

Slide 1: Future of Place

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Belfast City Council

Slide 2: Strategic context

Belfast's ambitions are underpinned by a strategic vision and policy levers. Plans are in place: Recovery Plan, Belfast Agenda (Community Plan), Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy, Cultural Strategy Climate Plan and Resilience Strategy. The delivery of this vision is also supported by our Local Development Plan—spatial plan for city.

These plans identify the transformational work that is being accelerated to address the impacts of recent months and rebuild momentum. Focusing on better quality of life for all. We want sustainable, inclusive success for the city.

Slide 3: Game Changers

Supporting our ambitions—a snapshot of key opportunities. Population of Belfast, 340,000 people—a compact city, punching above its weight. Belfast Region City Deal is £850m investment in physical and digital infrastructure, enhancing city tourism and sustained focus on skills, training, and employment.

Our Renewed Ambition Programme is a joint public and private sector-led initiative that aims to shape how we reimagine the future of our city and act together and how the real estate sector can respond as we learn to live with the virus and continue to realise the real estate ambitions of Belfast and the wider city region.

Our ambitions are supported by cross sector partnerships—there is an opportunity to shape Belfast. We have strong city networks and approachable, engaged leadership, able to quickly meet and have conversations with the right people. You can make a difference here. It is a place you can do business.

Slide 4: Housing-led regeneration and reusing herbage buildings

We are moving quickly and acting differently and stepping into new spaces, e.g. releasing our land for mixed use, mixed tenure development and open space by removing surface level car parking to support our wider growth strategy and regeneration priorities.

Our City Centre Investment Fund initially supported Grade A but now looking at new approaches e.g., targeted acquisitions to address vacancy, facilitate our holistic Future City Centre Programme and Cultural Strategy. A more agile approach supports the need for city centre diversification and could help target new uses to bring into the city centre, especially those services, amenities and shops that support city centre living.

Slide 5: A Bolder Vision for Belfast

A shared Vision between Belfast City Council and Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure—local and central government. Completed prior to COVID it validates our direction and aspirations that are set out as What Ifs, future possibilities.

A Bolder Vision for Belfast sets out the city's vision to transform the city centre into a green, walkable, cycleable network of streets and places. It focuses on creating a liveable city for people by improving the quality of life, securing sustainable investment, and enhancing health and wellbeing. Underpinned by four Visioning Principles:

- Healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment

- Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport
- Lively, safe, and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces
- Removing severance and barriers

Slide 6: Reimagining Public Space: Public and Private Sectors

Putting A Bolder Vision into practice and an example of Belfast collaboration in motion. Working with the three Belfast Improvement Districts, Belfast City Council provided funding for a package of interventions, totalling almost £500k that was combined with BIDs funding. This enabled the delivery of priority interventions, while delivering a high-quality product with a uniformed aesthetic approach. Example of how public sector facilitated place-making and delivery of BIDs own vision/plans and meant that local solutions were generated that drew upon the uniqueness of the different areas, creating new offers and destinations.

Interventions include new open space with provision for hospitality use, play and entertainment, with feature lighting and planting. Parklets will be installed within the on-street parking bays providing additional outdoor space hospitality, areas for additional planting & seating to encourage dwell time and to provide enhanced green & blue infrastructure within the area.

Slide 7: Key sectors driving the economy

Thinking about return to the workplace: Cities are the space of interaction and exchange—ideas, partners, culture, innovation, economies, experiences. A renewed focus on relationships—to other people and to place.

We have the foundations in place for our recovery and reasons for people to come together and our key sectors are driving our recovery and a return to the city. We yearn for community, especially those in more collaborative fields. Innovation does not just happen in your office building but is a part of the wider city eco-system.

Slide 8: Refreshed spaces

Return to office and city is about new ways of living and we are delivering projects that bring visible, tangible benefits to welcome people back and respond to the new demands. Grounded in the wider changes as we move from a less transactional and more experiential city centre with new, greener open space, richer environments and mix of uses.

Belfast's recovery projects are preparing the city for people returning to the workplace and hoping that they will see a change in the city—we want places for workers that are safer, cleaner, interesting and fresh and a chance to rediscover Belfast. Belfast's entries and lanes are distinctive, intimate arteries of the city that connect people, history in interesting, space spaces with a mix of uses, pubs and restaurants tucked away, and are key connections enhancing the accessibility of the city centre. We have refreshed and re-imagined these as welcoming spaces with creative, playful lighting installations.

