

Corporate Select Committee Business Transformation & Smarter Working

12 July 2021

Sam Pittam-Smith, Director of Transformation

Savings Position for 20/21

- 20/21 delivery of savings had a different profile to that anticipated prior to the pandemic
- The pandemic saw a significant drop in travel & mileage costs of £2.373m. Not all of the drop will be maintained as we move forward as some travel will be appropriate under new Smarter Ways of Working
- The accelerated implementation of inbound & outbound digital post led to reduced postage & print costs £0.5m

Financial Benefits 21/22

Saving Area	2021-22 Saving Amount £m
New Ways of Working – Reductions to staffing budgets	4.320
Rationalisation and relocation of office accommodation	2.732
New Ways of Working – Reductions to travel budgets	0.957
Reviewing NCC traded services	0.496
IMT, Postage, Printing	0.488
New Ways of Working - Other	0.294
	9.287

Benefits Led & Outcome Focus

- A happier & healthier workforce
- Increased positive perception of the Council as a modern employer (improving attraction and retention)
- Time savings / productivity gains that are re-invested rather than cashed
- Improvements to quality
- Service user needs met
- Strengthened compliance with regulations
- Reduced CO2 emissions

Test & Learn Approach

- “The use of the pilot study can significantly reduce the risks associated with adopting novel or ‘new to organisation’ approaches to projects. It also enables organisations to get a firmer idea of the costs and benefits of a project before committing.” The Association of Project Management
- Example: Events Research Programme aims “to examine the risk of transmission of Covid-19 from attendance at events and explore ways to enable people to attend a range of events safely.”
- A test and learn approach manages the risk of unnecessary expenditure and introducing ways of working that don’t deliver. It will ensure:
 - changes meet staff needs and requirements in a safe way
 - changes will deliver successful outcomes
 - investment in technology is spent wisely
 - responsiveness to the uncertainty created by the ongoing pandemic

Staff Survey Indicators

Smarter Working means being more flexible about when and where we work, and how we creatively use space and technology to find new and more effective ways of doing things in a modern and business-like way. The table below shows the different scores across the Smarter Working questions and the speech bubbles contain free text comments from the survey question 'Is there anything else NCC can do to enable you in Smarter Working?'.

Table 7: Smarter Working Questions Time Comparison	2021	After March 18th 2020	Before March 18th 2020
My manager practises Smarter Working	80	74	70
I am making Smarter Working work well for me and my customers	77	73	68
I know how to access resources to support me with Smarter Working	73	70	68
My manager encourages me and my colleagues to be flexible about when and where we work and to use space and technology creatively	77	74	69
Although NCC advocates Smarter Working, lack of organisational support means it is difficult to do*	47	50	54



(75+)

Good score / outcome
to be celebrated.



(51-74)

Moderate score / outcome.
Capable of improvement.



(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome A
clear sign to take steps to improve.

*Reverse logic - i.e. a lower score is a better outcome

Corporate Select Committee People Update

12 July 2021

Sarah Shirtcliff, Director for People

Our journey over the last 16 months

- Embedded remote working for all office workers
- All meetings conducted via teams
- The majority of training converted to online
- Digitalisation of paper based processes i.e. post/ signatures etc
- Staff engagement and survey gives clear feedback on a significant shift in mindset and skills
- We have formalised that we will work differently and modernising our property strategy accordingly with further rationalisation planned
- We have already made savings on business travel and continue to identify opportunities as a result of working differently

What this means for Smarter working going forwards

- Flexibility about how, when and where work takes place
- Ensuring smarter working enables better service to our customers
- Continuing to optimise technology to support productivity and efficiency
- Branding ourselves as a modern forward thinking employer
- Supporting more effective attraction, recruitment and retention

SW People workstream

Engagement, Communications and Research

- Executive Directors have approved direction for People workstream to September and beyond
- New Ways of Working Board have been briefed on our plan to September and receive regular progress updates
- Engagement with unions occurs on a weekly basis and we continue to work in partnership on key elements of the Employment Deal
- We have engaged with all DLTs/ HRBPs to shape elements of the Employment Deal
- Planned schedule of engagement with staff, managers and unions over the summer on various elements of our Employment Deal
- All Staff communications sent out in June to update all staff on the Employment Deal and work has begun on shaping content for our SW hub on myNet to provide clear and consistent communication
- We have been participating in a local government forum specifically focused on “New Ways of Working” post pandemic. This forum will act as a reference point and community of practice for around 8 County Councils to share practice and insight.
- NCC attendance at LGA round table events on Hybrid Working to keep in touch with Local Government practice
- We also continue to conduct external research within Public and Private Sector to keep in touch with insight on smarter working and shared learning

SW People Workstream progress and plan

Phase 1 (April to September)

- ✓ **Interim car parking solution for CH** – two engagement sessions held in June including staff, managers and unions to feedback on proposed solutions for County Hall. This will be presented to our New Ways of Working Board and approved before implementation in August. The proposals will be extended to other locations from September
- ✓ **Smarter Working Charter** – outlines the principles under which we will work in the future
- ✓ **Home equipment** – Home Working Equipment Policy created and now in place to ensure all staff have equipment to work remotely and safely.
- ✓ **Smarter Working Policy** - replaces COVID-19 temporary arrangements and links to other policies such as H&S/ Home Working Equipment policy.
- ✓ **Worker types/ Travel Policy (One base, Hybrid & Community)** – agree definitions of worker types and implications for travel expenses. Guidance for managers and colleagues.
- ✓ **Standardise holiday year for new Oracle system go live** – guidance for staff and managers
- ✓ **Proposal to refresh current flex policy** – create draft policy to replace and continue engagement with Staff, Managers and unions over the summer
- ✓ **Manager guidance and training for hybrid working** – bringing together all of the existing content we have and continuing to develop to support managers with new ways of working
- ✓ **Employee and manager engagement plan** – getting commitment and equipping managers to new hybrid ways of working (links to business change plan for HR/Finance system)

Corporate Select Committee Proposal & Actions

Proposal

Focus of the next 4 months will be to sustain and embed the positive organisational changes resulting from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to accelerate delivery

Proposed method is to work collaboratively with services to:

- Joined up implementation plans that support departments and services to deliver planned 2021-22 savings, and identify of further savings for 2022-23
- Develop new ways of working through a “test and learn” approach to identify and prove further improvement opportunities to build into implementation plans
- Maximise the potential of the improvement opportunities identified
- Scale-up and roll-out proven improvement opportunities to other parts of or the whole organisation
- Track the realisation of benefits identified by the changes being made so we know we are making a positive difference in achieving the desired outcomes

The Select Committee are asked to:

1. Recommend ways in which the Smarter Working Programme can maintain its focus despite the ongoing uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Acknowledge the savings achieved in the 2020/21 financial year and suggest any further non-financial benefits of the Smarter Working Programme.
3. Review the proposed approach to be taken by the Smarter Working Programme over the next 4 months and propose suggestions for improvement or additional focus.
4. Agree that a further report be made to Select Committee, with an updated plan that takes our transformation forward during normalisation and recovery, in November 2021 (assuming we do not have to re-enter the response phase).