

University Of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Msc Property and Facilities Management

Management of the Integrated Working Environment –

Selection of a Working Environment

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Contents Page

- 1.0 Introduction
 - 1.1 – 1.4 Background
- 2.0 Aims & Objectives
 - 2.1 Aim
 - 2.2 Objectives
- 3.0 Accommodation Analysis
 - 3.1 – 3.10 Analysis Detail
- 4.0 Understanding Organisational Cultures
 - 4.1 - 4.2 Background
 - 4.3 Power Culture
 - 4.4 Role Culture
 - 4.5 Task Culture
 - 4.6 Person Culture
 - 4.7 Organisational Culture model applied to Pobl
 - 4.8 Sample Organisational Chart for Pobl
- 5.0 Key Drivers for Change
- 6.0 Key Findings and Recommendations
 - 6.1 Office Space Standards
 - 6.2 Lighting
 - 6.3 Heating and Cooling
 - 6.4 Staff Welfare Facilities
 - 6.5 Meeting Facilities

- 7.0 New Ways of Working
 - 7.1 Agile Working
 - 7.2 Flexible Working Policies
 - 7.3 Working from Home Policies
 - 7.4 Virtual Meetings
 - 7.5 Smart Offices

8.0 Conclusion

Appendix

References

List of Figures

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Pobl Group are an all Wales Housing Association who manage more than 17,000 homes, employ around 2500 people, have a development programme of over £100m to provide new homes in the next 3 years, and provide care and support to 9184 people .
- 1.2 Due to the widespread geographic nature of the business, the group has two head offices, one in the East (Exchange House, Newport) and West (Ty Gwalia, The Kingsway, Swansea) as well as 17 other satellite offices.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this report consideration is only being given to The Head Office in the West, Ty Gwalia, The Kingsway, Swansea, SA1 5JN
- 1.4 This review is to ensure the accommodation best suits the aims and objectives of the group, new ways of working, new team structures and better ways of utilising the working space.

2.0 **Aims & Objectives**

2.1 **Aims:** The Aim of this report is to evaluate Pobl Groups Swansea Office Accommodation to ensure:

- The accommodation is used in an economic and efficient manner
- Aligned to meet the groups corporate aims and business needs
- That the office accommodation meets customer need and is adaptable to change

2.2 **Objectives:**

- Assess current accommodation
- Identify areas for change
- Identify areas for improvements
- Suggest new ways of working
- Ensuring that the accommodation is flexible enough to allow for new ways of working

3.0 **Accommodation Analysis**

- 3.1 The accommodation (7-13, The Kingsway,) is housed in 3 individual blocks constructed in 1927, and interlinked by doors on each level.
- 3.2 It comprises of a basement area, ground floor, and two upper floors. A further prefabricated floor was added at a later date and forms the third floor of 12-13 The Kingsway section of the building.
- 3.3 The gross internal floor area is approx. 4300 square metres (46300 square ft)
- 3.4 There are approximately 270 members of staff permanently based at or working from the office.
- 3.5 150 of these employee's spend the large majority of their working day away from the office
- 3.6 Internally the building is laid to offices; and has been upgraded and altered at varying times.
- 3.7 There are wide variances in the use of office space ranging from 4.8m² (51 ft²) per employee to 34m² (365 ft²) per employee
- 3.8 Buildings are considered to be inefficient in their use of energy, water, space management
- 3.9 There are eight open plan office spaces which have within them private/cellular office and meeting rooms. Each office has been allocated to a directorate as below:
- Development and Commercial Team
 - Care & Support
 - Organisation and Development
 - Corporate Operations
 - Executive
 - Finance and Procurement
 - Homes and Communities & Asset Management
 - Training
- 3.10 Approx. 560m² (6027 ft²) of the Basement area is set aside for archiving, this space could be better utilised