Cathedral Gardens was a marginal space, now transformed through people-focused place-making, creating a vibrant, inclusive family-friendly space. It was profiled in recent Urban Land Institute report and in RTPI best practice example of engagement with children and young people and highlighted in the LA Times as a clever COVID design solution.

Slide 9: City Centre Living

Thinking forward a few years—five areas for consideration. We want to build a Belfast that is sustainable, accessible, equal, and diverse. Housing-led regeneration supports a return to the city and workplace and critical for the success of Belfast's future.

1. *City Centre Living* is a multiple problem solver: integrating climate and COVID recovery goals to accelerate change with focus on high quality place-making, building communities and integrating green & blue infrastructure and open spaces that adds value and addresses wider sustainability issues; improves health and well-being.

2. *Diversification*—moving away from mono-culture development to mixed use (services and amenities to support City Centre Living), connected, interesting streets, and using what is unique to Belfast, our entries, independent retail, environment, culture & heritage, our people.

This combination creates a focus on the human scale of the city and generates sense of neighbourhoods, 15-minute city approach. In a globally competitive environment employers should consider how they will adapt to keep talent, adjust working practices and the wider quality of life issues to keep increasingly mobile staff.

Slide 10: Modal change and liveability

3. Multi-modal, interesting journeys

City Centre Living transforms commutes—more multi-modal, with a focus on environment and carbon neutral choices. Employers need to think about how people will get to work and support active travel.

Council and Department for Infrastructure are working together to implement active travel projects, i.e. new fleet of Belfast smart bikes, e-cargo delivery, cycle parking, active travel hubs and the new Belfast Cycling Network Strategy.

Slide 10: Pro tanto quid retribuamus

The motto of Belfast: *What shall we give in return for so much*

4. *City leadership and governance*: Increased calls for city leaders to take up the mantel. The Renewed Ambition programme for Belfast brings together key civic stakeholders, development community, private sector. Aligned to this is Council's approach to act differently and look at targeted acquisitions and transforming our assets.

5. *Increased focus on addressing inequality through inclusive growth and social value*, considering how development is part of place-making and how social value can bring better and helps deliver on quality of life and wider liveability agenda for Belfast.



Belfast

Dr Callie Persic
Connectivity Lead Officer
18 June 2021



Belfast
City Council

AMBITIONS & VISION



SUPPORTING
CULTURAL
RECOVERY

BY 2035

- Deliver **31,600** new homes
- Develop 550,000 sq m of **employment floor space**
- Increase population by **66,000 people**



OUR GOAL

- To transition to an **inclusive, zero-emissions, climate-resilient economy** in a generation.





Game changers



Investing in
**Infrastructure
and transport**



Investing in
Tourism

Increasing
**City Centre
Living**



Waterfront
Regeneration



City
Regeneration

Investing in
**innovation and
smart districts**



Belfast
Region
City Deal



HOUSING LED REGENERATION



RE-USING HERITAGE BUILDINGS



A Bolder Vision for Belfast

Re-thinking how the City's streets and places are used to make them attractive, healthy, vibrant and accessible places where people want to be...



THE CASE FOR CHANGE...

- We must address the **Climate Emergency**
- Our streets are **clogged with traffic**
- Our Central Belfast is **not accessible** by all
- Our **economy is changing**
- Our **population is changing**

... the time is now ...

... underlining all these challenges is one key opportunity ...

... a growing recognition that something needs to be done ...

WHAT IF? ...



Krakow, Poland

...the inner ring road became a circular park?



Oslo, Norway

...the city centre became the first place in Northern Ireland to become carbon neutral?



Copenhagen, Denmark

...centre of Belfast was fully pedestrianised?



Perth, Australia

...public transport within the centre was free?



Utrecht, Netherlands

...we reconnected with the River Farset?



Glasgow, UK

...there were green decks over the Westlink?

