

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

SMARTER WORKING PROGRAMME

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide Policy Committee with an update on the Ways of Working (WoW) programme and its successor Smarter Working programme (SWP).

Information and Advice

Background

- 2 The WoW Programme was initiated in 2010 as a key component of the Improvement Programme with the aim of reducing the Authority's portfolio of office accommodation and modernising working practices.
- 3 A fundamental review of all the existing office accommodation was undertaken.
- 4 County Hall and Trent Bridge House have been adapted to allow an average of seven desks for every ten members of staff.
- 5 New working practices have been introduced e.g. clear desk policy, supported by a modern open-plan office environment, the introduction of Lync telephony and the digitisation of records and files.
- 6 The WoW programme will come to an end with the clearance of the CLASP block of County Hall and a successor programme, Smarter Working, has been established as agreed at Policy Committee in July 2014.

Achievements of the WoW Programme

- 7 The original aim of the programme was to reduce the portfolio of office buildings and to date 11 buildings have been vacated or disposed. (Detailed in Appendix A)
- 8 This has so far generated:

£ 2.42 m in capital receipts
£ 3.11 m reduction in annual running costs
- 9 County Hall and Trent Bridge House have been transformed over the last four years. Whilst significant issues have been encountered and overcome, the fact that this process has gone so smoothly is a testament to excellent partnership working.
- 10 Organisationally, the greatest impact of the programme has been on the managers and staff taken through the process who have embraced new ways of working. This has not been without difficulties and it is recognised that culture change on this scale has to be an iterative journey. However, for a significant proportion there has been a step change in how they work.
- 11 A programme close report for the WoW programme, including a review of the lessons learned, will be produced once the programme has cleared the CLASP block.

Vision, outcomes and scope for the Smarter Working programme

- 12 The vision for the Smarter Working Programme is:

“To enable the Council to be a more efficient, agile and sustainable organisation that is able to deliver its services more cost effectively”
- 13 The expected outcomes for the programme are:
 - A reduced requirement for the property estate resulting in savings
 - Maximised use of and benefits of technology ensuring efficiency
 - A working environment that optimises productivity
 - Improved management of the office space
 - Resolution of existing building-based issues
 - A more joined up use of buildings across sectors
 - A more environmentally-friendly service provision
- 14 The net internal floor area for the entire property estate of approximately 700 properties is just over 750,000, of which approximately 60% is schools. The scope of the programme includes all Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) staff and all NCC properties excluding schools. Currently, approximately 9,000 staff make use of the Council’s property portfolio including office accommodation, properties used for service provision, touchdown locations and a number of partner properties across the county.

- 15 There are approximately 3,850 office based staff and the initial focus of the programme is on the office portfolio that they utilise.

Working with departments

- 16 In order to deliver major changes in working practices it is important to understand service needs and operating practices and to get engagement and buy-in from the services affected.
- 17 To that end, workshops have been held with service departments, in conjunction with colleagues from Property and ICT, to understand how the way that they currently operate will change as a result of introducing new technologies and to consider how this will impact on their future property requirements. Details of the building-related issues currently faced by staff were also considered.

Working with ICT – Smarter Working Technologies

- 18 The following technologies have been identified as being vital to support the transformation of how staff undertake their work:
- Tablet devices with software to support mobile working
 - Lync telephony
 - Smart phones
 - Video conferencing
 - Electronic file sharing and management (Sharepoint)
 - Electronic scheduling
 - Homeworking solutions
 - Software that supports the automation of activities
 - Technologies that support joined-up working with other parts of the public sector
- 19 The programme is working closely with ICT on the development, prioritisation and deployment of these technologies and to ensure that their maximum potential is realised.

Working with Property - Link to the Property Strategy

- 20 The Property group has a target to develop a long term (10 year) asset management plan (AMP). Information from the programme, in addition to the results of extensive suitability modelling of buildings that has been undertaken by property in conjunction with departments, will inform the development of this plan.
- 21 The results of the suitability assessments will be presented to the corporate leadership team as soon as agenda space allows to approve the future use/ proposed exit strategy for the 64 properties identified as totally unsuitable. Departments will be engaged to consider the full range of unsuitable

properties and assisted in the development of local asset management plans. It is proposed that Departments will be set a challenge to minimise their property footprint by utilising modern service delivery methods and modern ways of working. The above work will progress in parallel with the SWP on the corporate property estate to help formulate the long term AMP.

