



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Peter Schofield CB
Permanent Secretary
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9DA
psa@dwpa.gov.uk
www.gov.uk

Dame Meg Hillier
Chair of Committee Public Accounts
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
Sent electronically

12 April 2023

Dear Meg

**WORKPLACE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME ACCOUNTING OFFICER
ASSESSMENT**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 March about the DWP's Workplace Transformation Programme, with a number of follow up questions to the Accounting Officer Assessment.

1. What level of carbon reduction is targeted by the program as part of DWP's contribution to Net Zero and an assessment of feasibility and value for money on this aspect?

Through our Estates function and the Workplace Transformation Programme we are supporting the Government's Property Strategy to deliver a smaller, better and greener estate.

The Workplace Transformation Programme supports DWP's contribution to Net Zero through the divestment of estate along with targeted investment and improvement to the operation and efficiency of buildings.

DWP supports the delivery of the UK's Net Zero target through the Greening Government Commitment (GGC) targets, and the Workplace Transformation Programme has a significant impact on those targets. The GGC targets have been agreed up to 2024/25 and are reported to DEFRA on a quarterly basis.

An overall reduction in the footprint of the estate brings benefits associated with the direct carbon emissions produced from burning fuels on site, such as gas and oil, and total emissions produced by DWP, including those from electricity procured from the national grid and emissions from business travel.

Furthermore, the investments in buildings proposed as part of the programme will improve the energy use intensity of the remaining buildings on the estate.

The modelled benefits for the programme are as follows, against a 2017/18 baseline. These are tracked on a regular basis as changes to the programme are approved through programme governance structures.

	2024/25	2030/31
Direct Emissions	14% reduction	32% reduction
Total Emissions	45% reduction	56% reduction

The modelled savings will enable DWP to meet the GGC total emissions target for 2024/25 and will provide 14% of the 17% required for the GGC direct emissions target, with the remaining 3% being provided through other estate-led carbon reducing projects. DWP is currently examining its trajectory and pathway to Net Zero in more depth, with further work planned over 2023 to develop a clear roadmap to 2050.

In terms of feasibility and value for money, the proposed site-based improvements will be reviewed as part of the feasibility process, at a site-specific level based on the energy efficiency, fabric and current asset capability and condition of the existing building. This will bring the buildings up to Government Property Agency design standards, thus meeting sustainability criteria.

2. How the programme is improving the lives of the Department's workforce and how will you know that this has been achieved?

Moving to larger multi-functional locations allows colleagues a broader career path with more opportunities given the wider range of job roles are undertaken in larger buildings. Bringing more of our people together and co-locating multiple disciplines increases skills and knowledge sharing, whilst also giving the business flexibility and additional resilience to deal with peaks and troughs in demand.

In September 2022, DWP carried out surveys to establish a baseline against which we can measure the impact on colleagues of refurbishment works. We will continue with targeted surveys and obtain input from colleagues via our evaluation working group. Measures and indicators, will include:

- People Engagement survey scores;
- staff turnover rate; and
- sickness levels (excluding COVID).

Against the success indicator of 'Better Workplace' we have identified the following measures/outcomes and supporting indicators:

Flexible: Provision of workspaces to suit a variety of tasks, with Smarter Working in mind, including collaboration spaces and furniture and quiet zones and spaces for individual task-based working.

Welcoming and pleasant: Provision of wellbeing and welfare facilities and spaces including office spaces that feel relaxed, calming and open, improved external spaces, reducing noise levels.

Inclusive: Government Property Agency inclusive design standards are met, including ensuring that all areas are accessible, privacy is available when needed and with remote access to join meetings.

Adaptable: Provision of office furniture that considers the needs of those with reasonable adjustments and appropriate supporting equipment.

3. The measures being taken to minimise the impact on DWP customers, particularly in terms of customer service levels and accessibility of services.

The DWP understands the potential impact that a closure or relocation of an office may have and is making every effort to minimise the impact on both its people and service delivery.

Back-office services

The majority of sites impacted over the last 12 months have been those providing back-office services which are delivered via a virtual network across the country which do not involve customers coming to the building. Capability and capacity is spread across multiple sites, which provides flexibility to plan and ensure continuity of service for customers. And in the case of Barrow, which was historically the only site delivering Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, the Department has been able to increase its resilience by building capacity and capability in two new sites Barnsley and Bradford.

Jobcentres

The Department secured time limited funding for the temporary expansion of the Jobcentre network during Covid. Where the increased capacity is no longer needed, the Department is decommissioning the temporary Jobcentres due to:

- removal of social distancing measures;
- a reduced requirement for Work Coaches as the labour market recovered so services can be accommodated in the established Jobcentre; and
- the site is not suitable for swapping out with the established site.

A [Written Statement in February 2023](#), set out how the Department is taking a phased approach towards decommissioning temporary Jobcentres to minimise any impact on service delivery and customers will return to being served by their established Jobcentre.

For established Jobcentres, the Department set out its plans in a [Written Statement in July 2022](#). The Department will look to gradually improve its Jobcentre estate in four key ways:

- consolidate services in some locations where there is another Jobcentre nearby which offers better accommodation for customers and staff;
- look to close older and poorer premises and permanently relocate to the new temporary Jobcentre, making it an established site;
- co-locate with key partners;
- and in some cases, secure new premises.

The Department is committed to keeping Parliament updated as plans for decommissioning further temporary sites, or making changes to established Jobcentres, are confirmed.



Peter Schofield CB
Permanent Secretary