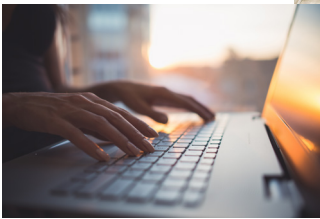
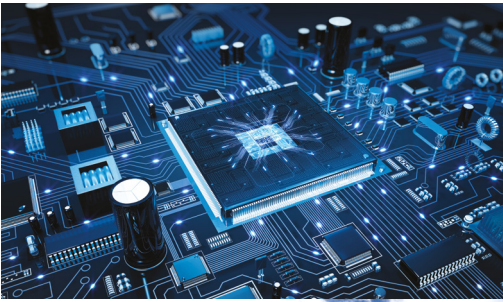




Government  
Legal Department

# Business Plan

## 2024 – 2025



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Government Legal Department, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9GL.



# Foreword

I am pleased to share the Government Legal Department's (GLD) Business Plan for 2024-25. The plan has been agreed by the Executive Committee and endorsed by the Board and the Attorney General.

The legal services that we deliver to government remain vital and are often complex and challenging. We continue to anticipate and respond to a rapidly changing world. We bring our unique skills and legal expertise to all aspects of government policy and delivery in service of our fellow citizens. We support the Law Officers of the Crown in their role as principal legal advisers to the government and work seamlessly with the wider Government Legal Profession and private sector partners to ensure government gets the outstanding legal services it needs. Above all, we are committed to our core purpose of helping the government to govern well, within the rule of law. Over the course of the last year, we have supported a heavy legislative programme, responded to Modules one and two of the Covid-19 Inquiry, participated in the negotiation of new free trade agreements and the Windsor Framework and handled an extensive litigation caseload. We have supported preparations for the Coronation of King Charles III and the response to ongoing international conflicts.



In the face of change and challenge, the constant has been the quality of our service, provided by all professions across our department, to ensure we continue to provide outstanding legal support to the government.

In 2024-25, GLD will continue to play a vital role in supporting government as part of A Modern Civil Service. World events, the government's ambitious agenda, the increasing number of legal challenges and the complexity of domestic and international legal frameworks have led to a significant increase in demand for GLD's legal services. We are in a General Election year and will be ready to respond to any additional challenges that this may bring. We will continue to work with our departmental colleagues to manage the risk of legal challenges and to ensure that our legal services are used effectively and efficiently.

This business plan outlines the range of high-profile and complex legal work that will form our delivery priorities for the coming year. It sets out how we plan to meet the ambitions in our new strategy and play our part in leading on wider government priorities such as Civil Service Modernisation and Reform. We know that we need to be a modern, sustainable, productive and innovative GLD, equipped to respond to a rapidly changing world. We will embrace the opportunities of technology to streamline our processes and deliver excellent legal services in a high-quality working environment. In the year ahead we will continue to look at ways of being more efficient, through continuous improvement, to ensure we continue to provide outstanding value for money for the taxpayer.

With a new strategy and a new business plan, some things do not change – including our enduring culture and Values. Our Values are crucial to achieving our ambitions and I believe they play a central role in what makes us special.

Working together as **Our GLD**, we:

- **value and respect one another**
- take pride in the **high standards** of our service
- embrace **new ideas and collaborate**

I want GLD to continue to be a place where everyone feels welcome – where we support each other whatever our background or role and wherever in the country we work. Diversity and inclusion, including improving social mobility, will continue to be at the heart of my leadership of GLD.

Leading GLD as Treasury Solicitor continues to be a great privilege; I am so proud of the incredible people who work here. I know that together we have the professionalism, commitment and skills to meet the aspirations of this business plan. And in the spirit of continuous improvement we will aim to be better skilled, better resourced, better connected and better known.

Thank you to all my colleagues in GLD who will be crucial in helping us to deliver this business plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susanna J'.

**Susanna McGibbon**

Treasury Solicitor and Permanent Secretary



# Who we are and what we do

GLD's purpose is to help the government to govern well, within the rule of law.

We do this, as the government's trusted legal adviser, by providing, commissioning and assuring the full range of legal services the government requires, according to clear principles that ensure best value for money for the taxpayer. This means we play a crucial role in changing and developing the law to enable key policies and public services to be delivered.

Our Vision is to be an outstanding legal organisation, committed to the highest standards of service and professionalism and a brilliant place to work, where we can all thrive and fulfil our potential.

We are led by the Treasury Solicitor and Permanent Secretary, Susanna McGibbon, and are sponsored by the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General is chief legal adviser to the Crown and has a number of independent public interest functions, as well as overseeing the Law Officers' departments. The Law Officers are accountable to Parliament for the performance of GLD.

GLD teams provide a highly valued perspective and play an essential role in the delivery of the government's plans and supporting the government of the day. Our unique role as lawyers and civil servants enables the department to bring to bear our cross-cutting knowledge and insight into government policies, ministerial priorities and the functioning of Parliament. This is underpinned by strong relationships with the departments we work with.

GLD is an inherently agile and responsive department, able to sustain high-quality services throughout periods of change. Whether during machinery of government change, negotiation of new free trade agreements, provision of support to inquiries, or through fast emerging challenges such as the recent conflict in Gaza, GLD is able to deploy the full spectrum of our legal capabilities where they are required, at sustained pace and quality. And ultimately delivering much more than law through the impact of our work.

In the year ahead, we will be working on an extensive programme of policies and legislation, helping ministers and departments to deliver their priorities for citizens. We will also be poised to respond to new priorities and events.