Supporting Principles

- 22 Previously agreed principles for the WoW programme are:
- A 7:10 desk : staff ratio
 - A clear desk policy
 - Digital storage where possible
- 23 It is now considered that, in addition to the above, the following principles are required:
- A 6:10 desk : staff ratio
 - When allocating space in buildings the priority will be to ensure that frontline workers are in close proximity to their service users and located with teams where work synergies exist to reduce travel times and encourage collaborative working across teams and services
 - Allocating a maximum of eight square metres of office space per full time equivalent (FTE) to ensure that efficient use is made of our buildings
 - Making use of technology to improve business processes and reduce the need for paper
 - Audio/video conferencing as an alternative to travelling to meetings
 - Working from home as an additional and alternative work setting
 - The Council's parking policy will be aligned with and underpin smarter working principles
- 24 The adoption of smarter working will require significant cultural change. Some individuals will have concerns about the changes and a different approach to management and the development of new leadership skills and competencies will be required and will form part of the Workforce Strategy moving forward.

Progress on Smarter Working to date

Tablet devices

- 25 Since March 2015, over 1,600 tablet devices have been provided, mainly to Social Care staff in Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection, (ASCH&PP) and Children Families and Cultural Services (CFCS). The devices are equipped with specialist software that enables the devices to synchronise with back office systems allowing staff to complete work and update case notes whilst in the field. This saves time, reduces travel and duplication and facilitates mobile working. The early signs from our monitoring is that this is having a positive effect on the productivity of staff.

Lync telephony

- 26 Following the deployment at County Hall and Trent Bridge House, plans are currently being developed to rollout Lync to Lawn View House (LVH) and the likely timescales are late 2015/ early 2016. It will then be rolled out across the remaining main office sites across the County. This provides staff with the capability to communicate far more effectively and provides the functionality to hold telephone conferences and work collaboratively on shared electronic documents allowing staff to work more efficiently and reduce the need for meetings.

Smart Phones

- 27 By moving to the Windows Smartphones we will be fully utilising the Microsoft applications already installed on desktop computers and tablet devices. These offer a greater level of security and a more familiar 'look and feel' to users. A technical pilot is currently underway and if this is successful they will be rolled out across the Council to replace existing Blackberry phones.

Video Conferencing

- 28 Following a feasibility study, video conferencing facilities have been installed at County Hall, Lawn View House and Trent Bridge House. This is to facilitate a move to video conferencing as an alternative to staff spending time and money travelling to and from meetings. If this proves successful, additional sites across the County will be established.
- 29 Other flexible solutions to facilitate video conferencing are being piloted that could allow any meeting room to be used for video conferencing

Electronic file sharing

- 30 The ability to store, share and manage electronically stored information is a key enabler for collaborative working. This is currently provided by the OneSpace functionality within the Sharepoint application. This is used internally at present but new functionality will mean that it will be soon be possible to open up access to external partners to facilitate more effective partnership working.

Electronic scheduling

- 31 A first pilot to trial the electronic scheduling of appointments for Occupational Therapists (OTs) in ASCH&PP is currently underway. This allows staff within the Adult Access Service, based at the Customer Services Centre, to book a slot with a service user at the time they make contact with us rather than wait for an OT to make contact at a later date. The aim of this pilot is to test out the technology and to measure the impact on the time it takes from a service user making contact with us to them being assessed. Two further pilots with different teams are planned to evaluate the potential to roll out on a wider

basis across the Council. Initial findings are that the scheduling can dramatically reduce the time for a service user to be assessed.

Homeworking solutions

- 32 Over 2,500 staff have received an upgrade to the *Get Connected* service which allows them to access emails and work files from home over an internet connection. The upgrade provides a more reliable connection which improves the experience of staff working from home.

Touchdown zones

- 33 A key element of the programme is to promote and support the mobilisation of staff. For this ambition to be realised it is important to have a network of locations that staff can use across the County. Therefore, 'touchdown zones' have been established at County Hall and Lawn View house as part of a pilot that could see them introduced at all main office buildings. Work is ongoing with Property to establish a wider network, including providing staff access to Day Centres and an interactive map is being developed for staff to identify where the nearest touchdown facility is when they are out in the community.

Following the undertaking of a Space Utilisation Survey, we will revisit the allocation of space at Trent Bridge House to ensure that the target desk ratios are maintained.

Financial Benefits

- 34 The benefits for the programme have been grouped under the following four headings and are detailed in Appendix B

Reduced budgets
Improved customer experience and value for money
Better partnership working
More stable workforce

- 35 Modelling the potential impact of the SWP on the requirement for office space within the property portfolio has identified potential savings in running costs of £720k per annum.

- 36 It is important to note that these are indicative savings and the actual savings from this programme will be derived from what is currently spent on the buildings that we would no longer use. For this to happen, the pockets of space created in a number of buildings will need to be translated into whole buildings being freed up by relocating services. Therefore, the final savings target for the programme cannot be evaluated until the property strategy has been developed and we know which buildings we intend to sell/vacate or share.

