



CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Chief Operating Officer & Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary

Catherine Little CB
Civil Service Chief Operating Officer
and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary
29 January 2025

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
By email: pubaccomm@parliament.uk

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

MANAGING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

I am writing to you regarding the update on the current status of Recommendation 1 of the *Managing Central Government Property* report (thirty-first report of session 2022–23).

The Committee recommended that the department's new property database should be operational as soon as possible, and that the Cabinet Office should:

1. ensure that it uses the right expertise to advise on the procurement;
2. explore off-the-shelf digital options; and
3. set clear deadlines.

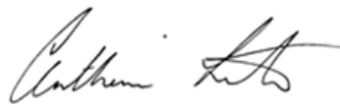
I wrote to the former chair of the committee on 15 May 2024, confirming progress on the recommendations and to also advise of a delay in starting implementation from Spring 2024 to October 2024. This was due to the off-the-shelf technology solution failing to meet the required legal and contractual accessibility requirements. At the time, I noted the risks inherent with the next phase of implementation as this was dependent on achieving a successful technical testing.

The completion of the technology solution, alongside the transition of data, is now forecast to complete by March 2025. The revision to the implementation date had been due to unresolvable issues with the technologies discovered in the technical testing (user acceptance) phase. This issue has necessitated a move away from one of the planned technology products. The change in our approach allows us to maintain progress towards a new property database, albeit with a revised deadline.

I have commissioned work to review the challenges we encountered which contributed to the delay in implementation, with the aim of identifying lessons to be learned to ensure smoother processes in the future.

I will be happy to provide this update to the committee, alongside any further progress, in the next Treasury Minutes Progress Report.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Little'.

Catherine Little CB

Civil Service Chief Operating Officer & Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary

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