Reimagining Public Space: public & private sectors





Key sectors driving the economy

ADVANCED ENGINEERING AND MANUFACTURING



FINANCIAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



CREATIVE & DIGITAL



CYBER TECHNOLOGY



HOSPITALITY & TOURISM



LIFE & HEALTH SCIENCES



TECHNOLOGY



Refreshed Spaces



Sustainable urban housing



Increasing density in accessible locations



City Centre Living



Brownfield Regeneration



Modal change & liveability



PRO TANTO
WHAT SHALL WE GIVE
QUID
IN RETURN FOR SO MUCH
RETRIBUAMUS





Changing our
city

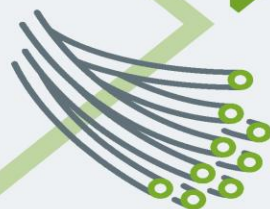
THE NEW BELFAST CAMPUS by Numbers

➤ **15,000**
number of staff and students
we will welcome through the
new campus – equivalent to
the population of Armagh



➤ **22,000m²**
of glass – the same size
as 44 basketball courts
(with 23 different types of
glazing on the façade)

➤ **606km**
of data cables which laid
end to end would stretch
between Belfast and
Londonderry 6 times over



➤ **300 years**
lifespan of the
building

➤ **650,000
bricks**
and 31,000
tonnes of
concrete

➤ **300+ Learning spaces**
With the largest able to
accommodate the passenger
capacity of a Boeing 747 jet (350)



➤➤ **2731 steps**
which if climbed
twice a week would
be equal to climbing
Slieve Donard



➤ **£1.4bn**
project's overall
regeneration
impact on the NI
economy

➤ **2900 doors**
which if laid
end to end
would stretch
for 5 miles





A vibrant campus community





Engaging
with business
and industry



A UNIQUE
asset



Partnership Approach

Thank you for
listening

MLN Events: The Future of Place

18 June 2021

Our Estate in numbers...

Employees



circa **1,400**

Square metres (sq footage)



26,087
(280,798)

Corporate offices



2

Branches



36

Regional Centres



2

ATM's



200

Our journey

- 23 March 2020 First lockdown announced mandated to work from home where you can
- By May 2020 we had successfully transitioned through initial COVID-19 crisis and were operating effectively with circa 80% of colleagues working from home and the remaining branch and key head office workers, safely working in office premises.
- Next challenge was the short term action to transition the workforce to a post COVID-19 working environment and also consider the longer term improvement potential through harnessing the innovation and learnings experienced during the crisis.
- By June 2020 our executive team decided this was the opportunity to implement a new agile flexible working model, retaining work from home as an option in the post COVID-19 working environment and fully utilising our property estate.
- The principle of “work as an activity, not a place” means colleagues choose their work location based on need which can be categorised as space to concentrate, collaborate and connect.
- We listened to our colleagues via a survey and feedback and committed to review the way we used our buildings to enable collaboration and team based meetings to take place. Whilst it was clear that many of staff enjoy the added flexibility of being able to work from home, many also told us that they miss the interaction and opportunities to meet with their work colleagues.

Market trends...

The introduction of Work Hubs to create less commuting and a more flexible workplace

Madasinet FINANS, November 2020

87% of companies expect to decrease their property portfolio due to more remote and flexible working post COVID-19

CBRE The Future of the Office Survey, Sept 2020

80% of employees would chose a company, who offers a flexible work-life instead of one that doesn't

Report, Frost & Sullivan, The global future of Work

In mid-2020 we asked our colleagues to feedback about their WFH experiences and how it might have changed their perceptions of how we might work in the future

Context to the survey analysis



All bank staff asked to complete survey



The purpose of the survey was to:

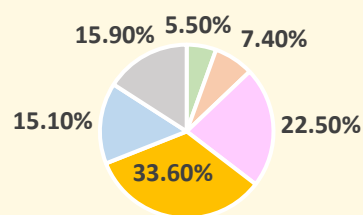
- Gain an understanding of how individuals and teams have adapted to the new way of working
- The benefits and challenges of working in a dispersed team
- Provide an insight and source of information as to how we may improve our way of working



88% of respondents were currently working from home. Prior to Covid-19, 89% of the organisation had 'rarely' or 'never' worked from home. 51% of those were 'never'.