Directorate	Staff Numbers	Type of Work
Training	Training Space for 40	Training & Meetings
Commercial	25	Predominantly site based surveyor & Project managers 4 Administration Staff
Care & Support	27	Predominantly site based staff – 3 Administration staff
Organisation & Development	38	Office Based Duties
Corporate Operations	39	Office Based Duties
Executive	5	Office Based Duties
Finance	35	Office Based Duties
Homes & Communities	102	20 Call Centre Employees 10 Administration Staff, 10 Management Roles, 8 Rents Officers 54 Site based staff – Asset Management Surveyors, Neighbourhood Housing Officers, Area Maintenance Officers

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

Ground floor

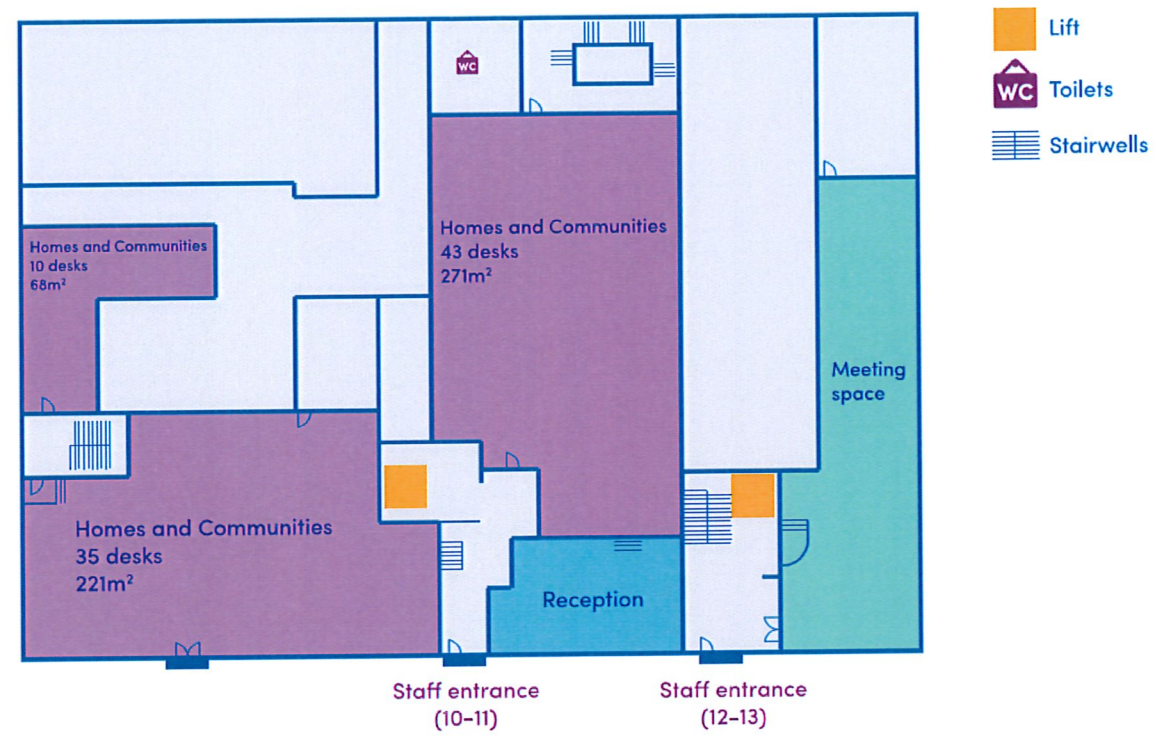


Figure 3.

