



Cabinet Office

Mark Chivers
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Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Cat Little wrote to you on 15 August 2025, following the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 31 March 2025 on the condition of government properties in response to Recommendation 1a of the Committee's Report. This letter responds to Recommendations 2b, 4a and 6 of the Committee's report (Twenty-ninth report of Session 2024–25).

Recommendation 2b: Supporting departments to minimise the risks posed by poor maintenance on their estate, and Recommendation 4a: What has changed to support the longer-term planning of property maintenance

I apologise for the delay in writing on recommendation 4a, which was due in October 2025. This was an administrative oversight.

I am pleased to report that the Office of Government Property has made significant progress in a number of areas working alongside departments, industry bodies and HM Treasury including:

- The Government **confirmed multi-year maintenance settlements** for the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Education, and the Ministry of Justice in the Budget.
- **Developing a maintenance backlog definition and code of practice:** This provides the technical framework necessary for calculating and reporting maintenance backlogs in a consistent and repeatable manner across Government. The code of practice has been developed in consultation with departmental and industry bodies. Pending final technical updates, the code will be made available to the wider government property community via the government's internal property networks by 1 June 2026 and will be published on GOV.UK following a period of test and validation.
- **The Balance sheet framework (BSF):** Following cross departmental consultation HM Treasury has introduced a new Balance Sheet Framework in November 2025. The BSF aims to promote sound asset management strategies, particularly for built assets, by encouraging Departments to base investment decisions on up-to-date data and scenario modelling.



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- Further work is being undertaken between HM Treasury, Cabinet office and NISTA to change incentives that improve strategic asset management approaches across Government, informed by a series of Value for Money studies. This will form part of future guidance over the next year.

Recommendation 6: An update on Cabinet Office's review of the effectiveness of its oversight of government property.

As part of the wider cross-government review of arm's length bodies, Cabinet Office completed in March 2026 a review of the suitability of discharging its operational management responsibilities for the office portfolio by GPA as an arm's length body. Ministers were provided with a range of options and it was concluded that the GPA would continue as an Executive Agency of Cabinet Office acting as the functioning agency undertaking the practical management of the office estate. This will be under the strategic governance of the OGP who will provide strengthened oversight and governance in a sponsorship role. A revised framework document is currently being produced to reflect new arrangements.

As part of normal business, we will continue to identify and address any duplication or inefficiencies across both organisations.

I hope this update gives you further assurance on the progress the government is making in addressing the condition of government properties.

I am copying this letter to the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, and to the Director General for Public Spending.

Mark Chivers, Government Chief Property Officer, Cabinet Office