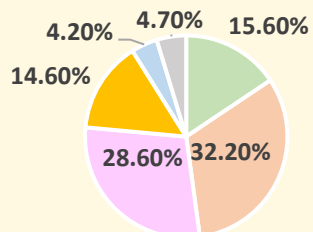
Hybrid working model informed by consultation with employees via the Better Ways of Working (BWOW) Framework

Number of days I would like to work from home each week



0 days 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days 5 days

Minimum number of days I would like to spend in the office each week



0 days 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days 5 days

BWOW Framework

The Better Ways of Working model is based on colleagues need to **concentrate, collaborate and connect**. It provides flexibility of work location within a framework where an individual's role allows:

- Minimum 1 day in the office per week
- Minimum 2 days at home per week
- Remaining time is a choice of home, local branch or office locations
- "Virtual & video first" principle has been introduced for all meetings with MS teams as default

To meet our peoples' expectation for a more flexible and remote workplace, we implement activity based workspaces, as part of the BWOW strategy

Why

- Better Ways of Working (BWOW) was introduced to drive the journey for a more flexible and modern workplace. In Properties our aim is to support the employees in doing their work, no matter **where they work from, what they work with or who they work with.**

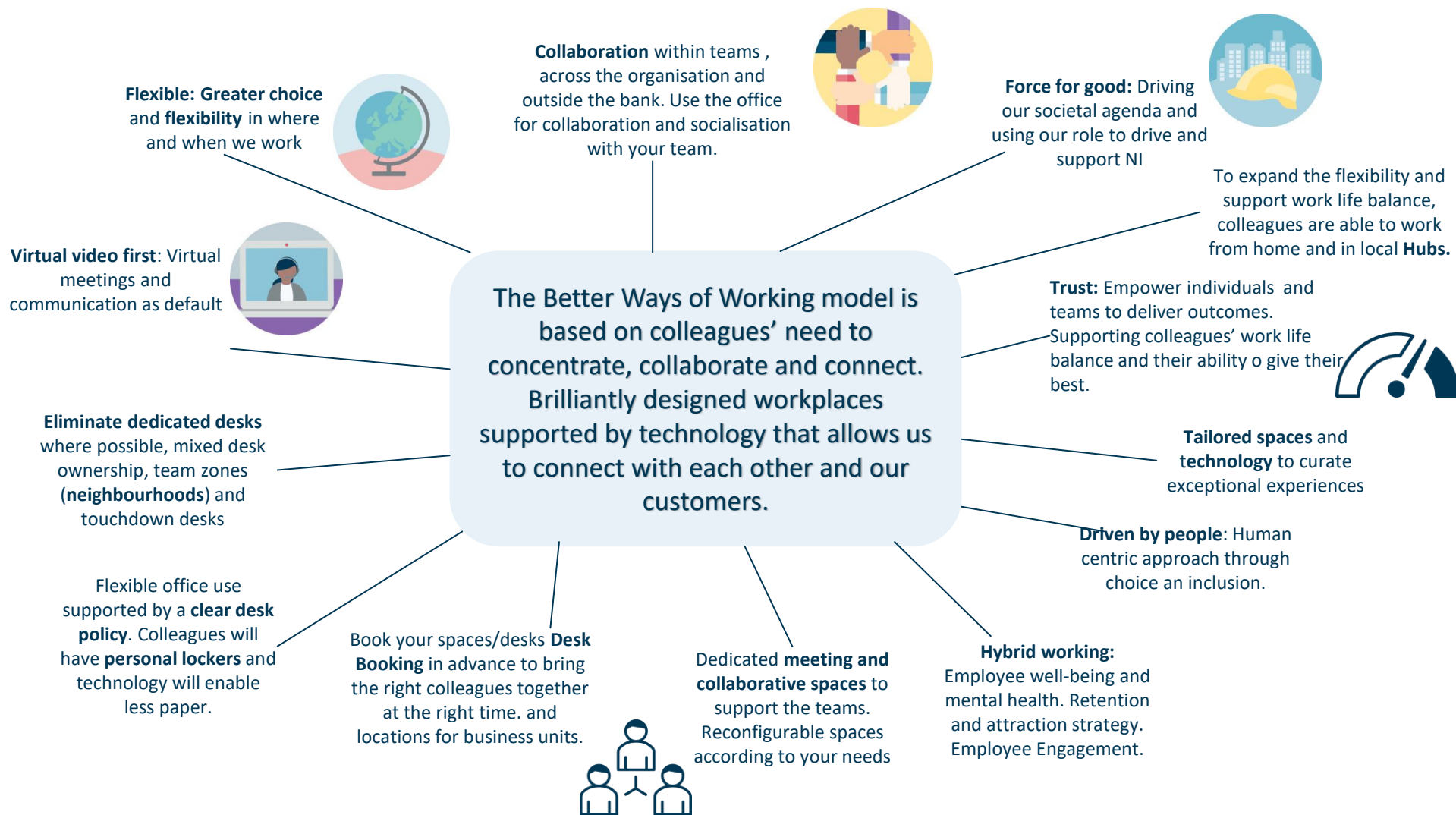
What

- Design objective to create a complimentary team work space that supports the focus home working space.
- Provide an alternative work place for the individual to get a break from home and have the opportunity to connect with work colleagues.
- The office is for idea generation that will drive innovation and new thinking.
- A place that encourages diversity, inclusion and engagement. A learning and mentoring space.
- Instils sense of community, promotes brand identity and the business values.
- The Office will generate the value for the business going forward.