First floor

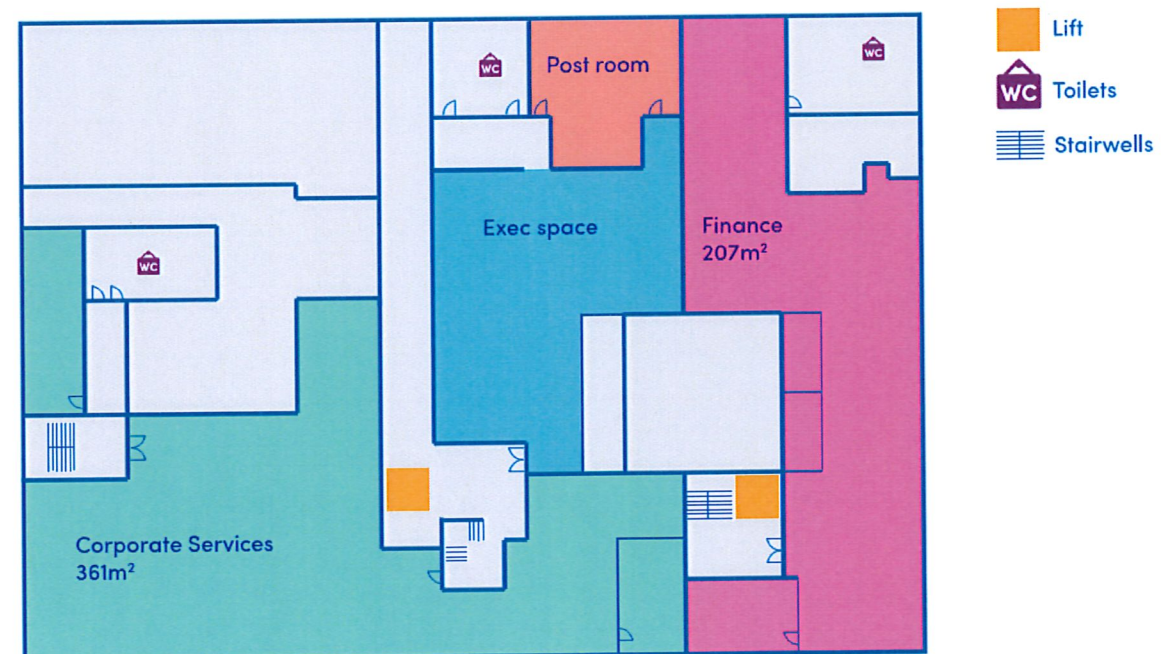


Figure 4

Second floor

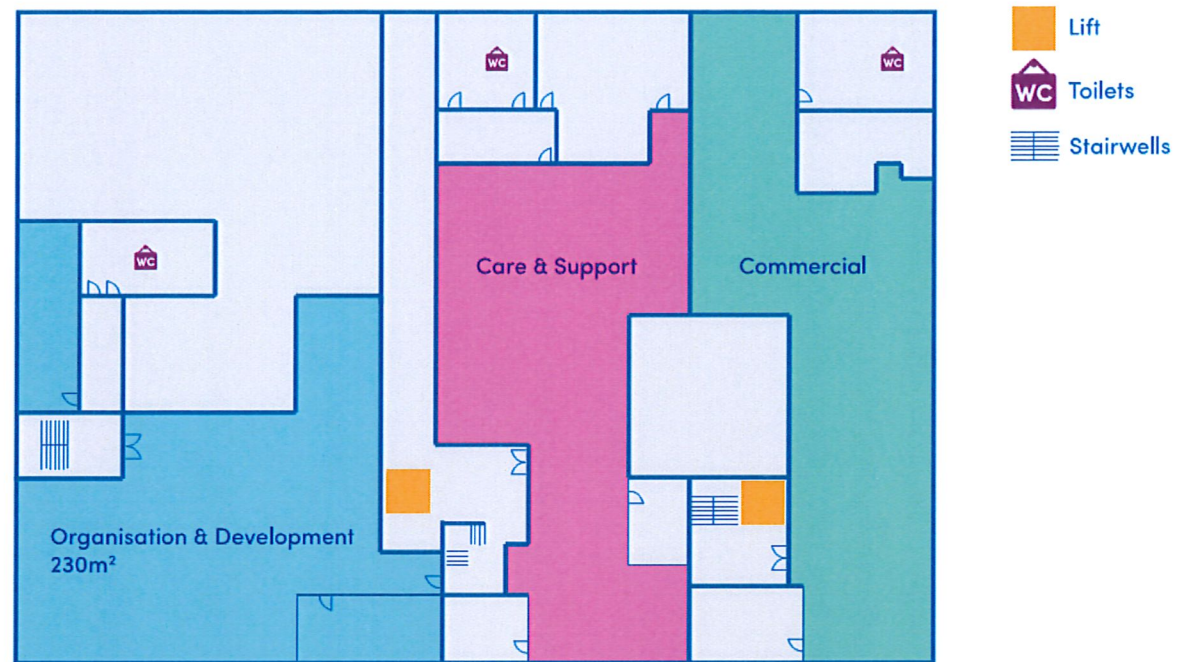
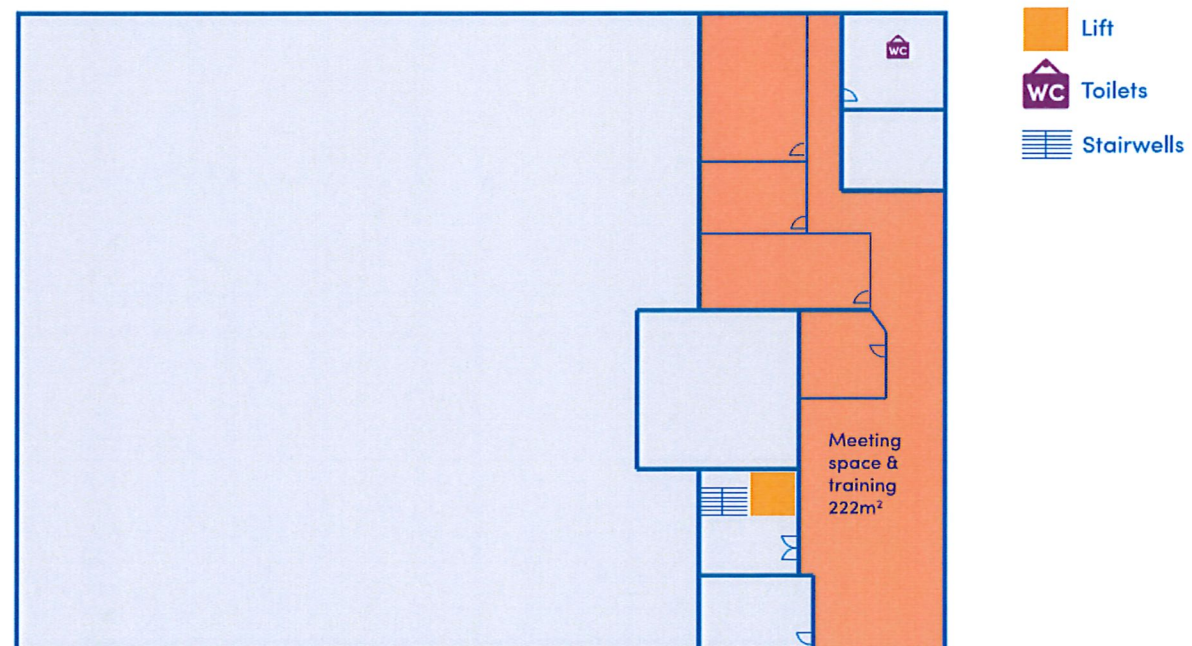


Figure 5

Third floor



4.0 Understanding the Organisational Culture

4.1 From the accommodation analysis there are areas to be considered for change and improvement, in order to do this we need to consider the organisations culture, the challenge they present and how they react to change.

4.2 Handy, (1900) states that there are four different types of organisational cultures to consider:

Power Culture

Role Culture

Task Culture

Person Culture

4.3 **Power Culture** – This type of organisation has a few leaders who hold the power, and influence the rest of the organisation. They leaders are the major decision makers and enjoy special privileges such as private offices. These leaders, delegate they're responsibilities throughout the organisation.

