scale: the government estate is a considerable asset, valued by the 2004 Lyons report<sup>1</sup> at £220 billion (fixed assets) and extending to 13.5 million square metres, made up of 8,900 holdings (Figure 1.3).

It continues to merit the closest scrutiny. The general office sector of the estate is largely commercial leasehold or under long term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract and managed and used by over 300 central government organizations – not just in Whitehall (Figure 1.4). Even modest improvements in the performance of the estate have the potential to deliver significant efficiency savings.

In 2004 Sir Michael Lyons quantified the challenge:

'A key component of asset management is to take a strategic view of which assets are best retained and efficiently exploited, as well as to identify those which should be disposed of to generate resources for reinvestment. For example, my initial work suggests the scope for efficiency gains of at least £760 million a year by 2010–11 as a result of more efficient management of offices alone.'

<sup>1</sup> Lyons, Sir Michael, (2004), *Towards Better Management of Public Sector Assets*, HM Treasury.

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**'Because of the sheer magnitude of the government's building stock there is virtually no area of procurement that will not overlap at some point with the property end of the public acquisition spectrum.'**

**Mike Burt**, Director of Government Estate Transformation<sup>2</sup>

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It is estimated that, across the whole estate, better strategic management of property assets will be key to effective public sector investment and delivery of the government's objective of £30 billion of asset disposals by 2010 and between £1 billion and £1.5 billion of savings by 2013.

The scale of this asset is not in doubt. The difference between 2004 and 2008 lies not in a change of scale but of complexity.

One strand in the braid is the impact caused by *Working Without Walls* itself. The language used in the book – public sector language, the argument from usefulness rather than profit – had a profound effect on managers able to relate deeply to the arguments put forward. It has played a substantial role in the demand for a much better standard of space use.

Another key element is the increasing interaction between the agents of change – the themes addressed in *Working Without Walls*. The quality of space, for instance, is now a main driver of staff recruitment and retention. Flexibility is the norm. Hot desking was radical in 2004: now the increasing expectation is that managers won't get an office of their own, and may not even get a dedicated desk. Environmental sustainability is seen as an aspect of value for money rather than an uncostable overhead. And political, policy and value imperatives continue to proliferate.

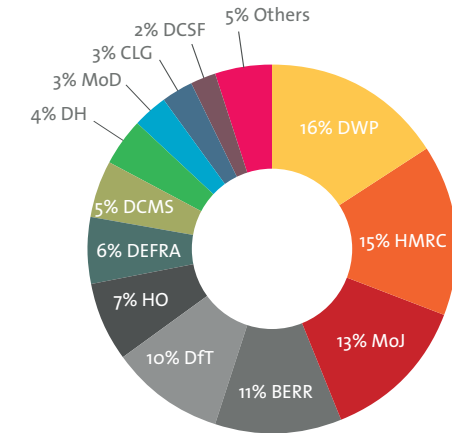
But of all the shifts in culture, value and technology, changes in government policy and initiatives and new ways of working, there's no doubt that the greatest development is the unlinking of work and place: the breaking down of the walls prefigured in the title

<sup>2</sup> *Government Opportunities*, August 2007

of the 2004 book and heavily signposted in one of its key charts, showing the evolution of office work from the physical constraint of cellular space to an almost complete liberation from space in a non-territorial environment (Figure 1.5). Virtual teams now work across geographic distances, and need physical places to incorporate new collaborative technologies: they must support more complex learning activities as individual work is removed from the office.

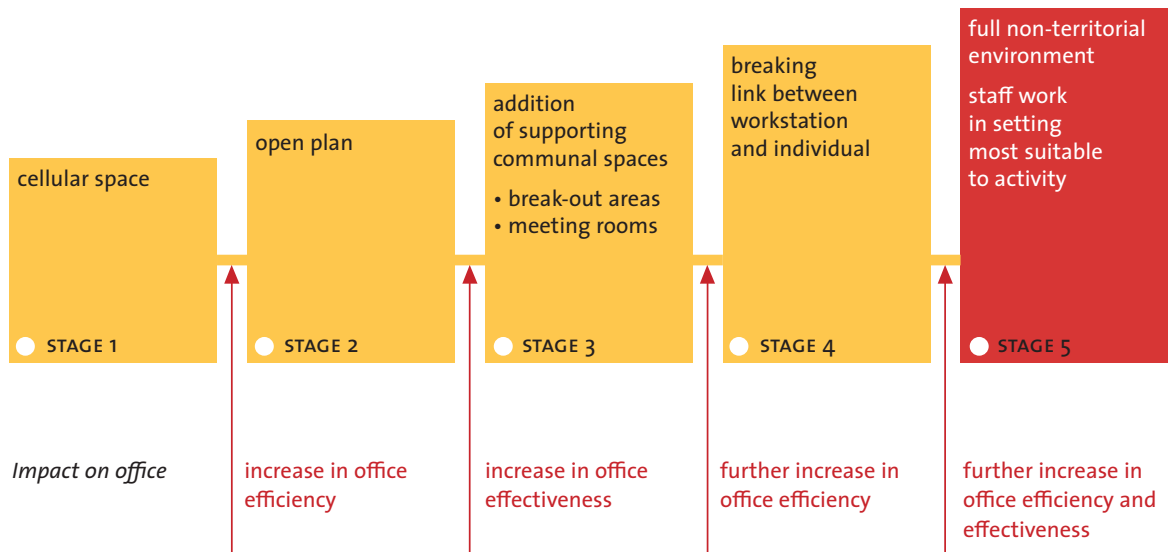
That’s where we are now: the spatial, temporal and psychological walls have crumbled. The new order will be a vast estate of technologically-enabled distributed workstyles, driven by a heightened awareness of environmental concerns into a more sophisticated range of designs and staffed by several different generations of people with widely differing experiences and expectations of work, place and the life of work.

Figure 1.4: share of civil estate by area



- 16% Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- 15% HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- 13% Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
- 11% Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)
- 10% Department for Transport (DfT)
- 7% Home Office (HO)
- 6% Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- 5% Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- 4% Department of Health (DH)
- 3% Ministry of Defence (MoD)
- 3% Communities and Local Government (CLG)
- 2% Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
- 5% Others

Figure 1.5: the evolution of office space in government departments and agencies



Source: Gibson/Luck *Flexible Working in Central Government: Leveraging the Benefits*, 2004

## Chapter 2

# Work and place – nexus of change

The revolution heralded by *Working Without Walls* has largely arrived, with organizations now able to integrate the physical work environment into the business process in new ways, increasing the density of occupation within their office buildings while at the same time creating effective work environments that encourage interaction and communications. The next five years will see even greater challenges – individuals trying to use the scarce resource of time more effectively and organizations trying to manage a dispersed and ever-busier workforce. Both are dependent on creating the spirit and teamwork necessary for organizations to continue to generate new ideas and thrive.

Like all workplaces the government's large and disaggregated building stock must now confront diverse economic, social and environmental pressures brought about by changing human factors, climate change, proliferating stakeholder and citizen demands and the opportunities presented by emerging technologies. Like them it must deal with the delamination of the once firmly sandwiched bond between work and place, resulting in – and causing – new, distributed ways of working and thinking about work. And in addition to these universal, external factors it must also confront the internal and specific need to accommodate the sudden demands brought about by changes to the machinery of government – from predicted or at least predictable environmental sustainability imperatives through SOGE<sup>1</sup> targets to the wholesale overnight rearrangement of the Whitehall estate after the departmental earthquake of a Cabinet reshuffle.

Public and private organizations will increasingly move beyond the physical container of their own buildings into larger organizational networks incorporating both owned and shared spaces that may be located across cities, countries, or anywhere in the world. This network of distributed workplaces

will include a much wider range of places in which work is carried out – including but by no means confined to traditional forms of office: and even within those recognizable offices there will be a liberation from the restriction of the desk-bound, one person per desk, 9-to-5 routine. Figure 2.1 indicates the range of work and place possibilities within the fifth stage of office evolution in terms of organizational commitment to distributed work. Organizations would do well to be able to locate their position on this evolutionary scale.

Five key drivers of change have brought about the current change in status of the workplace – including and sometimes especially the government workplace – and continue to exercise an enormous influence. Separately these new drivers impose huge stresses on the workplace. Acting together they are creating an extremely volatile new work and place landscape.

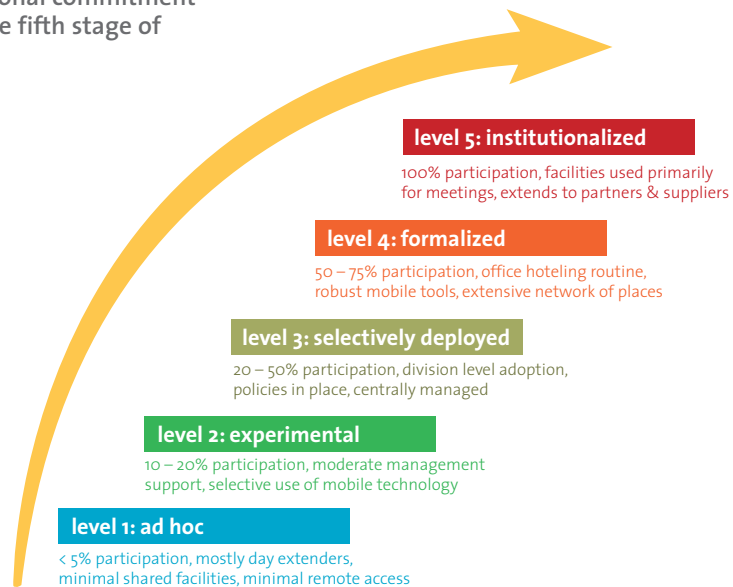
### **The transformative role of technology**

Technology is facilitating the adoption of a wider range of places to work, both for mobile individual freelance knowledge workers and people who want to balance their domestic and work life or who are working across a number of locations. It has already played an essential role in the creation of alternative workplace offerings – serviced offices and informal work environments such as clubs, airport lounges, libraries and cafés. But the effect of technology is constantly accelerating: even the internet café is likely to be a relatively short-lived phenomenon, destined to evolve into a work environment combining the IT and communications services of the café with access to sophisticated peripheral technologies. It might eventually offer 'softer' business services such as the provision of meeting rooms, business catering and perhaps training or career counselling. These possibilities all have their genesis in new forms of technology.

<sup>1</sup> SOGE: Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate. Available at [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.html](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.html)



Figure 2.1: levels of organizational commitment to distributed work (inside the fifth stage of office evolution).



Source: Richard Barrington and Sun Microsystems

### Distributed working

With workforces now distributed by time and location, accessing buildings only periodically, the role of buildings is shifting dramatically. If work can take place anywhere, why should someone come to the office? Rather than being a neutral container where all the individual, concentrated work takes place, the office is increasingly an opportunity for people, when present, to signify personal involvement in organizational culture and to participate in the values and beliefs of the organization. The physical work environment, and the opportunities it provides for interaction and collaboration, aid knowledge transfer and communication and will form the infrastructure for effective organizations.

The challenge for the future will be to design a wide range of physical environments that can effectively incorporate working in diverse ways at any time of the day or week and information and communication technology applications that will support this type of distributed working.

### The pressure to perform

The establishment of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), after the 1999 Gershon review of civil procurement, made clear the need for a one-stop shop, central procurement organization that would

catalyse best procurement practice within central government.<sup>2</sup>

The setting up of this new arm of the Treasury had profound implications for the government estate: a political recognition that property in all its manifestations, workplace as well as real estate, was of strategic importance and had to be managed in a way that would reflect that significance. It acknowledged that the estate was in essence a service, and that its management was fundamentally about commercial relationships.

### The increased importance of design

Work and the people who do it are increasingly found beyond the boundaries of the office and therefore beyond reach of traditional command-and-control management. This throws down new challenges on the significance of design. The future for an increasing proportion of the government workforce will lie beyond physical boundaries, in highly connected, geographically spread locations. As office work frees itself from the confines of single building boundaries to become distributed across locations and time, then design outcomes begin to matter in different ways. If the organizational office is to have a role in the new world of work, it has to attract and retain people, and to do that it must compete

<sup>2</sup> Gershon, Sir Peter, 1999, *Review of Civil Procurement in Central Government*, HMSO, London.

with a wide range of other physical – as well as virtual – work options.

Geographical locations that have the potential to support flexible working, for example, will have different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks. An airport is different from an office building. A home is different from an internet café. Yet we may be surprised by how well we adapt our work to the environment we find ourselves in. The ability to adapt while working will become more important to business and more dependent on lightweight, high-quality mobile devices as well as furniture and interior ‘scenery’ that can ‘plug and play’ into building infrastructure. Greater stress will be placed on a building’s interior elements as shared resources intensify the use of office space, requiring increasingly higher levels of durability, functional utility and design elegance. But wherever the workplace is located, it’s the vehicle by which business must add value while also driving the use of space harder, better and for longer.

### **The need to manage different sorts of people**

The future will be about constructing and managing one’s personal and professional life out of a potentially bewildering set of options. There are now many examples of flexible working practices in government – hot desking, non-territorial working, homeworking, teleworking, mobile working and virtual working. In the same way that distributed work gives more rather than less emphasis to the quality of design, the new, more flexible ways of working will rely on closer attention to the management of people: the manager will have to manage different sorts of people in different ways – to provide psychological pastoral care to support the changes caused by work/life balance, changing lifestyles, the taking of private values into the public realm. Above all, management of people will have to be predicated on a modern business output model rather than a traditional culture more closely focused on inputs.

### **Beyond UK central government**

The workplace revolution is also happening in UK local government and across the globe. Local councils with their functional diversity, range of services and geographical dispersal are rationalizing, modernizing and re-inventing themselves and the way they serve their communities. County councils from Norfolk to Wiltshire, and city and borough councils from Edinburgh to Camden, are actively engaged in understanding and evolving workstyles, supporting home, remote and other forms of flexible work practices, exploiting technology and matching locational and temporal presence with customer needs. New, often decentralized, locations are combining functions, establishing new partnerships, liberating staff and becoming more accessible to their customers through a range of new types of places like one-stop shops and service centres.

Beyond the UK, government workplaces are changing – with northern Europe and North America leading. Despite distinctive workplace cultures, common global trends are emerging, often influenced by private sector global organizations with their emphasis on shared values, consistent standards and increasing cross-boundary working. Large governments face similar challenges.

The General Services Administration (GSA) in the US is a prime example, where a very ambitious workplace rationalization and modernization programme is under way that will leave many US private sector organizations in the shade. In September 2007 GSA launched an aggressive telework programme to enable 50 per cent of eligible employees to telework one or more days per week by 2010. In support, GSA established an equally aggressive agency-wide policy that supports the broadest possible use of telework by agency employees, including supervisors, managers and executive leadership and, subject to eligibility and job circumstance, gives every employee the opportunity to participate. As one of two lead agencies for telework in the US government, GSA believes the benefits of telework warrant a strong campaign where it can lead by example. These benefits include improvements in quality of worklife, recruiting and retention, job performance, energy conservation and other environmental benefits, facility management and operating costs, emergency planning, and continuity of operations – and this is being accomplished at no additional cost, using the normal IT refresh cycle to replace desktop computers with laptops suitable for telework.

## Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

This case study illustrates how, by viewing property as a strategic asset, the process of estate rationalization, relocation out of London and the transition to open plan working are combined together and implemented successfully.

The leases were due to expire or reach lease break points between 2002 and 2006 on four of the six Bootle office buildings that housed HSE's headquarters staff. A project team was set up in 1997 to consider the options available. These included extensive refurbishment of the existing buildings, redevelopment of the existing site (such as the provision of a new building or linked buildings) and relocation to purpose-built premises or a refurbished existing building elsewhere in Bootle or central Liverpool.

Following a rigorous procurement process, the HSE took the decision to build new modern accommodation under a 30-year PFI arrangement, moving its 1,200-strong workforce at the beginning of 2006. The solution offered the best value for money that the market could offer against HSE's specification for serviced accommodation anywhere on Merseyside. This included existing building(s), redevelopment or new build.

HSE's new home, Redgrave Court, can accommodate up to 1,600 people on a campus of six main buildings

in an open-plan environment built around a covered central main street. Integral to the development is a knowledge centre, restaurant, delicatessen, a gym and training and conference facilities in an auditorium for 80 to 90 people.

Since its formation in 1974, HSE, like most government departments, has traditionally housed its staff in cellular accommodation. In 1998, it began a programme of using lease break/lease end opportunities to move from cellular accommodation to open-plan arrangements. This is seen as a more efficient use of the space while allowing better communication within the organization. In Redgrave Court all staff, including senior management, are housed in open-plan arrangements operating to an average across the building of approximately 15 square metres per person (NIA). Improvements in technology allow any staff visiting Redgrave Court to access the IT network.

The decision was made to close HSE's London headquarters and move approximately 200 posts to Redgrave Court over a period of 18 months. The operational field force for London will remain in the capital, together with a small policy team to manage relationships with key partners and stakeholders. This will increase the operational density of the building, although there is still room for growth exceeding the original planned capacity.



## Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

There had been many examples of innovation in workspace use across government, but this was the first public sector initiative that set out to achieve a business transformation by the implementation of non-territorial working (NTW) on such a large scale and in a transaction processing environment. The project has delivered a compelling combination of financial and cultural benefits to transform the DVLA's business processes.

The DVLA employs around 5,000 staff in its Swansea headquarters with the majority directly involved in processing vehicle and driver licences (over 95 million vehicle transactions and over 23 million driver transactions a year). Spread over several buildings at the Swansea Vale, Oldway and Morrision sites, the deteriorating and widely dispersed office accommodation had become an increasing financial and operational liability.

In April 2005 a 20-year PFI contract was signed to provide the agency with new and refurbished office space designed to a BREEAM rating of Very good and new FM services at its headquarters site at Morrision and at DVLA offices nationwide. This presented the opportunity to transform the estate into a modern, flexible and open plan work environment. NTW provided the means.

### Non-territorial working (NTW)

Instead of having one desk per person, staff share workstations in a team environment.

**Breakout spaces** provide informal meeting areas.

**Pod areas** house high speed printers, confidential print facilities, photocopiers, fax machines, post and stationery points.

**Quiet rooms** enable one-to-one discussions.

**Lockers and boxes** store everyday personal items.

**A clear workspace policy** is essential for shared space.

**Spacious and well-equipped meeting rooms** are easily provided for in the space savings won by NTW.

### How it was done

Non-territorial working at the DVLA involved allocating desks to a ratio of 8 for every 10 members of staff. During the transformation process, the tenets laid down in *Working Without Walls* proved invaluable to change managers, and innovative people management approaches were an integral part of the project. One of the most significant was the appointment of change communities within business areas to ensure grass roots involvement rather than project team imposition.



### Achievements

**Doing more with less** Within a year some 1,700 out of a total of 5,000 staff had already made the transition to non-territorial working, reducing the number of workstations by 300. By completion the project reduced the number of workstations required by 860.

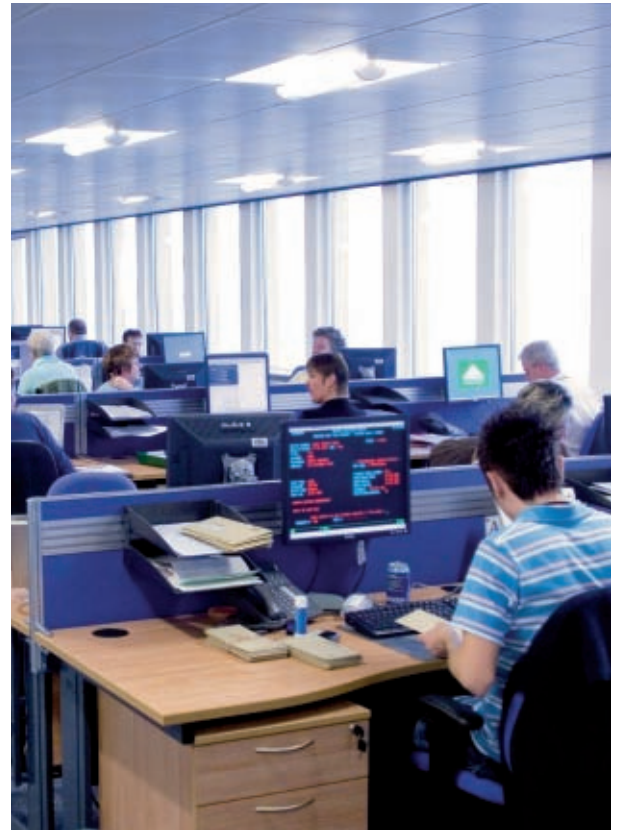
**Office renewal** The new estate now has core functions operating from Morriston and in a dual site strategy Swansea Vale provides flexible breathing space, allowing the agency to expand and contract as the business changes.

**Efficiency and effectiveness** NTW, in tandem with the building refurbishment project at Morriston, aimed for two key objectives: £11 million over 10 years in estate efficiency savings from occupying less space and fewer desks; increased organizational flexibility to foster collaboration, and improved communication between individuals, teams and business areas. With budget costs set at £5.7 million the NTW project has been delivered with a saving of £1 million.

**Modernized IT** Migrating electronic data from PCs to network storage completed the change from personal to shared storage. Programmable 'follow-me' telephony allows each person to log into a handset and receive or make calls from any desk.

**New facilities** Bright, new break-out areas and tidier, less cluttered office areas are now the norm across the estate.

The DVLA had a very traditional culture, with managers focused on inputs and expecting staff always to be at their desks. NTW has challenged traditional attitudes by promoting a more modern business aim focusing on outputs and individual performance. Significantly, managers have given up their offices to sit alongside their staff, resulting in better team working.



### Key lessons of the DVLA experience

- Clear and credible vision established at start of the project.
- Immediate support from chief executive through sponsoring the project at inception.
- Simultaneous management of people (HR), property (estates) and technology (IT) enabled the delivery of a fully-integrated project.
- Extensive change management and communication effort was applied early on to counter staff scepticism.
- NTW was trialled through a pilot project to learn lessons, build support and understand what the solution could look like.
- Coupling of NTW project with a radical office refurbishment programme.



# Part 2

# Distributed working

Across government it is now clear that the move towards distributed forms of work is the greatest challenge currently facing the workplace and the greatest opportunity to create significant business transformation within the civil estate. These new forms of work are permitted or driven by technological advances and in turn open up new possibilities – and new threats – for the people engaged in the work, the design of the places in which the work takes place and the ability of these modernized workplaces to meet sometimes intense economic and environmental pressures.

## Chapter 3

# Emerging technologies – making connections

Technology used to connect places: now it connects people. The impact on the world of work is immense. All the moves to distributed work we now see are driven by the ability of IT to connect the people in those new places, whether they are new ways of using the office, new ways of connecting traditional spaces, or entirely new places, such as homes and even parts of the public and semi-public realm, used as offices for the first time.

### IT – liberating people within space

IT in the office was first restricted to the large, space hungry, climate controlled computer room in the care of the IT professionals. The rise of the personal computer led to the processing power being distributed around the building, on or next to the desk. Concerns about data security, the requirement to store large volumes of data and the complexities of managing large networks of local and distant networked computers led to the evolution of the computer room into a possibly remote data storage location ('server farm') and a communications centre handling local and wide area communications for voice and data. And now that we are seeing a fourth locational shift, which takes us beyond physical walls into technologies capable of masking the physical nature and boundaries of the resources being used, the computing is becoming more virtual and less spatially/geographically defined.

The implications of this increasing virtualization of computing power is that the IT landscape within the office is changing again, and with consequences for workplace design. Many organizations are moving towards a re-centralized IT strategy with applications and data all stored centrally or using applications available on the internet. The technology at the desk can become much simpler, focused mainly on providing a high speed connection between the user and central servers housing the applications and data storage – the shift from fat client to thin client devices

(Figure 3.1). This can mean less desk space is needed, less energy consumed, less heat, less noise and even less dust at the workplace.

If the 'intelligence' is virtual, located somewhere within the IT network, this means that people should be able to work more flexibly, accessing the computing resources that they need from any computer within the office or within the wider distributed workplace. And such flexible working doesn't always have to rely on immediate connectivity. Remote devices like digital pens, which are already in use by field staff in the public health sector, aid the completion and processing of forms (particularly with the elderly who can relate to this apparently more traditional interface). Written data is then instantly digitized and uploaded to a laptop or office databases when convenient.

### Figure 3.1: the transition from fat client to thin client devices

**Fat client devices:** local storage and processing within the device. **Thin client devices:** data communication is the principal activity of the device.

Thin client devices share many characteristics in common with the graphical terminals of the 1970s and 1980s mainframe computer installations.

They offer a number of other advantages in the workplace including reduced cost, sustainability (less equipment to be upgraded or replaced), security (devices are worthless outside of the network environment), reduced energy consumption, faster network performance (most network activity occurs on high speed backbone network between application and data servers) and easier maintenance in the workplace (simply swap out identical devices – no data is involved).



### **Mobility – liberating people from space**

Inside and outside the office, mobile phones are becoming the storehouses of our digital lives, containing a growing share of our personal and professional resources and data: the UK is one of the countries where the number of mobile phones is now larger than the population of the country.

Mobile phones have become increasingly powerful and adapted to multiple uses; all now include some form of multi-media, as well as instant messaging, web browsing and e-mail. QWERTY keyboards are common and geo-location and the capacity to record video and audio are quickly becoming standard features. With over 225 million mobile phones manufactured each year world wide, innovation in these devices is occurring at an unprecedented pace.

While there are many drivers for convergence of devices, many consumers still prefer to use discrete components that are purpose-designed and can be connected via a wireless personal area network (PAN) to get 'best-in-class functionality'.

### **Virtual life – workplace impact of social networking**

The exponential growth of social networking/Web 2.0 sites such as Facebook, Flickr and YouTube (and their relevance to the workplace) is indicative of a fundamental shift in who is in control of on-line content – the control has shifted from the site owner to the contributor of material to the sites (Figure 3.2). The active audience is finding new ways to contribute, communicate and collaborate, using a variety of tools that put the power to develop and catalogue the network into the hands of the user.

