



# Strategies for mitigating office obsolescence

## The Challenge

As modern working practices change so do office space demand and requirements. When current office buildings are no longer viewed as fit for purpose, for a number of reasons, they are at risk of becoming obsolete. The rate of replacement does not typically keep pace with the ageing process. This makes the question of what to do with potentially obsolete office space a pressing challenge for the future. As a national forum for issues affecting the office sector, the BCO wanted to take a lead in shaping debate and discussion on the topic.

## Solution

R3intelligence is a team of industry specialists and academics based at Northumbria University offering commercial consultancy and contract research. The BCO commissioned R3intelligence, as experts in the subject, to produce a detailed report into office obsolescence. As a result of PhD research carried out by Northumbria University's Dr Kevin Muldoon-Smith into building obsolescence and adaptive re-use, R3intelligence already had significant knowledge and insight into the issue. We used this research to underpin a detailed report. It contained theoretical models of the process of office obsolescence and offered solutions for landlords and investors. In particular the report focused on four vacant office building strategies. For each it provided an associated set of management techniques and a relative degree of intervention.

## Impact

'Mitigating office obsolescence: the agile future' was published by the British Council for Offices in September 2017 and is available for download from [www.bco.org.uk](http://www.bco.org.uk). The report argues that the working environment has changed forever, disrupted by new flexible business models. It makes the case for office building agility and repeated temporary use. It suggests that investment and management strategies will need to be proactive, with an emphasis on tenant experience. The ability of buildings to adapt and change will be a key determinant of their success in the future. The team from Northumbria University were invited to present the findings of the report to the British Council of Offices in May 2018.

## Organisation Overview

British Council for Offices

The British Council for Offices (BCO) is Britain's leading forum for the discussion and debate of issues affecting the office sector. Its members are all organisations involved in creating, acquiring or occupying office space. The BCO works to advance the collective understanding of its members, enabling them to work together to create more effective office space.



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