

Project Outline Report

Job No/Ref:	06C000176	Client/Site:	NSS, NHS
Report No:	1	Period:	13 May 2020 - 3 June 2020
Project:	Phased Return to work Strategy (Gyle Square / Meridian Court)		

Introduction

Avison Young (AY) were appointed by NSS to provide advice in relation to the proposed return to work strategy following the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 with reference to building fabric and layouts.

Initial focus is on the Gyle and Meridian Court with the intention to review further properties in the portfolio thereafter.

Actions in the Period

1. Attended site project introduction meeting with Barrie Richardson, Saskia Quelleron and Stuart Taylor (ST) 13/05/20.
2. Carried out site survey 21/06/20 & 22/05/20.
3. Reviewed CAD and PDF information provided by Client and developed updated working drawings of Gyle Square 25 – 27 /06/20.
4. Developed proposed plans and layouts for Gyle Square and Meridian Court 27-29/06/20. Drafts issued to Client 29/06/20.
5. Prepared & issued draft car park layout for Gyle Square 02.06.20.
6. Took part in Client Team video conference to present draft layouts and review brief and development requirements.

Design / Brief Development Summary

AY have advised the Client and adopted the following in response to this brief:

1. A low impact approach in the first instance. This approach is to make best use possible of the existing assets without major disruption and physical intervention, with the onus on highlighting existing risks and ways of reducing them as quickly and efficiently as possible.
2. A low risk approach to this first phase response. This is closely linked to ongoing and developing government advice, where the primary objective is around absolute necessity to be at sites for staff and therefore all non-essential functions should continue to be undertaken from home where possible.
3. Operational procedures at each site / location have been advised by AY as the key information as to how each site / building can be used. A general and rational framework has been developed around this for the purposes of efficiency and simplicity, however there are constraints within this relating to existing building conditions and design.
4. A traffic light system on the drawings, where green is a safe individual work area, amber is a hazard and red is a higher risk hazard or a no-go area. Blue indicates directions.
5. The solutions developed take account of and do not interfere with the existing building fire safety provisions and systems.
6. The two main approaches behind the system developed so far centre around proximity and hygiene control measures. These will continue to be evolved and covered by operational procedures developed by the Client.
7. It is anticipated that the plans will have to evolve as needs change or the government phasing targets for eradication of the virus are met. This is also why a low impact solution has been recommended by AY, as there is no way at this point in time to determine how long each phase may last.
8. The current known risks are centred around the methods of transmission for the virus, which are airborne and via contact surfaces. Solutions to address this include: limiting occupancy, introducing internal one way circulation systems (where appropriate), introducing way finding signage, distancing reminders and hygiene reminders in frequent locations, providing sanitizing points, introducing a higher frequency cleaning regime.

9. Not yet shown on the drawings, but recommended as the immediate next stage consideration by AY, is the re-numbering of desks and the zonal control of areas within the buildings to enable traceability to be established should an outbreak occur. This is especially important when considering more people returning to the office and the need thereafter of tracing and minimising the potential of any outbreak. Gyle Square, due to its scale and level of facility is most suitable for zonal control of areas, however it is anticipated that other premises may not be so readily adaptable.

Understanding the Drawings

The drawings issued have been developed as follows:

1. A traffic light system of symbols to cover the basic elements.
2. Green indicates a safe working area observing the current social distancing requirements. (Operational procedures will be required in supplement to enable the furniture and desks to be utilised).
3. Amber indicates hazards generally.
4. Red indicates higher risk hazards and no-go areas.
5. Blue arrows show the proposed one-way system. Where one-way is not achievable an amber warning and note is provided.
6. Amber hatch-outs represent single person use areas. There are follow on procedures (such as cleaning down etc) required to enable useful facility.
7. The amber triangle shows sanitizing gel locations, which are to reduce spread of virus on contact surfaces.
8. Phase 1 restricts single person usage of desk clusters generally. This is to ensure adequate proximity can be maintained between staff and reduction of crossovers is created by default. This approach has been developed where the one-way route is the spinal distributor and the circulation space between desk clusters are the branches, the rule is generally one person per branch in this phase.
9. Additional risk assessment and management will be required to enable the plans to work effectively. These include Facilities Management, PPE requirements, hazard / risk assessments, wayfinding and constraint measures (such as cordons, signage) and operational procedures. These are not covered by the drawings.

Risk Factors

AY have considered the following general information regarding the virus in response to this brief:

1. Airborne Transmission – The principal and most common way of transmitting the virus. Primarily dealt with by proximity and occupancy control. On a secondary basis, screens and division of space could be introduced, and these might be more appropriate solutions in smaller premises, however these types of intervention can affect building systems and fire safety adversely.
2. Contact Transmission – Not currently thought to be the main way of spreading the virus, however significant risk is apparent due to how long the virus can survive on surfaces, particularly hard surfaces like metals, glass and plastics. (This can also include surface such as clothing, Perspex screens and nitrile / latex gloves and has been considered).

Qualifications

AY are not specialists in virus biology and containment. Advice and information given in this report and accompanying drawings is provided on the basis of guidance only gathered from widely available sources and based around our expertise in buildings, and their design and construction. It is not currently possible to create a virus free environment however the measures considered in this project are intended to significantly reduce the risks to staff should they choose to occupy buildings. AY recommends the principle advice from the Scottish Government which remains "Stay at Home" whenever possible.