Employers will have to develop a more mature response to social networking sites since at home and at work they will be a fundamental part of how most people interact in the future and interface with digital material. Web 2.0 sites are increasingly being used by schools and higher education as a teaching and learning tool. Future generations of people entering the workforce will require access to Web 2.0 sites to maintain and develop their professional and social networks and banning access will not be an option.

### **Figure 3.2: social computing/Web 2.0**

**Web 2.0** refers to a perceived second generation of web-based communities and hosted services such as social networking sites, wikis and folksonomies, which aim to facilitate collaboration and sharing between users.

**Social networking sites** focus on the building and verifying of online social networks for communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. These sites generally provide a number of ways for users to interact and communicate with each other including instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mail, webcams, file sharing, blogging and discussion groups.

**Wikis** are collaborative websites that can be edited by anyone. Folksonomy (also known as collaborative tagging, social classification, social indexing, social tagging) is the practice and method of collaboratively creating and managing tags (index key words) to annotate and categorize web content.



**New forms of presence – telepresence and virtual presence**

Videoconferencing has developed into a common practice in the public sector workplace for holding meetings across locations to avoid unnecessary travel and has increasingly become more sophisticated and effective. But videoconferencing between two or three individuals (all in different locations) from their laptops is also an available and very effective way of undertaking remote collaboration (not dissimilar to the webcam interactions used to support the social networking phenomenon just described). In the work context, however, technology now also allows us to go further in terms of sharing documentation across locations which can be edited by all parties in real time. This clearly provides many new opportunities for remote workers and homeworkers to be much more integrated into the important dynamics of the office base.

Telepresence technologies allow a person to feel as if they're present, to give the appearance that they're present, or to have an effect, at a location other than their true location; videoconferencing is a form of telepresence. Telepresence also requires that the

senses of the user, or users, are provided with such stimuli as to give the feeling of being in that other location. Additionally, they may be given the ability to affect the remote location. In this case, the user's position, movements, actions or voice may be sensed, transmitted and duplicated in the remote location to bring about this effect. Vision and hearing are the senses commonly engaged in telepresence applications although touch may be involved in specialist applications.

A virtual world is a computer-based simulated environment that its users inhabit and interact with using avatars (representations of themselves within the virtual space). Often these environments are designed to simulate the real world with real world characteristics and activities. These virtual worlds offer an opportunity to interact in a way that conveys a sense of presence that is lacking in many other forms of digital media, and are likely to have an increasingly important role in many aspects of how we live and work in the future.

Just how pervasive virtual worlds are likely to become is shown by the prediction by Gartner published in



Above and opposite Typical telepresence suite

April 2007 that by the end of 2011, 80 per cent of active internet users (and Fortune 500 enterprises) will have a presence in a virtual world of some kind. They also noted that meaningful corporate use of public virtual worlds will lag considerably behind individual consumer use as enterprises struggle to develop appropriate and relevant business models.

#### **Diverse new workplaces created**

The effect of all this connectivity is that people can work anywhere at any time, including the office, the home and a range of other 'third place' worksettings. Even within the office, this technologically-enabled freeing-up of individual concentrated work will mean an enormous change of emphasis and function. Increasingly its role will be to house collaborative activities such as team working on projects, training and skills development and knowledge exchange. Designing the office of the future will require acknowledgment of its role as a place for fostering organizational solidarity and for it to signify and express the values and beliefs of the organization. As a consequence there will be a development towards the creation of office interiors that are more richly layered with physical and electronic information, telling stories or conveying messages about the organization and its work.

The dense net of working relationships within traditional organizational boundaries will inevitably become less defined and it will be increasingly common for people from a number of organizations to share the same space in order to use the building more efficiently, so increasing resource efficiency since conventional office buildings typically have low rates of occupancy. In both public and private sectors this may take the form of a shared serviced office, where individuals and organizations pay for the space and time that they use, or a number of organizations who already work together may share a work hub in key locations. In the public sector the solution may be shared one-stop shops, delivering a range of government services to the public, or government regional offices shared by a number of departments.

As the emphasis within the office shifts towards these collaborative activities, more space is likely to be devoted to informal meeting and work areas and touchdown spaces to support mobile workers. The basis of the traditional office has been that most work activities can take place at the desk. More innovative



work environments aim to relate work activities – such as research, writing, telephoning, video and teleconferencing, project team or solitary modes of working – to differently designed worksettings. This trend is likely to become even more pronounced in the future as office interiors strive to accommodate a much richer and more diverse range of physical and virtual worksettings (Figure 3.3).

Developments in the transmission of wireless power known as WiTricity will ultimately provide complete mobility and liberation within the office and beyond, as well as having a revolutionary effect in the home. Based on the creation of non-radioactive electromagnetic fields, this technology is already being tested in the US. A development by Microsoft – Surface – sees the integration of technology touchscreens into furniture components such as table-tops and counters. Perhaps initially intended to support customer interaction in shops, hotels and restaurants, it is not hard to see how this technology can very effectively support meetings, informal collaboration and public interface in the office environment.

**Figure 3.3: diverse worksettings**

**Within the office**

**Dedicated office** enclosed room with desk and often meeting table for exclusive use by one individual  
**PC LT T**

**Dedicated desk** desk in open plan workspace for exclusive use of one individual  
**PC LT T M**

**Hot desk** desk with shared use in open plan workspace, often bookable, perhaps in a specific 'hot desk' zone  
**PC LT T M**

**Hot office** enclosed room with desk for shared use, often bookable  
**PC LT T M**

**Team table** large work table for use by a number of individuals – either shared ad-hoc basis or by specific team  
**LT T M**

**Touchdown desks** typically smaller desks in open plan for shared use, typically short-stay only, not bookable  
**PC LT T M**

**Touchdown benches** high-level shared short-stay work bench, not bookable, with high stools or stand up use  
**PC LT T M**

**Browsery** high level work/layout surface, typically on top of storage cabinets, with high stools or stand up use  
**PC LT T M WiFi**

**Quiet room/booth** shared use enclosed room, bookable or ad-hoc use, for concentrative/quiet working  
**PC LT T M**

**Quiet space/area** shared use area, perhaps semi-enclosed, specifically designed to support quiet working  
**PC LT**

**Project space** area of workspace designed to support ad-hoc project work, often table and white/scribble board  
**LT T M AV**

**Small meeting room** enclosed room to support 1:1 meetings or meetings up to 4–6 people, may be bookable  
**LT T AV**

**Large meeting room** enclosed room to support meetings, typically between 8–20 people  
**LT T AV**

**Conference room** large space capable of holding up to 50 people for theatre-style presentation activities  
**LT T AV**

**Informal breakout space** café or lounge style area within office, for ad-hoc discussion, solo work or breaks  
**LT M WiFi**

**Restaurant area** beyond facilitating meal provision, also area for informal meetings, solo-work or presentations  
**LT M WiFi AV**

**Hub/resource area** shared, often semi-enclosed space for centralised printing, copying, kitchen, waste etc  
**EQ**

**Business lounge** hotel/airport-lounge style shared workspace specifically designed for use by visitors  
**PC LT T M WiFi**

**Beyond the office**

**Home** dedicated space in individual's home for regular or ad-hoc working, typically with remote IT connectivity  
**PC LT T M BB**

**Train** temporary public workspace for individual/groups while travelling  
**LT M WiFi**

**Car** temporary location for ad-hoc work for individual/groups while travelling (especially when parked)  
**LT M (hands free for driver)**

**Café/restaurant** temporary public work location for individual or group, combined with eating, coffee etc  
**LT M WiFi**

**Hotel room** temporary location for individual to work when staying away from home on business  
**LT M WiFi BB**

**Hotel lobby** temporary public meeting or working space, for use when travelling or as convenient location  
**LT M WiFi**

**Airport lounge** temporary semi-public work and meetings space, for use when travelling by air  
**PC LT M WiFi BB**

**Service centre** semi-public shared office facilities, often in local locations, used as an alternative to commuting  
**PC LT T M WiFi AV EQ BB**

**Business club** temporary workspace, bookable, often by membership, alternative/supplement to office  
**PC LT T M WiFi AV EQ BB**

**Library** temporary public quiet work space  
**LT WiFi BB**

**Customer/client premises** temporary workspace options when working with customers/clients  
**PC LT T M WiFi AV EQ BB**

**Technology**

- PC** Personal Computer
- LT** Laptop computer
- T** Telephone
- M** Mobile phone
- WiFi** Wireless connectivity
- AV** Audio-visual technology
- EQ** Technical equipment like copier, printer, scanner etc
- BB** Broadband connectivity

### **Continuing technological impact**

The incorporation of larger – or multiple – screens, webcams, telepresence systems, voice input devices, and audio and video materials will have major implications for the design of office-based work environments as the acoustic, light and enclosure requirements of these hybrid physical/virtual worksettings are taken into account. Access to daylight, for instance, has always been a key component of a healthy workplace but is not necessarily a good thing for digital worksettings that will require a controlled light/sound environment. The zoning of the workplace to include these settings in the deeper, less well lit areas of each floor and the use of internal mobility to allow individuals to select appropriate work locations will help to ensure that the future digital workplace is still a healthy place to be.

Internal mobility in the workplace will permit the non-territorial use of space in buildings – which in larger buildings is likely to lead to the increased use of location tracking systems either based on the position of mobile communications devices (locating people using the organization's wireless network transceivers), radio frequency identification (RFID) tags or advanced positioning systems using ultra-wideband (UWB) radio or other tracking technology. The use of these location systems has implications on workplace design and also on privacy and security issues, but will equally help to connect people.

The ability to work flexibly from a range of locations will be greatly enhanced by the use of laptops with internet USB modems and by dual mode mobile phones that act as internal network phones when in the office, and public network mobile phones when outside. These innovations, coupled with the use of high-speed networks and thin client type devices,

will inevitably lead to concerns around data security. Technology is, however, addressing this issue, with manufacturers already developing devices with enhanced security features designed to support mobile and wireless working.

Access to timely, accurate and appropriate information will be a critical issue for everyone in the future workplace. Mid-term predictions for future computer memory include the possibility of a thumb-sized USB drive that could contain the equivalent of 32 million DVDs. It becomes clear that in those circumstances organizational success and individual sanity will rely on the widespread implementation of knowledge management systems that can integrate internal organizational information with filtered external data sources.

The impact of information and communications technology on the workplace is likely to continue to increase. The office building alone is no longer the container for office work and organizations will need to develop workplace strategies based on an in-depth understanding of business process, current and likely future ICT strategy and the work/life balance issues of the workforce. This is likely to result in a rich landscape of worksettings including both owned and shared spaces as well as physical and virtual spaces.

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**The ability to work flexibly from a range of locations will inevitably lead to concerns around data security. But manufacturers are developing devices with enhanced security features designed to support mobile working.**

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## Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)

BERR has developed a first in central government web-based thin client solution – Remote IT Environment (RITE) – that allows greater agility for its workforce and more efficient use of its estate.

Because too many of its staff – particularly those with occasional and ad hoc requirements – were being excluded from the benefits of effective flexible computing by the high cost of traditional laptops, BERR investigated a no-laptop solution that would be cheap and simple to maintain. The aim was to deliver this solution:

- within a climate of increasing financial pressures and year-on-year budget cuts and to ensure flexible computing benefits were made available as widely as possible
- in a way that would provide remote access to information up to RESTRICTED protective marking within a risk profile that was acceptable to the department and addressed the concerns from CESC, the information assurance arm of GCHQ
- in a managed programme from BERR's existing outsourced IT supplier to allow in-house new technical solutions to be developed and tested cost-effectively
- that gives BERR a opportunity to re-evaluate its business continuity strategy and move away from traditional fixed locations with standby equipment.

To fulfil these requirements a solution was chosen that was based upon delivering a core subset of secured and locked down applications. This was limited to the departmental office productivity, electronic records and document management and intranet applications only, running on centralized servers hosted in the data centre. Citrix's XenApp Server product was selected to provide this functionality as the technology is well proven within the commercial sector, allowing the RITE designers to focus on providing an integrated security wrap, appropriate to protection of HMG RESTRICTED information. It was also recognized that the core technologies deployed within this solution could be expanded upon to deliver complete virtualized desktops, allowing true location independence.

This capability provides the tools to enable enhanced business continuity planning, utilizing shared HMG buildings.

The first application of this solution, which provides a majority of BERR's staff with cost-effective secure remote access computing, was to help with restructuring implications by allowing incoming teams to work from their existing agencies' computers from non-BERR offices. Before the development of RITE, they would either have had no access at all, disconnected from e-mail communication and BERR information, or would have been required to carry around secure laptops – even in agencies and offices where they were provided with a desktop computer. With RITE, they need only a small key ring authentication token (below) to work remotely from almost any internet-connected computer in the UK.



### Organizational benefits include:

- increased workforce and team flexibility and agility
- recovery of lost productivity due to transport incidents and other home or family emergencies
- improved work life balance and satisfaction helps attract and retain workers
- financial gains due to rationalization of back-up sites and more costly laptops
- opportunities to reduce estates and associated costs with increased flexible working.

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## Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

Information systems (IS) were consuming a large proportion of the operational budget, replacement of desktop kit was overdue and IT improvements were needed to ensure business continuity and security. The RPA adopted an ultra thin client (UTC) approach.

The RPA administers payments of around £1.6 billion per year to farmers and traders under EU schemes including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Its 4,500 employees are mainly located at six large operational centres – Reading, Newcastle, Northallerton, Exeter, Carlisle and Workington. The challenge defined by the RPA IS strategy was to achieve a minimum of 5 per cent year-on-year cost reduction for ICT expenditure over six years, to increase business agility and flexibility through ICT innovation, to protect against business disruption during the refresh, and to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions. These aims were all met by taking an ultra thin client (UTC) approach – a SunRay system, with no local operating system or client software, supplied through a lease agreement to government standards (security, asset disposal, data protection).

*'UTC is exceedingly useful because of the flexibility it provides. I and my staff have been happy with the new system. From a personal point of view it allows me to easily access "my" computer from either another desk in this building or from another office, such as Newcastle or Reading. When I log on at a strange desk I get the set up that I am used to, the desktop is "mine", and everything works as I expect it to. This is especially true of e-mail which could be problematic when logging on to strange PCs.*

*'From a management point of view it allows me to move staff around the office with the minimum of upheaval and the minimum of cost. Once they've moved their belongings they are able to immediately start work again in a familiar environment. When PCs were in general use this flexibility was not available.*

*'My only negative point, which in truth applies as much to PCs as UTC, is the printer issue. If you are moving out of the zone of your usual printer you cannot automatically print on the nearest printer, you have to identify which one that is and then re-set the system.'*

**Ruth Tompkins**, RPA Exeter

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## Chapter 4

# New workstyles – the distributed workplace

The evolution of government office space towards non-territorial working is firmly established; it is now becoming accepted that people should work in the most appropriate setting for the work they're doing, regardless of location. This might be within the traditional office, but liberated by information technology. It might be in an increasingly wide range of urban, suburban and rural work locations. All have to be integrated into a workplace strategy that acknowledges that workspace is a tool for doing

work. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the emerging diversity of workstyles already evident in most organizations today. With space increasingly purchased on demand, or taken in non-owned spaces such as hotels, airport lounges, clubs and trains, the need for building or space ownership becomes less significant: getting the right match between space and the business conducted in it, however, becomes increasingly critical.

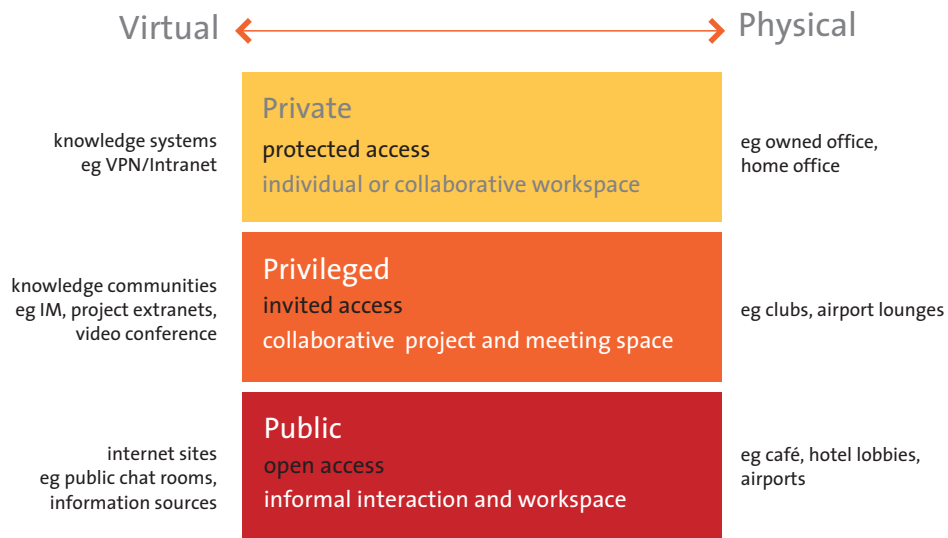
Figure 4.1: the new workstyles – what's important

workstyle characteristics:	workstyle categories:					
	residents		internally mobile		externally mobile	
	team anchors	process workers	knowledge/net-workers	executives/managers	nomads/travellers	home/remote workers
use of owned office desk	■	■	■	■	■	■
use of shared office desks	■	■	■	■	■	■
time in prime office, not at desk	■	■	■	■	■	■
internal physical interaction	■	■	■	■	■	■
external physical interaction	■	■	■	■	■	■
dependency on paper files	■	■	■	■	■	■
dependency on office systems	■	■	■	■	■	■
need for mobile ICT	■	■	■	■	■	■
need for fixed ICT	■	■	■	■	■	■

relative importance ■ high ■ mod - high ■ low - mod ■ low



Figure 4.2: distributed workplace model



DEGW has developed a distributed workplace model – a tool to help in the selection and creation of appropriate workplace strategies (Figure 4.2). It attempts to do this by taking full account of the increasing congruence between physical and virtual work environments and by acknowledging the impact that information and communications technologies are having on the work process of most individuals and organizations. The model also examines the continuum between public and private space and produces novel solutions to their integration into workplaces.

#### Distributed workplace model

The physical workplace is divided into three conceptual categories, according to the degree of privacy and accessibility each offers. The three categories of place used in the model are ‘public’, ‘privileged’ and ‘private’. Each of these ‘places’ is composed of a number of different types of worksettings, the relative proportion of each forming the character of the space. Public space is predominantly suited to informal interaction and touchdown working for relatively short periods of time. Privileged space, also known as invited access space, supports collaborative project team and meeting spaces as well as providing space for concentrated individual work. Private space also

contains both individual and collaborative worksetting, but with a greater emphasis on privacy and confidentiality, with defined space boundaries and security.

Each of the physical work environments has a parallel virtual environment that shares some of the same characteristics. The virtual equivalent of the public workplace is the internet, where access is open to all and behaviour is relatively unmanaged. The equivalents of the privileged workplace are extranets, where communities of interest use the internet to communicate and as an information resource. There are generally restrictions to entry into a knowledge community (such as registration, or membership by invitation only), and membership has obligations and responsibilities attached, perhaps in terms of contributing material or communicating with other members. The virtual equivalents of the private workplace are intranets, the private knowledge systems belonging to an individual organization that contain the organization’s intellectual property. Access to the intranet is restricted to members of the organization and the value of the organization is related to the content of this virtual space – the customer databases, the descriptions of the processes and project histories.

### Accommodation strategies

Managers increasingly need to consider how the virtual work environments will support distributed physical environments, and how the virtual environments can contribute to the development of organizational culture and a sense of community when members of staff spend little or no time in 'owned' facilities. An organization could choose to locate the public, invited-access and private workplaces within a single building and location. The wide variety of worksettings provided in the best new facilities already provide this choice.

As the level of remote working increases in an organization it may not be desirable to house all types of workplace in the same location. Distributing workplaces around the city or country may allow staff to reduce the amount of commuting they need to do and allow the organization to start using the attributes of the wider community to reinforce organizational culture.

Private sector organizations are increasingly incorporating semi-public spaces such as hotels, serviced office centres, airport lounges and cafés into their work environments. It is possible that this trend will continue to the point where the only spaces actually owned by the organization are the private workplaces, including such things as headquarters buildings, training and IT centres. All other space, as well as many of the business support services, could be provided by outside organizations on a flexible, 'as used' basis. A proposed new initiative by the National Audit Office, 'core and flex', insists that departments work out which of their buildings are core and which are flexible in their use needs, and plan accordingly: see Chapter 5.

### Developing a strategy

The distributed workplace model is a conceptual framework that can be used to implement a distributed workplace strategy for any organization or government department. This strategy could incorporate working in owned workplaces, working in a shared workplace, working while travelling and working from home.

From this model a set of diagnostic tools and a process can be developed that will assist organizations in developing and implementing a distributed workplace strategy, down to the level

of workplace design and management (Figure 4.3). The process can also help organizations identify potential workplace partners for the provision of both space and services.

The model can be applied in many different ways to meet the needs of a specific organization, develop appropriate workplace solutions to meet the requirements of their business process and the needs of their employees. It is possible, however, to describe a number of generic real estate components – personal, project, collaboration and operation centres – that together could form the elements of a distributed strategy for organizations of various sizes, appropriate for a range of countries and market sectors.

### Figure 4.3: distributed workplace checklist

The distributed workplace model, tools and process should help an organization to answer certain key questions.

- Should the organization consider the implementation of a distributed workplace strategy?
- Is a particular location suitable for distributed working?
- What form should distributed working take in this location?
- Where should these distributed components be located?
- What size should these components be?
- What types of buildings would be suitable for the components?
- How could these components be procured?
- What types of worksettings would support our work processes?
- How do we assess whether the distributed strategy is successful?
- What technologies would be required to support this distributed workplace strategy?
- What services would be required to support this distributed workplace strategy?

**The personal centre**, or home office, may be the primary work location for some people working as freelancers or in roles that can be undertaken entirely from home using technology (such as distributed call-centre employees). For the majority of knowledge workers, however, home will be a secondary work location that is used for individual concentrated working or to carry out routine tasks that do not require the physical involvement of other people for their completion (such as dealing with e-mails, expenses, standard reports). Working from home for part of the week may provide individuals with significant work/life benefits, in terms of avoiding long commutes or providing flexibility in dealing with family or other responsibilities (Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.4: the rise of homeworking in the public sector**

The Office of National Statistics reported in 2005 that there were around 3.1 million people in the UK who worked mainly in their own home, or in different places using home as a base (homeworkers). This number had risen from 2.3 million in spring 1997. An additional 8 per cent of the workforce were teleworkers (see Figure 7.2 in Chapter 7), compared with 4 per cent in spring 1997. 'Flexibility', the not-for-profit membership organization set up to raise awareness of the impact and benefits of flexible working, noted that there had been a remarkable catch-up in the public sector, as initial uptake was almost exclusively in the private sector, with the self-employed particularly well represented.

**Project centres**, located in areas near where the employees live – for example, as part of neighbourhood shopping and commercial centres, community libraries or schools – will allow people to achieve many of the work/life benefits associated with homeworking where this is not practicable. These centres could be shared by a number of organizations, or they could be completely open to the public. As well as providing a location for individuals wanting to work near home these centres could also be used to provide longer-term project spaces for teams collaborating on a specific project. These teams could also be from different parts of

a single organization, or people from a number of different organizations could form them.

**Collaboration centres** would provide a wider range of worksettings and services, probably housed in more expensive space in central business districts close to where related organizations or their clients are likely to be located. They would also contain both individual worksettings, to be used by 'drop-in' visitors, and longer-term project space. In addition, the collaboration centres may contain a wider mix of meeting and other client facilities such as presentation rooms and private dining facilities. Collaboration centres can also to be shared by a number of organizations, with project and client areas being branded for specific events or projects if appropriate.

**The operations centre** will primarily house business functions that are not directly public-facing. These are likely to be located in less expensive space outside the central business district and may include functions such as finance, human resources, information technology and training. The populations of the operations centres are likely to be more resident and predictable than in the other types of centres. They may feature relatively low external mobility with high internal mobility, requiring a rich mix of worksettings to support the work processes being undertaken, including call-centre space support to users of the other centres. It is also more likely that the operations centres will continue to be leased or owned by individual organizations than be shared by a number of organizations. This is because of more stable populations in the operations centres, the nature of the work being undertaken there and the lower real estate cost in the more fringe locations where these are likely to be located.

**Choosing where to work**

When deciding on the most appropriate distributed work location on a day-to-day basis, at least four different kinds of factors are worth considering:

**The intrinsic nature** of the work activity itself – for example, does the person require a place where one can concentrate; do the work tasks require the participation of other people?

**Extrinsic characteristics** of a particular instance of an activity – for example, whether a particular document or conversation is confidential or whether particular

information resources or people are necessary for that work activity. These may derive from the nature of the task or business process of which this activity forms a part.

**The wider context** of the other activities that the person is carrying out during the same time period, which will influence the location chosen for the activity. These may relate to other work activities such as visiting a client or other agency or to work/life issues such as proximity to childcare or schools.

**The background context** of the organizational goals, values and culture; for example, does the organization place a high value on team-working or, conversely, is the culture one of collegiate working of autonomous individuals?

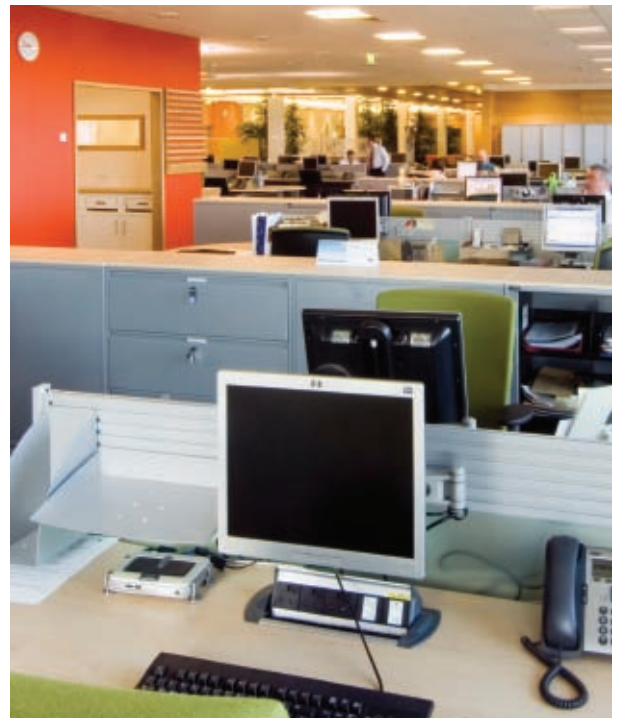
All four groups of factors must be taken into account when selecting where to carry out an activity or when making decisions about what range of workplaces to provide for staff in a particular location.

