FD move questionnaire, March 2015

Over 50% of those invited to participate did so. There are mixed feelings about the move, with some solutions to common concerns proposed but limited appetite for written rules. Broadly the messages are that closer proximity should lead to better communication and integration but noise and privacy in large open-plan are worrying people, the space overall looks tight and the communication about the project could have been better.

1. What features of the new accommodation do you feel will be the most beneficial? For instance: closer proximity for teams that have related work so better FD integration; networking with more people and having a greater understanding of their job roles; improved communication within teams due to consolidation and open plan working; opportunity to rethink current ways of working in a new environment (eg electronic storage rather than paper; more personal contact and less email etc); impetus to throw out unwanted filing and start afresh. Although 14% of the respondents to this question didn’t think there were any benefits, most of the rest thought co-location could be good, leading to better integration and communication within and between teams. This included the idea of more face to face communication instead of email.

There was also a strong feeling that the move gives a good excuse to clear out and become less paper-based.

A couple of cyclists are particularly looking forward to having easy access to changing facilities.
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2. What are your greatest concerns about the move at this stage, and do you have any proposed solutions? For instance: working in larger open plan areas where noise may be an issue; closer proximity to other people so less privacy, eg others can see my computer screen; lack of privacy for phone calls; availability of sufficient storage space for both filing and personal belongings; sharing kitchen and fridge space with more people; apprehensive about the change in general.

The concerns raised in response to this question broadly fall into the categories shown in the pie chart below (and it should be noted that 7% of those responding to this question said they had no concerns, or none that wouldn’t settle down after a while).

Noise, unsurprisingly, was the most common concern, including chatting, loud voices, ringing phones and computer beeps. Proposed solutions include: using voicemail, call-forwarding or group pick-up to limit phones ringing; acoustic screens or partitions; clear guidelines (see question 4).

Privacy was another major concern, for instance confidential conversations on the phone or in person, particularly where the respondent currently has their own office – this linked to a concern about availability of meeting rooms at short notice for unplanned conversations, and also the ‘obvious’ nature of repairing to a meeting room with a manager. There were also concerns about sensitive data on screens, and managers dealing with confidential information, as well as the feeling of being watched. A related aspect was the inability to shut the door and get on with things – how will ‘do not disturb’ be conveyed?

Storage, and size of workspace, are two closely-related but distinct concerns. There is a perception that the building as a whole is too small for the number of occupants, with the desks placed too close together (‘cramped’, ‘claustrophobic’) and a consequent lack of storage and non-standard workspace, e.g. for laying out drawings. Worries include the storage of PPE, winter coats and
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umbrellas, and the security of personal belongings. Proposed solutions include issuing guidelines to ensure everyone reduces filing to a similar degree, reducing or removing the proposed boardroom.

Kitchen-related concerns were partly due to storage for the requisite number of packed lunches, but also friction over milk, and being clear on cleaning responsibilities. It is not felt that the rest room area shown on the plans is large enough for the number of people intending to use it, which is causing concern due to the rumours of banning hot food at desks.

Several people pointed out that they often receive contractors at their desks to view things on the computer. This linked to the concern over availability of meeting rooms (particularly at short notice) but also the probable disruption to neighbouring colleagues. The proposed solution was to locate those members of Estates most likely to see contractors on the ground floor close to reception.

The remaining concerns covered behaviour (swearing, inappropriate language or conversation topics, regular contact with people you don’t get on with but can currently avoid), team disruption (separation from e.g. Estates workshops, concerns that a tight team will lose its identity, loss of impromptu team discussions), greater spreading of illness, and temperature regulation.

3. Will the transition be easier if we all know what is expected of us?

- Yes, it’s a good idea to have a set of agreed behaviours so we know what to expect: 37%
- Maybe: 27%
- No, expected behaviours feels like ‘big brother’: 6%
- No response: 30%
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4. Are there any behaviour guidelines you would like to suggest for a harmonious and productive workplace?

Despite the relatively low numbers saying no to guidelines in question 3, the predominant message from question 4 seemed to be that written guidelines may not be necessary, or should be light-touch/lighthearted, and the responsibility lies with managers to lead by example, and step in swiftly (and consistently) where behaviour is causing a problem. More than a third of respondents to this question suggested that respect and consideration for colleagues was the main requirement.

Noise and phone etiquette (personal mobiles as well as work phones), and use of the kitchen were the main contenders for guidelines, though there were some relating to ‘do not disturb’, and keeping the working area tidy. One suggestion was a general user guide covering the role of reception, using voicemail, booking and using meeting rooms, changing rooms, and where the cleaner’s responsibility in the kitchen ends.

There were polarised views on some matters such as: treat everyone the same e.g. not having 9 to 5 for some but flexible hours for others / remember all teams are different and may work differently, rules should be per team. We’re all adults and able to behave ourselves / rules are needed about swearing, cleaning, etc.