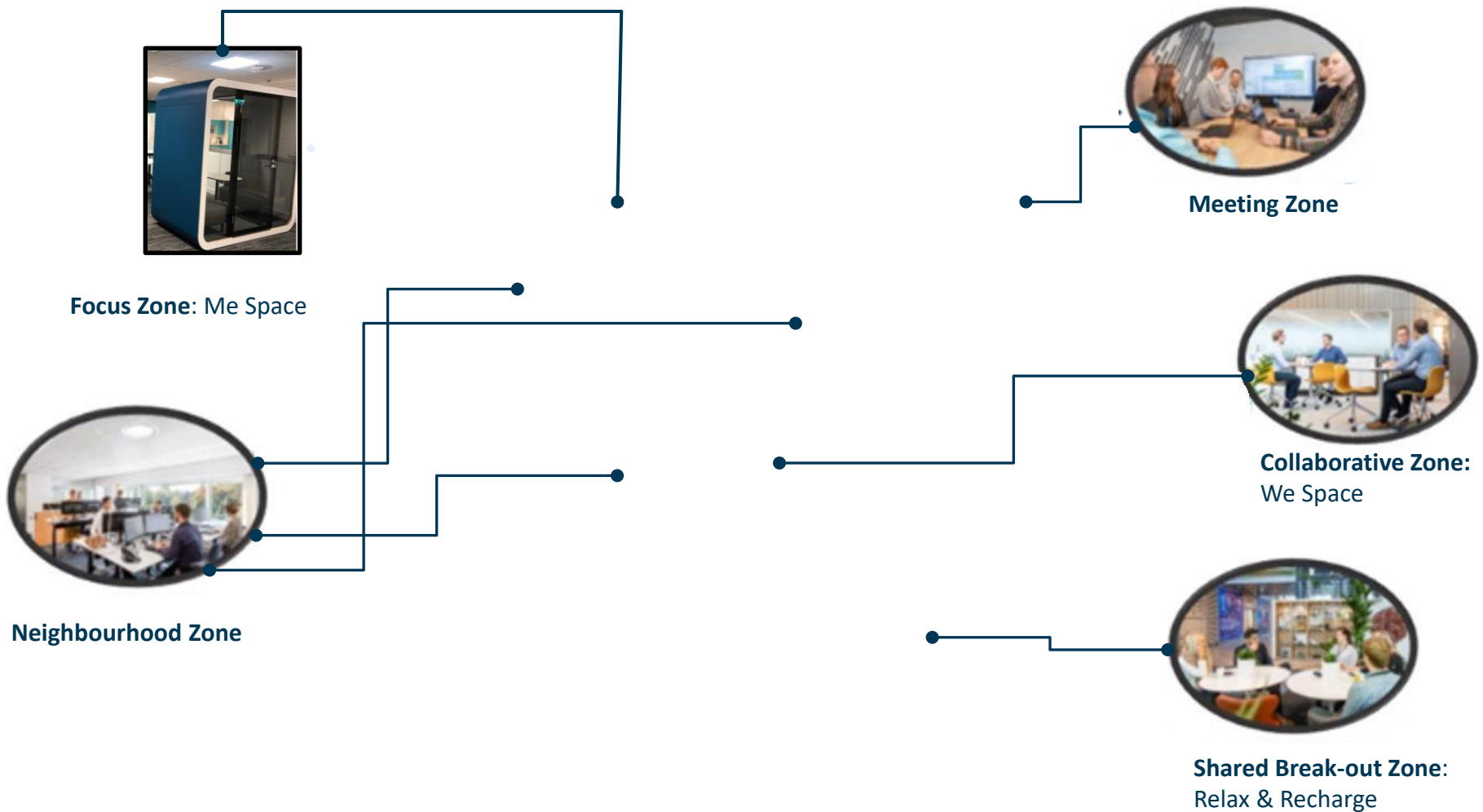
How

- Over the next period, we will change existing workspaces into a flexible and activity-based setting. We move away from the fixed workstations to a flexible and shared workspaces. This will accommodate more facilities for physical and virtual interaction.

Our glimpse of the future of place



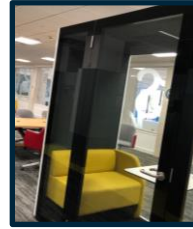
Offices divided into workzones to support the need for flexibility and agile working, employees can choose where to work dependant on work tasks or preferences...



DSW: Collaborative Zone: We Space



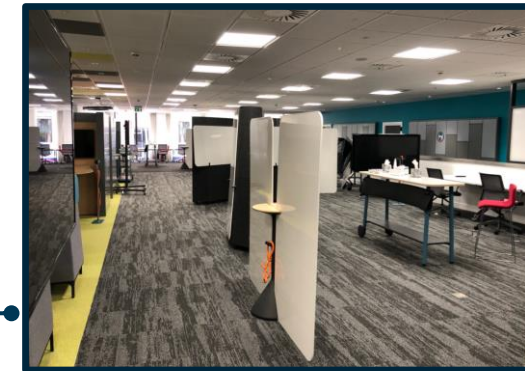
Team Zone: Private



Focus Zone: Me Space



Team Zone: Alcove



Team Zone: Open



Meeting Zone

Work Space Zone:



**Shared Break-out Zone:
Relax & Recharge**

DSW: Community Zone



Environmental focus for 2021 and beyond ...



Reducing our carbon emissions

During 2021 we are targeting a reduction in our emissions and launching a range of complementary initiatives

BITC Climate Pledge commitment

↓
50%
by 2030

Target reduction forecasted 2021
year end

↓
33%
vs 2015

Target Climate Pledge commitment

↓
55%
vs 2015



Scheduled further branch emissions reductions, additional budget 2021 meant we switched over 8 branches. Only 5 branches remaining.



Pilot Charger Project completed May 2021 to support car scheme zero emissions by 2025. Further roll out to estate by 2023.

Targeting early completion branch only estate would be 100% Fossil Fuel Free with no Scope 1 & 2 Emissions.



'Do more good' by developing climate focused partnerships