#### **The physical landscape of work**

The three parts of the physical landscape of work can be identified as worksettings, work arenas and work environments. It must be understood that each is defined in scale and context in relation to the others.

The immediate environment that the body interacts with can be described as a worksetting. It is the smallest unit of analysis of an overall working environment to which some 'use-meaning' still applies – that is, people from a common culture will understand how to use a particular part of their spatial environment in a particular way. Thus, a sofa has a different 'use-meaning' from a desk and chair in an open plan office building. Worksettings are made up of a number of components, such as a desk, a chair, a full-height partition, a medium-height screen, and so on.

A work arena is a collection of one or more worksettings that forms the psychological status of a 'place' – that is, it has some meaning associated with it which would be largely shared by everyone within the culture or society using that arena. For example, a team area could contain four desk-plus-chair settings, a meeting table and chairs, a mobile flip chart and storage units; it will have a particular 'feel' and history for the people working there. A business lounge is also a work arena because it will contain a number of



worksettings and it will have an intentionally designed 'feel' and atmosphere.

Work environments are the highest level of the physical environment which needs to be taken into account in this analysis. Examples include an office building, an airport departure terminal, a train and a city street. Note that the same kind of work arena can exist in more than one type of work environment, and this will alter its nature. For example, a business lounge might be within a private office building, or might be a privileged space in an airport. A café might be a public space within a city street, or might be a within a private office building. Conversely, work environments will often contain a variety of work arenas – an airport, for example, contains café areas as well as business lounges.

A worksetting (such as 'an L-shaped desk and chair' or 'a sofa') cannot be judged without taking into account the context of the work arena – the collection of worksettings which make up a coherent 'place' both physically and psychologically. The distributed workplace model, however, describes work taking place beyond, and no longer constrained by, the context of the traditional office, so not only the work arena but also the context of the wider work

Above Worksetting with thin client



environment must be taken into account. Developments in information technology have enabled activities that would normally take place in a single physical place to be conducted when one or more of the participants are in different locations. Thus, virtual or mediated worksettings must also be included in our understanding of the workplace.

#### **Matching locations and activities**

Work locations vary in ways that can define their suitability for particular activities. In the physical realm, boundary control can be implemented by either physical enclosure or through protocols – for example, screens around the worksetting reduce casual interruptions by others, shutting the door to an individual office can indicate that you do not wish to be disturbed. Boundary control may discriminate between classes of people – clients may have access to only certain floors of your office building. Boundary control can also be achieved by geographical distance (working at home), and the accessibility limitations of this can be overcome by means of virtual environments (your colleagues can, if necessary, still contact you by telephone or e-mail). And just as a building allows members of the organization access to internal spaces through a series of controlled

boundaries, so in a similar way, protocols can be established for virtual space. This can reinforce people's membership of and sense of belonging to a knowledge community.

Boundary control and accessibility are very closely related: if a knowledge worker chooses a work location offering high boundary control, this means that other team members have low accessibility to that knowledge worker. Low boundary control leaves individuals continually accessible to others. This can lead to excellent communication and collaboration but can be frustrating when there is a need for isolation or concentration. Collaboration is a key feature of knowledge work, so whether or not a particular work location facilitates collaboration is an important factor in determining the use of that workspace. It is on this issue that the impact of technology in the workplace is greatest, since virtual collaboration liberates the individual from having to move to a colleague's current location to work with them.

The ability to control confidentiality is similar to boundary control, but relates to controlling others' access to the material one is working with (where 'material' can include conversations). In the physical

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Will distributed working provide individual workers with more control over their time and flexibility to balance work/life issues, or will it increase pressure to perform and result in longer days?

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realm, the means of achieving confidentiality may, in many cases, be the same as the means of achieving boundary control (that is, controlling the access of other people to oneself).

The critical factors determining the appropriateness of work location and environment for a particular activity are not found solely within the nature of the activity itself. The move from activities to work environments should be seen in terms of the surrounding organizational context, including the business process and business task level (Figure 4.5).

**Risks and benefits of distributed working**

There are undoubtedly risks as well as benefits associated with the implementation of a distributed workplace strategy (Figure 4.6). Will distributed working provide individual workers with more control over their time and flexibility to balance work/life issues, or will it increase pressure to perform and result in people working longer days, with the time saved on commuting being used for additional work activities? Will organizations be able to maintain their organizational culture in work environments that are shared with people from other companies, when the buildings and artefacts in the building will not be able to reflect each individual organization? Will

workplaces and mobile ICT create security risks for organizations?

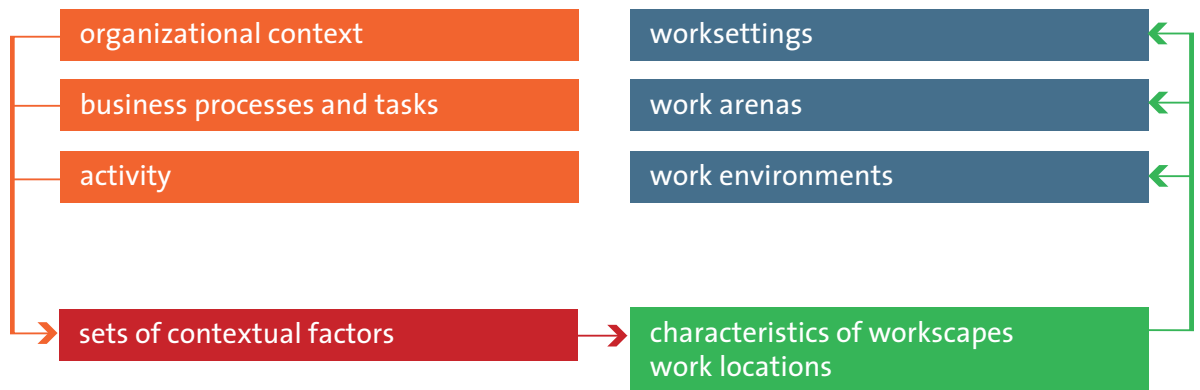
Each of these risks must be considered by organizations implementing a distributed workplace strategy and a plan developed to avoid the risks or minimize their potential impact.

Benefits, however, can be considerable, at the level of the individual, the organization and the wider community. With the workspace of the future broken down into smaller units and more widely distributed there may be opportunities to address the regeneration of urban and rural areas.

The re-use of buildings contributes to environmental sustainability in terms of avoiding the construction of new buildings (materials and energy) and in the maintenance and support of existing communities. Remote working, whether at home or at neighbourhood work centres (café or club type space) also aids social and economic sustainability by improving the quality of life for individuals (reduced commuting time) and can contribute to a reduction of energy consumption.

Buying space on an 'as needed' basis rather than by committing to long-term leases allows organizations

Figure 4.5: moving from activities to work environments



to move from a fixed cost structure to a more variable one, freeing-up capital to be invested in developing the business rather than housing the existing business. At the level of the individual, distributed working allows more control over the use of time, with reduced commuting and an ability to match the work environment to the tasks required: to use visits to the office to meet with colleagues and work with project teams and use a range of other locations for concentrated individual work, away from interruptions and distractions.

**Figure 4.6: risks and benefits of the move to distributed working**

The implementation of a distributed working strategy will require careful planning involving all areas of the business. Critical issues to be considered include:

- costs and benefits of implementing the strategy (real estate savings, investment costs in IT and provision of business services)
- risks to business delivery
- HR policies on flexible and remote working
- provision of training
- corporate branding
- maintenance of community and culture
- knowledge management
- management teams and individuals
- confidentiality
- client perceptions
- provision of business services.

## British Medical Association (BMA)

The BMA is the professional association and trade union for doctors, with its head office in London. In 2004 the Regional Services teams in England and Scotland agreed to a strategic plan to work more flexibly. Participating in the government's discussion network on flexible working, the BMA's own programme for workplace change is of key interest.

The move to flexibility included relocating office based advisory staff to work from home, therefore becoming more locally based, with easier access to BMA members. Five existing 'regional' offices were re-established as BMA centres across England to provide administrative support, as well as meeting and hot-desking facilities. 'National' offices remain in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Plans were drawn up to reduce both office and travel costs and 9 of 13 regional offices were closed. Employees participated in focus groups addressing people issues, technology issues and the service to members and were briefed on the facilities offered to enable them to work from home.

A Flexible Working Information Pack was prepared and issued to provide more detail to staff about the proposals, arrangements were put in place to secure contact between staff and managers, and some business processes were changed. Staff were asked to complete a risk assessment on their home office space using a checklist for guidance. Copies of relevant HSE publications were provided and a DSE self-assessment questionnaire was issued. Guidance was issued in relation to the specification of equipment and furniture required and a furniture budget allowance of up to £900 provided for all flexible workers. A taxable 'Disturbance Payment' of £2,500 was offered to assist those that made the move to homeworking. The project has been successful, with 94 per cent of advisory staff in England and Scotland now based at home.

### Smartwork – learning from government

BMA benefited from belonging to a network led by Ofsted to gather and disseminate good practice and lessons learned about flexible working across central government. This group evolved into the Smartwork Network now led by Flexibility.co.uk [www.smart-work.net](http://www.smart-work.net).



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## Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

Over a period of two years, from 2001 to 2003, Ofsted transformed the way it works, and its estate. The inspection services have become entirely home based, and subsequently other supporting activities have focused on only four locations, a reduction from the original 11 buildings.

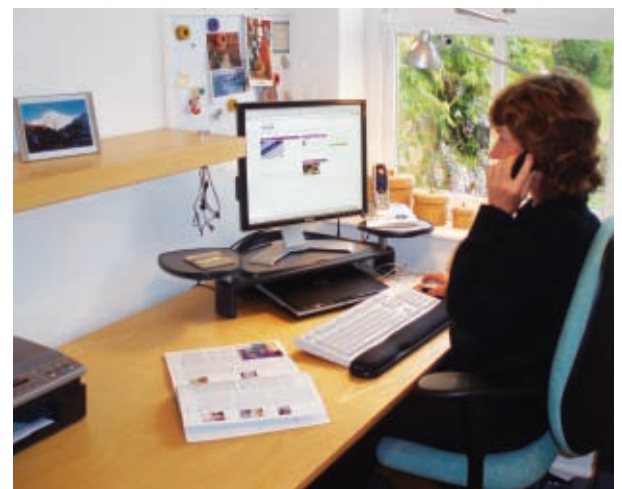
Ofsted's main purpose is to maintain standards in childcare, children's residential services and education, from birth to age 18. Now, in 2008, school, social care and early years inspections are conducted by around 1,400 inspectors – about 56 per cent of the workforce. When Ofsted's remit was expanded in 2001 to include the regulation of early years provisions previously inspected by local authorities, over 1,500 inspectors and some support staff transferred. It was noted that some local authorities already employed their staff on home-based arrangements and this model was adopted for all inspection staff transferring from the local authorities. This arrangement was successful, so it was decided that the HMI (schools inspectors) who were out on the road for most of the week conducting school inspections, and who also worked partly at home and partly from local offices, should be asked to consider a change in their contract to work from home. The small local offices were closed and new contracts issued. This left Ofsted with 11 offices across England, so in 2006 it reduced its estate by closing a further eight offices. The office estate is now structured around the National Business Unit (NBU) and three regional offices. Although inspectors no longer have an office base, Ofsted supports staff with investment in effective ICT and a range of office services, administrative and management support and local venues for meetings.

The NBU, regional centres and home-based staff are all part of a distributed workplace network. Working in this way and maintaining consistent quality and high productivity has needed the foundation of a 'very good' IT system. This means that administrative and inspection work can go on in parallel and all members of the distributed team can immediately see the latest developments in any specific case. The system is used to log all records, documents and progress referenced to specific education or care providers. This IT system is delivered to all staff wherever they are located. Home-

based staff are issued with a standard encrypted laptop PC for use on site and connected at home through wireless broadband. They also have a printer, scanner, global positioning device such as a Tom Tom, cordless and mobile telephones and some have Blackberry devices.

To work well, the distributed network also requires the best available office services support. Ofsted has set up a range of these services such as IT Helpdesk, next-day delivery office supplies, hotel booking and car hire that inspectors can book directly. Inspectors are also supported with 'back-office' administration teams in the regional centres and a wide range of information, guidance and standard template documents are delivered on line.

Good ICT and effective practical support are essential, but not the whole story. For home-based staff, isolation is the norm. People are often working on their own without the day-to-day social support of colleagues and managers. In Ofsted, inspection team and area managers are also based at home so they understand these difficulties. Managers and staff receive training in managing and being managed at a distance, and managers and inspectors are selected for their ability to manage in this way. Managers also have a regime of monthly face-to-face individual meetings with each member of their team, monthly team meetings and periodic wider area meetings. It is important for staff and teams to meet one another and some teams also have lively social networks.



## Chapter 5

# Transforming the estate – the pressure to perform

Distributed working is part of the generally observable organizational shift to see the workspace as a tool for doing work, and it owes a great deal of its ability to deliver that work to technological advances that can now connect people and places in previously unimaginable ways. It has also emerged as a key response to government's policy requirement for a civil estate that is smaller, more tightly managed, flexible, agile, environmentally, economically and socially sustainable and that delivers value for money.

### **The government estate as a strategic asset**

It is clear that property cannot be planned or managed in isolation, that the drivers of property demand are in constant flux, and organizational and workforce demands are constantly being ramped up – that the office may no longer always be the place where value is added. Looking at these and other shifts in the role of property, in June 2006 Virginia Gibson, Professor of Corporate Real Estate at the University of Reading, raised a key point for debate among senior decision managers: 'should government property, generic at least, be managed centrally or should the devolved approach continue?'

In fact, prior to 1996 there had been such central control and after the formation of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) in 2000 the tide began to turn again: but for a time there was systemic disaggregation that undoubtedly led to the lack of a single drive for change. For a decade – a decade that saw the transformation of the understanding of property's role in business – the OGC and its predecessors were able to offer advice and raise awareness but were unable to insist on changes. There was, as Director of Estate Transformation at OGC Mike Burt points out, '10 years of laissez-faire'. No one was capturing data centrally or measuring performance.

As the context of work changed for individuals and organizations, many of the limitations imposed by governance arrangements in place on the government's estate were coming into sharper focus. Traditional methods of procuring property solutions could be seen as a restraint both on progress and a barrier to efficiency. Government was constantly reconfiguring its departmental boundaries to address new and emerging policy imperatives. New approaches to procurement and models of occupation were being explored as an essential component in delivering the level of flexibility necessary to support an increasingly agile workforce, and a culture of service delivery and fluid organizational structure right across government.

Add to these new imperatives increased financial pressure and the drive for a sustainable work environment and it became clear that a strategic, cross-departmental asset management approach had to be adopted. Organizations now recognized the value of aligning their property asset base with corporate objectives to ensure that property was optimally configured to support the business in the delivery of these objectives. But not until the OGC launch of High Performing Property (HPP)<sup>2</sup> in 2006 – and, even more critically, the publication of *Transforming Government Procurement*<sup>3</sup> in January 2007 – was there a defined strategy in place for the transformation of the civil estate.

### **High Performing Property (HPP)**

It is now increasingly accepted across government that work is an activity, not a place, and that the way ahead lies in flexibility. The agenda is the modernizing of the estate and HPP is the route map to achieving that, setting out actions and milestones and developing ideas that will help government departments become more agile in their use of space and time (Figure 5.1).

<sup>1</sup> *Getting the Best from Public Sector Office Accommodation* (2006), NAO.

<sup>2</sup> *High Performing Property – A Routemap to Excellence* (2006), OGC.

<sup>3</sup> *Transforming Government Procurement* (2007), HM Treasury.

While HPP remains essentially an operational tool it does point the way forward for the estate to be run as a strategic property portfolio in which accommodation will be acquired on the basis of whole-life value, to meet well-defined business needs. The estate will be used intensively and effectively, with land and buildings retained only as long as they are performing well and location built into the business case. There will be much less concentration on London and the South East. Aiming for a fully sustainable, carbon neutral portfolio of property the transformed civil estate will provide for long and short term needs by supplying hotel.gov type flexible accommodation and one-stop shops where face-to-face contact is required in the delivery of services. It will meet space efficiency and organizational effectiveness benchmarks by promoting a 'work anywhere' culture, using the best technology: distributed working.

HPP builds on good practice already being adopted by some government organizations and plans for work by the OGC and departments to transform the government estate through four key components, which will require action by senior stakeholders, business decision makers, project and programme directors, finance directors, heads of estates, estates and facilities managers and service providers.

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**High Performing Property requires the government estate to be run as a strategic property portfolio in which accommodation will be acquired on the basis of whole-life value, to meet well-defined business needs.**

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**Figure 5.1: HPP themes for action**

**Leadership and integration** HPP recognizes that without leadership, nothing happens. It calls for strong leadership from the centre to offset the effects of fragmentation of the estate, and for an integrated property strategy. This would be based on the integration of asset management into strategic business planning and policy delivery across government departments and their arms-length bodies. Actions would include use of Property Asset Management (PAM) boards and revisiting governance frameworks.

The setting up of PAM Boards in main departments, each with their own Property Champion at board level, has brought a new focus to property across the department's family of organizations. These people, at around the seniority of director general, would usually be dealing with corporate services and weren't – aren't – narrowly estate-minded. Their involvement has produced a real shift in emphasis from a property-based to an asset-based view of the impact of buildings on the work of government. It is no longer acceptable to be speaking the language of bricks and mortar instead of the language of business. The result – and quite quickly – has been a search for more agile models of work and place, matching space to need. Increasingly this means instituting shared services, eliminating

repetition and concentrating on the status of the asset in terms of service delivery: it means convincing people to challenge what they're asking for rather than merely debating ways of getting it.

**Benchmarks and standards** HPP provides a framework of standards and benchmarks that set out best practice, performance objectives and aspirations. It also provides tools, guidance and support to help government organizations implement best practice and meet objectives. Actions include developing and using PAM plans, PAM capability and maturity assessments, the HPP Property Benchmarking Service<sup>4</sup> and the application of Workplace Efficiency Standards, the Civil Estate Coordination Protocol and guidance where appropriate.

**Skills and capability** All senior managers in government will be expected to have an understanding of asset management among their core skills. HPP ensures that there are sufficient skilled property professionals to implement best practice across government organizations.

**Review and challenge** HPP is committed to the creation of a culture of evidence-based review, challenge and continuous improvement, and to improved accountability and transparency in property asset decision-making.

<sup>4</sup> Corporate, cross-government benchmarking of property performance, using external expertise for data gathering and analysis and access to cross-sector and international benchmarking data. See *Better Measurement, Better Management: Effective Management of the Government Estate* (OGC).



### Barriers to performance

There are undoubtedly some barriers still in place between the perception of the need for a more open workplace nexus and its achievement. Chief among them is security, which is a powerful brake on change, preventing civil servants working in each others' buildings, each others' departments, even where this would be otherwise sensible, logical and acceptable. It has also affected the use of laptops within departments, and been a block on homeworking. It could be argued that although ICT is seen as an enabler – and that is the thesis of much of Chapters 3 and 4 – in certain cases it has become a barrier. Wireless access, for instance, is an obvious security issue across government. The transition from fat client devices (with local storage and processing within the device) to thin client devices (where data communications is the principal activity), reduces intranet and eventually internet monitors to highly secure dumb terminals and addresses many sensitive security issues.

New models are, however, in place for more agile workplaces that will produce a greater flexibility in the property portfolio. The traditional property market

presents challenges for the agile organization, offering as it does high levels of inertia for occupiers. Disposal and acquisition are complex, time consuming and costly processes. This often results in significant vacant space as the property cycle lags behind the business cycle. The new models must offer benefits for occupiers over conventional office space. In particular:

- an improved ability to match space to changing business growth patterns
- rapid mobilization and ease of exit
- reduced overheads through shared common services such as reception, mailroom and security
- predictable costs covering rents and rates and the full range of property support services
- avoidance of the long-term residual liabilities (such as dilapidations) that can arise with conventional occupancy routes.

Some public organizations are already planning, or have taken significant steps towards, increased use of flexible solutions within the context of their own property portfolio. In part this is driven by the need

for greater resilience in managing sudden changes in service delivery requirements which typify the sectors in question – the increased use of flexible managed space within the portfolio provides just this sort of resilience. There is significant demand for flexible short-term space across the public sector, but insufficient capacity to meet this in both the government estate and the market. OGC is piloting schemes to test and publicize the concept within government, backed by a longer-term look at how to use the potential demand to stimulate the market to respond.

### **Sustainability**

The public sector has a significant contribution to make to sustainable development, not just through the policies and services it delivers but also through all the supporting activities that go on in the workplace every day. Decisions about energy, water and waste management, and the goods and services government buys, all say a great deal about the government's commitment to sustainable development. But the pressure is on. It needs to go beyond compliance with good practice and to lead by example – our wider sustainable development goals as a country are unlikely to be realized if central government is not prepared to lead the way. As part of the UK's compliance with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, a key piece of European environmental legislation, the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) is introducing measures in England and Wales to improve the energy efficiency of buildings – which are responsible for almost 50 per cent of the UK's energy consumption and carbon emissions.

In June 2006, the Prime Minister launched new outcome-focused targets for Sustainable Operations on the Government Estate (SOGE), alongside the 2007 Sustainable Procurement Action Plan.<sup>5</sup> These targets have set out a clear agenda for central government on a range of priority areas for action, driving a significant step-change improvement in the way government manages and uses its buildings sustainably. They include:

- a carbon neutral office estate by 2012 alongside a 30 per cent reduction in carbon emissions by 2020
- recycling 75 per cent of the waste by 2020

- reducing waste generated by 25 per cent by 2020
- reducing water consumption by 25 per cent by 2020
- increasing energy efficiency by 30 per cent per square metre by 2020.

The introduction from 2008 of Energy Performance Certificates and annual Display Energy Certificates for public buildings will significantly help improve the energy efficiency of our buildings.

OGC is working alongside DEFRA and the Sustainable Development Commission to support the achievement of these targets. The establishment in 2008 of the Centre for Expertise on Sustainable Procurement (CESP) within OGC will ensure a stronger drive towards their achievement and the appointment of a new post of Chief Sustainability Officer within OGC will strengthen leadership.

A sustainably managed estate is one that has modern, resource efficient, low energy usage buildings and sustainable travel to work arrangements; well conserved and managed land; efficient use of space and ways of working; and the principles of sustainable development embedded into working practices.

### **Relocation**

In 2003 Sir Michael Lyons undertook a review challenging the location of public services in London and the South East.<sup>6</sup> Its conclusions were incorporated into the 2004 Spending Review settlement.

Lyons concluded that the pattern of government needed to be reshaped, and that it was disproportionately concentrated round London, which meant that, among other things, the pattern of government was not taking advantage of cost savings and operational efficiencies that could come from operating outside London and the South East. His message continues to act as a pressure on departments to consider relocation as a first option where business needs dictate that this is viable, as, for example, in the case of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) illustrated in Chapter 2.

By December 2007 15,710 posts have been relocated against an initial target of 20,000 posts to be relocated by March 2010. Further progress is being driven by controls on property acquisitions and leases in London and the South East in place since 2005. These require government organizations to produce

<sup>5</sup> SOGE targets are available at [www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.html](http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/government/estates/targets.html).

<sup>6</sup> 'Well placed to deliver? Shaping the pattern of government service', March 2004.

a robust business case for remaining in that area every time a property acquisition is proposed, or a lease expiry or lease break arises. By December 2007 these controls had led to the release of 316,000 square metres of space and taken over £54 million off the government's annual rent bill in London.

The relocation of posts away from London and the South East is recognized as an excellent opportunity to drive further efficiency savings, not limited to estates or simply moving to cheaper areas in the regions, but as an opportunity to re-engineer the business process delivered from that location and examine additional workplace strategies discussed elsewhere in this book.

### **Workspace standards and efficiency**

The pressure to save money in government is relentless and in recent years many public sector occupiers, in common with the private sector, have focused attention on occupational space efficiency, becoming more rigorous in their management of property costs while also focusing on improving the quality of the work environment. But how much space is enough?

OGC has set standards for workspace efficiency that will challenge organizations to be more imaginative about the way they use space. Through OGC's benchmarking service it will become obvious where workspace does not meet these standards, and increasingly champions will be asking questions. Business cases for new acquisitions or refurbishments presented to Property Asset Management (PAM) boards will need to address the space standards and explain any departure from the standards. While some buildings or uses may never support the standard occupation densities, the setting of a standard and the ability to monitor performance raises questions and challenges, and space use has to be justified.

Within the government estate some buildings are currently operating as efficiently as those in the private sector, and in some cases more efficiently. Recent research by OGC,<sup>7</sup> however, supported by its cross-government Property Benchmarking Service, suggests that public sector offices have not seen the scale of floorspace efficiencies observed in the private sector and that across the civil estate, space is used about 25 per cent less efficiently than in the private sector. This position clearly needs to change.

There are, however, a number of factors at play that will constrain the ability of an organization to maximize its space efficiency. Physical constraints are an issue: the building's age, floor size, space configuration and listed building status. Operational constraints include desk sharing potential, the prevalence of cellular space, the main function of the office, as well as the organization's requirements for public or meeting space and other, more specialist, support functions. Cultural constraints, such as an organization's management philosophy and willingness to embrace flexible working styles, will often dictate a particular form of layout. The final constraint is financial, because, of course, making changes to improve efficiencies often involves up-front expenditure.

