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William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional
Affairs Committee
House of Commons
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Thank you for your letter of 26 April regarding the Cabinet Office Supplementary Estimate and future spending. I have set out below the answers to your question.

1. The Cabinet Office has carried out a thorough business planning round for 2022-23 (Year 1 of the Spending Review) and allocated budgets that match the spending review settlement and manage the unexpected rise in inflation. To achieve this, we have identified further savings and efficiencies in programmes, reducing headcount as required by the SR21 settlement, along with aligning spend to ministerial priorities and deprioritising areas of spend. In addition, throughout the 2022-23 financial year, there will be regular ministerially led reviews of budgets across business areas to ensure resources are continuing to align with priorities and expenditure is maintained within available funding.

2. Whilst Ministers strongly reaffirmed their commitment to the Government Hubs and Whitehall Campus programmes, improving the quality and performance of the Government Estate in SR21, the process proved to be a difficult settlement given the very tight constraints on public finances. This led to some tough decisions by Ministers on the relative priority of a number of Hubs and Whitehall projects that were underway, resulting in a number of planned projects being deferred into the next SR period for further consideration or, indeed, cancelled. Of the £23.7m underspend:

    a. £10.3m was related to projects funded in SR20 but cancelled or deferred

b. £7.8m was due to a lack of need to draw on the Temporary Accommodation budget that had been anticipated to support early moves to the regions, which could not be supported by existing government buildings.
c. £5.6m was due to contingency that did not need to be drawn down.
d. A further £10m of expenditure was delayed primarily due to re-scoping the London, 1 Victoria Street disposal project to ensure that it will fully accommodate BEIS staff in refurbished buildings by 2023/24.

A Government Hub has most recently been opened in Birmingham, 23 Stephenson Street, accommodating c1,600 FTE, and in Whitehall, GPA has completed the refurbishment of London Old Admiralty Building for c3,000 FTE. In 2022/23 we will look to make space available to accommodate immediate Places for Growth roles in Darlington, York, Preston, Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent and Birmingham, with a new long-term Hub in Peterborough, Fletton Quays opening in early 2023.

3. The One Login programme spent £17.6 million in 2021-2022. GDS also spent £7.8m on the GOV.UK Verify programme.

   Since I last updated the committee, GDS has made good progress on the development and launch of One Login's 'minimum viable product'.

   Initial delivery will now be in two parts, with a technical release of the solution in the middle of May. This will allow additional time for testing and feedback, and will link together the 'sign-on' and identity verification components for the first time. The second stage will be six weeks later, at the end of June, when the Disclosure and Barring Service's Basic Check will connect to the system. From this point users will begin to login and verify their identity with One Login, under controlled conditions.

   This is the start of the 'private beta' period, during which GDS will improve the platform through testing and the iterative addition of more functions, including an identity checking app. This will enable more government services, and their users, to onboard fully before the end of 2022.

Yours sincerely,

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