During 2021 our focus has been building further on our biodiversity activities To do this we have identified a number of new partnerships and initiatives for development



Partner with KNIB on their eco-schools outdoor learning project covering every primary school in NI. 11 productive gardens and outdoor learning spaces delivered by April (1 per council area). Next phase Aug/Sept.



Partner with KNIB to re-purpose unused external as small allotments or flower gardens : Killeaton. Produce grown will be used in the canteen.

Installation of a sedum roof April 2021 at DSW to promote the habitat of birds, butterflies and insects, especially in the city environment which is mainly concrete and asphalt

Introducing additional living walls within the estate



Partner with Men's Shed to re-purpose unused external branch space as small allotments or flower gardens : Banbridge and Lurgan.



Next Steps:

- Our colleagues returning to the offices, target 40% occupancy
- Desk Booking App operational by 5 July
- Completion of the Work Hubs
- Test, Learn, Adapt, Change



Source: *Medium* – City Scale Prototyping, Times Square 2007-2013

Bikable cities

- Amsterdam 2.48 million 2580 sq km
- Belfast 635,000 958.3 sq km
- Copenhagen 2.02 million 2778 sq km



Source: *The Uni Project* – Our work at NYC Play Streets



Brent Toderian ✓

@BrentToderian

Follow



Want families & kids downtown?

- 1) ensure family-sized housing;
- 2) ensure daycare, schools & supports;
- 3) design the [#publicrealm](#) for kids.



8:01 PM - 7 May 2017



Source: *Channel News Asia* - Intergenerational playground in Singapore



Source: *Straits Times* - Intergenerational playground in Singapore

