

# Department for Education (DfE)

## Strategic Asset Management Plan - Executive Summary

### **Key Statistics**

Core DfE Sites	Outturn for FY 18/19
Total estate running cost (annual, gross)	£32.4 million
Holdings (number)	13
Floorspace (buildings) sq m	58,000
Land area (ha)	328.9
Staff number (headcount/ FTE)	6,300
Locations	Darlington, Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham, Coventry, Bristol, London Cambridge, Watford, Croydon, Leeds, Gateshead

### **Our Business**

The Department for Education's (DfE) business and vision is to provide:

World-class education, training and care that allows every child and young person to reach his or her potential, regardless of background.

- A more productive economy, fit for purpose; and so, everyone has the chance to reach their potential and live a more fulfilled life

One overarching ambition will focus on places and communities across the country that feel they have been 'left behind', because they have not yet seen the improvement that other parts of the country have already benefited from.

As we strive to achieve our vision, seven principles will guide our work. These principles will help tell the story about our reforms and plans. The principles are cross-cutting rather than focussed on specific phases or programmes:

- Ensure our academic standards match and keep pace with key comparator nations
- Strive to bring our technical education standards to the level of leading nations such as Germany and Japan
- Ensure that education builds character, resilience and well being

We can achieve this through:

- Always remembering that in education and care, by far the most important factor is the people delivering it – so we will strive to recruit, develop and retain the best people
- Prioritising in all we do the people and places left behind, the most disadvantaged
- Protect the autonomy of institutions by intervening only where clear boundaries are crossed
- Make every pound of our funding count

### ***Our Estate***

DfE is a national employer and benefits from the use of a diverse estate across 13 locations. We have reduced our overall occupation and our people cover a collective floor area of over 45,000 square metres across the country operating across six main sites in London, Coventry, Sheffield, Manchester, Darlington, and Nottingham – and smaller satellite sites in Bristol, Cambridge, Croydon, Gateshead, Leeds and Watford.

Our aim is to continue to build on our national presence to enable effective and efficient delivery. We value our people and the benefits of working in modern and flexible workplaces, both in terms of staff wellbeing and productivity.

To support this, we are undertaking a programme of office refurbishment to modernise, and improve, our current estate. This will also help to utilise our space and release any surplus space to improve value for money across the estate.

We aim for all children to be able to access a good school place and learn in a quality, safe environment. As part of this, we are delivering two major school building programmes, aiming to build new free schools and refurbish or rebuild schools in the worst condition across the country. We also provide guidance on pupil place planning, design standards and how to manage school estates. We are also in the process of analysing the condition of the entire school estate through the Condition Data Collection and are providing additional funding to address condition and maintenance in schools across the country.

We fully support the Government Estate Strategy<sup>1</sup> and are working in collaboration with partner organisations including the Office of Government Property and Government Property Agency (GPA). We have actively engaged through a number of activities/initiatives. Examples of this are:

**Places for Growth** – DfE has continued to reduce its London headcount, offset by national growth. We have agreed an ambition of achieving a 50:50 split of SCS roles in and out of London by 2022. We are working with our ALBs to understand what their plans are and how we can support and co-ordinate this activity.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/738217/Government\\_Strategy\\_Final\\_AW\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738217/Government_Strategy_Final_AW_v2.pdf)

**Smarter Working** – Committed to achieving Smarter Working maturity by end 2020. Modernised a number of offices in line with GPA design standards. Initiating refurbishment programme to enable maturity commitment

**Government Hubs** – We have committed to occupy the Bristol hub. We have aligned lease expiry dates to enable DfE to occupy hubs in Nottingham, Leeds and Newcastle.

Two-thirds of our workforce is located outside of London and we have consolidated into one location in London where there are 2,300 roles.

These wider government objectives are at the core of our Departmental Property Strategy where we will:

- Provide estate solutions to support business operations
- Continue to build and buy expert capability to deliver estate priorities
- Make the estate affordable and sustainable
- Modernise the estate to smarter working standards

DfE has made significant savings and space efficiencies while its workforce headcount increases. Smarter Working and better use of space has seen an average of 6.8 sq.m per person, compared to just under 7 sq.m per person in 2018.

Estate costs continue to be reduced through efficiencies and are now under £32m. This includes negotiating a new lease and savings at its London HQ site, Sanctuary Buildings. DfE has also successfully sub-let a building in Coventry and, overall, tenant income has risen since 2017.

DfE provides property services to its Executive Agencies: Standards & Testing Agency (STA); Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The associated costs and metrics are included in DfE reports.

The estate services for their Arm's-Length Bodies (ALBs) are managed and reported on separately. Governance for property reporting is currently under review.

The department works closely with LocatED – an ALB responsible for buying and developing sites in England to help deliver much needed new school places for thousands of children. Its specialist in-house teams provide property expertise to education bodies, local authorities and central government departments to support the provision of education in an efficient school estate.

LocatED manages sites and schools held by the department and free school trusts, that are not in use, to identify and implement enhanced value – it is currently managing c.85 sites. It also disposes of sites that are no longer needed – HMT guidance states sites should be held unused for no longer than three years.

LocatED manage the delivery of complex mixed use developments in support of efficient and cost effective delivery of new schools. School-led mixed use development schemes can make it viable to deliver new schools in dense urban areas, where the cost of land could otherwise be prohibitively high. Capital is generated from the sale of residential dwellings in the mixed use scheme, which subsidises the cost of delivering the new school.

In 2018, LocatED and the DfE's Central Capital Unit launched a small scale pilot to explore how to reconfigure a selection of school properties with surplus buildings or land. The aim is to unlock funds to support additional capital investment in school buildings and, in turn, release land for homes. The pilot looks at areas of England with high or very high housing need, with the potential to include affordable and teacher housing. All projects include improvements to sports facilities and any works will always be the school and landowner's choice.

### ***Our Capability***

DfE will continually invest in our people to develop inclusive, valued and high performing teams empowered by inspiring leaders. We are building on our investment in learning and development by supporting all our people and strengthen our entry level jobs offer with Apprenticeships, Internships and Fast Stream opportunities.

DfE will do this through an established team to support staff in recognition that our people are our most important asset – this team will focus on multiple people challenges and enable the department to become a recognised “employer of choice”.

Our Estates Intelligent Client Function (ICF) has a range of skills and knowledge in property – our capability and resource profile is regularly reviewed and updated in line with business need and aligned to the Civil Service Plan. We are working in partnership with GPA, to further develop the ICF and better align the roles to property career paths.

Currently MOJ Estates Directorate provide capability and staff with recognised qualification relevant to their job role and over 65% of their Directorate are members of the Government Property Profession.

DfE has a large and experienced directorate with responsibility for the school estate and its condition. The directorate consists of approximately 550 staff with a variety of professional backgrounds, including architects, lawyers, surveyors and project managers. Around 70% of these are specialists, with many belonging to one of the Civil Service professions, including the Project Delivery Profession, the Government Commercial Function and the Government Property Profession, among others. Alongside professions, we continue to build the capability of these staff in line with professional standards. In recent years this has included qualifications through the Association for Project Managers (APM), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the International Association for Contract & Commercial Management (IACCM).