



Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP  
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Our reference: MC2022/15505

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

*Oliver Dowden* Will,

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Thank you for your letter of 27 October, and for your message of congratulations. I look forward to working closely with you and the Committee on the important matters you raise in your letter.

#### Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Lobbying Act 2014

You will have gathered that we were not able to issue a response to your committee's call for evidence by the end of October but I hope to do so early in the new year – once the Government's approach has been approved by Ministers and collectively agreed by Cabinet. As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I maintain oversight of constitutional, transparency and ethics issues within Government, including oversight of consultant lobbying and the post-legislative review of the Lobbying Act 2014. As Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, Alex Burghart supports me in the delivery of some of these duties and he would be the relevant Minister to provide evidence to your Committee on the post-legislative scrutiny.

#### Declaration on Government Reform

The Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency wrote to you on 2 September providing an update on progress made since February implementing the Declaration on Government Reform.

As stated in that letter, the review of Civil Service Governance and Accountability launched on 27 July 2022 and is chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Maude of Horsham PC. In October, the then Minister for the Cabinet Office, the Rt Hon Edward Argar, wrote to Lord Maude granting an extension of his appointment and a revised deadline for delivery of his findings of 31 December 2022. This extension will ensure there is sufficient time for Lord Maude to fully deliberate on the complex issues and to continue with his wide-ranging consultation of those with expertise in these areas. The Minister for the Cabinet Office continues to have Ministerial oversight of the review.

#### Civil Service numbers and Relocation Programme

The Government is committed to ensuring the Civil Service and its Arms Length Bodies have a national footprint in order to be connected with and representative of the communities we serve.

Our Places for Growth programme is bringing new jobs and investment to locations across the UK including Glasgow, Darlington, Wolverhampton and Stoke-on-Trent through the relocation of 15,000 roles from Greater London by 2025 and 22,000 roles by 2030. We have already relocated more than 8,000, including 255 Senior Civil Service roles. I am proud that the Cabinet Office has contributed to this agenda by establishing its second headquarters in Glasgow, where we have 350 staff members. The Committee would be welcome to visit the Glasgow Hub and meet with visiting Ministers and staff.

The Prime Minister recognises the important work that the Civil Service delivers on behalf of the British people and has committed to providing civil servants with the skills and tools they need. To meet the opportunities and challenges ahead, we do not believe that top-down targets for Civil Service headcount reductions are the right way forward. Along with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Prime Minister will be asking every government department to look for the most effective ways to secure value and maximise efficiency within budgets, so that taxpayers' money can be used sustainably in the long term.

#### Outcome Delivery Plans

All departments produced a draft Outcome Delivery Plan for 2022/23. The announcement of Civil Service 2025 in May meant that the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury Ministers agreed to pause the publication of Outcome Delivery Plans to ensure that they could reflect any workforce changes. Since then, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered the Autumn Statement and these changes need to be reflected in plans. The Government has agreed that we will not require departments to publish Outcome Delivery Plans for 2022/23 but to concentrate on the production of Outcome Delivery Plans for 2023/24.

Departments will report their delivery against the Priority Outcomes agreed in SR21 settlements, published in October 2021 on GOV.UK, in their 2022/23 Annual Report and Accounts – which will be published in 2023.

#### Cabinet Manual

It is important that the Cabinet Manual continues to provide an accurate and authoritative guide to the laws, conventions and rules on the operation of Government. I can confirm that Cabinet Office officials, working with colleagues across Government, are working on updating the 2011 version of the Cabinet Manual, and we will provide an update to you on this work early in 2023, including the detailed arrangements for consultation with your committee.

