

Preparing for the Future Programme

The Preparing for the Future Programme is delivering changes to how we work which will streamline our use of office buildings and enable a more flexible workforce that reflects the changes in how we now work and how we will deliver services in the future. The aim is to equip all staff to have a good day's work by providing them with the right technology, being flexible in our approach to promote wellbeing and ensuring an effective work/life balance.

The overarching principle will be *work is what you do not a place you go*.

The streamlining of our office buildings and reducing the need to travel by encouraging blended working is driven by our corporate strategy as it both supports our principle of preparing for the future and contributes to the core policy of addressing the climate emergency.

Blended working combines on-site and off-site working, enabled by the utilisation of information and communication technologies that provide staff with real-time access to job-relevant information and co-workers. It refers to smooth and seamless time-independent working (flexibility in when and how long workers engage in work-related tasks) and location-independent working (flexibility in where work gets done).

Objectives

The aim of the programme is to change the way we work so the Council is fit for the future and includes the following objectives:

- Vacate St Martin's Hospital and change the work base for the teams based there to Keynsham Civic Centre and/or the Hollies
- Reduce the number of office buildings we use in Bath
- Change the work base for the majority of teams based at the Guildhall and Lewis House to Keynsham Civic Centre
- Generate income by commercial letting of floors 1-4 of Lewis House
- Temporarily re-design parts of the office space in Keynsham Civic Centre and the Guildhall to make the buildings Covid secure
- Re-design office space for the future in Keynsham Civic Centre to increase capacity and change how we work
- Review and update the IT and digital strategy and enable responsive, safe and secure remote working and agility across the Council

Benefits

The planned benefits of the programme are as follows:

- Reduced operating costs from a reduction of office buildings / rationalisation of space
- Revenue generation from the commercial letting of Lewis House
- Increased efficiency of staff with the right IT equipment / new ways of working
- An IT and digital strategy in place fit for the future to enable us to deliver services more efficiently

- Break-down of silo working by changing the way our office buildings are used and increased collaboration across and between teams
- Increased staff morale and well-being leading to improved productivity
- Delivery of savings plans in HR&OD (from reduction in travel) and Estates
- Enhancing and improving utilisation of the Keynsham Civic Centre office building

Progress

The timescales for the programme were planned to be June 2020 – March 2021, but this is likely to be impacted by the decisions made by the Government on lockdown measures and social distancing requirements in our office buildings.

In the first 6 months of the programme of work the following has been delivered:

- Vacation and clear out of equipment and paperwork from St Martins Hospital. Reduction in leasehold costs of £50k per annum
- Vacation and clear out of equipment and paperwork from Lewis House floors 1 – 4
- Commercial letting of floors 1 & 2 of Lewis House to Bath University (from Sept 2020) Discussions being held with other potential tenants for floors 3 & 4
- Vacation and clear out of equipment and paperwork from the Guildhall floor 1 North
- Covid safe preparation of Keynsham Civic Centre and the Guildhall for some staff to return from September onwards
- Clear out of equipment and paperwork by some teams in Keynsham Civic Centre
- Recruitment of programme manager for the Keynsham re-fit in 2021
- Purchase of 325 laptops for phase one IT rollout
- Review of IT and digital strategy underway and consultancy support engaged
- Communication, change management and engagement plan in place with staff

Next stage

The focus for the next stage of the programme will be on the re-design of Keynsham Civic Centre to increase capacity, maximise utilisation of the building and enable staff to work differently. In order to give staff access to the office space the principle will be that the space will be mainly for team collaboration and meetings and so if you have a discrete piece of work to do which does not involve others you do that at home or elsewhere.

Whilst the designs are still in the development stage the following changes are proposed:

- A partnership working space which will enable our key partners to book hot desks on the understanding there will be a reciprocal arrangement in their office buildings
- Removal of desks to create team collaboration spaces to include pods with screens and meeting areas
- Touch down areas with high bars and stools for temporary working in between meetings
- A flexible learning and development / training suite.

- Different zones for different types of work – eg a technology zone housing specialist equipment such as plotters and CAD machines
- Removal of some meeting rooms to create more flexible space
- Addition of corporate strategy and values branding along with increased use of colour
- Resolution of the current equalities issues eg re-naming and better identification of floors and wings
- Addition of small booths for confidential discussions

The aim is to create a workspace that staff *want* to go to on the occasions they are able to book space. The rest of the time staff will work flexibly, either from home or using community or partnership space.

The phase two IT roll-out will see a further ~750 laptops provided to staff during 2021/22. This will also enable the launch of Microsoft Teams to all staff.

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