



BCO Research Specification

Property's role in recessionary times – Towards sustainable cost control

Introduction

The BCO wishes to commission an important research study looking at the position and perception of occupational property in corporate balance sheets. The costs of occupation of office property in the UK are often perceived as relatively low in comparison to other costs such as staff and technology, but past economic downturns have shown us that property costs are often high on Finance Director's lists of the first things to cut.

Objectives

This report sets out to debate whether property's role in delivering a profitable and efficient workforce is underestimated in difficult times. For example, if a business is making head count cuts should they be focusing on delivering an even higher quality workplace to improve the productivity of the remaining workers and space? Are there ways that landlords, managing agents and other service providers can work with their tenants to make office properties work more efficiently in difficult times, rather than just dumping floorspace onto the market to save on rent bills?

Background

Each year the BCO President will commission a piece of research on what he/she considers to be a key topic during their Presidential year. Nick Ridley is currently the BCO President and he has decided to look at property's role in recessionary times.

Methodology

We outline below a suggested methodology for the study and we anticipate several consultant organisations will respond to this request for a proposal and offer enhancements or alternative methodologies.

The chosen consultant will undertake both primary and secondary research around these topics, with a view to producing a guidance and discussion document targeted at CEO's, CFO's and CTO's around the topic of "*property's role in sustainable cost control.*"

Areas that we would wish respondents to this brief to consider would include the following:

- The simple costs: rent, rates and service charges
- Landlord & tenant issues
- Tax issues
- Energy cost control
- Management and maintenance of M&E systems

- Improving fit-out to drive density – higher occupational densities drive greater cost efficiency?
- What proportion of the average office occupier's fixed costs relate to property?
- What are the costs of rationalising property occupancy (e.g. dilapidations, acquisition/disposal costs/fees), and do the costs incurred merit the savings made and costs of churn?

Respondents to this invitation to tender are encouraged to suggest other areas of study that contribute to this important discussion.

Report structure and specifications

We anticipate that the final research report will be produced in the second quarter of 2009, and will contain a mix of best-practice thinking around these subjects, as well as relevant case studies and guides on how to best manage these issues in a time of corporate desire to control costs.

We would imagine the final report would be a text-based report including as necessary a combination of technical detail. The actual presentation of the report should reflect the different topics addressed and a defined chapter structure would be, in our opinion, suitable. All prospective contractors will be presented with samples of BCO research, which should offer guidance.

The researchers should bear in mind that the final report will be published and the structure of the document should reflect this. A stimulating style and a robust methodology should be a core aspect of any research produced. All research materials are peer reviewed by various committees, key BCO members, and by the Secretariat itself to ensure consistently high standards. Contractors will be expected to co-operate with this process and produce redrafts of their text in response to these reviews. Such a process does benefit all those parties involved in BCO research work and has produced robust and highly reputable research reports in the past.

Additionally the Contractor will present a single copy 1,000-word summary of the report in both paper and electronic copy.

- The report should include a 1000 word executive summary and a set of conclusions. (Scope does exist for a flexible application of this particular guidance.)
- The use of page headers and footers should be avoided, as evidenced by samples of current work and the contractor should not include their own name on any such material inside the main text of the report.
- It is usual practice that the contractor's name but not their company logo will appear in the report.
- The BCO will manage the design and production elements of any final report. This stage may be undertaken in partnership with the research contractor depending on the opportunities available and offered, and upon the agreement originally reached.
- The successful contractor will be expected to support BCO public relations efforts to launch the report, acting as the authoritative author of the research work and speaking to the press through the offices of the BCO public relations company. Contractors should consider the presentation of at least one workshop as part of their fee. Further support by the contractor may be open to favourable negotiation.

The tendering process

Form of Tender

All proposals should include:

- details of the proposed methodology for preparing and undertaking the programme of research
- a detailed schedule of work including the number of days allowed for each member of the research team at each stage
- details of the proposed individual or team, including specific skills and relevant experience (including a short CV)
- details of the roles and responsibilities of each team member in relation to the proposed research method and project management
- details of any sub-contract proposal

Criteria for Evaluating Tenders

Each tender will be judged on performance against the following value for money criteria:

- how well they address the research objectives
- the quality of the ideas presented
- the relevant skills and experience of the research team
- the robustness and suitability of the proposed approach in meeting the requirements of the specification
- the adequacy of the proposed project management arrangement
- the track record of the tenderer in delivering quality and succinct reports to schedule – using plain English

Tenderers will need to demonstrate that they have the following attributes:

- an understanding of office design and its impact on business outcomes
- a strong research background
- an ability to produce practical advice in a clear, succinct and user-friendly form, with a minimum of technical jargon, including quality illustrations and other visual material in support if applicable
- an ability to work closely with the Jenny Mac Donnell, Research and Policy Officer throughout the project.

At times tenders are encouraged to bid in partnership with other organisations to ensure the optimum width of professional skills.

Following the written tender process, the BCO will call up to three tenderers for an interview to present their ideas and proposed methodology. It will be expected that those team members

nominated in the tender to deliver the project will attend the interview. Arrangements will be made as necessary.

Quality and risks

In considering tenders, the clients will pay attention to the tenderer's internal project management arrangements and to the quality plan and monitoring arrangements that they propose, including measures to deal with potential risks to the programme.

Project Management

The project will be managed under BCO's standard framework consultancy contract. The contractor will be supervised by Jenny Mac Donnell, Research and Policy Officer, who will act as Contract Manager for the project. The BCO will expect a named member of the contractor's staff to be in sole charge of the project.

In addition to individual event reports, the Contractor will be required to submit a brief (maximum 1 side of A4) monthly report covering progress on timetable, data collection, findings, staff changes and any issues that affect or could affect progress.

Timetable

The closing date for receipt of research proposals is 9am on Monday, 9 February 2009.

It is envisaged that work will begin in the week of 23 February approximately, with an interim report ready for comment by 6 April and the final draft report ready for initial comment by late May and the final publication signed off by BCO in June 2009. Tenderers should comment on the timetable in the context of their proposed methods and approach, suggesting amendments as necessary.

Budget

The BCO wishes to procure the above services through a framework contract with a selected partner.

Tenders should give a breakdown of charges to cover the research element.

The approximate budget for this project is between £25K and £40K, however, it may be possible to renegotiate the scope of the contract.

Each figure should be presented exclusive of VAT and the tender should state on what items VAT will be charged. Travel and subsistence costs should always be included in the fees proposed. Only in exceptional circumstances will other arrangements be considered.

Payment arrangements

Payments will be made in on completion of agreed milestones.

General

Any information supplied by the client to the contractor during the project must be returned no later than one month after the end of the contract period. A copy of any materials used during the research programme will be required by the BCO for retention. The contractors will not use the information generated by the project for any purpose other than to meet the terms of the contract, unless given prior consent by BCO.

Further information

Any queries regarding this specification should be addressed to

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Deadline for tenders

Tender should be submitted by email no later than [9am on Monday, 9 February 2009](#) to Jenny Mac Donnell at the above address.