

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Corporate Asset Sub Committee	18 January 2021
Establishment Committee	17 March 2021
Efficiency & Performance Sub-Committee	30 March 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Guildhall - New Ways of Working Update Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>Estimated £1m</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>City's Cash</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Report of:</b> City Surveyor	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Dorian Price	

### Summary

Following on from the September 2020 report of City Surveyor, Chamberlain (IT), and Town Clerk (HR); Guildhall Complex – Road Map for Return to the Office report, the purpose of this report is to focus on the future new ways of working.

Covid-19 has demonstrated that it is possible for our business to operate without access to Guildhall. However, Covid-19 has also demonstrated that this is not without challenges and recent staff surveys have provided evidence that the office still has a major role to play in the workplace, as a destination for staff to meet and collaborate and for anybody who simply cannot work from home for health and wellbeing reasons or has a need to work on-site physically.

The City Surveyor's remote working departmental survey undertaken in September 2020 highlights that over 90% of staff would choose to work at least 2 days per week remotely/from home. This fact is supported by various recent external surveys that suggest 70-80% of people would like to work from home more often in the future, but not necessarily 100% of the time as experienced during the pandemic and lockdown periods.

An independent poll conducted in September 2020 and commissioned by the British Council for Offices (BCO) of just over 2,000 office workers across a range of job roles in all regions of the UK shows that, once Government measures allow, Britain is set to move to a 'mixed' or 'hybrid' working style, where time in the office is balanced with time working from other locations including at home (see Appendix 1 – From Desk Office to Destination Office)

What is becoming clear is that the changes made by the Corporation during this time, which in March 2020 were short-term changes driven by necessity, are now having a profound long-term impact on how we work.

The Corporation offices need to be more than places to just house staff, they need to be a destination of choice; and transformed into environments our staff see as great places to work. The positive changes being made now will undoubtedly become permanent shifts in working practices as we integrate these into:

- a. Our new Target Operating Model and help to embed positive culture change.
- b. The Guildhall Masterplan, offering flexible workspace for a more agile workforce and creating an exemplar sustainable building.
- c. The City's Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy 2020-25 (approved at the December meeting of Finance Committee), to better utilise our operational assets.

Retaining some of the best practices that are now commonplace, whilst rethinking the Property role of workplace design, the People role of changing working patterns and the Technology role to deliver digital solutions to support the destination office offering flexible working patterns, will be critical stepping stones to deliver the next normal.

To further support the delivery of all workstreams, the City Surveyor has established and will lead a new Workplace Steering Group formed of City Surveyor, HR, IT and Finance officers.

## **Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

- Note the proposal to continue developing the Hybrid workplace model that will be a stepping stone to support the Target Operating Model and the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy to deliver an organisation that is efficient, agile and better joined up.
- Note further reports will be provide as proposals are developed by the City Surveyor's new Workplace Steering Group.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. Officers from across departments have been working collaboratively (through the Smart Working Group) to prepare for more staff return to Guildhall and other Corporation locations in a safe way, whilst introducing new ways of working that supports a future agile workforce. This is subject to ongoing Government and Public Health Guidance at the time and is covered in 3 key principles as set out by the Chair of Policy and Resources at Court. These are:
  - Our staff safety is paramount
  - Our workplaces are Covid secure
  - Our new flexible ways of working are embedded.

## Current Position

2. Top actions the Corporation has taken to provide returning workers with confidence that their workplace is Covid-19 safe by introducing the following workplace standards;
  - Enhanced office cleaning
  - Reduced capacity due to social distancing requirements
  - Redesigned workspaces to support social distance guidelines
  - Improved air quality – the mechanical ventilation has been set to ensure adequate fresh air to North and West wing office buildings is delivered.
  - Clear Desks
  - Assigned Desk Booking and contact track and tracing App.
3. The Corporation now has a unique opportunity to consider how the next normal can continue to support the new ways of working that we have all followed during the Covid-19 pandemic and support the new Target Operating Model (TOM).
4. The vision of the TOM is an organisation that is efficient, agile and better joined up. Improved ways of working and offering flexible workspace can be critical ingredients to meet these aims by helping to foster better collaboration and reduce organisational drag (the collection of institutional factors that slow things down, decrease output, and drain people's energy).
5. For example, open planned seating areas and “collaboration spaces” are tools that can help remove silos and make it easier for teams to informally collaborate and strengthen relationships. Better working relationships and closer collaboration from the start, help departments and individuals understand where they fit into the whole corporation and how they can have the most impact, without the necessity to always be present in the workplace. This also results in increased organisational knowledge which can inform process improvements and generate opportunistic innovations.
6. Technology has made advancements that would be unimaginable when the Corporation was first established. There has been some good progress made during 2020 for creating an improved and inclusive digital environment supporting new ways of working for Staff, Customers and Members. Some examples are detailed below:
  - a. **Firmstep Forms** – The IT Development Team have continued to manage a development pipeline of forms and workflow requests to facilitate more online services and digital ways of working. This year they have received over 15k form submissions and taken over £5.21m in online and telephone payments using the forms. Highlights include the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme, new Online Licensing Forms, Hampstead Heath Swimming Season Ticket application and Open Spaces Online Donation Form.
  - b. **Microsoft Teams** – Teams has been the major technology success story this year, facilitating thousands of meetings and webinars across the organisation. Although the product was only launched by the Corporation in 2019, the use

of Teams has increased significantly in 2020 with over 80% staff now using the product on a regular basis.