In 2008 OGC introduced space efficiency standards of 10 square metres per person for new builds, acquisitions and major refurbishments, and 10–12 square metres per person (NIA) for workspace improvement opportunities arising from all other refurbishments. OGC's research estimates that application of these standards across the estate has the potential to deliver annual savings estimated at £1.25 billion. These standards recognize the growing importance of flexible working and the opportunities to make efficiency savings through better utilization of desks rather than through lower space allocation per workstation. The lessons from elsewhere in this book are that good quality space reduction programmes have typically been used creatively in a change management context to improve the way people work together.

If new workspace standards are to be optimized, attention must be paid to professional space planning. Workspaces typically evolve organically, absorbing changes without re-planning. Over time this can result in duplicated or inefficient circulation, inefficient layouts, poorly positioned desks (in terms of light and circulation) and inappropriate adjacencies in terms of teams and worksettings (for example, breakout space too near to desks). A basic review of space planning, even without any fundamental renewal of the workspace itself, can pay great dividends in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the working environment. And any implementation of new space standards demands replanning of the space to achieve the desired outcomes.

<sup>7</sup> 'Efficiency Standards for Office Space: A Report to the Office of Government Commerce', IPD Occupiers, November 2007.

### Flexible managed office

In response to demand a new flexible managed office (FMO) market is emerging. FMOs may particularly suit organizations with rapidly changing or unpredictable short-term space requirements, or undergoing mergers, contraction, expansion or relocation, particularly if temporary space is needed to facilitate moves (swing space).

OGC is examining the scope for increased use of flexible managed offices and flexible desking. The market for flexible managed space is still very small compared to conventional leases, so OGC is adopting a twin approach; pilot schemes to test and publicize the concept within government, backed by a longer-term look at how to use the potential government demand to stimulate private sector supply. In addition, while well over half the existing non-PFI office space is already in larger buildings, work is in hand to improve the opportunities for co-location by removing barriers in government leases to sharing space more easily within the wider public sector.

The National Audit Office (NAO) has proposed three initiatives in combination (Figure 5.2):

- Hotel.gov
- Core and flex
- Clustering/co-location.

### Figure 5.2: the flexible managed office

**Hotel.gov** provides serviced-office style accommodation tailored to an FMO solution – though of course significant cultural and operational barriers remain, such as meeting the public sector’s security and information technology requirements and breaking the link between ‘me and my building’.

**Core and flex** insists that departments work out which of their buildings are core and which tidal in use. If they are project based they are time bound and must be costed accordingly (or an embarrassing amount of space will become available for disposal). People must not be encouraged – or permitted – to make core decisions to meet this year’s big idea and then be stuck with it (and the bill).

**Co-location** of departments, arm’s length bodies (ALBs) and the establishment of shared service centres within campus settings observes the reality of complex changes in organizational boundaries, as models of service delivery change. The call centre, for instance, has become a dated phenomenon: now the internet is growing as a vehicle for service delivery. These changes raise questions of where the appropriate location should be for government activity. Clustering of government buildings and organizations helps further career opportunities and can create a critical mass of like-minded professions/professionals. But it can overheat local property markets and impose an organizational context where none need exist.

**Strategic portfolio management**

While HPP remains the primary vehicle to drive better performance from the government estate through more taut and efficient asset management disciplines, HPP needs to be supported by initiatives that exploit efficiency gains across the government estate, which is not at present being planned or delivered as a corporate asset. It is managed and used through individual departmental accountability and, to an extent, 'silo mentality'. Clear opportunities exist to exploit the pan-government use of workspace, and OGC is considering ways to strengthen the delivery of HPP through introducing further incentives and removing obstacles – many of which are in the accounting procedures – and through developing a stronger strategic portfolio management approach to the whole government estate.

The thinking about the direction this will take is still at an early stage, but there are clear opportunities to develop and exploit regional or functional strategies for sectors of the whole estate portfolio, building on the emerging departmental strategies and cross-

cutting initiatives such as Civil Service West Midlands ([www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk/westmids/](http://www.careers.civil-service.gov.uk/westmids/)).

A key challenge is to achieve the right balance between the need for a corporate approach to planning and exploiting the opportunities for the whole government estate and the need to maintain departmental accountability for managing and using individual property assets to deliver business objectives.

Building on the earlier Gershon Efficiency Programme, the government's ambitious and far-reaching Operational Efficiency Programme of 2008, with work strands that include property and asset management and disposals will mark a new phase in the ruthless drive to ensure that the tax payer gets the best possible deal from the services they fund. The property work strand of this programme is expected to build on what is being achieved by HPP, looking hard at the scope available for further savings from better management across the whole of the government estate.



## Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

### Alnwick

DEFRA's new office building in Alnwick, Northumberland – completed in April 2008 – houses around 70 staff including members of the department's Shared Services group and will have the ability to expand its operational support on demand in times of national emergency. Hot-desking is provided for a small team of Rural Payments Agency inspectors who travel to outlying farms and a records management team has on-site file storage capacity. The new project is planned to bring environmental, economic and social benefits to the Alnwick community.

Lion House is potentially the first zero carbon building to win a BREEAM Excellent rating: it has achieved this distinction by integrating natural ventilation and renewable energy sources into its design – wind turbines, solar hot-water, solar electric panels and a biomass boiler – and targeting energy consumption in its operation to reduce and manage its carbon emissions. It also incorporates government SOGE targets<sup>8</sup> to reduce water consumption and waste and to increase recycling. The project has benefited from collaboration with the Building Research Establishment to pilot and launch a new BREEAM Outstanding building design category, which the building is likely to achieve.

Staff were closely involved during the design development process and were able to observe progress on site from their adjacent 1960s offices, now demolished following occupation of the new building. Regular consultation between the DEFRA design team and building users during the construction period addressed how best to manage the use of the building including the consumption of energy and water, and how to manage waste and recycling.

### York

At Foss House and Mallard House in DEFRA's York headquarters complex, refurbishment and re-stacking of the accommodation led to improved efficiency which allowed for an increase in the number of workstations from 850 to 1,150. A naturally-ventilated open-plan modern working environment has been

delivered against a demanding programme, together with a new social hub extension and business centre. Complex construction and move-in phasing required excellent communications to enable DEFRA staff to remain working and to maintain business continuity throughout the programme. Driven by property rationalization, the resulting financial savings will now return to the Exchequer. With a BREEAM Excellent rating and SOGE targets met, high environmental sustainability credentials were achieved.

**Renewable energy** is the term used to describe energy flows that occur naturally and continuously in the environment, such as energy from the wind, waves or tides. The origin of the majority of these sources can be traced back to either the sun (energy from the sun helps to drive the earth's weather patterns) or the gravitational effects of the sun and the moon. This means that these sources are essentially inexhaustible.



## Environment Agency (EA)

The drive to sustainable buildings is government policy: the new headquarters of the Environment Agency's Thames Region – Red Kite House, Wallingford, Oxfordshire – is inevitably a test case, promoted as an example of best practice in sustainable development, designed to be BREEAM Excellent and now with several awards to its credit.

Red Kite House is a distinctive building – curved to capture the wind and maximize natural ventilation. With around 192 workstations accommodating 250-265 'floating' users, it occupies 2,490 square metres (NIA) of office space, meeting rooms, kitchen/break-out space, reprographics, laboratory space and secure interview rooms. Operational field teams share desks at the rate of one desk per two staff.

The passive energy design is optimized for natural ventilation and night-time cooling. It incorporates renewable energy features including photovoltaic cells to generate electrical power, solar panels to provide hot water, rainwater harvesting and sustainable car park drainage. The building is expected to produce 25 per cent less carbon dioxide than current eco-friendly offices and will save 40 per cent of the building's demands on water. Red Kite House was designed to a BREEAM Excellent rating. This rating was achieved even before the renewable energy strategies now in place were taken into consideration.

The new office will accommodate more staff when leases fall in with adjacent buildings on site and will be promoted by the Environment Agency to demonstrate best practice and showcase sustainable 'green' building for the twenty first century.

### Opportunity for change

The agency previously occupied low-grade, inefficient, inflexible, dispersed but low cost properties occupied under separate leases and exposed to risk of piecemeal lease termination. Disabled access was poor, running costs were high and energy performance inadequate. The main project driver was the opportunity to bring everyone under one roof to improve business performance. An increase in staff numbers was predicted between 2003 and 2007: it was imperative to get value for money and an environmentally sustainable office building.

It was apparent that significant improvements to workplace quality and business operations would only realistically be achieved following an expected increase in operational and property costs.

### Implementation

A design and build contract was used to developer shell and core standard with tenant fit-out under a separate contract. The business plan was approved in 2002. Pilot 'open plan' layout started in 2004, with the pilot area set up with new space plan and furniture in one of the buildings due to be vacated. This ran for two years and staff were encouraged to visit the space. The building was completed to shell and core in February 2005 and occupied in phases between May and July 2005.

### Performance

The building's energy design was benchmarked against the Best Practice Econ 19 model by the design team, who also carried out a post-occupancy evaluation (POE) to determine whether the project had delivered to the operational reality. 70 per cent of the staff surveyed had been in the building for at least a year and so had worked through all four seasons in the buildings. Using a Probe Survey<sup>9</sup> (post-occupancy review of building engineering) under licence revealed that Red Kite house fell in the top 20 per cent in topics such as perceived comfort and lighting.

### Key lessons

- Work closely with developer from project inception with pre-let specification
- Pilot open plan and flexible working well in advance
- Consider appropriateness of a building management system (BMS) at an early stage
- Consider merits of sub-metering during the design stages
- Energy bills – should be paid direct to supplier rather than via the landlord
- Be aware of snagging implications when employing different contractors to undertake the shell and core development and the fit-out
- Look at the widest possible BREEAM context and commit to planned travel to work options.

<sup>9</sup> The Probe project is a joint initiative between the *CIBSE Journal* – the journal of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers – HGa Consulting Engineers, William Bordass Associates and Building Use

Studies. Its purpose is to assess the performance in practice of projects covered in the *CIBSE Journal*.





## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)

This is an estate-wide, strategic initiative with far-reaching consequences for the ways in which space and attitudes to it can be modernized to support new ways of working and enhance service delivery.

Public property in Northern Ireland has suffered from decades of under-investment and lack of maintenance: much of the funding available was directed towards building security and staff safety initiatives. With a new devolved government and exciting inward investment, the Province now boasts one of the fastest growing regional economies in the UK and looks forward to a dynamic future, in which strategically managed public property is set to play a major part.

Together with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB), the NICS has developed a joint strategy to deliver a step change in the quality and efficiency of public services, encompassing everything from public records and finance to IT services and broadband implementation. A key part of this strategy, Workplace 2010, looks at the pressing problems in the office

estate in light of the way that the civil service would wish to deliver its services in the future. The NICS has about 200 office buildings varying in size, age and quality. A study of these buildings identified around 70 buildings for transfer to the private sector under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract.

Most of the buildings are in the Belfast estate, and will be included in a 20-year total property programme in partnership with the private sector, providing a very significant investment into the Northern Ireland economy. The contract is expected to be in the region of £1.5 billion.

Two pathfinder projects, created to pilot new open plan accommodation standards and working practices, were used to inform the development of the tender briefing process, expected to reach its conclusion in early 2009. The pilot projects have helped some 12,000 staff with a means of visualizing the future of their work and continue to provide NICS with the facilities to test every aspect of change in the workplace throughout the rationalization and refurbishment process it is about to embark upon.



## Chapter 6

# Workplace design – a business imperative

Twentieth-century modernism was a highly successful programme, from the Second World War onward profoundly affecting the way we as a society live, work and play through our exposure to urban design, architecture, industrial design, fashion, fine art, theatre, cinema, music, literature – and even food. We've come to take access to high-quality products as a right: and now their performance affects every aspect of our lives and not least our life at work. Design matters. We see its influence everywhere: the post-war revolution in prefabricated homes and schools; the rise of new entrepreneurs like Terence Conran, providing interior design for a consumer society; and the proliferation of public exhibitions of art and design, from London's South Bank, Design Museum and Tate Modern to the Hockney gallery at Salt's Mill in Yorkshire.

As a society we've become more discerning about design and more confident about talking about it and as a result more critical if it fails. And naturally we signify our involvement in design culture through the way we live and work, through the places in which we choose to live and work, and through our relationship with the well-designed technology that enables our working lives and makes such an impact on our life experiences and our work performance. The government workplace is no exception to that general engagement with design.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, better quality workplace design was ushered in on a wave of space rationalization: workplace space standards. Then in the 1990s came a step change in design quality for the government workplace – for example, with the move from London to Castle Meadows in Nottingham of the former Inland Revenue, and the campus development at Abbey Wood for the Ministry of Defence. Both projects illustrated that good design can result in more flexible and efficient space, and therefore a reduction in long-term real-estate costs.

In the same way that we expect cars to be compact, fuel-efficient, easy-to-manoeuvre and high-performing, we now know that well-designed work space is cheaper, wears better and performs better: what we want is high performance with classic style. So whole-life costing and triple bottom line accounting (taking account of social and environmental as well as financial performance) can emphasize value for money, cost per wear and less waste.

People want value for money as consumers and as tax-payers: they know it makes sense for government personnel to work in well-designed, organizationally effective surroundings. To attract and retain skilled staff in the face of competition from other employers means providing attractive and healthy places for working, inside or outside the office.

### Design excellence

The Roman engineer Vitruvius applied a simple test to any building structure: it had to be strong, useful, and beautiful (*firmitas, utilitas, venustas*). Today's focus on quality makes the same fundamental points in our use of space,<sup>1</sup> and attests to the crucial importance of building design in the procurement of process and product, relevant to everyone involved in achieving design excellence.

Design quality indicators (DQIs) now come recommended and the completion of a short questionnaire allows clients and designers to evaluate their building design proposals. Each topic is considered and rated against set criteria: build quality, functionality and impact – the expressive function. The NHS (AEDT) and MoD (DEEP) use similar design evaluation methods.

An excellent building design will add value at many levels: to the work of the organization and the working lives of its employees; to the public that depend on their performance; to its cost in use and to its relation to the natural environment.

<sup>1</sup> *Achieving Excellence in Construction*, OGC.  
*Creating Excellent Buildings*, CABE.

### Design procurement

Time spent on defining requirements, evaluating solution options and selecting a design and procurement team should neither be wasted nor spared. Careful preparation at the start of a design project will provide maximum opportunity to add value to the design outcome. But there comes a crossover point in the life of a project when more time spent trying to add value through re-designing will start to add to costs through programme delay. Working closely with the design team will help a client decide when this point is reached.

The starting point for the procurement of a good design is a committed and authoritative client: committed by virtue of having a clear vision and authoritative as a result of having the financial muscle to get things moving quickly. The client's first priority is to select the best team for the job, made up of people with complementary and unique skills. They must then be kept focused and bonded by a single vision. This skill set is essential if they are to play the role of the intelligent client.

At the point of selecting appropriate partners it should be clear that they should have no interest in any of the products specified in the design, or conflicts of interest will soon arise. Furniture suppliers asked to produce the space planning, for instance, may end up filling the available space with their furniture products. Partnering with a team that communicates well is not a bonus but a prerequisite for good design: OGC guidance points out that contracting with partners on the basis of cost alone will not guarantee value for money.<sup>2</sup>

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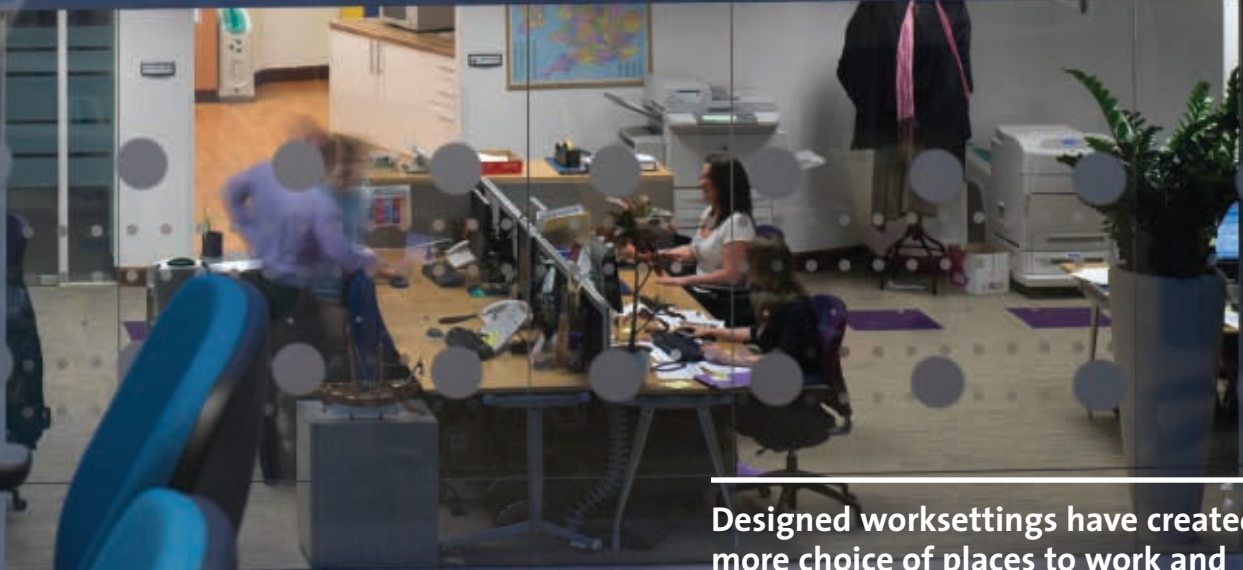
**‘Any successful project requires a well informed client, good project management, good design team/construction team, good support from legal and finance and finally a very good facilities management operation.’**

Tony Edwards, Head of Home Office Estates

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Above Home Office, 2 Marsham Street



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Designed worksettings have created more choice of places to work and more variety in places to work within the building, with wireless working allowing staff to work productively almost anywhere.

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When placed in perspective, construction costs may be exceeded several times over by occupancy costs during a building's life and the cost of longer-life, better quality construction elements can be paid back through reduced running and maintenance costs. The expense to a business of occupying and maintaining a building over its working life may be up to five times its construction cost. Factoring in the cost of staff salaries during occupation (perhaps up to 200 times of capital costs), suggests that the potential leverage on productivity from procuring better quality design could be immense.<sup>3</sup>

While the accuracy of the so-called 1:5:200 ratio has been challenged, the point is that a small addition to construction costs from specifying better quality elements may have a large beneficial and magnifying end-user effect. When using designers and architects, ensure that their specifications for workplace elements and products take whole-life costs into account.

### Designing for work beyond walls

Until recently the focus of design performance has been on the immobile office, where work is located and fixed within the walls of a building. But work and the people who do it are now increasingly found beyond the boundaries of the office and therefore beyond reach of old styles of management. This throws down new challenges on the significance of design. Two new problems arise for designers: first, what kind of buildings are needed to cater for the changing demands of increasingly mobile workers who have new and different needs at those times when they come into an office building? Second, as office work frees itself from the confines of single building boundaries, what challenges does this present for designing new types of products and places that support work?

To support employees when they turn up at new 'core' or 'flex' offices (see Chapter 5) new levels of specification will have to be met if they are to provide mobile workers with durable, highly performing and attractive work settings.

Analysis of a wide range of case studies in the private as well as the public sector illustrates how design has evolved in response to supporting new ways of working.<sup>4</sup> This research was conducted across a range of new, refurbished, small and large offices and

revealed generic interior design, IT and FM solutions within the office that support working beyond walls. These solutions may herald the trend for the future of government working and include:

- concierge service at reception
- web-enabled booking system that allows staff to share desks
- open office floors with low level storage to maximize operational visibility
- grouped, lockable, robust, personal storage cabinets with portable elements
- wireless working in part or whole across the building from an atrium café to floor break-out spaces
- bright, accessible break-out spaces to encourage eating away from desks
- service hubs on each floor to accommodate multi-functional devices for printing, faxing, scanning and copying, reducing hot spots, noise, untidy cables and general disruption
- desks and low-height acoustic screens in a variety of configurations, shapes and sizes
- first-come, first-served touch down work stations
- small quiet rooms for confidential calls and one-to-one meetings
- team project and quiet meeting rooms
- touchdown space for all short-stay visitors near reception in a business centre environment with club style meeting lounges
- well-designed signage for way-finding
- easily accessible stairs and lifts from reception
- a variety of tough, attractive, high-quality finishes and fittings.

These design interventions have benefited business through reduced occupancy and environmental costs. Space management benefits have included the opportunity for business teams to be charged according to the actual use of space; further growth in staff numbers being absorbed within the current office space to provide 'space-less growth'; and staff from different business teams mixing together and being more generally aware of what is going on.

Left Department for Children, Schools and Families

<sup>3</sup> Evans, R., Haryott, R., Haste, N. and Jones, A., 1998, *The Long Term Costs of Owning and Using Buildings* Royal Academy of Engineering, London. The 1/5/200 rule of thumb was proposed as a 'useful guide for the whole life cost of operating and owning commercial office buildings'.

<sup>4</sup> *Getting the Best from Public Sector Office Accommodation*, 2006, NAO.

Hotel-style facilities and services have set new quality standards for housekeeping and support to valued staff wherever they may be working beyond office walls. Carefully designed interiors have also created more choice and more variety of places to enable staff to work more productively almost anywhere within the building. So not only can design reduce cost and environmental waste, it can also add value to a business.

### **The impact of office design on business performance**

The investigation of the ways in which design may improve staff productivity and business performance is a well-trodden path. Experiments conducted around 1930 at the Western Electric Hawthorne Works in Chicago tried to link employee motivation and productivity to workspace illumination. These and subsequent results suggest searching for simple, direct causal links has turned into something of a philosopher's stone. Social scientists, business economists, corporate real-estate professionals and others now ask reformulated but still similar questions. While simple, directly useful answers linking design to measured outcomes are rare, the studies mentioned below illustrate current thinking and introduce readers to key issues.

Survey results of users' responses to office buildings in terms of perceived comfort and productivity can be found in the CIBSE Probe post-occupancy studies, for example. These have shown that recognition by designers of users' own strategies to satisfy their comfort requirements have led to simpler and more effective office design and building management solutions.<sup>5</sup> And OGC's ongoing and now widely applied benchmarking survey across government offices looks similarly at workspace 'effectiveness' by measuring staff self-reports on productivity (see Home Office case study below).

Research conducted by DEGW for the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the British Council of Offices (BCO) in 2005<sup>6</sup> showed that offices are moving from being a basis for information processing towards supporting corporate and business communication. This is being driven by IT, increased competition for staff and therefore the desirability of attractive buildings, the under-utilization of office space and the development of new ways of working, all of which are revolutionizing office design. This study

shows that despite the global level of investment to modernize ways of working there is still 'a disappointing lack of relevance in most office workplace research to business performance'.

The study's recommendations to occupiers point to critical decisions that each business must make within the context of its own objectives and priorities, and include:

- staff productivity and satisfaction versus economic efficiency
- new ways of working
- organizational change
- concentration versus communication.

A recent study in which business and staff issues have been investigated using the participant organizations' own data can be found in *Getting the Best from Public Sector Office Accommodation*, (2006) NAO. In case studies demonstrating good practice in the use of public and private sector real estate, ensuing financial, staff satisfaction, retention, absenteeism and work-life balance benefits are presented.

In many of these cases project outcomes have been judged most successful where a higher level of staff retention following workplace transformation is reported.

On a slightly different, but related, tack, useful results from researching the business benefits of successful corporate property management in both the private and public sectors can be found in 'Think profit, act property' by Evans and Weatherhead for the RICS's Corporate Occupiers Group 1999. The relationship here is explored between occupancy costs and revenue and measured by an 'affordability ratio' – a benchmark used to determine whether businesses are 'living within their means'.

It is undeniably challenging to measure the links between perceived comfort of staff and productivity, as these studies have made clear, but there is no doubt that the importance of retaining highly valued staff and achieving business transformation through the impact of design ensures that it will continue to occupy a key and expanding role in the evolution of distributed working.

<sup>5</sup> Leaman A., Bordass W., Cohen R. and Standeven M., *The Probe Occupant Surveys*, CIBSE, February 1997. See also [www.usablebuildings.co.uk](http://www.usablebuildings.co.uk)

<sup>6</sup> *The Impact of Office Design on Business Performance*, CABE/BCO 2005.



### The evolution of design

The role of design in a world of impersonal workspace is different from the one it has traditionally occupied in shared office buildings, but it matters more because, for example:

- work is what you do, no longer where you go – but the number of locations to go to is growing
- when there's a broader range of workplaces, no one single place for working should be of any lesser quality than any other – home, airport, office or hotel
- emphasis will no longer be on simple space constraints such as desk space-standards – fewer people are in the office long enough for it to be more significant than for example finding a vacant meeting room
- if staff are to be attracted and retained, then people's expectations about the variety of places in which to work will matter more
- expectations will involve a step change because of media influence
- every opportunity should be taken to provide design excellence and to avoid disappointing the end user because it will have a huge impact on their ability to perform at work and when they come to the office the setting will affect their relationships with other people
- distributed work and working anywhere is a fast accelerating trend.

With the greater range of office settings now required to support a wider variety of working styles the task of designing the interior and layout of offices has become one needing greater professional and creative skills. The development away from rows of desks and bands of enclosed rooms to much more dynamic layouts that support human movement and work variety is evidenced by many of the case studies illustrated in this book. People now expect more stimulating colours and textures, and more variety from workplace furnishings and lighting, all of which can set the appropriate mood for the task in hand. Graphics and artwork on walls and ceilings, colourful hanging banners, etched glazing and decorative screens can all be combined to convey the aims and values of an organization as is amply demonstrated for example in the Home Office building presented here.

The expressive power behind successful branding and design can no longer be ignored, even in government, and will be key to how well the office workplace can position itself in the future world of distributed work and its infinite array of choice, options and opportunity. The office as a building type now has to compete with other alternatives to attract employees, and with a wider range of age groups to be supported, generational expectations must be borne in mind: expectations in terms of design quality and performance. A new generation will blur traditional distinctions between home and places in which to work. This means there's great natural competition for places to go, linked to technology: employers will have to compete to attract and secure their staff. And the iPod generation will give as much attention to the detailed design of their workplaces as they will to their mobile technology, at the point of purchase.