#### Other Live Inquiries

I can confirm my commitment to meeting with the Committee to give evidence regarding the work of the Cabinet Office in January. Thank you again for writing, and I look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Yours sincerely,



**Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP**  
**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

# PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP  
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
Cabinet Office, 70 Whitehall  
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27<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Dear Oliver,

## **Introductory Letter and Forthcoming Committee Business**

Congratulations on your appointment as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. On his appointment, your immediate predecessor, Rt. Hon. Nadhim Zahawi, sent the Committee a letter on 11 October and I thought it might be helpful to touch on a few key matters – some of which were raised in that letter – which we look forward to discussing with you in the near future:

### Post-Legislative Scrutiny of the Lobbying Act 2014

The Committee is undertaking post-legislative scrutiny of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 ('the Lobbying Act'), as was requested by one of your predecessors some time ago. The Government had committed to providing us with a post-legislative scrutiny memorandum on the basis of which we can undertake our work. I would be grateful if you could confirm that the intention remains to provide this to the Committee before the end of this month (October 2022)? As part of the inquiry, we will want to hear evidence from the Government before Christmas this year. Can you confirm who the relevant Minister now is and your intention to facilitate this?

### Declaration on Government Reform

In February this year, your predecessor updated the Committee on progress on the implementation of the Declaration on Government Reform's main action points and undertook to provide a further update in the Summer. We would now appreciate that update. We would also like an update on the progress of Lord Maude's review of governance and accountability, including its anticipated completion date.

### Civil Service Numbers and Relocation Programme

The Committee was also very interested to learn of your recent visit to the Cabinet Office's second HQ in Glasgow. As you may be aware, the Committee takes a keen interest in the implementation of the Levelling Up White Paper's commitments regarding relocation of civil servants to outside London, as well as the progress of the Government's estates strategy. The Committee would be very interested to visit the Glasgow Hub at some point to gain first-hand experience of how these matters are progressing and to meet with senior officials and Ministers at that location.

Moreover, it has been reported that the plans to cut the size of the Civil Service by 20% by the end of this Parliament announced by the previous Government have been

revised, with a longer timeframe now envisaged. Can you clarify what the Government's current position on reducing the size of the Civil Service is?

### Outcome Delivery Plans

In common with other departments, the Cabinet Office published its first Outcome Delivery Plan in July 2021, to cover the period 2021-22. This superseded its last Single Departmental Plan, which was published in 2019. In its guide to 'The Government's planning and performance framework', published jointly by the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury in June 2021, the Government states that: 'Outcome Delivery Plans are revised annually.'<sup>1</sup> To date the Government has not published any updated plans to cover the period 2022-23. Could you confirm whether the Cabinet Office plans to publish an updated Outcome Delivery Plan for 2022-23, and if so when it intends to do so?

### Cabinet Manual

The Committee have previously raised with the Cabinet Secretary the issue of the need for an updated version of the Cabinet Manual to be produced. He has confirmed that Cabinet Office officials have been working on revising the Cabinet Manual. Could you update the Committee on the progress of this work and confirm that it is your view that the revised Cabinet Manual will need to be provided to the Committee in draft with adequate time for scrutiny before it is finalised?

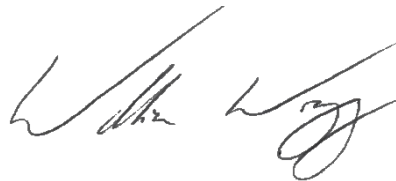
### Other Live Inquiries

Thank you for the cooperation of your Department to date on both the Government Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and the Civil Service People Survey inquiries. The Committee looks forward to taking further evidence on these inquiries, and we expect to take evidence from you and your Ministerial team in due course on both inquiries.

You will also be aware that we have an ongoing inquiry into the Work of the Cabinet Office, and that we have held regular sessions with your predecessors to cover the work of the department alongside the annual report and accounts. We are planning to hold the next of these in mid-December and I would be grateful if you could confirm your agreement in principle to come before the Committee at that time? The Committee Clerk will make the final logistical arrangements with your office in the coming weeks.

I am copying this letter to the Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case, and the Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary and Civil Service Chief Operating Officer, Alex Chisholm.

The Committee looks forward to meeting you soon.



**William Wragg MP**  
**Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee**

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<sup>1</sup> [The government's planning and performance framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-government-s-planning-and-performance-framework)