



Report to Finance and Resources Select Committee

Date:	February 23
Title:	Work Smart Programme
Cabinet Member(s):	John Chilver Cabinet Member Accessible Housing and Resources
Contact officer:	Tom Guest
Ward(s) affected:	N/A
Recommendations:	Members are asked to note the progress in implementing the Work Smart programme and the Estates Strategy

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Work Smart Programme continues to progress deliverables identified as part of the hybrid way of working at Buckinghamshire Council, to support the vision of modernising of local government in Buckinghamshire under three core workstreams: workstyles; workspace and work tools.
- 1.2 **Workspace.** Using the occupancy data of our main office sites alongside the flexible working arrangements in place for 'Any Desk' workers this has enabled the 2nd floor in the Gateway to be redesigned to pilot a greater desk ratio, providing a more flexible space with desks and collaborative spaces to bring teams together and provide evidence to support the future estimated office requirements. This has supported the development of the estates strategy and recommendations for our future office estates.
- 1.3 **Workstyles.** Alongside the estates strategy work has continued to attract and retain staff through our flexible working arrangements, and a new onboarding and induction process to support the flexible working arrangements and ensure that new starters feel team of the team and organisation, with additional support to those early in their careers.

1.4 A Management framework has been developed to support and enable managers to carry out their roles successfully and manage their teams in a hybrid way.

1.5 **Worktools.** A number of work tools have progressed to both support the way customers interact with services and ensure that internal processes are efficient as possible and making best use of technology.

2. Content of report

2.1 Work Smart is our programme for delivering hybrid working and providing a new model for the future. The Work Smart vision, objectives can be found in the December 2021 Work Smart report.

There are three work streams within Work Smart and within each, key deliverables have been identified that are critical to the success of delivering Work Smart.

2.2 This report provides an update on the programme across the three workstreams:

Workstyles Focussing on our staff, looking at how we work from employee wellbeing, training and development, digital skills and capabilities, employment policies and contractual changes, induction, health and safety and communication and collaboration mechanisms.

Workspaces Creating the right spaces for us including the estates strategy, workspace designs, storage and car parking.

Worktools Solutions to help us work effectively, designed around the needs of services and our staff. This includes ensuring we have the right technology for our roles, in our meeting and collaboration spaces, printing, receiving, and sending post, information governance and our carbon footprint.

Workstyles

2.3 To facilitate hybrid working, four workstyle categories have been developed to understand the future demand on workspaces as well as understanding training, development and induction needs that support working in a hybrid way. The Employee Experience and Workforce ambition presented to Finance and Resources Select Committee in September 2022 sets out how Work Smart and in particular our Workstyles and the associated flexible working model are a key enabler to our recruitment and retention strategies.

2.4 To support the development of our workstyles the following areas have been progressing.

2.5 ***Working arrangements for 'Any Desk' workers***

We continue to keep our flexible working arrangements under review to ensure that we meet the needs of residents, whilst remaining competitive in the job market, and promoting a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement across the organisation. We will shortly be introducing Team Charters which will enable individual Service Directors to establish the right balance of hybrid working arrangements for their particular service areas, within the context of a corporate framework.

2.6 ***Induction and Onboarding – including early careers***

A new approach to induction and on-boarding processes has been implemented to support new starters joining the organisation to feel part of the team, grow in confidence and become a productive member of the team. This includes induction packs for the new starter and guidance for managers, including considerations around hybrid working arrangements and working in the office more in the early stages to support them to settle in, particularly if they have not worked remotely before.

An early careers network has also been established to support those who are in the early stages of their career and make it a less daunting time, as well as to help colleagues build supportive connections across the organisation

2.7 ***Managers***

A framework called Being a Buckinghamshire Manager has been developed to support and enable managers to carry out their roles successfully. One aspect is managing hybrid teams. Face-to-face courses have been developed and rolled out to support managers which include: an overview of managing hybrid teams, performance management and managing absence.

2.8 ***Digital Skills and Capabilities***

To enable employees to work in a hybrid way, providing training and guidance on core systems and processes is essential. We have identified core skills and are developing both online guidance and face to face courses to support employees across the organisation in each of the workstyles.

Alongside training, expected behaviours and standards are being developed which will support the use of digital services and embed the hybrid way of working.