When the annual cost of providing an office workplace can exceed the purchase price of a small car, the issue of value for money and stakeholder choice jumps sharply into focus. As issues of economy and design as well as environmental sustainability loom larger, alternatives to the traditional office with a dedicated desk for everyone will look increasingly attractive. After all, what used to satisfy us in the 1970s as personal transport – in terms of durability, functionality, elegance, economy and impact on the environment – would appal us now: why should our expectations of a twenty-first century place to work be any less demanding?



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**‘Good design may initially cost a little more in time and thought, although not necessarily in money. But the end result is more pleasing to the eye and more efficient, costs less to maintain and is kinder to the environment.’**

**Lord Rea, House of Lords <sup>7</sup>**

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## Home Office

In 2005 2 Marsham Street became the new address for the Home Office. Its design overturned some of the deep-seated feelings people had towards their workplace and its success illustrates a number of ways in which design can make a difference.

The Home Office believes its design has had a positive affect on people's performance at work. The design addressed not only the individual buildings but the surrounding urban environment of public spaces and their inter-relationship. The integration of the use of space continued throughout the planning and design of the interior.

*'...we are modernizing and becoming more outward looking...Moving our headquarters to 2 Marsham Street is both a major contribution to and a symbol of this new approach. It is striking yet simple – the antithesis of the notoriously ugly tower blocks it replaces – and will allow us to bring more core headquarters staff together for the first time. Terry Farrell has given us a building which encourages people to work more collaboratively, to communicate better and more openly with our partners and the public, and which equips us with the latest technology. It will enable us to play our role better and thus to make a difference to the lives of people across the UK.'*



*'...Original and public art have been included as an integral part of the design, which has been delivered on time and on budget. It is a headquarters to rival the best in all sectors of the economy....'*

**Sir John Gieve**, Permanent Secretary

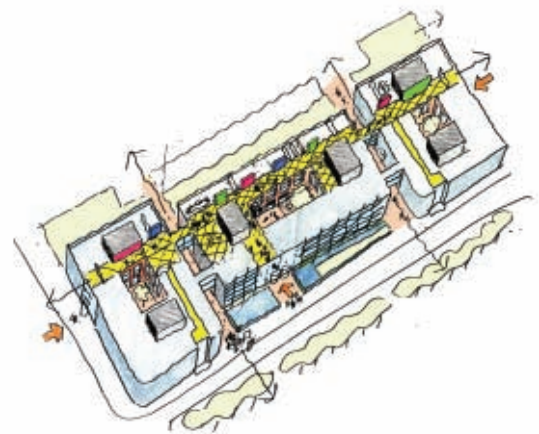
*'Our previous workspace had been dark and depressing. There wasn't much of a view through those bomb-proof curtains. When we had a sneak preview of the building I thought it was fabulous; so bright and colourful. The new offices couldn't be more different. It's obvious that a lot of thought went into its design.'*

**Jennifer Lyon**, Drug Strategy Unit

*'2 Marsham Street has scored 140 for effectiveness under OGC/IPD benchmark. This is 40 per cent above the benchmark average. It supports team work, it adapts quickly to changing requirements, it encourages flatter management hierarchies all of which help the Home Office to work more efficiently and more effectively.'*

**Tony Edwards**, Head of Home Office Estates.

'Effectiveness' is a measure of the influence that office design can have on people. It combines together such things as staff satisfaction, environmental sustainability and building condition. For a fuller understanding see OGC Property Benchmarking Report 2007.



## Chapter 7

### The human factor – stakeholders and staff

There are 5.4 million employees in the UK who work through some kind of formal or informal flexible working agreement. Of these, 3.3 million work from home in some form.<sup>1</sup> Clearly such a radical challenge to long-held assumptions on how, when and where we work must be met with an equally strong response, if people are to be free to operate with greater personal flexibility and business agility.

A key problem lies in the fault lines reported within traditional 9-to-5 employment structures and their negative impact on the economy, society and natural environment.<sup>2</sup> Many UK employers are still out of step with the popular demand for 'flexible' working. Many have out-of-date employment policies and are unsure as to what criteria enable employees to work flexibly. A 2007 BERR survey reported that almost half of employers (45 per cent) said that managers did actively promote flexible working which is an increase of 7 per cent since 2003.<sup>3</sup> However, this masked a decline in the proportion of large workplaces (250 employees or more) that 'actively promote flexible working, from 56 per cent in 2003 to 49 per cent; and an increase among smaller workplaces (with less than 250 employees) promoting flexible working, from 37 per cent to 44 per cent'.

With an increased demand from employees for more flexible hours and more flexible locations for working, management support is patchy and some employers are still not ready for change. So what implications does this have for employment prospects?

By limiting job choices inside a 9-5 work culture, millions still remain either under-employed in part-time work or unemployed. A 2007 Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) report reveals that 6.5 million people in Britain could be using their skills fully if more flexible working were available. It warns that 'rigid working practices are driving highly qualified

workers into jobs below their skill level so they can achieve a work/life balance'.<sup>4</sup>

Even where people and skills are matched, a reported increase in workloads with long hours at the office followed by long hours commuting may prove unsustainable for many working families. The situation is not made easier by much-lauded but poorly executed travel-to-work plans. The plans originally conceived to reduce the environmental and social impact of 9-to-5 commuting are not yet treated sufficiently seriously. Transport for London (TfL) has an automated survey tool to help organizations implement a travel plan ([www.flexibility.co.uk](http://www.flexibility.co.uk)).

Employees, however, treat the issue of long hours spent working very seriously. Customers expect service at times that suit them and more people have to juggle responsibilities at home and in the workplace. The two concerns that emerge most frequently from surveys conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) on employee attitudes are long hours and work intensity.<sup>5</sup>

'The UK has one of the longest working weeks and the longest commute times in Europe; 54 minutes per day or 29 working days per year'.<sup>6</sup> The social impact of work on all of us is considerable. Changing working patterns – compressed working hours, job sharing, nine-day fortnights, teleconferencing, working from home, working remotely, mobile and flexible working – can help to make a substantial reduction in the necessity to travel to work or to business meetings. Mobile working, hot desking, drop in centres, teleconferencing and videoconferencing are effective ways of beating congestion, saving costs and increasing productivity. The adoption of more flexible attitudes across both the public and private sectors could stagger the rush hour, reducing travel at the

<sup>1</sup> *Smarter Working Guide*, 2007, Transport for London.

<sup>2</sup> Madden, A. 'Flexible working in the public sector', conference address 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Third Work Life Balance Employer Survey*, BERR, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> 'Working outside the box', EOC, January 2007, quoted in *Smarter Working Guide*, 2007, Transport for London.

<sup>5</sup> *Work-life Balance*, CIPD, 2007.

peak period of congestion. And, of course, a reduced need to travel means lower carbon emission.

Working families are more diverse in their domestic arrangements than before<sup>7</sup> and this means that different models of employment flexibility are needed, along with more choice. Changing demographics are revealing a trend toward fewer young, white males in employment and a growing number of women and older people in need of employment security. With millions of graduates working below their potential and with career returnees compelled to trade down their skills, the UK is losing out to its competitors – and at a time when ‘UK productivity in 2006, as measured by GDP per worker, was behind that of the average of the other G7 countries’.

With a traditional management culture fighting a rearguard action, many people of working age have been unable to engage satisfyingly with the world of work. Social attitudes to family and working lives have changed and the 9-to-5 model of office work is now out of step. The prediction is that finding a better balance between the demands of domestic life and work – a work/life balance – will increasingly be the key to employment choice.<sup>8</sup>

Jobs that by definition have involved working beyond office rather than traditional management ‘walls’ include peripatetic inspectors and field workers and thousands are already employed across government. Added to these are the rising number of professional and knowledge workers in government. Their skills

#### Figure 7.1: some fundamental questions on flexible working

Those with a stake in the solution to working more flexibly must answer some key questions.

- Which jobs are most suited to the new work/life paradigm?
- What are the risks and the potential benefits?
- What changes to HR policies and practices are implicated?
- What new skills are involved?
- What strategies will help to better manage remote working?

guarantee some independence over how they work and seeking work/life balance they can do so very effectively at a distance from office headquarters.

#### Working more flexibly in time and space

‘Job suitability’ and ‘eligibility criteria’ for working flexibly are key issues of concern to employers along with whether new forms of working are seen as a management reward or an employee right (Figure 7.1). The case for working remotely now has wide ramifications and is driven by even larger employee numbers than before, not least because of rapid developments in ICT and access to cheaper bandwidth.

#### Figure 7.2: some new ways of working defined

**Hot desking** The sharing of desks over time by a number of individuals. Can be bookable or ad-hoc use, often located in team or special zones.

**Hotelling** More formalized bookable hot desking, often for shorter stay use.

**Mobile working** Workers spend considerable time travelling and working from different locations but will still have an office or home base.

**Teleworking** Office-style work undertaken exclusively from a remote location – home or a local centre.

**Homeworking** Workers work from home as their main base, occasionally visiting the main office.

**Working from home** More occasional, ad-hoc, and often informal arrangement for working from home – where office is main base.

**Non-territorial working (NTW)** Working within the office using a range of shared, communal workspaces. Nobody has a dedicated workstation.

**Virtual team-working** Project teams work together primarily on a virtual basis, typically across different locations using technology to communicate and share work.

**Flexible working** Workers agree different patterns of work over time (part-time, term-time, annualized hours, nine-day fortnight), to assist work/life balance, as well as business needs.

6 David Lennan, Chairman, Work Wise UK – Work Wise UK Summit 2008, ‘Creating a smarter, greener working Britain’, QEII Conference Centre, 21 May 2008.

7 National Statistics On-line.

8 *Management Futures – The World in 2018*, CMI, 2008.

**Figure 7.3: matching flexible work practices to job roles**

Term	Description	Typical roles	For the benefit of
<b>Hot desking</b>	Hot desking refers to permanent workstations that can be used on a temporary basis by different employees as and when required. The work surface could be an actual desk or just a terminal link. No one has their own personal domain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial services</li> <li>• Administrative posts</li> <li>• Customer service</li> <li>• Consultancies</li> </ul>	Anywhere staff work with different teams of people or where staff are not predominantly office-based.
<b>Working from home</b>	Activities and functions are mainly performed at home and typically require the establishment of a suitably equipped workspace to allow full regular contact with colleagues and customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional and knowledge workers</li> <li>• Technical experts</li> <li>• Sales staff</li> </ul>	Knowledge workers – and can be helpful if covering different time zones or round-the-clock cover
<b>Teleworking</b>	Teleworking refers to jobs and assignments performed from a distance typically over a network such as the internet as opposed to work performed directly on site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales</li> <li>• Customer support</li> <li>• Technical helplines</li> </ul>	Where most work is conducted by telephone
<b>Mobile working</b>	Mobile workers may have a permanent base but spend most of their working time in other locations. Suppliers of business services, in particular, are mainly on site with clients. These workers can communicate with their office and stay away from base by using mobile phones, wireless internet enabled laptops and personal digital assistants (PDAs), handheld devices that combine computing, telephone/fax and networking features. A typical PDA can function as a mobile phone, fax sender and personal organizer. Many PDAs incorporate handwriting and/or voice-recognition features. PDAs are also called palmtops, handheld computers and pocket computers. This can also provide significant savings when coupled with other Smarter Working techniques such as hot desking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales staff</li> <li>• Auditors</li> <li>• Field technical staff</li> <li>• Regional managers</li> <li>• Trainers</li> <li>• HR managers</li> <li>• Project managers</li> </ul>	Employers who have to make face-to-face calls and can use time between appointments to manage administration
<b>Virtual teamworking</b>	In virtual teams people collaborate on joint projects but rarely or never meet face-to-face. Developments in video conferencing, virtual private networks and collaborative-project software are making such work possible. Where physical items have to be exchanged, courier services are used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copywriter</li> <li>• Editor</li> <li>• Illustrator</li> <li>• Graphic designer</li> </ul>	High skill level work where teams might work together for a short period of time



Work Wise UK, a not-for-profit initiative, aims to make the UK economy more competitive by encouraging the widespread adoption of smarter working practices. The organization provides a central information service for the UK workforce and champions the dissemination of key information and best practice. In May 2008 DEFRA was awarded the Work Wise UK Quality Mark, the first public sector organization to be recognized for flexible, efficient and sustainable smart working practices.

There are now many examples of flexible working practices across government – hot desking, non-territorial working (NTW), homeworking, teleworking, mobile working, and virtual working practices. (Figure 7.2 gives a fuller list of these terms and Figure 7.3 illustrates the possibilities for matching flexible work practices to job roles.) Some departments have made enormous steps along the road to flexibility in time and space and can offer useful guidance to those at an earlier stage: learn from the innovators. DIUS, for example, is the first department to issue all its staff with encrypted, lightweight laptops and encourage flexible working by widespread hot desking for all staff, including the permanent secretary. The department has also made big investments in videoconferencing, including the first telepresence suite in Whitehall (with life-size, high-definition images that give you ‘everything that a meeting does except the handshake’). There are also plans for a departmental presence on virtual world domain Second Life, and to WiFi the London headquarters.

#### **Changes to policies and practices and the need for new skills**

There are risks involved to both employers and employees in more flexible working.<sup>9</sup> At the top of the list are the health and safety concerns of the workforce, with new risks arising from long opening hours, people working alone in the office or at home, and working remotely. New risks to employers revolve around issues of duty of care, task supervision, performance measurement and remote communication. Reported benefits gained by employers of homeworkers are reduced occupancy costs, ability to recruit and retain staff from a wider recruitment pool, and access to a nationally based workforce with employees closer to clients. Benefits reported by employees include savings in travel time and transport costs and enhanced work/life balance.

Wide variations in employment policies and practices are reported – for example in homeworking. To minimize risk of grievances or even legal action by employees, forward-looking employers have formalized new arrangements and included appropriate terms and conditions in either an employment contract or a policy.

Homeworking across government is now a fairly well-established practice, with many different models of formality in existence. As a general trend, most of those involve work from home as part of a choice of work options and tend to be on an ad-hoc basis – perhaps once a week, to meet business or personal needs.

Typically, once line management approval has been provided, advice and guidance on health and safety and insurance matters are provided on a self-assessment basis. Meetings at home are universally to be avoided. Expenses are not usually paid for utility costs – although for more regular home-workers an allowance might be made. Laptops are usually employed by such workers at home and in the office and IT connectivity arrangements vary enormously, but are often restricted to e-mail access, avoiding connections to internal systems and databases. Only for very regular home-workers is home furniture provided by the employer.

#### **Guidance on flexible working**

**Flexibility** is an on-line journal providing resources for new ways of working. For research, opinion, events and links see [www.flexibility.co.uk](http://www.flexibility.co.uk)

For the **Smartwork Network** for public and private sector flexible work practitioners to share experiences in an open non-selling environment see [www.smart-work.net](http://www.smart-work.net)

**Workwise UK** is a national campaign to promote flexible working. For case studies articles and guidance see [www.workwiseuk.org](http://www.workwiseuk.org)

Transport for London's **Smarter Working Guide** links flexible work with travel planning and the main business and personal benefits. See [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

**The Health and Safety Executive.** For aspects of risk associated with flexible work see [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)

<sup>9</sup> Wright, D., 'Homeworking: Where does the Employer's Responsibility End and the Employee's Begin?', 2007, unpublished dissertation, Middlesex University.

Such schemes are typically trialled on a pilot basis before being implemented more widely. The development and promotion of guidance for managers in managing remote workers and assessing suitability for individuals is a key aspect of supporting this form of flexible working.

A Chartered Management Institute (CMI) report<sup>10</sup> suggests that the working norm by 2018 will be virtual work teams operating remotely under the supervision of managers who combine the complementary skills of older and younger workers. A key factor predicted for organizational success is emotional intelligence as much as technical competence and organizations will regard 'wisdom' as a valuable resource in work teams that will be much more multi-generational. The report suggests that:

- positions and job titles may become extinct if they hinder collaborative working
- while many of today's skills will still be valued organizations will prize most those skills that enable and drive change
- project management skills will be necessary for everyone
- innovation and creativity will be integral to most types of work.

To address new demands arising from the technological and organizational implications of working more remotely, individuals will need the ongoing support of tailored continuing professional development (CPD) training programmes.

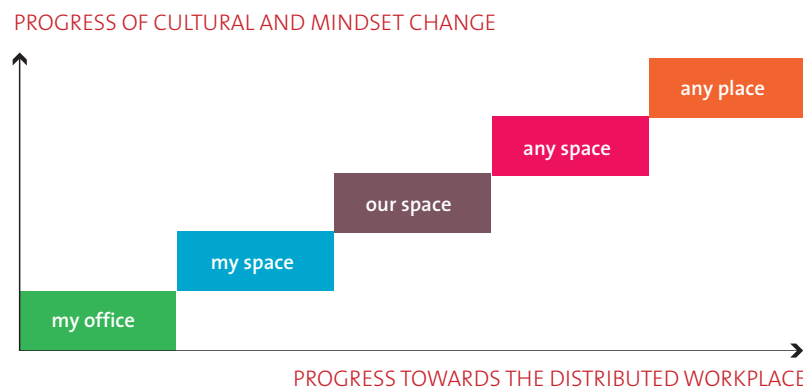
Isolation and stress among homeworkers are reported and obviously techniques to counter these must be developed. The British Medical Association (BMA), for example, organizes quarterly management meetings to address:

- managing remote workers
- managing stress
- improved reporting of problems
- communications with support staff in facilities and HR
- home visits
- support to manage workloads
- reviewing allowances for business mileage.

#### People are the key

This pastoral care approach is, of course, only one way of dealing with the new workstyles. Generation Y, people born since 1979, will be better adapted to the new workstyles by virtue of an early grounding in flexibility. Many are from diverse family structures, more of them are ethnically diverse, they're good social networkers and IT literate, used to change, and will work anywhere even with major distractions around them. Along with issues such as security of information and sustainability vis-à-vis flexi-working hours (social), increased earning potential, increased exchequer revenue (economic), travel to work (energy use) and the revival of local neighbourhoods, this new generation could hold the key to the new flexible working strategies in ways that could transform the future of work.

Figure 7.4: the relationship between mindset change and progress in distributed working



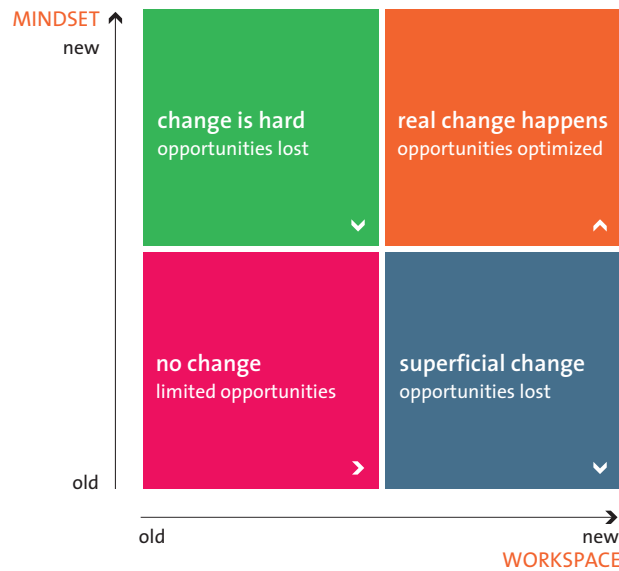


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**Generation Y, people born since 1979, will be better adapted to the new workstyles by virtue of an early grounding in flexibility. Many are from diverse family structures, more of them are ethnically diverse, they're good social networkers and IT literate, used to change, and will work anywhere.**

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Figure 7.5: the relationship between mindset change and workspace



Organizations aware of the need to make the next big step in workplace evolution understand that their people are the key to success in this context. People need to be prepared and developed for this new world, in parallel to that world being shaped for them. It's a wide-ranging cultural challenge: as a prominent writer on distributed working points out, 'Most workers today lead, manage, or collaborate with people they do not see on a regular basis.'<sup>11</sup> The time-bound personal tie to a desk, space or building is dissolving and a new relationship must be forged with the unbounded workspace that is fast becoming the norm. New technologies must be embraced, as an integral part of evolving work and workstyles. The ideas, skills and energy of the next generation workforce need to be harnessed through wise leadership and new management skills that will support working in increasingly fluid, collaborative and autonomous ways. This liberation relates to working both within and beyond the office base; as well as beyond normal organizational and employer frameworks. This, in itself, has links to changing career and employment models.

There are practical matters to be addressed to ensure successful workplace transitions, such as refined policies and procedures and enabling technologies and worksetting choices. A key challenge to overcome

will be mindset change and the adoption of a new perspective to work and its relationship with workspace and the organization. Figure 7.4 indicates the change in personal perspective on workspace as the transition is made in supporting change to more innovative and distributed working. Changing the working environment without supporting the mindset change can result in lost opportunities and superficial change only (Figure 7.5).

Managing cultural change in the workplace is an integral part of workplace projects. We live through and embrace change all the time in our everyday lives: we make and accept decisions, we make compromises, we make adjustments; we balance our own needs with those of others, such as our families; we understand the need for change and make it work for us. The principles in the office are no different, yet, typically, the individual perspective is the most overlooked. A new form of consultation is now required, where the reality of changing working requirements are objectively assessed, explained and supported. Tradition has to be challenged. Innovation and new thinking pushed. A desired outcome may be that workers don't necessarily get what they want, but they do want what they get; and importantly they understand, accept and embrace the differences.

<sup>11</sup> Froggatt, Cynthia C., 2003, 'Leading from a distance: the four qualities of good distance leaders'.

## Department for Transport (DfT)

Four years ago the DfT's permanent secretary identified an urgent need to improve the organization's 'agility' – its ability to form the right teams quickly and to deploy staff where their skills are most needed by breaking down team and divisional 'silos'. He wanted to be able to identify and draw upon capability and capacity from right across the organization, treating the whole workforce as a pool of resource to achieve the best possible fit of people and work. The flexible deployment (FD) initiative was introduced to bring this about.

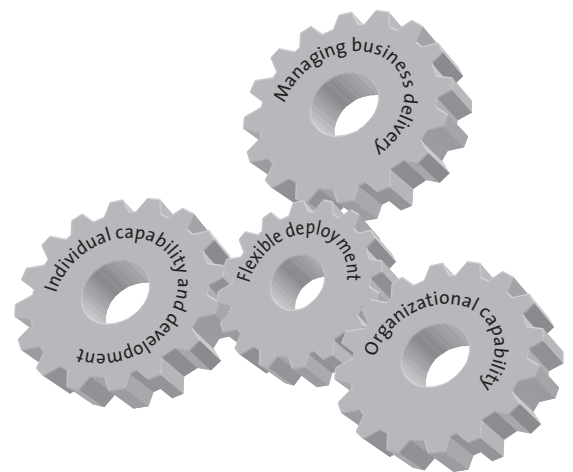
Flexible deployment is a major change programme that focuses on work and people. It is implemented using facilitation and training, and data is captured on a custom-designed IT system which is available on everyone's desktop. All work is 'packaged', including projects and day-to-day business workstreams. Directorates themselves identify and describe these work packages and categorize them according to their importance, mandate, degree of discretion and an estimate of the time required each month. Staff members undertake a self assessment of their skills and experience based on a framework which embraces professional skills for government. This provides a searchable database which can be used to match people to appropriate work packages. Staff contribute to the process by recording their working hours and availability against the work packages to which they contribute.

One of the primary aims of rolling out FD across DfT is to manage capacity, making sure staff are deployed effectively but not overloaded. The work package manager uses information on the FD IT system to manage workloads and adjust them in the light of staff availability. Along with this goes time recording – how time has been spent in practice. All staff record which work packages they have worked on every day, building up an appreciation of the variances between actual workload and work package estimates. Managers may choose to divert resource from lower priority work where necessary. Time recording was a new experience for most staff but there has been a high level of compliance – people are comfortable visibly demonstrating

their contribution when it is not used as a compliance tool.

After piloting FD in two directorates initially, the programme has now been rolled out across most of the central department. In adopting the FD approach as one of the key building blocks of the annual business planning round, the process of setting business plans and budgets has been speeded up. One board director commented on how worthwhile the exercise has been in allowing the organization to focus its resources in the best way on the highest priorities, and the very process of defining the work in the early stages of roll out in itself raised questions about what work was being done, and why.

**Flexible Deployment aims to improve organizational agility by treating the whole workforce as a pool of resource to achieve the best possible fit of people and work**



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# Part 3

## Workplace blueprint for the future

Workplace change is taking place at an accelerating rate across government. That change must be incorporated into organizational culture so that it can be welcomed as an ally rather than feared as an invader. Above all, the management of change has to form part of a total strategy for work and place acting together – and to achieve that it is dependent on a comprehensive set of tools and checklists that support the manager's progress.

## Chapter 8

# Managing the change to distributed working

We are now in the midst of a new era of transformation for the government workplace. Many public sector organizations are still struggling to adopt the more open, egalitarian work environments heralded by *Working Without Walls* and to make the necessary cultural adjustments. But that was only the start: the pace of change is now relentless.

Significant effort is required to manage the pace of change. Managers need to recognize all organizational and personal impacts on people – setting the context, joining up initiatives and making links, as applicable. The change process needs to address all potential areas of resistance, acknowledge those most affected by the changes (in whatever way), as well as identifying those most able to provide a positive influence on others (at whatever level they may be in the organization). There is a thin line to tread between educating, supporting and patronizing the diversity of viewpoints involved. Skilful diagnostics will be key.

While many workplace innovation projects admirably focus efforts on helping staff understand, accept and exploit their new working environments, the main issue holding people back can often be something much simpler, personal and immediate. Car parking and journey-to-work often feature as key early issues where a re-location is involved – and too often these matters are overlooked in the enthusiasm to ‘sell’ the eventual project outcomes. This suggests the need for sensitive planning and pace. A schedule of project e-newsletters is a great idea, for example; but if too much irrelevant information or detail is rushed out too early in the first few editions, the opportunity and impact can be lost for ever.