In organisations with this type of culture the lower level employees are there to follow instructions, policies and procedures set by the leaders.

Employees, are in general judged on performance rather than their actions, this can result in poor decisions being made and jeopardising the standing of the organisation.

Despite these issues, a power culture is often considered to be a strong culture.

4.4 **Role Culture** - Is prominent where every employee is allocated a role and delegated responsibilities based on their education, experience and interest, this is in order to get the best out them. Every employee is made responsible for their area and is encouraged to take ownership.

Power, within an organisation where a role culture is prominent, it is allocated dependant on a person's position in the organisational structure.

Organisations with a role culture are formed around strong organisational structures. These structures are formed around a long chain of decision

makers delegating work through to the front line staff. As a result of this the organisations tend to be very bureaucratic, slow to respond to decisions, and risk adverse. Organisations with the Task Culture do not respond well to change.

- 4.5 **Task Culture**— This type of Organisational culture is found where teams are brought together to meet a common goal or a set target. The team is made up of employees with similar skills, knowledge and drive to meet a common goal.

Teams are usually made up of four to five members. And each team member is required to contribute equally in order to meet common goals, in innovative ways. There is a power element to the team, and this will move between employees depending on individual's skills and the requirements of the task.

Task culture is strongly reliant on the dynamics of the teams, ensuring the right blend of skills, personalities, and leadership is critical. Organisations with this type of culture can be successful due to their productivity and creativeness.

- 4.6 **Person Culture** - In an organisation where the person culture is prevalent, individuals are usually more concerned with their own objectives rather than those of the organisation. The power lies solely with the individuals, and they usually see themselves as being superior to the organisation. This type of culture is usually found in doctor's practices, accountancy and law firms.

Handy, (1995) Managementstudyguide.com,(2017)

- 4.7 Pobl Group as an organisation may be viewed as one where the "Role Culture" is encouraged, however the organisation is divided into different directorates that may consider their cultures to be more aligned to Task and Power Cultures. When considering these cultures in line with the working environment it can prove challenging, this is due to the different culture functioning better in different environments, for example, where the role culture is found a layout of small cellular offices and open plan space can work well, however where the Power culture is to the fore, individual private offices are required.

- 4.8 Please appendix 1 for sample organisational structure

5.0 Key Drivers for Change

Despite change being difficult to manage within an organisation such as Pobl Group, the key drivers outlined below all have positive effects for the organisations financial and environmental sustainability.



Fig.6

6.0 **Key Findings and Recommendations**

6.1 **Office Space standards**

Under the Workplace, (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, the guidance states every employee shall have sufficient floor area, height and unoccupied space for purposes of health, safety and welfare. With regards to office accommodation, the total volume of the room, when empty, divided by the number of people normally occupying it should be at least 11 cubic metres.

In a typical office environment, where the ceiling is 2.4m high, a floor area of 4.6m² will be required to meet the 11 cubic metres.

(Health and Safety Executive, 2013)

This sets the minimum standard however the British Council for Offices state in their guidance 8-10m² should be allowed per workspace. (Gardiner et al, 2014)

A standard adopted by many government organisations looks only to provide 8 desks for every 10 Full time employed staff. By allowing for leave, sickness, site visits, meetings and other legitimate reasons we can safely reduce desk occupancy levels.

(Flexibility.co.uk, 2015)

Whilst on the whole the current layout does allow for this, there are certain departments that have been laid out just meeting the HSE minimum requirements, this was agreed as so to achieve the right culture for the Group and to help Address some of the barriers impacting on effective ways of working.

There are many variances throughout the Swansea office, however, it is worth noting that where only the legal requirement is met, the majority of the staff are site based, many of the staff could have desk shared. However, Executive Directors made the decision that by providing a desk for everyone it gave the staff a feeling of worth and belonging.