- c. **Teams Telephony** – The additional Microsoft Teams functionality allows staff to make and receive telephone calls using the Teams application on their laptop or mobile device. This has enabled services to operate remotely and flexibly, removing the need for staff to attend Guildhall during lockdown periods or be constrained by their work location.
  - d. **Teams Meeting Rooms** – Audio visual equipment has been installed to over 25 corporate meeting rooms and private offices. These facilitate a more flexible meeting approach, with hybrid meetings consisting of staff based at Guildhall and staff working remotely.
  - e. **Virtual Committee Meetings** – All Committee Meetings are now delivered virtually through Microsoft Teams and streamed to the Corporation's YouTube Channel allowing access to members of the public. The IT Division have worked with Committee Services to support Members throughout this period and exploit new features such as the 'Raise Hand' feature and the Microsoft Forms integration which is now being used to streamline voting in meetings.
  - f. **Automated desk booking system** – to support the COVID changes to office working and preparing the ground for allocated desking in the future, a new booking app for desks was introduced available on laptops and mobile devices.
  - g. **Automated device set up** – IT have introduced Microsoft tools and new contractual arrangements that enable devices to be built by suppliers on our behalf and shipped direct to the customer which cuts down the device build and shipping time by 4-5 days.
7. These advancements can and must be leveraged to meet the current challenges the organisation faces. The most recent employee survey shows that the shift to more homeworking has been welcomed by many colleagues. One benefit of remote working that will contribute to the TOM's vision of an agile organisation, is the ability to quickly meet with colleagues based across different sites. Whilst this is not a substitute for in-person relationship building, it does offer a practical advantage of setting up discussions quickly and contributes to speeding up slow processes.

## Proposals

8. We know a large proportion (70% to 80+%) of Corporation staff are favouring greater flexibility at work and there is overall support for a split working model (split between remote and office work).
9. Proposal 1 – continue working with the Hybrid workplace model, that will support;
  - a. Presenteeism challenges – New ways of working may make presenteeism and its underlying conditions harder to spot and deal with. Supporting the Hybrid workplace model will empower staff and give them the choice to work in various locations, home, office, satellite office, café etc. This in turn

- will provide the balance of increased flexibility and autonomy with better time management, job security and engagement.
- b. The office as a place to connect and collaborate.
  - c. Member Hybrid meeting arrangements that have been introduced to allow some Members to meet physically at Guildhall and “attend” formal committee meetings.
10. Proposal 2 – The City Surveyor will establish and lead a new Workplace Steering Group formed of City Surveyor, HR, IT and Finance officers. The main purpose of the group being to plan and communicate how the next normal can continue to; prepare the Corporation for;
- a. A post Covid-19 workplace and the longer term financial implications to make the office a destination of choice.
  - b. The Target Operating Model and help to embed positive culture change.
  - c. The introduction of the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy (approved in December by Finance Committee) to better utilise our assets and release those where they are under-utilised or entirely surplus.
  - d. The Guildhall Masterplan, offering flexible workspace for an agile workforce and creating an exemplar sustainable building reducing our estimated annual carbon emissions to circa 750 tonnes per year. (currently 38,000 tonnes)

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- **Strategic implications** – The New Normal ways of working will support the TOM and the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy that seeks to further improve the efficiency and sustainability of operational assets to deliver an efficient, agile and joined up organisation. Improved ways of working and maximising traditional office space will be critical ingredients to meet these aims by helping to foster better collaboration and reduce organisational drag.
- **People implications** – HR consider it is too early to formalise any future working patterns while the workplace landscape remains unclear due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In the meantime, HR colleagues are developing and supporting our capacity to work virtually and anticipate that future working patterns, will where possible, include more virtual working. Training methods are being transferred as much as possible to virtual training platforms.
- **Financial implications** - The short term costs associated with adapting Guildhall for the return of staff has to date been absorbed by the City Surveyor’s local risk budget, and has in part been helped by the reduction in other costs such as lower energy consumption. Longer term financial implications are yet to be assessed.
- **Equalities implications** – Giving employees more flexibility in choosing when and where they work can increase gender equality via two pathways. First, research has long established that remote work can help mothers better balance their work and family responsibilities, which makes them less likely to sacrifice one for the other. Second, data collected during the pandemic suggests that working from home may also make the father more involved. More couples share family responsibilities more equally now than they did before the pandemic.
- The new Workplace Steering Group will continue to ensure that these proposals comply with our public Sector Equality Duty 2010.

## **Conclusion**

11. For decades, the office has been the default location for knowledge, collaborating and the place to work. The future of work and ways of working has now become complex with multi-faceted issues.
12. To support new normal working practices and make the office a destination of choice, will require aligning **people** (culture and behaviour), **workspace** (for a future agile workforce) and a robust **technology** backbone with a suite of digital tools to enable the work to be done in a variety of settings. The pandemic has provided a unique opportunity and stepping stone to accelerate change for the Corporation.

## **Appendix 1 - From Desk Office to Destination Office**

### **Dorian Price**

Guildhall Manager, City Surveyor Department

E: [dorian.price@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:dorian.price@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

T: 0207 332 1487