In terms of some of the most significant and controversial aspects of workplace change, for example decisions to change location or have no

dedicated offices or desks, time is required for people to absorb and consider what this means for them. Such matters need to be communicated early and firmly, but with time for reflection and acceptance allowed before the next level of detail is imparted. Managers are not always good at presenting ‘difficult’ messages in a timely and consistent manner; but this has to be done. Indecision, delay or lack of clarity can be extremely damaging. Not surprisingly early resistance may occur in these circumstances, but better sooner than later. Resistance can be good. It signifies that people are listening and considering the issues. Silence and disregard are much more worrying responses.

### **Step away from the desk**

The latest workplace developments challenge a new level of deep-rooted associations within government office work – where ownership of a dedicated workspace has been seen as a contractual entitlement, if not actually the prime provider of stability and status. On the whole, previous innovations have failed to address this situation. As many managers will confirm, you can change practically any aspect of someone’s work, systems and organization, but mess with their desk and you are in big trouble. There are many organizations that have permitted and enabled extensive home or remote working for employees, yet still allowed ownership of a dedicated office workstation (which naturally then lies empty and unused for much of the working day).

In the constant onslaught of organizational change, the desk has become the last bastion of resistance – the one constant left to hang on to, to fight for. But this construct has now become the major constraint in embracing the future world described in this book. The time has come to let go: we no longer have to use furniture as the means of connecting people. We can cut out this outmoded ‘middle man’ and connect directly with people as people, wherever they may be.



And the technology that created this liberation can now be better focused in supporting these new dynamics of office work.

Appropriate desk provision is a major cultural issue to be tackled in most organizations, and an intelligent response to accommodating emerging new workstyles and the changing nature of work is now well overdue.

### **Psychology in the workplace**

For anyone to want to move from one state to another, they need to be able to weigh up the pros and cons of making that transition. They need a clear picture of what the new future might hold for them and a solid rationale for why it is the better option. And this is not always obvious or familiar territory – so explanation, envisioning and support are required.

Staff need to be engaged as individuals: clarity, motivation, choice and confidence are four key factors. Address their concerns head on. What is the purpose or rationale for the change(s)? What will it be like once the changes are made? How will we get there and do I have confidence in the process? What's in it for me – what will be better or easier? How can I get involved and what choices are there for me?

A workplace change management and communication strategy that embraces these generic needs will go a long way. And armed with this focus, it is easier to see how an effective strategy and support programme might creatively be developed.

Inspiring confidence and trust in the process will be as important as the process itself, so if the approach is perceived as well managed, appropriately resourced and properly planned, this can really pay dividends. The combination of strong vision and senior leadership is arguably the single most important ingredient in the successful change management programme. The presence of a well-respected senior project sponsor will make or break a workplace project. It will align senior management and drive decision-making. A challenge at middle management and below may still exist, but a targeted approach can help ensure those people get the attention and support they need. There are some obvious organizational behaviours and processes that will either help or hinder the change process – and can be taken into account (Figure 8.1).

**Figure 8.1: things that help or hinder successful workplace transformations**

#### **THINGS THAT HELP**

##### **leadership**

- vision and clarity of goals
- strong and positive leadership by example
- clear investment rationale
- cross business project ownership
- openness and communication
- organizational motivation
- well managed project processes and budgets
- responsive to project challenges

##### **staff**

- identification of personal benefits
- cross business ownership
- confidence in leadership
- openness to engagement
- positive attitude
- personal motivation
- peer group communication
- flexible to project process

#### **THINGS THAT HINDER**

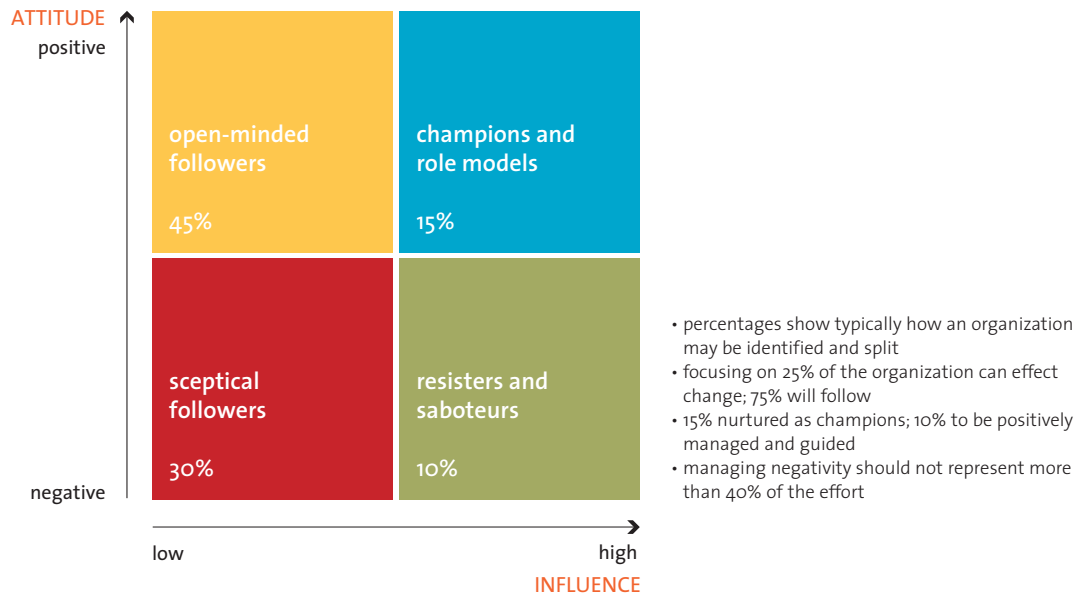
##### **leadership**

- previous poor experiences
- no champions or visible examples
- conflicting organizational distractions
- limited staff consultation
- mis-timed communication
- conflicting policies and procedures
- poor project management
- lack of sensitivity to staff mood

##### **staff**

- focus on negative aspects only
- job insecurity
- disconnection from project objectives
- ingrained workstyle habits
- unrealistic expectations
- perceived unfairness and inequality
- rumours and preconceptions

Figure 8.2: positivity and influence assessment matrix



It will be important not to allow resistance and negativity, particularly from an outspoken minority, to drain energy and time from the change management effort: this can have a disproportionate impact on the tone, pace and direction of the project. There will probably be a majority of staff who are positive and enlightened, and it is important that they receive the right level of encouragement and assistance. Among them will be potential role models and lower level champions or ambassadors who will be able to exert powerful peer pressure and change momentum.

A rough analysis of the workforce, in terms of attitudes and influence, can quickly provide a focus for tactics and targeting efforts. Figure 8.2 gives a workforce assessment matrix that indicates how and where effort can best be channelled.

### Structuring the change process

A proper understanding of the nature, scale and context of the change challenge should then lead to the creation of the correct structure for the change management process. This essentially boils down to an appropriate change management and

communications strategy and plan; and supporting infrastructure. On a project level, there are important early questions to be considered to ensure the scale and scope of change is realistic.

- What is the workplace vision and how does this align to organizational goals?
- Where is the organization now/what is the current situation?
- What is the gap/What is the scope and scale of change?
- What are the strengths and opportunities within the organization?
- What are the barriers and constraints?
- Is the change realistic?
- Is the culture capable of making the change?
- Does the change need to happen at once, or could/should it be phased?
- And, finally – Is the workplace vision/proposed change plan right?

*Working Without Walls* proposed a five-phase model for managing change, which reflected the change journey for staff. This is still valid, although the detail of activities and interventions that might be undertaken will vary depending on the nature of the changes involved. Importantly, that model covers both pre-change and post-change considerations. Increasingly the post-change period is becoming even more critical. Without a sophisticated pilot or example to draw on, there may be a limit to how well people can really take in and prepare for radical changes – so supporting the embedding and exploitation of change within the setting of the new working environment or

work arrangements is vital. In this sense, and at this stage, the true journey of change is only just beginning.

Figure 8.3 illustrates the generic development of this model with a ‘menu’ of sample and optional change-related interventions relevant to each phase. This includes high-level mass communication activities, as well as more collaborative team and group level activities. It also makes reference to substantial elements like piloting, new protocols and evaluation.

Such a model needs to be underpinned by a communications strategy and plan, which recognizes

Figure 8.3: Change management model and toolkit

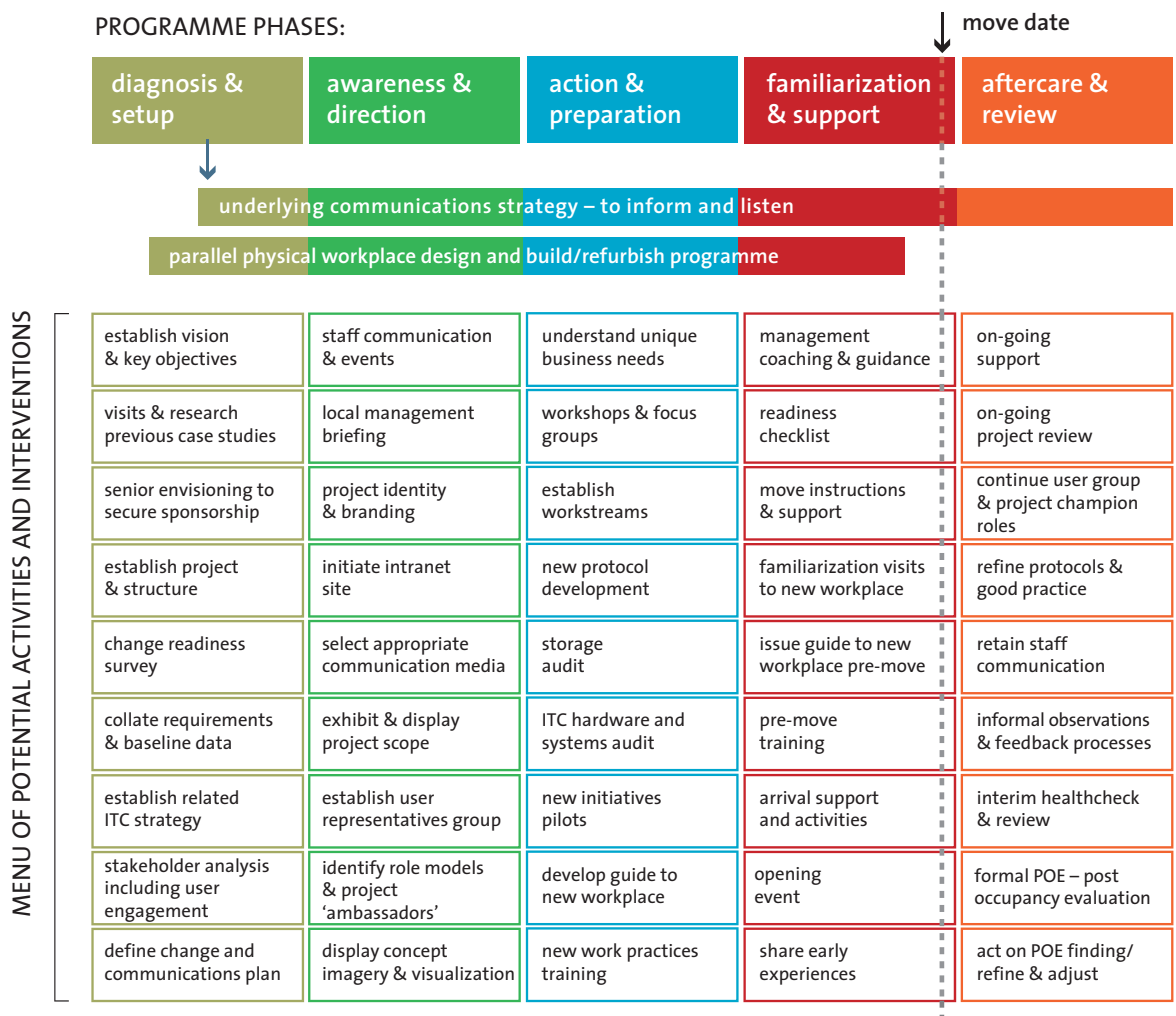
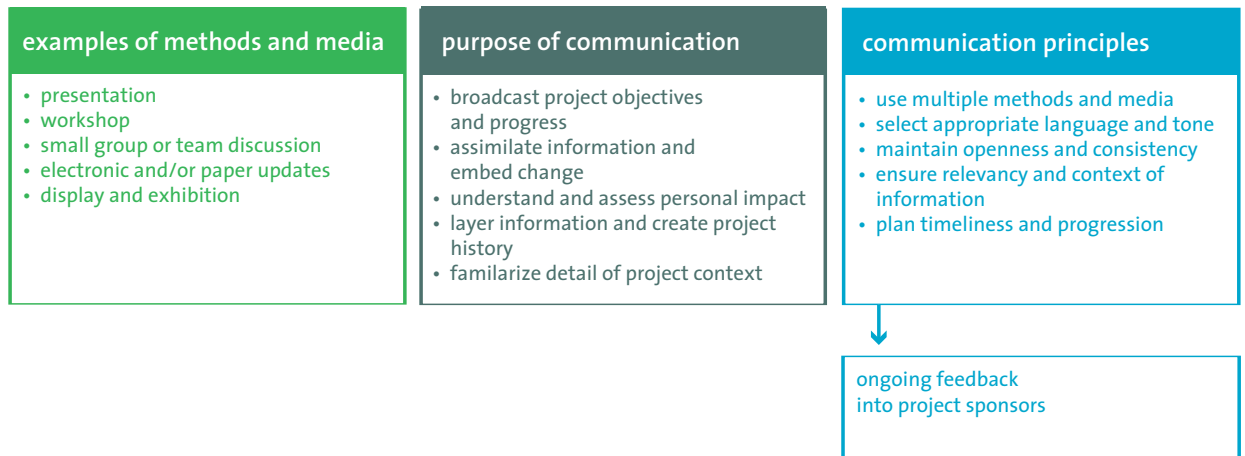


Figure 8.4: change communications – key considerations



the audiences and stakeholders involved. The strategy should also address the mechanisms and media to be used, along with the tone and identity of the project (Figure 8.4 provides some important reminders of the considerations here). A multi-media communications approach can help engage large numbers of staff, who may have a range of communication preferences and needs.

A supporting project structure typically also needs to be in place to ensure that lines of communication and decision making are effective, as well as to manage discrete areas of associated work or tasks. A sample project structure and respective roles diagram is provided in Figure 8.5. This should complement and fit into broader project governance arrangements. The change project support structure, in particular, will facilitate more substantial areas of work such as developing new protocols and policies or piloting new arrangements. It is an effective way of creating a change community, where a number of staff can play an active role in the change and connect with colleagues and the deeper organization on the project's behalf. The project structure suggested also insists on the need for senior sponsorship and

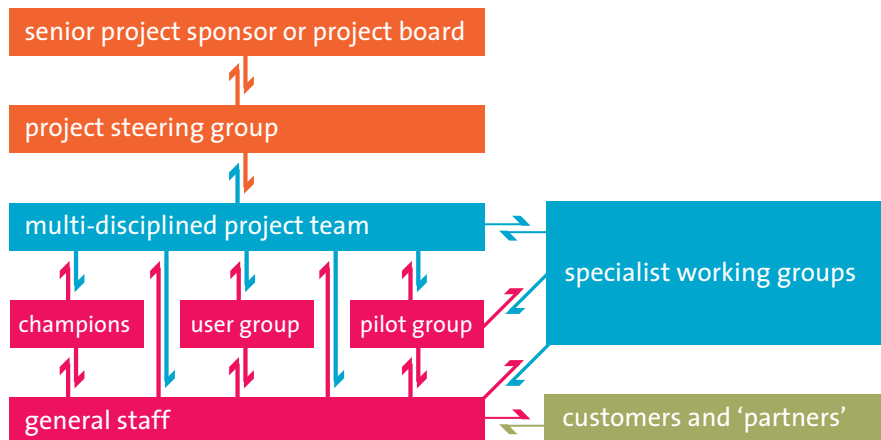
champions, critical to implementing successful organizational change. (This important aspect of running an effective change project is explored in more detail in Chapter 9.)

#### **Desk-sharing (and piloting) made easy**

The loss of a dedicated workstation is a fundamental aspect of new and distributed ways of working. It is probably the key challenge facing organizations at this time. How do you convince staff that they might no longer need a dedicated workstation? As with open-plan work before it, such notions historically have had a bad press – mainly because their implementation has been inappropriate or badly introduced. Too often those sharing desks have been made to feel like second class citizens. The opportunities and benefits of this new liberation need to be made clear and compelling; and confidence instilled in the implementation and operation of the new arrangements.

Shared or team-desking solutions need to be created as attractive, desirable places, so that others aspire to join 'that club'. With the spatial efficiencies gained, there is no reason why investment cannot be made to make these areas special. An even better approach

Figure 8.5: change project structure and linkages



would be to make the 'club' inclusive to all – so that everyone has a piece of the action. This will instill a sense of fairness and enable economies of scale to provide wider facilities and choices. A sense of belonging is important also, so defining team zones will help people come together better when they need and choose to (and this is something they will need to plan for, rather than leave to chance in the future). Even where workstyles are more static and some choose to sit in the same place most days (effectively as team anchors), it is good if everyone can participate in their own way, exercising flexibility when appropriate and adhering to the clear desk and shared resources protocols.

Even the sharing of high performance printers can create advance anxiety: sharing other resources like desks, offices or break-out spaces are inevitably more stressful. And it can be hard to imagine these new arrangements when we are so steeped in the existing regimes.

### Piloting

Installing a small-scale demonstration scheme, or 'piloting', is an extremely effective way of allowing staff to understand how this new style of working

environment can work. With a pilot, you can invest time and effort in exploring and supporting the new concept with staff to aid success. Learning can be optimized through evaluation to inform the broader solution. The pilot participants can act as evangelists or champions for the change to inspire and reassure others, often acting as role models. Ideally some senior management should participate in the exercise and lead by example. Better still if the pilot space can also allow non-pilot participants to join in on a guest basis or at least provide some facility to draw the wider organization in.

Often, for practical reasons, pilots are in reality early implementations – that is, 'pathfinders' or 'trailblazers', rather than strict test beds or experiments. But they can still be extremely valuable and an excellent early focus for the change management process.

Like all good workplace solutions, such developments will need to be backed up by suitable technology, systems, procedures, policies, protocols and support. Preparing the pilot participants through practical working sessions will support the change process for them. Attention to behaviours and habits (not easily

changed overnight) will be key, as these are the things that will help embed, or undermine, the new arrangements. *Working Without Walls* provided some pointers on developing new protocols and running effective pilots. Figures 8.6 and 8.7 provide respective summaries and updates on this guidance.

### **Bite-sized chunks**

The focus within this chapter on desk-sharing considerations and tactics illustrates how the change management process might be applied to a specific challenge. The reality is that such an element will only be part of a much bigger picture of workplace and working practice change – but the same principles apply and dealing with change in ‘bite-size’ or phased chunks can be very effective, as long as the broader context, rationale, objectives and benefits are always clear.

Aside from pilots or ‘pathfinders’, there are many other significant but discrete pieces of work associated with a workplace transition project; and specialist task teams might lead the efforts here, underpinned by the supporting change structure. Examples might be dealing with storage reduction, choosing furniture solutions, developing new protocols, harnessing technology, dealing with travel/transport issues; and so on. Workshops might also feature as a means of exploring in detail specific topics with a suitable (either expert or representative) group of people.

All of these aspects allow for a managed, involved process where those affected by the changes can most appropriately input and influence the outcomes. Less about defining what they get, more about deciding how they use it. Less about accepting imposed and defined change, more about implementing a change they are shaping – and will continue to shape into the future.

Change management in the workplace context has come a long way from its origins of management controlling the physical implementation of objectives, where people are assumed to be obstructions and need to be changed. Today we need an inclusive process inspired by clear vision, leadership and creativity. It is more about how we work than where we work. And where those affected by the changes can play their part if they want to.

### **Figure 8.6: developing new protocols – example checklist of considerations**

#### **Noise**

- Keeping mobile phones with you, diverting phones, use of voicemail
- Appropriate ring-tones, ring levels, use of speaker-phones
- Meetings/loud group conversation at desks

#### **Distraction, disturbance and concentration**

- Being visible, doesn’t mean available – virtual door policy, don’t jump in
- Move to quiet/quieter or study areas, when appropriate
- Agreement on music, use of headphones

#### **Sharing**

- Leaving shared desks/spaces for others as you would expect to find it
- Booking spaces responsibly, don’t hog or block book just in case
- Don’t restrict yourself to your desk or team area, use whole floor/building/range of facilities

#### **Clutter**

- Clear desk policy
- Personalisation of space
- Accumulation of non-desk storage (walkways, on cupboards, under desks)

#### **Security**

- Use of password screensavers
- Not leaving confidential papers on desk unattended, locking away at night
- Escort visitors, always carry passes

#### **Food**

- Smelly food at desks
- Use (or not) of local microwaves, kettles etc.
- Clearing up after eating/drinking, clearing and cleaning of fridges, use of dishwashers

#### **Maintaining the protocols**

- Recognize and respect different workstyles and work practices
- Be prepared to challenge those not adhering to agreed protocols
- Report issues (or ideas) to your line manager/ workspace contact or at team meetings
- Ensure visitors and new staff are made aware of protocols

### Figure 8.7: tips for running successful pilots

- Ensure you have defined objectives and a business case to justify investment in the pilot. Link pilot objectives to wider organizational aspirations and vision. Ensure you have an appropriate multi-disciplined project team and structure to steer and manage the pilot process. Do not skimp on budget, scope and support – better not to do at all than do badly, as a poor pilot can do more damage than good.
- Be clear the extent to which the pilot can influence wider workplace developments – is it a true experiment or an early ‘pathfinder’ implement? – both are valid, but expectation need to be managed accordingly. Time the pilot carefully – too early and it may not attract interest; too late and its influence may be limited. Avoid the pilot clashing with other organizational change initiatives; develop a clear identity for the pilot to distinguish it from other initiatives, as well as make links to related wider workplace and organizational developments.
- Ensure that pilot participants are chosen carefully to be fully representative and exert maximum influence, ensure senior representation is included/involved in some way, so that leadership

by example can be demonstrated. Appropriately prepare, encourage and supported the pilot participants – before and after the pilot becomes operational. Ensure all participants understand the pilot objectives, new concepts and benefits involved; and agree to the ‘spirit’ of the pilot in terms of willingness to try new things, make adjustments and share learning.

- Be bold, use the pilot to truly innovate; do not compromise or dilute its objectives or concepts. Ensure the pilot workspace looks and feels very different from conventional space – this will help support changes in work practices and behaviours, as well as attract the attention and interest of others. Consider placing facilities in the pilot that draw in the wider organization, including ‘guest’ and visitor workspace.
- Ensure appropriate protocols are developed and tested through the pilot process to support harmonious and effective operation of the new work environment. Identify a ‘guardian’ or workspace manager to support the dynamics of the new workspace and the upholding of new protocols. Regularly review how things are going through formal and informal evaluation activities, linked to pre-pilot benchmarking. Reward good practice and innovation; celebrate success.



Above Department for Children, Schools and Families

## Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

DCSF's transformation of its central London working environment in spring 2006 was based on the need to vacate one of its HQ buildings (Caxton House) – with savings of £10 million per annum – and consolidate in a refreshed and innovative workspace in Sanctuary Buildings. This move underpins the department's aspirations to transform the way DCSF works by providing a working environment that stimulates creativity, team working, collaboration and a focus on better delivery of services to children, schools and families.

A pilot space was developed, testing the intention to reduce space per person through a range of work-settings tailored to people's needs and not their place in the organization's hierarchy. The pilot aimed to support a modern and more collaborative way of working through the provision of a fully flexible working environment. There was no individual ownership of workstations: teams owned the whole office landscape, including a varied range of settings to support different modes of working.

From the outset it became clear that challenging established working culture lay at the heart of the project. Users were supported by a comprehensive programme of change management that allowed them to influence the design of the space and take

ownership of their environment. A post-occupancy evaluation study proved that the pilot had been well received and was performing to target. The project is now in the fourth phase of the rollout programme. The dynamic occupancy target of 6.2 square metres per person (NIA) has been achieved on the refurbished office floors: this excludes central support, such as restaurant and conference facilities.