Also, by rationalising the workspace and applying a standard throughout the accommodation there are opportunities to relinquish some space, therefore making financial savings and making the organisation more sustainable

6.2 **Lighting**

Throughout the office accommodation there is recessed ceiling grid cat 2 type lighting, designed to reduce glare for VDU operators, a LUX level of between 300-500 is maintained. This causes issues, as in line with research carried out by Boyce et al (2003), that establishes that people's preference for lighting conditions can vary widely.

The office space would benefit from individual lighting controls; this would then address the issue, allowing individuals to self select their preferred conditions.

Alternatively, consideration should be given to a smart lighting system, Joseph (2016), states that LED technologies used are not only very energy efficient but also last a very long time therefore meeting the sustainability agenda on two counts. Applications and sensors are used to control these bulbs, they have the ability to control the lights so they work to set lighting levels or as a sensor dictates.

Boyce et al (2003) found that in accommodation where staff has individual control over lighting measures, higher levels of satisfaction and productivity were found.

Conversely, in historical research carried out by Roethlisberger and Dickenson (1939), they found that by altering lighting levels staff productivity continued to improve regardless of different lighting levels.

6.3 **Heating and Cooling**

The heating and cooling equipment within the Swansea office are localised individual units, each floor is heated by floor standing system boiler, and there are cassette type air condition units placed in an ad-hoc manner around the building (usually in smaller offices or meeting rooms). There are minimal controls, again localised to the area and manually set. Whilst this type of set up allows the remainder of the building to function as normal if one area fails there are far greater advantages to having a HVAC type system installed,

Velhirst et al, (2017) state that they allow more stringent comfort demands and allow the building to be more automated. Also, Punke,(2017) states that whilst the initial installation is higher than that of conventional systems, energy saving benefits are noticeable each month, The HVAC system has both heating and cooling in one unit. This alone saves construction space, installation time and fees, and required power usage. This system can also run on renewable energy.

Research carried out by Valancius, R and Jurelionis, A., (2012), found that heating and cooling plant in the office environment is generally controlled and balanced to external air temperature. Where sudden changes in the external air temperature occur, the indoor temperatures not meet what is considered to be comfortable.

This research highlighted that adverse indoor temperature can cause issues to the occupiers such as; thermal discomfort, poor air quality, and sick building syndrome symptoms.

Despite modern facilities, occupants may be exposed to these issues, all of which can have a negative effect on performance in the workplace.

6.4 **Staff Welfare Facilities**

Within the office there are two staff dining areas and nine rest rooms, each containing a male toilet area, female toilet area, and disabled toilet. The dining areas have been refurbished recently; however the toilet areas are in need of refurbishment.

A study carried out by Tiwari, (2014), found that where good quality welfare facilities were provided by the employer, there were positive impacts on employees health, physical and mental efficiency, alertness, morale and overall efficiency, therefore contributing to higher productivity.

Staff should be encouraged to leave their workspaces for their comfort breaks and, therefore, adequate breakout or dining facilities should be made available.

6.5 **Meeting Spaces**

Throughout the office there six formal meeting rooms that support the businesses needs, however people are now working more un-conventionally, Aitch, (2016), states that informal meeting spaces are becoming more popular, they facilitate collaboration without disturbing people at their workspace and without clogging up formal meeting rooms. Suitable areas should be identified, these areas can be areas otherwise thought of as being un-useable. There are practicalities such as Wi-Fi connection, charging facilities and white boards for brainstorming required despite these spaces being intended for short meetings.

By identifying and investing in this type of collaborative meeting space there are both financial and practical benefits, more formal meeting space will be made available and better utilisation of otherwise unusable space.

6.6 **Archiving**

At present the basement area of the building is used for archiving, this area alone (approx. 6000 ft²) cost the group £36000.00. Offsite storage will definitely be more cost effective, is consider being more secure, and will promote the organisation to be more organised when it comes to data retention and disposal policies. The freed up space could be better utilised for collaborative working areas, video conferencing facilities or staff facilities.