Workspace

2.9 ***Pilot Workspace***

Occupancy data alongside the agreed flexible working arrangements for 'any desk' workers enabled the Gateway 2nd floor office to be redesigned to pilot a greater desk ratio, providing a more flexible space with desks and collaborative spaces to bring teams together and provide evidence to support the future estimated office

requirements. The pilot space has since been shortlisted for a Smarter Working Award in the 'Future focused and Sustainable Property' category.

The pilot has been reviewed and will now be rolled out across Gateway.

2.10 ***Estates Strategy***

Providing the right workspaces for our staff and customers is integral to the success of Work Smart, as well as delivering a reduction in operational estate footprint based on organisational need, a reduction in carbon footprint and will deliver potential £2.4m revenue savings and £4m capital receipts savings from the operational estate as set out in the Unitary Business Case.

All the Councils offices represent significant regeneration and redevelopment opportunities, and this emerging strategy establishes and looks to realise some of those opportunities. The recent, wider economic issues the Public Sector is experiencing means consolidating the estate is now even more vital.

The recommendations approved in the estates strategy result in:

- Walton Street Offices – close and dispose/redevelop/subject to Planning
- Gateway Office, Aylesbury – retain and confirm as the Council's HQ
- Options for a small office in Aylesbury town centre
- King George V House, Amersham – close and redevelop for housing (with consideration given to retaining a small footprint in the town, subject to further consultation with staff, and stakeholders)
- Wycombe Old Library – relocate staff to Queen Victoria Road and lease the accommodation to a third party
- Queen Victoria Road, Wycombe – retain and continue to operate in the medium term, but once the recommendations in this report have been delivered, a further report will be brought forward on the potential opportunity and future of the Wycombe Offices.
- Easton Street, Wycombe – already vacated; continue to lease
- Capswood, Denham – already vacated; surrender the lease, or generate as much income as possible. Lease comes to an end in December 2026.

The long-term future of archives accommodation for Public Records and unique collections will also be considered alongside the estates strategy.

The full Estates Strategy approved by Cabinet in January 2023 can be found [here](#).

2.11 ***Office Floor Closures***

To reduce running costs and to move to our new ways of working we are also implementing floor closures in Walton Street. This means that 12th, 11th and 8th floors

have been closed and these Resources staff are now co-located on the 4th floor. The design of the floor and the density complies with the Workspace principles.

2.12 ***Car Parking***

A consistent approach to car parking in Council owned car parks for employees working from main office sites and in the community has been implemented, reducing administration.

Worktools

2.13 Ensuring our staff have the right tools to do their job when working in a different way or place will be essential to its success. It also provides an opportunity to streamline some of our processes whilst making savings. The following areas have made progress:

2.14 ***Printing***

A new printing contract has been awarded and implemented reducing the overall number of printers across the estate and reducing costs.

2.15 ***Paper records and storage***

An audit of paper records and storage has taken place across the estate to inform an approach to record management and retaining records in the future, reducing the need for paper storage.

2.16 ***Intranet***

A new intranet solution is being developed to provide an easily accessible source of information and advice to all employees with a similar user centred approach to the public website.

2.17 ***Digital Postroom***

A single central postroom team has been put in place to ensure all post is received and sent from one location. The digital post processes which provide improved document control and efficiencies are being rolled out to services in phases to support with the change, this means officers receive their mail digitally and not needing to travel into the office.

2.18 ***Technology***

Available video conferencing technology in meeting rooms and collaborative spaces, training and guidance has been promoted to support hybrid meetings to support staff to attend meetings and collaborate regardless of location.

2.19 ***Space booking***

Space booking for desks was introduced as part the of the pilot workspace in addition to room booking to help understand the use of spaces available and future requirements. The system also supported staff in accessing the right space to suit when attending the office.

Next steps and review

2.20 Work Smart encompasses a number of phases and following the approval of the estates strategy, work will continue to develop and progress the recommendations in the strategy including;

- Apply for Certificate of Immunity from Listing
- Plan layouts for agreed buildings to facilitate greater collaboration

2.21 Updates will be provided to Finance and Resources Select Committee in line with arrangements for providing Cabinet with an update on the progress of the estates strategy.

Background papers

Below are links to papers that are published on the Buckinghamshire Council website in relation to the Work Smart Programme:

- [Estates Strategy](#) presented to Cabinet in January 2023
- [Work Smart Programme update](#) presented to Finance and Resources Select Committee in December 2021
- [6.1 Buckinghamshire Council Employee Experience and Workforce Ambition.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) presented to Finance and Resources Select Committee in September 2022