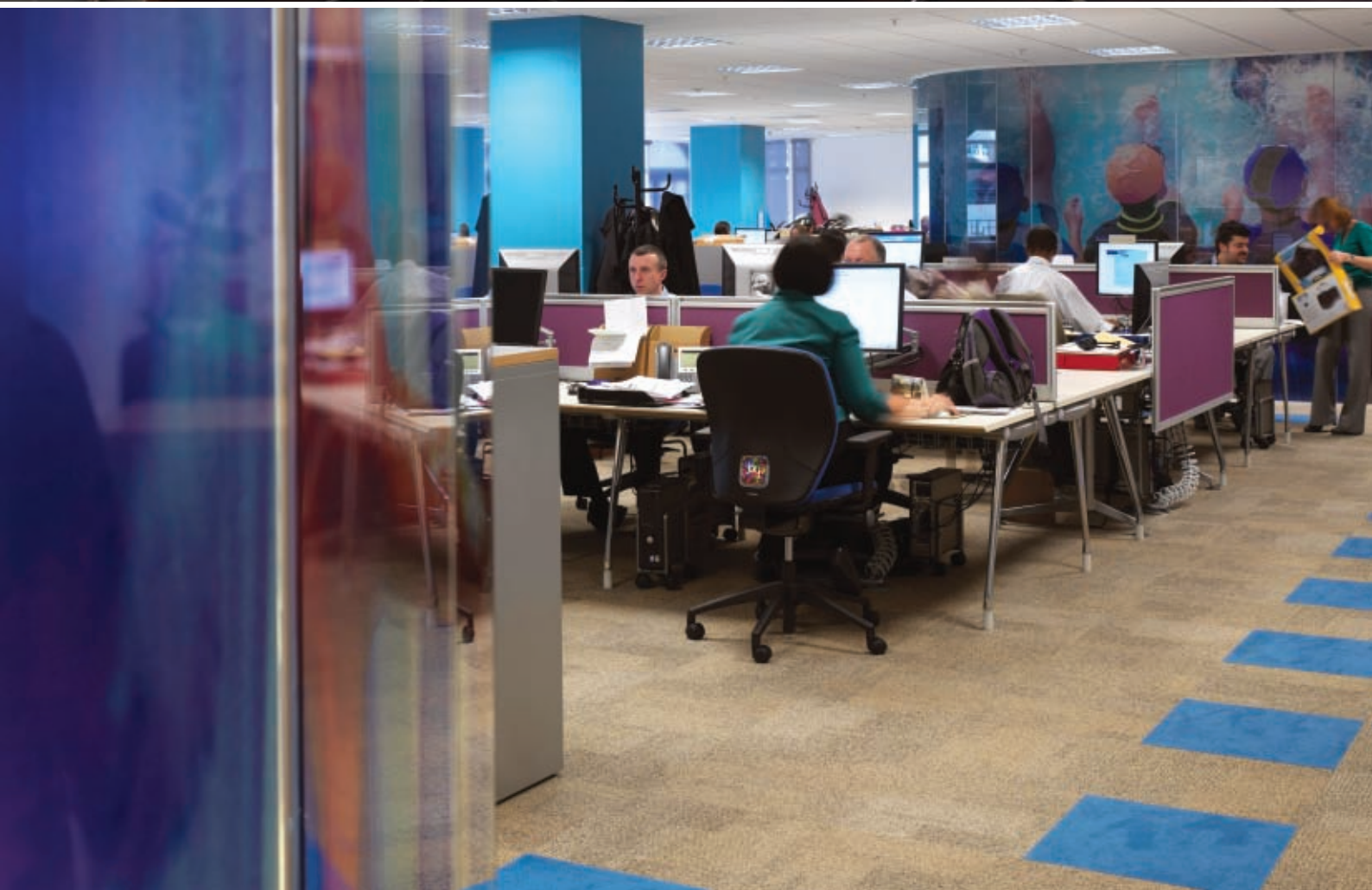
The appointed architect worked closely with the DCSF to provide a strategic framework, contribute to the workplace design and layout and provide detailed interior design of specialist areas. As a result of this close working relationship between internal and external consultancy partners, the project is regarded as an exemplar in terms of space utilization, meeting original aspirations and challenging conventional work practices.

A specialist environment – called 'the bridge' – has been created to promote internal collaboration, review and feedback. This was carefully designed following detailed consultation with DCSF business stakeholders on how they wanted to work. The space has been praised for its innovative and considered solution.

The DCSF continues to review and evaluate the work to date and is developing proposals for the revitalizing of the central support spaces with an architectural solution that will bring them up to the standard of the rest of the building.









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## Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)

In early 2008 CLG achieved a step change in leveraging more efficient and effective use of its London HQ space, by consolidating from four buildings to two. The benefits of this encouraged the department to test the next step in the evolution of its accommodation strategy – moving from two buildings to one, Eland House in Victoria. This could only be realized through the implementation of flexible desking and the simultaneous driving of a more adaptable, agile and collaborative working style.

To explore the feasibility of a flexible desking strategy (and the consequential challenges that this would encompass in terms of technology, people, and process), CLG expanded its space transformation programme in early 2007 with an intensive workplace study focused squarely on consultation with 140 staff in two directorates recruited to form a pilot group. Leadership interviews, staff workshops and a space utilization study were undertaken to investigate the current (and future) working patterns and preferences of the pilot group, and to identify potential space savings. The study found that a desk-sharing ratio of 7:10 was possible, and that overall the pilot group reflected a ‘cultural fit’ in terms of their potential and willingness to adapt to the new ways of working required within a flexible desking working environment.

Following board approval to proceed with the pilot space, the project team planned a design and build process that would achieve a fit-for-purpose space, which would also encourage a strong degree of ownership by the pilot group. Staff support and preparation were critical in allaying fears and concerns about what was to be a major change for many of those involved. Day 1 of occupation was supported by a dedicated team of floor-walkers covering all aspects

of furniture, ICT, storage, and general communications; move support packs and ‘workspace guides’ were distributed.

Staff very quickly began adjusting to some of the necessary changes in working practices – most notably, perhaps, the clear desk policy. From day one, with very few exceptions, desks were clear at the end of the day, something the department had never come close to achieving previously. Staff feedback was positive on the overall look and feel of the space, the new collaborative team breakout spaces, the ‘creative’ space (a space designed for stand-up meetings and ad hoc chats), and the quiet rooms for individual, focused work.

Post-occupancy evaluation has validated much of the informal feedback gathered to date. Issues surrounding ICT peripherals and furniture have comprised most of the change requests by staff. The resounding feedback from those participating in evaluation workshops and interviews, however, is that the pilot space has been a success – staff can choose a desk or a place to work on any given day, can find a space close to those they need to work with on a consistent basis and teams have been increasingly networking and forming new bonds. Most importantly, when they arrive at work they can get on with their work.

- Pilot space: 878 square metres
  - Headcount: 133
  - NIA per person: 6.7 square metres
  - Cost per square metre: £690 including VAT (includes all works costs, fees, furniture, etc as well as other costs arising from other ‘pilots’ within the pilot)
-

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)

As part of its ambitious Workplace 2010 reform programme, the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) implemented a substantial pathfinder project to inform the forward programme and help demonstrate to all 26,000 NICS staff what the future working environment would be like.

This approach was in recognition of the significant cultural challenge facing the NICS, whose working environments in many cases had seen little transformation for decades. The implementation of the pathfinder project took place in late 2006 at Belfast harbour front location Clare House, which has become the new workplace for around 500 staff. All staff at all grades operate in an open working environment and take advantage of more recent concepts like alternative work and break-out facilities (of which a new café facility is the focus). The project also introduces remote working, desk-sharing for some teams, thin client technologies and VOIP telephony.

The change management process was essentially made up of initial envisioning sessions and strategic visits with senior management, the establishment of a project board, project team, user group and series of staff-led 'workstreams' to progress specific issue areas, such as IT, travel and transport, storage and work practices. There was a 'town hall' style event to kick off preparations for staff (a full year before the move) and follow-up workshops were held with staff to explore new work opportunities and associated protocols. Pre-move familiarization visits to the near-complete Clare House were organized for all staff and a new guide issued at that stage to complete preparations. Post-move evaluation work is on-going (with teething problems with IT dominating the earliest feedback) and the project board and user group have continued to operate to manage on-going adjustments and developments – and feed into the progress of the overall Workplace 2010 programme. Staff from the wider NICS are encouraged to visit and use the Clare House facilities and a ground floor business lounge was specifically included in the design to support visiting workers.





# Chapter 9

## A total workplace strategy

The previous chapter explores, with some specific examples, the important practical aspect of managing workplace transformations with people – without whom physical and technical improvements have little purpose. This is still, however, only part of the overall picture of defining and managing a successful workplace transition. Both the workplace and workforce are meaningless without the context of the organization and its business – and that, in turn, has to operate and exist within the wider and increasingly dynamic world in which we all now live our lives.

Two things this book highlights are that the world of work is changing and that – no matter how radical the transformation – the workplace still has a key role to play. No longer to be considered an inevitable overhead to bear and reduce, the workplace now needs to be understood as a critical business enabler to be optimized and exploited. The role of the workplace needs to be elevated to a strategic level within the organization. Alongside technology and human resourcing, it has to become an integral part of the business strategy and planning process and be more appropriately represented at board and executive level. And this is a key tactical challenge for today's workplace manager, whatever position in the organization they may occupy.

A holistic workplace strategy is now required to support business objectives, aspirations and associated challenges and underpin the related business case for change. And this will be the key to facilitating the agility all organizations will require if they are to prosper and continue to have a purpose and value in future.

As Chapter 8 highlighted, securing senior sponsorship for such workplace transformation is absolutely imperative. This is likely to be achieved through a number of key stakeholders, as well as an individual 'champion'. But such support needs to be genuine

and robust, and demonstrable to the wider organization. To enable this, such senior executives need to be enlightened about the opportunities, implications and linkages at stake here and allowed to draw their own conclusions and form their commitment. A facilitated 'envisioning' session can often be extremely useful in establishing the initial mandate for change. Visits to other 'case study' organizations can also assist. The strategy's role is then to convert this mandate into a managed action plan and drive the business case for change.

### **Workplace demand and supply**

A recognized approach to workplace strategy has been to assess and align organizational 'demand' with building 'supply'. However, the traditional focus has too often been on headcount projections, existing business requirements and existing building stock and traditional capacities. The new workplace strategy can still use this model but addresses these two dynamics in a more enlightened and holistic way, with a new focus on challenge, creativity and opportunity. Figure 9.1 provides an updated demand and supply model for reference.

Organizational 'demand' is now firmly about the properly-defined future organization, which recognizes all the new influences highlighted in this book: emerging political, attitudinal and demographic drivers, new technology opportunities, and new models for doing business. No longer based on a wish-list of perceived requirements, such demand is driven by the well-informed reality of holistic future business operation. This requires an entirely different model of setting vision and direction, researching and gathering data and securing organizational engagement: challenging convention, asking different questions, opening up new possibilities; and making a better link between workplace performance and influence and operational effectiveness. A range of interventions with the organization can be used here to inform

Figure 9.1: updated demand and supply diagram



the process and involve management and staff alike: interviews, workshops, questionnaires, observational studies, audits and statistical reviews. This should be balanced with wider research and investigation, with the focus always on establishing what is needed, rather than what is wanted.

The commercial drivers around product and service provision may be less stark in the public sector, where the 'business of government' or at least 'office work' in this context may well be seen as more predictable; but on the other hand, fast changing political and policy drivers and associated re-organization are arguably (in terms of accountability) an even more turbulent and demanding environment in which to operate. It calls for increasingly fluid and flexible approaches to policy development, project-working and service delivery across government. While the nature of work has

continued to evolve as this book suggests, the context in which that work will be undertaken will be even more fundamentally transformed. Government bodies need to be open to more partnership, collaborative and merged working and not be precious about their current remit, identity and infrastructure, including premises. The boundaries will blur, but the mindsets will need to be open and clear.

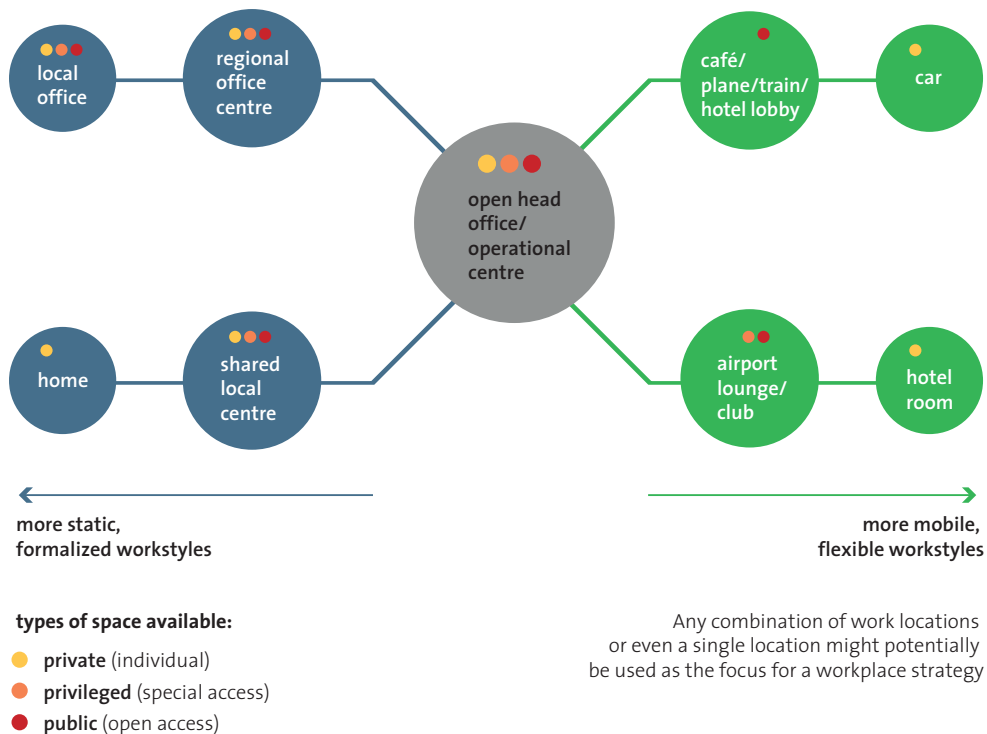
Building 'supply', therefore, also takes on a whole new meaning. Buildings themselves, as we have learnt, can now be used and optimized in new ways – providing greater function, capacity and purpose. But as Chapter 5 has made clear, the nature, size, location and ownership and even necessity of buildings (and indeed whole property estates) need to be challenged and creatively addressed. New awareness, knowledge and skills are required to assess the potential and

relevance of this resource and to skilfully align it to the new business models. Will such a thing as a generic government office, capable of supporting any department's work, be a reality? Is a shared, flexible 'hotel' or 'club' for work in Whitehall and/or elsewhere, a potential way of supporting the growing mobility and cross-departmental roles of civil servants? What models of sharing premises across local and central government, even partnerships with the private sector, are possible in the future? How much of the public's interface with government will be virtual in the future – and, with this in mind, how much flexibility is there as to who is behind these services and where they are based? All of these scenarios have to be seen as real possibilities. The only fixed parameters for the future government organization are relevant and responsive services, value for money and accountability: everything else has to remain open to informed new thinking.

The hub and spoke model of distributed working (Figure 9.2) highlights further the importance of a strategy to define the role, performance and balance of remote working, alongside core, elements of the working environment. All of these possibilities need to go into the mix of properly assessing what the workplace means in terms of 'supply' to meet the new 'demands'. 'Supply' in this context is also as much about the supporting technologies and policies that need to be in place, as the physical working environment.

The role and profile of the workplace manager, too, needs to be elevated to support the process of developing, in partnership with other key players, a total workplace strategy in line with the HPP routemap advocated in Chapter 5. Armed with the knowledge and debate in this book, this is good news for the ambitious workplace manager, if he/she is prepared to rise to the challenge.

Figure 9.2: hub and spoke office model for distributed working





A real benefit of the total workplace strategy approach is that it provides the full context for all related initiatives, be they focused on physical workplace change or other elements of the total working environment, including technology, policy, culture or work process change. In this way, individual initiatives can be joined-up, mutually support each other and be better understood and accepted by the organization they impact. A piecemeal approach to change and development can be avoided. This requires organizational resources working together in new ways. The branding of workplace projects has long been a technique to capture the attention, even imagination of the workforce – now a new level of organizational project identity can emerge, helping employees to see the ‘big picture’ and the context of individual initiatives. Aside from the obvious benefits and efficiencies of a more holistic and co-ordinated approach, from an employee point of view such projects or programmes can present a higher profile, greater consistency and more obvious senior commitment and, in doing so, inspire a greater level of confidence in the process.

#### **Project management**

Such a forward-looking, broader approach to developing an organization’s workplace strategy requires strong disciplines, project management and governance – that addresses both the technical aspects of projects and the ‘softer’ cultural change aspects. Such project structures need themselves to recognize the culture of the organization and the broader scope of change being addressed. In the public sector where a committee/consensus-style-approach to decision-making and buy-in is still so prominent, this calls for multi-disciplined teams and use of steering groups and user groups to support the process and the associated management and staff engagement. Although the nature of organizations will be changing, recognizing and using existing organizational and cultural arrangements can be an effective way of introducing, rather than unnaturally forcing, change. A list of key project roles is provided in Figure 9.3. A diagram presenting a sample change project structure and definition of key roles is provided in Chapter 8: Figure 8.5.

#### **Figure 9.3: key project roles**

Workplace transformation project – typical roles and responsibilities

##### **Steering group**

Senior multi-disciplined group who provide governance for project and lead project direction

##### **Project manager**

Individual tasked with managing the project on a day to day basis

##### **Project team**

Multi-disciplined team responsible for day-to-day project progress, led by the project manager

##### **Senior project sponsor, project champion, senior responsible officer (SRO)**

Senior individual who takes a personal interest and formal role in supporting the project

##### **User group**

Representatives from across the business to provide local input and aid staff communications

##### **Departmental change champions, change agents, role models and ambassadors**

Senior business representatives to support local project engagement and decision making

##### **Departmental contacts/move co-ordinators**

Practical-level business representatives to support move adjustments, preparations and logistics in particular

##### **Workstreams, working groups, task teams**

Specially formed teams to progress specific project areas – for example storage reduction, technology considerations etc.

##### **External (or internal) advisers**

Specialist brought in to project for short or longer timeframe to provide specific expertise not available within the project

Some of the most common failures of workplace projects tend to be around issues like lack of clear rationale and objectives, insufficient senior support, lack of funding, unrealistic timeframes, inappropriate project resources (in terms of skills and knowledge), misalignment with wider organizational developments, lack of staff engagement, delay and 'drift', and unclear outcomes. Defining and positioning the right strategy in the first instance to inform a robust business case and an appropriate project infrastructure can positively address all these risks.

Use of external expertise always has its place in such strategic projects, although it should be undertaken wisely and the opportunities for skills and knowledge transfer exploited, wherever appropriate. Often significant workplace projects and programmes represent one-off, once-in-a-generation activities for an organization and the organization cannot be expected to have all the required knowledge and experience in-house to define and deliver an effective all-embracing strategy. Broader experiences can bring a wider perspective and case study examples to a project, helping to avoid repeating others' mistakes or 're-inventing wheels'. Credible, external advisers can also help influence the organization, including the most senior staff, in ways that internally can be difficult.

As implied, such project disciplines include the clear definition of project objectives and measures of success, with key performance indicators (KPIs). Some examples of workplace objectives and measures, linked to wider organizational change, are provided in Figure 9.4. In setting such objectives, it is important to understand the existing position, which effectively provides the benchmark against which later progress can be measured. In the case of the workplace, this might incorporate the nature, type, amount and condition of space, which might usefully be captured by photographs, as well as through statistics. The performance of the existing workplace will be an important benchmark, too – and the views of employees, as well as statistical data will be important here.

#### **Business case**

Typically such objectives should be embraced in an associated business case, the development of which is a substantive exercise in itself, particularly in terms of attracting new levels of investment in the workplace.

#### **Figure 9.4: example workplace transformation objectives and measures**

- Ability to adapt to future change
- Drive and stimulate culture change
- Removal of hierarchy/bureaucracy
- Better support new work practices
- Streamlining service delivery/better customer interface
- Cost savings
- Reduced cost base
- Better exploitation of technology
- Encouraging innovation and creativity
- Improved image and identity
- Improved staff morale and sense of pride
- Improve recruitment/staff retention/reduce absenteeism
- Improving internal communications
- Improving project/team working, collaboration and knowledge-sharing
- Improve quality, comfort and safety of work environment
- Greener more sustainable workplace

The workplace strategy, including its assessment of the current situation, essentially presents the rationale for change and the associated forward plan that will underpin the business case for improvement and provide the confidence to secure its endorsement. Some tips and pointers around developing the business case for workplace-related elements are provided in Figure 9.5. Linked to such strategic objectives would be the definition of associated risks, often captured as a risk register. This outlines the priority and impact of the risks and actions proposed to minimise them. All change projects carry risks: it is how those risks are anticipated, managed and (planned to be) offset, that is important.

Usefully, most major public sector projects and programmes now require an associated benefits management and realization process, linked

to the OGC Gateway Review process. Typically this requires the definition of a small number of significant longer term benefits, which may be financial, cultural and organizational, often expected to be realized over a three-, five- or even ten-year timeframe. This process also sensibly calls for the identification of a number of associated intermediate benefits and measures so that progress towards the benefits realisation can be understood and effectively tracked, enabling corrective action to be taken, for example, if progress is not as expected. Figure 9.6 provides a framework to help develop an appropriate benefits management model. While this process may feel as though a new level of bureaucracy has been introduced, the longer-term focus is extremely helpful. Short-term financially-orientated pay-back has, for decades, restricted creative and truly appropriate investment in supporting workplace evolution.

**Figure 9.5: tips on developing the business case for workplace transformation**

- Secure in advance time with key senior influencers to ‘prepare the ground’
- Contextualize proposed costs against greater organizational costs, in particular ‘people costs’
- Link proposals with broader organizational vision, objectives and aspirations
- Provide examples of how the new workplace will better support business and bring specific benefits
- Draw comparisons with what other organizations, including peer organizations or competitors, are doing/not doing in this respect
- Highlight the risks and costs of non-action

Figure 9.6: benefits realization model

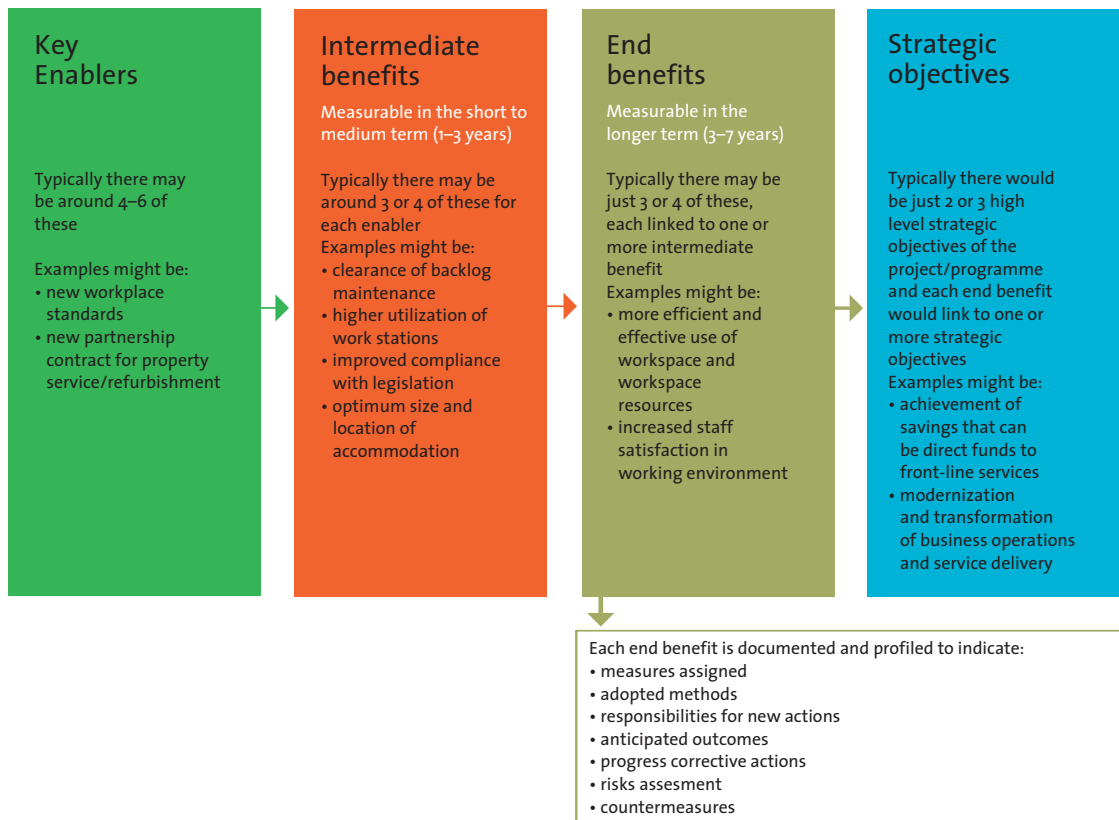
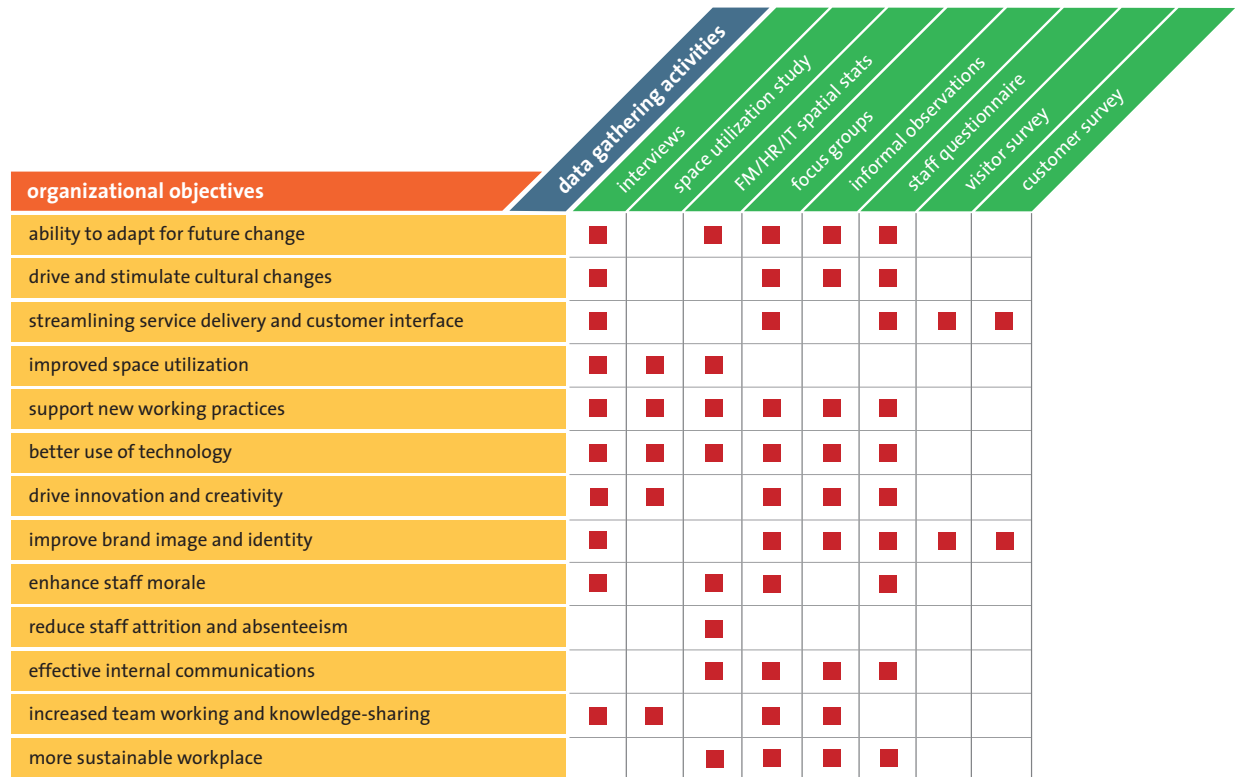


Figure 9.7: data gathering methodology for post-occupancy evaluation



### Monitoring and measuring the workplace

Post-occupancy evaluation (POE), typically undertaken between six to 12 months after the move to a new working environment or to new work arrangements, provides a powerful input to the longer-term benefits realization process.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, it provides more immediate and specific feedback to support the embedding of change and inevitable post-change adjustments. Post-occupancy evaluation can take many forms. A 'lighter touch' approach can sometimes be useful as a more immediate measure of progress (for example, six weeks after a change). The benefit here is that early teething problems can be identified and managed early and conversely early successes understood and built upon. Six months can be a long time to allow a niggling issue to fester. Evaluations of pilots should, in particular, be fairly comprehensive and typically embrace a range of interventions such as

interviews, workshops, questionnaires, observational studies and statistical analysis. An example framework for a more substantial post-occupancy evaluation is provided in Figure 9.7. Such evaluation activities should always try and link back to pre-change benchmarks to allow comparisons where appropriate. Evaluation should also seek to become an on-going, year-on-year aspect of everyday operational review activities – for example, as part of regular staff attitude or business performance surveys.