The downside is that there is a slight delay in retrieving the archived information

Documentarchiving.com, (2012)

7.0 New Ways of Working

- 7.1 **Agile Working** - Agile working is the process of bringing together physical and digital technologies, this in turn enable employees to work when, where and how allows them to be most efficient. By enabling staff to work away from the office it empowers to work as they feel best.

Offices that have been designed to accommodate agile working principles will consist of an open plan layout, low level furniture, flexible meeting areas, standing desks, breakout areas that allow employees to relax and discuss ideas, and conduct informal meeting.

Agile working has been found to reduce property overhead costs by 20%, raised productivity, customer satisfaction and employee loyalty.

Office Principles whitepaper, (2014)

- 7.2 **Flexible Working Policies** – whilst this may not be a new innovation by adopting a “work when you want” approach to managing an office it allows employees to pick the times that best suits their family needs and sleep patterns, this type of policy increases employee satisfaction and increases productivity in a dynamic way.

- 7.3 **Working from Home Policies** – with technological advances working from home is now easier than ever, there are both environmental and economic savings to be made for the organisation. It has been calculated that if the 40% of employees who could work from home did so for two days per week, the country could:

- Reduce road travel by 6.3 billion miles/year
- Reduce greenhouse gases by 6.2 million tonnes/year
- Save the average commuter 11 working days of travel per year
– and over 4 working weeks for longer distance commuters
- Reduce office accommodation cost by 10%

Lake, (2013).

- 7.4 **Virtual Meetings** – By utilising online conferencing facilities such as conference calling and video conferencing faculties it is possible to lower carbon emissions due to the fact you can reduce thousands of business miles

every year, reduce travel subsistence allowances and increase productivity as a result of reduced travelling time.

Lake, (2013)

7.5 **Smart Offices** – A “tech-enabled office” can include devices that enable the working environment and its occupiers to work in an efficient, economically and sustainable manner. Such devices are:

- Beacons – allow easy contact between employees.
Strategically placed throughout the building they can connect to employees smart phones so that people know if they are in the building and contactable.
- LED Smart Lights – these are more than just lights; they can house sensors, cameras, microphones, vibration and CO2 detectors. These digitised fittings are networked between themselves.
- Individual Thermal Clouds – These are localised heating and cooling systems which provide a precise personal climate for the employee. By using responsive infrared heating elements and motion tracking sensors each employees favourite conditions are maintained
- App Control – Allow workers to control environmental conditions from their mobile devices.
- Internet of Things – this allows technology to communicate, an example would be the system would recognise a meeting in an employee’s outlook calendar and automatically set up the technology required for the meeting.

Stoddart, (2016)

8.0 Conclusion

Within this report we have examined the Head Office accommodation of Pobl Group, a Large Housing Association that covers vast geographic area. The office provides works spaces for a wide spectrum of roles and allows for both internal and external meetings.

Organisational cultures have been examined and challenges for change identified. From the review, Key drivers for change have been identified, and key findings critically reviewed.