5. To reduce future storage needs and improve sustainability are there any processes which could move from printing and storing paper files to electronic storage? Does this rely on anything else, eg if meeting papers are electronic those attending would need a device on which to read them?

The broad picture was that most (though not all) processes could move away from paper if:

- the DLO had hand-held devices;
- tablets were available for surveying on campus;
- laptops or tablets were available for meetings;
- papers were emailed round before meetings;
- up to date templates were provided;
- guidance was provided on what to keep, what to scan, what could go;
- sufficient data storage was available to all.

It was, however, pointed out that:

- some day to day paperwork or training materials relate to staff who are not computer users (e.g. catering or cleaning staff);
- large drawings often need printing out to see the whole thing at once at a reasonable scale;
- the proposed number of combined copy/scan/print machines may not be sufficient to deal with the increase in scanning;
- not everyone is on the same server;
- a wider or culture shift may be needed in some cases (e.g. HR processes quite paper-based; existing O&M manuals are paper; some meeting organisers print copies of papers for everyone).
6. Do you currently cycle to work?

- Most days (weather permitting): 7 (11.7%)
- Often but not always: 3 (5%)
- Occasionally: 1 (1.7%)
- Never: 49 (81.7%)

7. Will changing facilities and showers in the new accommodation make you consider cycling if you don’t already?

- Yes, probably: 9 (16.4%)
- No, I don’t want to cycle: 38 (69.1%)
- Maybe: 8 (14.5%)

8. Will changing facilities and showers in the new accommodation make you consider other forms of activity such as running or walking to work?

- Yes, probably: 13 (22.8%)
- No, I don’t want to: 32 (56.1%)
- Maybe: 12 (21.1%)

9. Would you ideally like storage in the new accommodation for sports kit, e.g. for the gym?

- Yes: 24 (40%)
- No: 24 (40%)
- Maybe: 12 (20%)
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10. There will be lockable individual shower/changing cubicles and storage lockers, would you be comfortable if these were mixed gender use?

The chart below shows the overall response to this question, which 92% of respondents answered (i.e. not only the ones who cycle, jog etc).

Of the 11 people who say they cycle (at least occasionally) at the moment, 9 said they were willing to use mixed gender locker/changing areas, 1 preferred single sex areas and 1 was not sure.

Of the 10 people who don’t currently cycle but said they might or probably would consider it because of the new facilities, 4 were willing to use mixed gender locker/changing areas, 5 preferred single sex areas and 1 was not sure.

15 of the 25 people who said they might or probably would consider other activities because of the new facilities were willing to use mixed gender locker/changing areas. 7 would prefer single sex areas, 2 aren’t sure and 1 would not get changed in the locker/changing areas.

11. What should we call the new building?

Only 51% of the survey participants suggested a name (some suggested several alternatives) and some were more tongue in cheek than others, but here is a list of all the different suggestions:
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Summary of responses to online questionnaire

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<tr>
<th>Bleak Endings</th>
<th>Facilities Directorate Headquarters</th>
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<td>Facilities Directorate!</td>
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<td>Browlee Building</td>
<td>Facilities House</td>
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<td>Clobery House</td>
<td>Fawly Towers</td>
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<td>Clobery Lodge</td>
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<td>FD Central Building</td>
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<td>Mount Preston Building</td>
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<td>The Unity Building</td>
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There were cautions against a ‘knee-jerk’ name or an FD-specific name rather than a generic one.

12. Please let us know any particular time constraints around events planned in September 2015 or beforehand which may impact on the time you have available for packing/moving. If you have planned a holiday, this is not a problem so long as you are able to pack before you leave.

Only 29% of the survey participants indicated time constraints, mainly relating to financial year-end at the end of August, and student intake, car-parking renewal, and new interns, all in September. Others in the FD are particularly busy during August, e.g. for conferences, maintenance work prior to the new year. It was pointed out that a date to work towards would be useful.

13. Is there anything else you would like to say?

52% of respondents took the opportunity to add something, from the super-short (‘good luck’ or ‘Would it make any difference?’) to the person who gave 1,000 words of comments and questions.

Many comments related to poor communication about the project (‘I am still speaking with plumbers, fitters, etc. who have no idea about what’s happening’, ‘Staff do not feel that they have been involved in the process early enough to have an impact’) and the importance of listening to staff views (‘Whilst change is inevitable in life, change is easier accepted with good, clear, transparent, regular, inclusive communications.’, ‘if concerns are dismissed because someone does not understand that concern then motivation to embrace this move will be short lived’, etc).

The additional comments reinforce some of the concerns from earlier sections about noise, lack of non-standard workspace (and indeed lack of space in general), availability of meeting rooms, insufficient kitchen provision, and the number of visitors for staff currently shown as being on the first floor. They also raise points about sustainability, parking zones, the FD not all being on the same server (can’t access shared drives), and ask for clarification on availability of equipment, and on merged roles such as reception and fire wardens.