While post-occupancy evaluations (POEs) have their place, very often they are one-off actions to complete a workplace project, with little attention to on-going monitoring of the new workplace beyond the first six or 12 months. And the more comprehensive the POE, the more difficult it is to incorporate such reviews into business as usual.

<sup>1</sup> Guide to Post-occupancy Evaluation, British Council for Offices, 2007.

However, a new approach has been pioneered by the architects working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), which sees a more proactive and pragmatic approach taken to monitoring the performance and impact of new dynamic workspace.

The approach is not about one-off exercises that just look backwards, but about frequent on-going assessment of both objective and subjective aspects of the workspace operation (Figure 9.8). Such assessment would typically be done by the workspace manager or similar role on an indefinite but less intense basis than a POE – perhaps every five weeks.

The objective aspects would include informal observational review of, say, how spaces, desks, meeting rooms or break-out spaces were being used. Subjective aspects would include feedback sought randomly from a representation of staff, using a range of appropriate methods from mini-questionnaires and interviews to vox pops.

The subjective feedback would focus on a range of themes pertinent to that workspace – for example the effectiveness of meeting rooms, quiet space, technology, equipment, protocols and booking arrangements. These may be prioritized in terms of the attention they are given, and such prioritization

may change over time based on monitoring outcomes. Furthermore, both the objective and the subjective assessments and related themes would be reviewed in the context of both technical considerations, such as building or system matters and, importantly, cultural or behavioural considerations.

A good example here would be a comment that ‘there aren’t enough desks for people’ in a shared work environment, which potentially suggests a technical response of providing more desks. However, this approach might provide the insight over time that desk occupation is not as high as perceived (objective review) and that a lack of an effective clear desk policy is hampering the availability and use of empty desks (subjective review). This approach would indicate a very different response to the initial issue.

As always, it is the skilful identification and interpretation of relevant data, rather than the data-gathering process itself, which is the real key to a successful methodology here.

If kept simple enough, this process can successfully identify issues and solutions to help ensure continuous optimization of the workspace; and this may prove much more practical and valuable than the more traditional POE approach. After all, we can safely assume that the demands of the workspace and the dynamics of its occupants will continue to change

Figure 9.8: objective and subjective aspects of the workspace

	technical	behavioural
<b>objective</b> Series of pertinent prioritized themes	frequent (but irregular) structured observational assessment of the use and utilization of a suitable representation of workspace	
<b>subjective</b> Series of identified work spaces	frequent (but irregular) informal feedback from a representation of staff on the performance/effectiveness of different aspects of the working environment	

and evolve well beyond initial occupation period; as will the associated (measurable) process of benefits realization, which this style of monitoring can also help inform.

A robust evaluation or a broader benefits management process will be meaningless if the defined outcomes and benefits are not appropriate or realistic. In this sense, getting the workplace strategy right is paramount. OGC has made the observation that '30–40 per cent of projects designed to support business change deliver no benefits whatsoever and one must assume a not dissimilar percentage fail to meet the anticipated benefits'.<sup>2</sup> This is probably a combination of weak management, poorly defined objectives and benefits and, most significantly, an inappropriate strategy and business case. Missing the mark in this respect can lead to missing the whole purpose and therefore the opportunity.

#### **Route map to strategy success**

In summary, the key steps to defining and operating a successful workplace strategy can be summarised as follows:

- Do your research and preparation – understand fully the rationale, drivers and context for change and how workplace developments align with broader business, organizational and cultural considerations. Learn from others. Think beyond convention. Recognize the new drivers and influences for change.
- Establish clear aims and objectives linked to realistic, measurable but ambitious outcomes and benefits. These need to address real holistic needs, challenges and opportunities incorporating business, organizational and cultural aspects.
- Secure senior, demonstrable support and commitment for the project/programme and ensure that all organizational and business linkages are made.
- Establish an effective project infrastructure and supporting processes and disciplines to manage successful delivery of project/programme, ensuring the right skills and experiences are incorporated (including external advice), as well as appropriate checks and measures.
- Develop a supporting communications and change management plan to assist project implementation and the embedding of change, that will engage with the wider organization, encourage broader

ownership and instil a recognition of the need for continuous change and adaptation.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

The latter point reflects the need to establish an effective and sustainable change community and expectation of on-going change, as a key strategy outcome. Too many worthwhile workplace and organizational change projects have provided initial success that has not been maintained or, in some cases, has even been abandoned over time because the focus and disciplines around the original project were dropped once the main implementation was complete. This is particularly pertinent in the public sector, where civil servants traditionally have generic, moving roles to further career development. Currently, an effective key project manager or director is unlikely to still be in post after initial implementation and indeed the post itself is unlikely to exist. But someone needs to lead and ensure change is embedded and the defined longer-term benefits are monitored and realized. The need for a senior strategic workplace manager is a critical on-going role for any organization and needs to exist in future. In this sense, while the world of fluid, multi-project working is clearly required as we embrace the future, key roles like this will also have to feature to underpin the dynamics of the future organization. Without them, there will be chaos, lack of focus and lost opportunity.

#### **Guiding principles**

Beyond the strategic context and rationale for a workplace strategy lie the detailed components of that strategy that are used to implement meaningful solutions. A key linkage here between strategy and implementation is the development of workplace principles – higher level standards that set the tone and parameters for more detailed workplace components. Examples of principles would be an average allocation of space per workstation or person, a directive that no one 'owns' a dedicated office, the principle that space is allocated by need not status; or that workstyle determines allocation of technology, such as mobile telephony, laptop, thin or fat client PCs. Even the basis by which desks are allocated or shared can be determined through such high-level guiding principles. A more comprehensive example of workplace principles can be found in Figure 9.9.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Enterprise Programme Management*, Williams, D., and Parr, T., 2003, Deloitte.



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**Someone needs to lead and ensure change is embedded and the defined longer-term benefits are monitored and realized. The need for a senior strategic workplace manager is a critical on-going role for any organization.**

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**Figure 9.9: example of workplace principles and standards**

- Space allocated by need not status
- No storage on desking
- Minimal personal storage
- Grouped project or team storage
- Reduced storage practices
- Clear workspace policies
- Desks shared and not owned
- Reduced allocation of space for desks
- Higher proportion of shared support space
- Offices available for use but not owned
- Range of alternative work settings
- Increased utilization of workspace
- Centralized recycling and waste disposal
- Rationalized copying and printing
- Employees empowered to work across locations
- Exploitation of new technologies
- Emphasis on sharing and not owning facilities

**Workstyles**

Much of the workplace strategy detail that then flows from these guideline principles is easier to define and has its roots in emerging workstyles – that is, how the workforce will operate in delivering the organization’s evolving business priorities.

Even today, no more than around six distinct workstyles are likely to be encountered across the diversity of private and public sector organizations (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.1). Although the nature of workstyles will change over time, the range of workstyles is likely to remain fairly limited. And this provides a useful basis in which to look at physical, technical and policy solutions.

Each workstyle reflects, if you like, different aspects of ‘office work’ – from the most autonomous, mobile, interactive and externally focused roles to the more administrative, system-tied, customer-focused or routine roles – and everything in between. Skilful

analysis of work processes, technology, storage and filing dependencies, policy requirements and physical worksetting needs will define a distinct workstyle and set of requirements which the workplace strategy can address. The aim of the workplace strategy will be to identify the common ground between the differing workstyle needs to enable generic solutions that reflect efficiency and economies of scale to emerge. The solution differences between workstyles will be more about how those solutions are used, rather than the solutions themselves – and the relative proportion or emphasis on aspects of the solution are placed. For example, one workstyle may have a greater need for mobile technology, interactive worksettings and electronic data storage; another a greater need for a dedicated workstation and storage, access to comprehensive databases, as well as team colleagues. Both require differing emphasis on elements of a common ‘menu’ of worksettings, technologies and policies. If designed well, a new work environment that will be the base for 100 people, for example, will have the potential to support 100 different workstyles. We are all individuals with specific preferences and quirks. In this sense, there is no longer a need for the workplace or our working arrangements to compromise our business-focused chosen work and life styles.

**Workspace budget**

In the workplace concept, such a menu of worksettings (and see Chapter 3, Figure 3.3) can contribute to the development of a workspace budget and model which defines the amount and nature of workspace required for the organization. Such a workspace budget will reflect the range and proportion of worksettings required and, for example, sharing ratios for workstations, if this is appropriate. Such a process can be extended to define technology, equipment and storage needs. To aid an effective strategy, typically workplace standards are introduced to help the calculation of overall needs and aid future adaptability – for example all workstations have a common footprint, even furniture solution; there is a standardised ratio for sharing desks or printers; and a standardised formula for calculating numbers of meeting rooms and so on. Such a workspace budget model allows for demand and supply to be quickly aligned, refined and adjusted as required and for procurement and costs to be most appropriately planned.



Traditionally a workspace budget focuses on elements of the organization's working environment – namely what can be made available within its premises. We now see a broader scope to what 'workspace' can mean for an organization and an individual. How much space an organization needs to own or maintain or retain in a particular location (for example centrally) is of course now all up for grabs. We still need, however, to understand the organizational needs for such resources and how they are to be satisfied – and to be able to remodel it as required.

### **Framework for the future**

The future is certainly about greater fluidity, mobility, choice and liberation – but equally robust new business management and planning processes, as well as individual disciplines will be more important than ever; in order that effectiveness and success, rather than chaos and confusion, is achieved. This chapter presents a range of models and checklists to support our efforts in this respect. Much of it is not new, although perhaps has to be viewed and used in new ways. And rather than a new order of control and bureaucracy, such developments have to be seen as a welcome flexible framework for exploiting whatever the future may throw at us. Much of this we can now predict and anticipate, some we have yet to learn of; but most we should now be able to deal with in ways previously not possible through our developing new outlooks and mindsets. Working beyond the boundaries of the conventional office environment; working beyond the constraints of our previous thinking; working beyond challenges we need to penetrate. Working beyond walls.



**Above** Range of worksettings at the British Library, St Pancras



# Part 4

# Workplace

# 2020

The year is 2020: the landscape of government work is transformed. Traditional associations between work and place have gone. The link between person and desk has been broken but many people now have wide access across the regions to better quality space and resources for undertaking work. A flexible and sustainable estate strategy has evolved, delivering greater savings and giving employees more freedom of choice over where they work and live.

## Chapter 10

# Reimagining the government workplace

It's the year 2020 and the government workplace has witnessed enormous changes. Greater effectiveness is achieved through the OGC's High Performing Property programme. Improved job satisfaction and perceived productivity are reported from regular surveys and benchmarking. Step-change improvements have arisen from enabling employees to choose the best place from which to work. Homeworking is commonplace. Mobile working is popular. Work and life choices are clearer and more balanced but, looking at the bigger picture, the future for humanity is less clear and more uncertain.

According to the most recent UN report, humanity's future has been put at risk by a failure to address environmental problems including climate change, species extinction and a growing human population. This confirms the findings of the Stern Report way back in 2006 on the Economics of Climate Change, and subsequent reports from the World Bank. There is now enormous pressure on basic resources such as food, water, energy and medicines. Targets set by the government's Climate Change Bill mean cutting emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, with mandatory carbon budgets set at five-year intervals. A new independent monitoring body is in place to make an annual report to parliament on progress towards meeting the objectives.

Carbon neutral objectives now cut through every aspect of business and domestic life, with government showing the way for best practice. Transport in cities is revolutionized. Cycles, buses and trams replace the car.

Energy production is more locally focused, with heating and power networked between buildings. Using lightweight flexible materials, photovoltaics are applied to building surfaces, vehicles and clothing to power digital LED displays and lighting. Lightweight information and communications technology (ICT) devices plug into the fabric of clothing. Technology that harvests small quantities of energy from human

movement, machine and building vibrations is used to power robotic limbs, monitoring sensors, GPS and mobile communications. Energy and space management are big business and government policy requires front-of-house display of energy consumption in every workplace.

### **Government offices and the evolved estate**

Inside office buildings, radio frequency identification (RFI) connected to building management systems keeps tabs on the carbon footprint of every building user. Heating and lighting sensors regulate energy consumption according to building occupancy and seasonal variation. PCs have vanished from office floors, dramatically reducing summer heat gains. In their place, thin client systems with card reader, roll-out screen and keyboard linked to main servers allow people to work anywhere in the building. Facial recognition systems control and manage building access, ICT usage, food and refreshment charging and personal carbon accounts. Increased pedestrian activity at work has helped reduce the alarming levels of obesity seen in 2008.

The government office estate has now evolved to comprise long-term core holdings complemented by short-term leased or flex space. The OGC estate database, e-PIMS, has developed into a sophisticated web portal, allowing users to drill down to floor layouts within individual buildings. It is suited with software enabling 'what-if' modelling of the relationship between demand for office space with supply. With a better match now achieved between occupiers' ever-changing requirements for office space and the estate supply the result is year-on-year efficiency savings. Unit costs per person and per square metre for space and energy decline year on year.

In a climate of opinion in which social, economic and environmental priorities are now more deeply interconnected, distance working is commonplace, supported by neighbourhood, home and transport



infrastructures. Emphasizing that work and place are now different sides of the same coin, government places are more strategically located to provide an integrated network of facilities from large campuses to small spaces on-demand and government jobs are dispersed across geographic and economic regions and demographic profiles.

#### **A work and place landscape**

Campuses inside and outside cities house headquarter functions with high-quality serviced support space for meeting, conference, training, catering and pastoral purposes. Whitehall, a centre for policy initiatives and knowledge working, is now a central London campus. High-tech serviced working and meeting spaces have brought together both internet and baby-boomer generations to work and meet in team neighbourhoods, non-territorial ICT labs and airline-style club-lounges. Full-immersion room displays and computer animated virtual environments (CAVES) support communication between remote teams. Life size, standup telepresence enables people

to meet and speak in real time across the globe using hologram video technology.

Once dedicated to the use of specific departments, Whitehall's support facilities are now held in common and used intensively across all departments on a daily basis. Campus signs and route-maps encourage walking between buildings and for the able bodied taking the lift debits your personal carbon account.

Hundreds of campus visitors come and go daily – employees, advisers and suppliers. Office demographics have changed. Contracted staff together with consultants and advisers now account for the majority of building users. To maintain security, visitors are supported by separate WiFi services.

Away from London and centred on each UK region, alongside each campus headquarters is a shared service centre (SSC), which enable economies of scale to be achieved through centralizing administrative and transactional functions across branches of government. Where cost and space permit, family-friendly reception areas allow parents access to childcare facilities.

With distance working now prevalent, new pastoral facilities are incorporated within core premises and buddies from team neighbourhoods keep in regular contact with their more distanced colleagues.

Away from the regionally centred campuses and tucked onto brownfield town and adjacent sites are premises occupied by single departmental directorates and arms length bodies. Front-line services such as HM Revenue and Customs and Job Centres occupy a balance of core and flex buildings in provincial locations to manage the peaks and troughs in their business cycles. Team shared desks and web enabled booking for space and resources provide a variety of worksettings and meeting spaces.

Flex offices come in several varieties. Hotel.Gov offices are managed under short-term leases but are finely tuned to government needs, with customized security, visitor WiFi network, and commuter shuttle services. Serviced pay-as-you go offices come with a concierge and internet booking. Providing increased agility to expand and contract departmental portfolios at short order, the combination of hotel.gov and serviced offices offers premises for a flux of small business teams.

Below sub-regional level and dispersed around town locations, further flex offices are found within local neighbourhoods including government one-stop shops to help with jobs, personal tax, benefits and carbon credit advice. Accommodating up to 400 workstations in a variety of settings – desk assigned, team-shared, touchdown, walk-up configurations, neighbourhood offices come with hotel-style management, web enabled booking and front-of-house concierge and provide ‘swing’ space for when departments are relocating.

Increasing numbers of employees, particularly part timers, are now attracted to the prospect of walking and cycling to a neighbourhood government facility. If the neighbourhood scene is sometimes too busy for quiet work then homeworking is an option, using advanced ICT and learning from past experience to:

- undertake health and safety risk assessment on ergonomics of workspace design
- assess risk to data protection and broadband security
- budget for funding ICT, furniture and lighting
- review financial implications in terms of insurance premiums and taxation

- arrange regular contact with colleagues
- help employees achieve a sensible balance between work and domestic life.

Working at home is part of the experience of the government’s growing cohort of mobile workers. Keen interest in employees working more flexible hours using mobile technology and at a distance from headquarter facilities resulted in rolling out the remote working programme. Alignment of HR, ICT and workplace responsibilities within a single directorate has enabled rapid change and a radical work and place transformation across government.

Employees now choose between three work and life-style options. They can be assigned a desk at one location with limited rights of access to other government regional and headquarter workplaces. They can be based at home at least three days a week. Or they can choose mobile working, with rights of access to most government neighbourhood, regional and headquarters offices. Whichever they choose they will know that they are playing their part in a total workplace strategy developed over the course of more than a decade by people committed to the most imaginative and far-reaching scenario planning so that the future world of work doesn’t find us unprepared.



Above Communities and Local Government

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## Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)

2020 foresight suggests that coming into the office will be the exception rather than the rule, that the office is unlikely to be in London unless you work in a minister's private office, that HD videoconferencing will be the norm from home as well as from the office, that we'll be taking a much more portfolio/project-based approach to work, with teams coming together for short periods of time to do specific pieces of work, with team building often based on postcard-sized e-cvs, and with much more movement of staff and even whole management units between government departments which will by then have homogeneous IT systems that fit together.

Created in June 2007, the aim of the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) is to make the UK one of the best places in the world for science, research and innovation while ensuring it has the skills to compete in the world-wide economy. DIUS brings together functions from the former Department of Trade and Industry with further and higher education and skills, previously part of the Department for Education and Skills.

DIUS is trying to focus its departmental strategy and resource on its core policy and delivery role, in part by outsourcing its corporate and support services to other government departments. The overarching ambition driving this work is to create a lean and strategically focused corporate centre.

With office locations in London, Sheffield, Runcorn and Darlington, all its 850 or so staff have their own encrypted, lightweight laptops enabling them to work anywhere. This has been enabled by a flexible IT leasing contract that gets cheaper as the number of users across Whitehall grows. A separate contract for new telephony provides staff with a fully flexible follow-me office phone system.

DIUS has an empowering approach to flexible working and staff are encouraged to think imaginatively about where and how they work. At Kingsgate House in London where there are no fixed computer terminals, other than in touchdown areas for visitors, and desks are provided on less than an eight per 10 staff ratio. Ian Watmore the permanent secretary says, 'I not only

*sit in open-plan accommodation, I also hot-desk, which I think is a Whitehall first.'* Each week Ian and his team hot-desk in another part of the building and the team can be located via the departmental intranet. Other board members also hot-desk, bringing senior management into regular face-to-face contact with most of the department. Ian says, 'We are now looking to exploit this investment [in laptops] through our own social networking My Site page; and hoping in the future to install wireless networks to help people become less chained to their desks.'<sup>1</sup>

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### **'I not only sit in open-plan accommodation, I also hot-desk, which I think is a Whitehall first.'**

**Ian Watmore, Permanent Secretary DIUS**

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On the key subject of communications technology Simon Morys, director of operations explains, 'We also have made big investments in various kinds of videoconferencing, including the first telepresence suite in Whitehall, which gives us life-size, high-definition images that give you everything that a meeting does except the handshake.'

Telepresence will allow regular videoconferences for example between the Sheffield and London offices, saving the time and high cost normally associated with extensive travel. DIUS conference and meeting rooms are equipped with the latest digital whiteboards enabling presentations to be given from visitors' laptops, and for notes and ideas to be downloaded and shared.

The next step for DIUS is to create an innovation park on the top floor of Kingsgate House that will be fitted out as an area that won't look like a traditional government department but rather will be a place for showcasing innovation and for thinking and working in a different way.

## Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)

The past few years have heralded an unprecedented period of modernization for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and its 11 departments, where a range of reform programmes are radically transforming interaction with the citizen through new work processes, work practices, information systems and the working environment.

Part of the cultural challenge facing the NICS is helping its 26,000 staff to understand how all these initiatives work together to provide a step change in the quality of services to the citizen and what the changes will mean for staff in the short, medium and longer term. At the heart of this communication is an interactive visitor lab-style facility called future@work, launched in May 2007, where staff can see, feel and try out the physical and technological changes that will be implemented in the months and years ahead and understand better the policy, cultural and work practice changes and opportunities that will support these developments.

The facility, based within the NICS pathfinder workplace Clare House, encompasses an office zone, a home zone, a beyond the office zone and a future zone to provide location context to all these work developments. Bespoke tours and demonstrations are hosted by the future@work manager who can also help facilitate group discussions around workplace innovations, new ways of working and policy implications. The information and features available at future@work are continually refreshed to reflect on-going developments. Staff feedback is also an important part of the facility and touch screen technology is used to capture the thoughts of visitors at the end of visits. The comments and suggestions are also reflected in updates to the site and are used to develop the facilities available.

Using future@work allows staff to try out new desks, chairs, desktop technologies, storage arrangements, phone and information systems – before implementation. They can also explore the potential of dual and touchscreen monitors, new remote shared-working technologies and software and the latest portable devices, digital pens and voice-activated applications.

There is also a roadshow version of future@work and an associated DVD. Most recently, a dedicated intranet site has been established to promote ideas and thinking around the future at work. To date there have been over 3,000 visitors to the future@work facility and roadshow. Feedback has been excellent, too, with 98 per cent of visitors finding their visit interesting and useful and 97 per cent indicating they would come back to see new developments. Many other public sector organizations from across the UK, as well as private sector organizations, have also visited the facility. The intranet site has received 15,000 visits in its first six months.

This facility aims not just to help prepare NICS staff for immediate change, but to do this in the context of what work might be like in the years leading up to 2020, so the long-term direction and pace of continuing change can be understood, accepted and embraced.

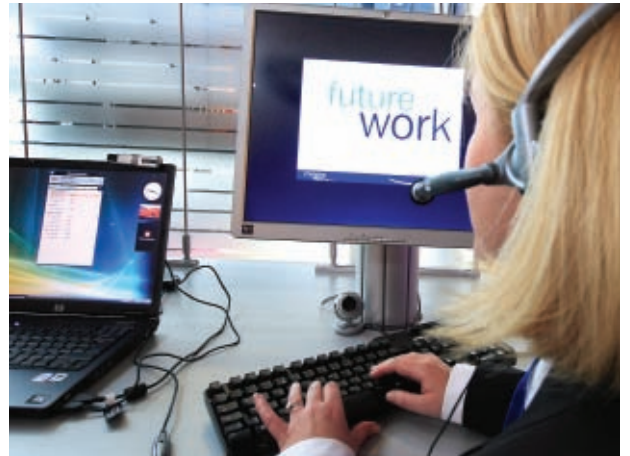
*'To serve our citizens in the future with the services they require and expect, it is critical that we in the Northern Ireland Civil Service embrace change and reform and become much more agile in our thinking and operation. And we can only deliver this through our people. However, such change can be daunting, confusing, even threatening, for staff.'*

*'The future@work programme has given us a stimulating, experienced-based facility to give us a better understanding, as teams and individuals, what the future at work really can mean for us all and highlight the positive opportunities and choices that are available. The response to this initiative from staff, as well as from visiting organizations, has been overwhelmingly positive. The next challenge for us is to keep things fresh and relevant and to maintain the sense of excitement and opportunity about the future.'*

*'And rather than the future being something that is imposed on us which we have to react to and even be fearful of – which has so often been the case in the past – we now want to anticipate it, shape it and personalize it, so we can all get the very best out of it. That is what future@work is all about.'*

**Bruce Robinson**, Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service





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**‘Work is what you do, not a place you go. The next generation of workforce will know that and be ready and able to work anywhere. Work has migrated beyond the conventional boundaries of time and space into a wider environment and those who manage the government estate need to be prepared.’**

Sir Gus O’Donnell, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service

The civil service in the twenty first century is facing the challenge of rising expectations for high quality services, increasing competition for the best quality workforce and the combined effects of climate change and dwindling fossil fuel resources. There is no doubt that to respond to these challenges the government estate must change – and it is changing.

*Working Beyond Walls* explores the role of the workplace as an agent for change and describes a vision for government workplaces of the future. The authors discuss the issues facing those seeking to achieve change through distributed working and innovative workspaces and, with the help of case study examples drawn from the UK central government sector, offer advice and inspiration about how to achieve change successfully.

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