

## **Limitless potential – The reimagined the workplace at Chatham house**

“Beyond the age of information comes the age of choices.” – Charles Eames

Until recently the conventional wisdom has been that a workplace was essential to maintain productivity, develop a strong culture and attract the best talent.

But now, many people are getting used to working from home (or from anywhere) thanks to the adoption of digital collaborative tools. They do not want to give up their flexibility or go back to long commutes. So, what does that mean for the workplace? How can we reimagine this space, not only for a post-Covid world but to be the kind of places in which talented people would choose to spend time? How should workplaces be designed so that they are safe and conducive to great work?

***Limitless potential*** is our investigation into the new role and purpose for the workplace.

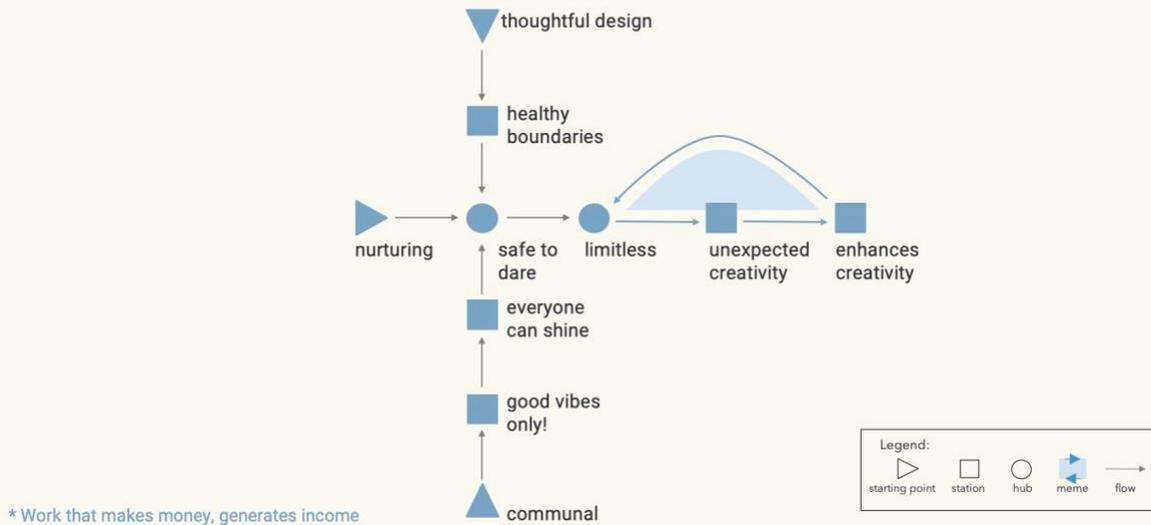
### **Approach**

We employed a unique, proprietary method called the Structural Mapping Process® (SMP) to access, release and activate the hidden insight, imagination and power within individuals and organizations about the future of the workplace. The SMP is a celebrated approach for achieving insight into mass behaviour and societal preferences. The session centred around the desired Outcome of “I choose to work\* in this space!” The session produced a “map” (see below) that depicts the direct paths to effectively and sustainably achieving this Outcome.

\*Work that makes money, generates income

Desired outcome statement:

**“I choose to work\* in this space!”**



### **Key insights from the Map**

The map is best used when looked at from a strategic and “below the surface” view much like a DNA sequence. For example, think “genotype” (underlying genetic code) rather than “phenotype” (outward expression of the gene sequence)

- The 3 key emotional journeys that form the DNA of people choosing a place in which to work are:
  - **Understand the appeal of well-crafted and considered space** that is purposefully designed
  - **Provide a warm and welcoming space** where one feels safe to explore, dare and grow
  - **Nurture positive and supportive individuals** who encourage and challenge each other to go further
- Every universal need, identified by Maslow, must now be thoughtfully addressed through the workplace.
  - Fundamental Safety needs are indicated by “**healthy boundaries**” and “**safe to dare**”
  - Belonging needs are indicated by “**nurturing**” and “**communal**”
  - Esteem needs are indicated by “**everyone can shine**” and “**limitless**”
  - And the entire Meme represents themes directly relating to Self-Actualization and even Self-Transcendence

Surprisingly, our current work environments, based on knowledge, collaboration and creative problem solving has not evolved beyond the industrial revolution and era of assembly line workers governed by a managerial class.

This mechanistic approach to work – creating workplaces that operate like machines – has resulted in the development of silos, compartmentalized outputs and disengaged employees.

This requires us to rethink today's knowledge-based work that is based on delivering meaningful value creation at the individual, organizational and societal levels versus increasing production numbers and maximizing efficiency. We must design a working environment that employees want meaningful work, where they build their mastery, and work in a collaborative environment that brings out their best.

It's time to move from a mechanical view of the workplace – built for efficiency, productivity, control and compliance – to a biological view – designed for effectiveness, mastery, autonomy and trust.

Rather than being primarily structured based on organizational requirements, workplaces now need to take into account multiple perspectives. As living organisms, they must behave holistically, taking into account the needs of three interconnected parts: **human health** (emotional, physical, mental, social), **planetary health** (sustainability) and **economic health** (individual, collective, corporate).

These are three key dimensions that must be considered.

1. **The sensory**

- The intangible components that may not be visible but have an experiential impact

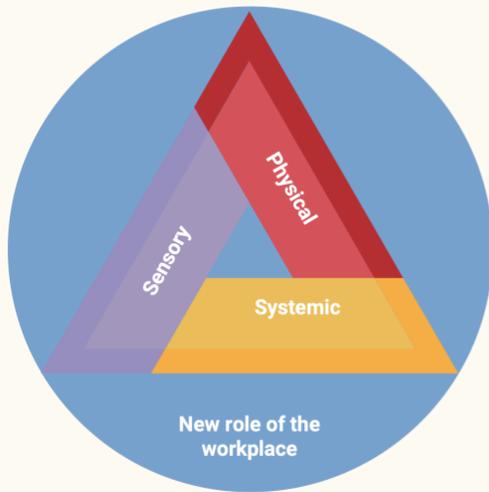
2. **The physical**

- The tangible components that can be seen and touched

3. **The systemic**

- The systems that make the whole ecosystem operate at its best

Our project, ***Limitless potential***, will use the following framework (see below) to deliver on these emotional drivers and design a workplace within Chatham House as a living ecosystem that is flexible and adaptable to evolving. A place that bridges people and space into a multifaceted environment built on community, collaboration, and creativity. The work will bring people together into an experiential and ethereal space designed for value, purpose, and meaning.



01

**From work as a machine to work as an ecosystem**

- Understand the appeal of well-crafted and considered space
- Provide a warm and welcoming space where people can explore and grow
- Encourage people with positive and supportive behaviours who enable others to go further

02

**From a nice-looking to a multi-sensorial space**

- Ensure people always have access to natural light and fresh air
- Adjust the acoustics of each area to match its specific purpose
- Make physical and psychological comfort a priority

03

**From fixed to adaptive components**

- Use repurposable spaces and furniture to foster collective interactions
- Choose design aesthetics that reflect your company's DNA
- Leverage smart technology to increase safety and collaboration

04

**From location-based to multifaceted processes**

- Be ready to change how work is done
- Use your culture to foster desired behaviours, wherever people may be working
- Evolve your rituals and practices to instill a sense of pride and belonging