

Department for Transport (DfT)

Key Statistics

- **total estate running cost** (annual, gross, 2016-17) = £139.9 million
- **holdings** (total) = 9000+
- **staff number** (headcount) = 18,245
- **locations** = London + whole of the UK and overseas

Our Business

DfT provides leadership of the transport sector which helps deliver economic growth whilst promoting environmental and safety improvements. DfT works with national, regional and local bodies and with private sector partners. We work with our agencies and partners to support the transport network that helps the UK economy by enabling people and goods to travel around the country.

DfT is a ministerial department, supported by 19 agencies and public bodies¹.

Our Estate

The diverse nature of the operations of DfT requires the department, its Agencies and Sponsored Bodies to hold a complex range of assets in order to facilitate its business delivery. During 2017-18 the estate comprised over 9,000 holdings.

The main elements of the DfT Estate are:

- DfT(Central): Headquarters - Great Minster House, Ashdown House, Government Car Service, Marine, Air and Rail Accident Investigation Branches (MAIB, AAIB & RAIB);
- Civil Estate Offices: DVLA, DVSA, VCA, Independent Commission for Civil Aviation Noise, Airline Insolvency Review and British Transport Police Authority
- Operational Estate: HS1, HS2, Waterloo International Terminal, MCA, International Maritime Organisation, Transport Focus, Highways England, LCR Ltd, East West Rail Ltd and Network Rail
- Non Core Surplus: Highways England, LCR, NR and Historical Railways Estate
- Peripheral: General Lighthouse Authority, Civil Aviation Authority and Office of Rail and Road

The vast majority of the DfT Estate is now held by devolved Trading Funds or Limited Companies. This means that the Boards of these bodies have financial and business incentives to rationalise their property holdings. The success of this devolved, business driven approach can be seen by the significant reduction in the size and cost of the DfT estate and its increased efficiency in terms of space utilisation. The willingness of DfT Bodies to adopt and embrace new technologies is likely to lead to further cost effectiveness.

DfT is fully engaged with the Cabinet Office on key pan-governmental strategic initiatives such as the Government Estate Strategy, Government Hubs (including the Whitehall

¹ Further information is available at:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-transport-single-departmental-plan/department-for-transport-single-departmental-plan-may-2018>).

campus), the 8 sq.m per FTE challenge, the Government Property Agency (GPA), One Public Estate, Land for Housing and other central initiatives.

Our Capability

The Property Group Operating Model (covering the majority of the Transport family) has a professional capability strand which is being developed to promote the appointment and training of professionally qualified staff (for example members of the RICS). This is especially important in DfT (Central) where the majority of work is not asset management but professional advice and assurance where property helps the delivery of departmental policy, such as HS2, Rail and Roads.

Information on the properties held by the department is recorded on e-PIMS. In broad terms the estate is considered fit for purpose at present, but future requirements are kept under regular review. One of the future changes expected to have an impact on the estate is digitisation. This is expected to have three key impacts: (1) the reduction of the need for storage space in office accommodation; (2) the transfer of some administrative functions to customers (channel shift) such as the completion of application forms for (say) driving licences; and (3) the removal of some functions entirely owing to new technology (for example the driving tax disc is no longer needed on vehicles). All of these reduce the need for property space previously used for those functions. Our previous SAMP mentioned the removal of regional DVLA offices as an example of the impact. DfT expects this process to continue and will take advantage of it to achieve efficiencies.

Network Rail and other companies sponsored by DfT (e.g. London & Continental Railways Ltd and High Speed Two Ltd) are not part of this Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP), although DfT has developed a property governance, assurance, recording and monitoring relationship with them at suitable levels.

A successful element of the department's approach is the devolution to the arms length bodies (ALBs) of estates matters. This means that property requirements are business-led. There has been a substantial reduction in their property portfolio over time, as well as reduced costs. Effective sponsorship of the ALBs is carried out, which ensures estate use is examined through challenge and assurance.