Lawn View House

- 37 Lawn View House (LVH) has been identified as the first site at which the Smarter Working approach will be deployed. This site has been chosen as it is one of the geographical areas with the highest densities of service users, there is a mix of teams from different departments based there and it is the most flexible of the main buildings outside of the County Hall campus. This is also why LVH has been chosen as a site for a new touchdown area, a fixed video conferencing capacity and to be the first building outside the County Hall campus to have Lync deployed.
- 38 Planning and preparatory work has started and details of the approach to be taken are detailed in Appendix C

Gateway Review

- 39 A gateway review of the programme will be undertaken in November to:
- Provide an assessment of how successfully Smart Working has been implemented so far through the Ways of Working Programme
 - Review the expressed vision, expected outcomes, approach being developed and governance for the Smarter Working Programme
 - Make recommendations for taking Smart Working forward.
- 40 The review will be undertaken by a specialist in flexible and smarter working who is currently advising the Cabinet Office.

Other Options Considered

None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

To update Policy Committee on progress with this programme

Statutory and Policy Implications

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, ways of working, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Policy Committee notes the work undertaken to date for the Ways of Working (WoW) programme and its successor Smarter Working programme.
- 2) Further reports are brought to provide an update on a six monthly basis

Councillor Alan Rhodes
Leader of the County Council

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Constitutional Comments

- 41 Constitutional Comments are not required as the report is for noting only.

Financial Comments (SES 02/11/15)

- 42 There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

Appendix A

Properties vacated/disposed since 2010	Capital Receipts £	Running costs £
39/41 Loughborough Road, Rushcliffe	338,000	140,400
47 Loughborough Road, Rushcliffe	250,000	44,000
Centenary House, Rushcliffe	1,450,000	248,174
Thoroton Road, Rushcliffe	384,000	47,216
West Bridgford House, Rushcliffe		230,007
The Hall (Office), Rushcliffe		194,470
Ludlow House, Rushcliffe		184,500
Mundella Centre, City		600,000
Heathcote Buildings, City		116,000
Baldertongate, Newark		294,000
Oak House, Rushcliffe		902,000
52a Rectory Road, Rushcliffe		110,000
	2,422,000	3,110,767

There will be an additional saving in running costs of £178k when the CLASP has been demolished.

Benefits expected from the Smarter Working Programme

Reduced budgets, measurable by:

- Less square metres of property per FTE
- Increased income generation through property rentals
- Lower maintenance and running costs
- Increased capital receipts
- Reduced spend on carbon tax
- Increased space utilisation ratios

Improved customer experience and value for money, measured by:

- Reduced processing time for customers
- Ability to provide better or maintained services, at less cost
- Ability to provide services to more people at same or less cost
- Fewer customer complaints

Better partnership working, measurable by:

- Increased number of initiatives / ventures done jointly with partners

More stable workforce, measurable by:

- Increased retention rates
- Reduced sickness
- Employee Satisfaction Surveys

The Smarter Working approach

Step 1

Before engaging with the teams based at the building we will work with colleagues from Business Support & Admin, Property, Facilities Management, ICT and Print to consider the following:

- Clarity of roles for Facilities management / Business Support & Admin / Nominated Property Officer / Nominated Property Contact at LVH
- Adoption of Smarter Working practices within teams
- Culture, performance management and training requirements
- Development of protocols
- Digital solutions for mail in and mail out
- The clarity of existing signage in the building
- Visitor management at the building
- Stationary / resource hubs
- A review of existing storage
- Governance for the management of the building

Step 2

Identify the optimum mix of teams to be based at the building

Step 3

Determine the amount of space to be made available to each of the teams and the amount of space to be identified as touchdown space for all staff

Step 4

Undertake a Space Utilisation Survey of the building to confirm baseline activity

Step 5

Work with managers to facilitate the adoption of new management/leadership skills so that teams can work effectively, communicate constructively and maintain high levels of engagement and performance. This includes constructive challenge to the status quo that involves entrenched out-dated working habits

Step 6

Work with employees to ensure they can adopt smarter working practices by understanding what they are expected to do and how the new approach to performance management works

Step 7

Work with the identified teams to understand how they work together and determine what new team working practices need to be adopted as a result of mobilisation and the introduction of technologies to support Smarter Working – using that knowledge to inform how they would like to configure their space.

Step 8

Design and develop working protocols that include both smarter working principles and new localised working practices.

Step 9

Finalise, agree and get sign-off for the proposed configuration and evaluate the cost of the change from the existing configuration

Step 10

Obtain sign off to the configuration and budget approval for any associated costs to facilitate implementation and go-live