



National Audit Office

Comptroller and Auditor General
Gareth Davies

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Helping the nation spend wisely

Telephone +44 (0)20 7798 7777
Facsimile +44 (0)20 7798 7990
Email Gareth.Davies@nao.org.uk

Date 28 May 2020

Dear Mr Wragg,

PROGRESS IN REDUCING THE GOVERNMENT'S LONDON OFFICE ESTATE

During the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee session on 5 May, you asked about government's progress towards its target of occupying only 20 buildings in London.

This target derives from the [2019-20 business plan](#) of the Government Property Agency (GPA). GPA is an executive agency of the Cabinet Office, set up in April 2018, to bring together management of the government's central estate. In its business plan it states:

Whitehall Campus Delivery Plan for 2019/20

Development of a programme plan to deliver the vision of a Central London 'Whitehall Campus' of no more than 20 efficient, fit-for purpose buildings, operating as a single entity with flexible space, shared services, and where possible integrated systems, by 2030.

GPA's 2020-21 [Business Plan](#) sets out GPA's targets for this financial year to enable it to meet its 2030 target. Key priorities include developing a masterplan for the Whitehall Campus, which will provide some specific milestones to track progress towards the target. It also plans to undertake refurbishment work on two more Whitehall buildings and to arrange the closure of eight further Central London buildings.

GPA reports progress against its strategic objectives in its Annual Report and Accounts - the Report for 2019-20 is due to be presented in Parliament in mid-July. In terms of progress to date, there were 60 government buildings within Central London when the baseline target was set on 1 April 2019. The GPA has identified 40 non-core office buildings within Central London that will be exited and closed four of these buildings during the year, leaving 56 occupied Central London properties as at 31 March 2020. In the March 2020 Budget, the Government announced that 22,000 roles will be relocated from Central London and a commitment from HM Treasury to create a new economic

campus in the North with over 750 staff. The GPA has also made progress on Old Admiralty Building as the first refurbished Campus building.

GPA has plans to open a series of Government Property Hubs in major UK cities outside London. Ensuring that departments have the right incentives to move some of their operations/workforce outside London will be crucial to enable GPA to meet its 2030 target for reducing the government's central London estate.

I hope this reply is helpful and do let me know if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gareth Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

GARETH DAVIES