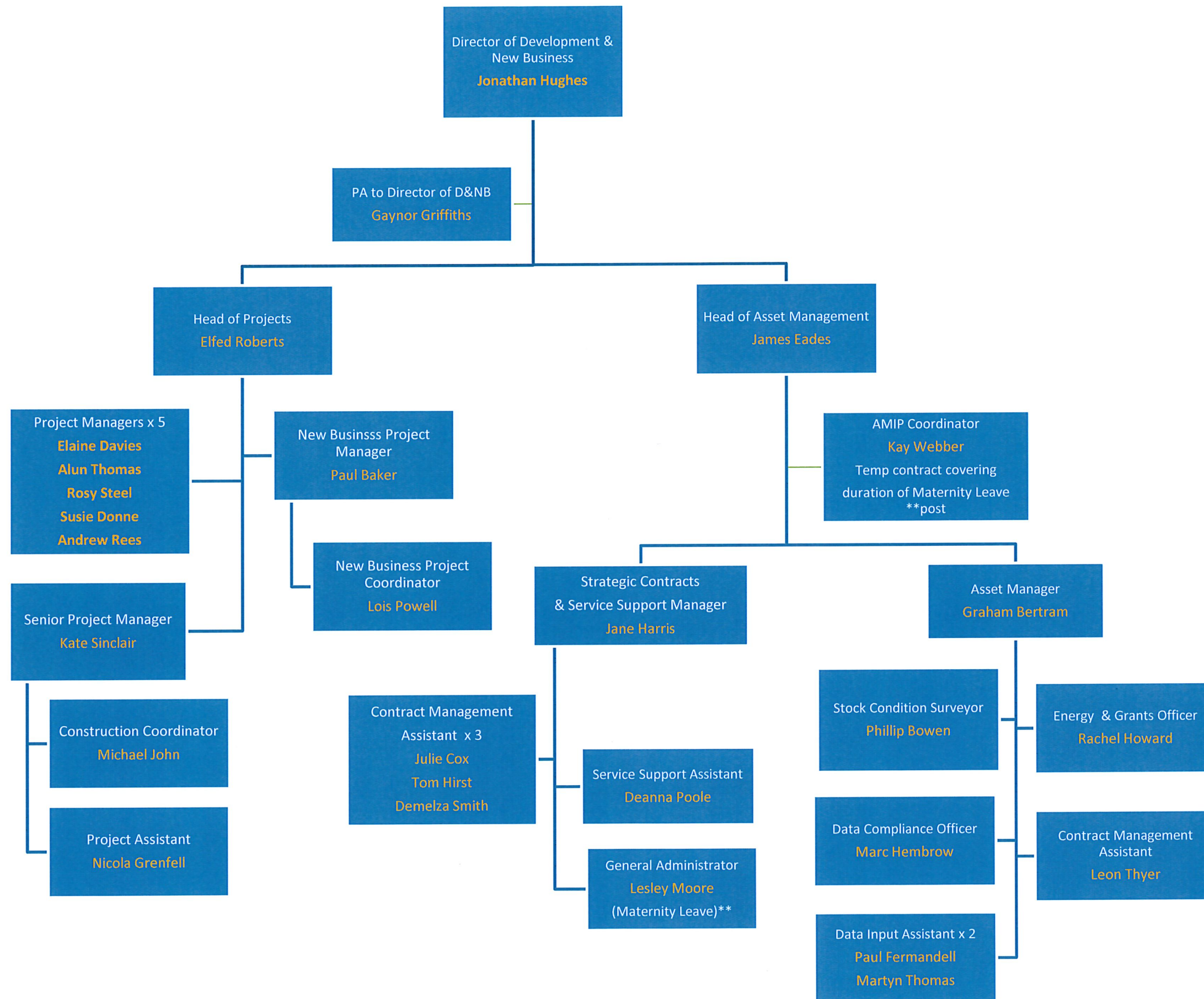
Further research has been carried out and new ways of working have been identified to be given further thought and consideration.

This report has researched and evidenced, how making changes to office accommodation can improve employee productivity, and make an organisation both economically and environmentally sustainable.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Sample Organisational Chart

DEVELOPMENT AND NEW BUSINESS (D & NB)



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List of Figures

Fig.1 Table Showing Directorates, Staff Numbers and working practices

Fig.2 Ground Floor Office Plan showing directorate occupancy, Pobl Group 7-13
The Kingsway, Swansea.

Fig.3 First Floor Office Plan, showing directorate occupancy, Pobl Group 7-13 The
Kingsway, Swansea.

Fig.4 Second Floor Office Plan, showing directorate occupancy, Pobl Group 7-13
The Kingsway, Swansea.

Fig.5 Third Floor Office Plan, showing directorate occupancy, Pobl Group 7-13 The
Kingsway, Swansea.

Fig.6 Diagram showing Key Drivers for Change within the Pobl Group Swansea
Office