# Our legal priorities for 2024-25

Our work covers a wide range of high-profile and complex legal issues that will form our delivery priorities for the coming year, which we have set out by directorate. Business priorities for this year will reflect that we are in a General Election year. We will be delivering on the current priorities for government up to the election period and then will adjust as needed following the election. We will also be advising on and delivering legal services in relation to the election itself.

Priorities for this year are as follows:

## **Employment with Economic Recovery and UK Governance Directorate** will

- implement the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and take legislation through Parliament to reform renting and home ownership, make legislation to allow automated vehicles to operate safely on UK roads and reform train operations with the creation of a single entity 'Great British Railways'
- support the design of a new Advanced British Standard educational qualification and reform of Children's Social Care, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and childcare entitlements

- advise on the delivery of a reliable, high-quality welfare and pensions system in which customers have confidence and which maximises employment across the country
- support a high-quality and sustainable NHS, including through legislation for a smoke-free generation and reformed regulation of health care professionals
- represent the government in employment litigation and advise it on its employment relationships and in relation to cross-cutting industrial relations matters and equalities issues

## **Commercial with Trade and International Directorate** will

- work across GLD and government to support the negotiation of an ambitious programme of free trade agreements, helping to generate economic growth for UK business and reduce costs to the consumer
- lead the programme of work for implementing Retained EU law legislation (now "assimilated law") in cross-cutting collaboration across the Government Legal Profession

# GLD Strategy 2024-27: Delivering much more than law

- increase energy reliability by leveraging investment in clean technologies, tackling climate change and reducing UK greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, while improving the environment through cleaner air and water, increasing the sustainability and resilience of the agriculture, fishing and food sectors, enhancing biosecurity at the border and raising animal welfare standards
- with the Ministry of Justice Legal Advisers, support and implement legislation to address the unsafe conviction of postmasters as a result of the Horizon scandal and ensure prompt compensation
- support passage of significant legislation including the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill, Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill, Media Bill and the Football Governance Bill
- support the government's response to the growth of artificial intelligence (AI)
- work on the policy development and enforcement of financial sanctions
- with Cabinet Office Legal Advisers support other GLD teams and departments to implement the Procurement Act 2023

## Litigation with Justice and Security Directorate will

- represent the government in high-profile litigation and inquiries such as the Covid-19 Inquiry, Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan, Grenfell Tower Inquiry and Thirlwall Inquiry. Implement recommendations from the Infected Blood Inquiry
- deliver complex and urgent statutory instruments (SIs) via our expert SI Hub, including in support of the General Election
- implement the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and the partnership with Rwanda so that we have safe and legal routes to the UK
- support UK military and international coalition requirements in relation to Ukraine, Gaza and the Middle East
- implement and support the Windsor Framework Agreement and work closely with the devolved institutions, in particular in Wales and Northern Ireland
- implement large scale reforms to procurement law following the successful passage of the Procurement Act 2023
- deliver the Criminal Justice Bill, the Sentencing Bill and the Victims and Prisoners Bill
- support digitisation of the civil court system and reforms to civil legal aid

At the start of 2024 we published a new departmental [strategy](#). This strategy sets out how we will achieve our vision to be an outstanding legal organisation, committed to the highest standards of service and professionalism and a brilliant place to work, where we can all thrive and fulfil our potential. And in doing so we will – as we have set out in the range of legal issues we will be actively working on this coming year – deliver much more than just law through the real-world impact of our work.

Our strategy is built around 3 strategic ambitions: Becoming A National GLD, Rewarding Careers for All and An Environment Fit for the Future. These ambitions align to the Civil Service's "[Shaping our Future](#)" plan and the [Modernisation and Reform Programme](#). It represents how GLD will contribute to the 5 missions of Civil Service Reform: Place, Capability, Digital and Data, Innovation and Delivery. Our new strategy is also a blueprint for ensuring our organisation continues to be ever more productive and offer value for money for the taxpayer. This is why effectiveness and efficiency are cross-cutting themes within our strategy, with our initiatives requiring financial investment offering the potential for improvements in service delivery, productivity and impact.

# Business Plan 2024-25 priorities

This plan sets out below the work we will do under our 3 strategic ambitions. Many of the things we intend to deliver will contribute to more than one ambition: their placement reflects the closest fit and they are aligned with how they will be governed.

In 'Year 1' of executing the new strategy, we will be focusing on priority work and work which is foundational to delivering the ambition we have over the life of the strategy. Much of the work planned is exploratory in nature and will help us develop firmer plans for the future over the course of this year.

The delivery of our new strategy relies heavily on cross-functional professions within the Chief Operating Officer Group: they have a critical part to play in enabling our legal services to be delivered effectively and efficiently.

## Becoming A National GLD

We are a vibrant, inclusive and integrated GLD that is influential and respected in government and beyond. Our closely connected, state-of-the-art offices, across the country, enable our people in all our diverse roles and professions, at all levels, to contribute to our success. In all our locations, we reflect the communities we serve and are recognised as leaders in the legal community.

What success looks like:

- 1 Our national estate, in London, Salford, Leeds and Bristol, provides our people with modern, flexible offices so that we all experience the benefits of efficient in-person working and virtually any role within GLD, at any level, can be performed successfully from any of our locations.
- 2 Colleagues feel part of multiple teams locally and nationally, with an 'Our GLD' culture common across all our national offices.
- 3 Our technology supports seamless hybrid working, smoothly connecting our people with each other, clients and stakeholders, wherever they are working.



## A National GLD

- 4 We are recognised leaders in all our locations, with strong relationships in the neighbouring legal profession and with local schools, colleges and universities, so that they understand the unique value of our work and the range of excellent career opportunities we provide.
  - 5 Our active nationwide recruitment achieves a vibrant, dynamic and diverse culture.
- We have a National GLD delivery programme already in place and this programme is expected to run for the life of the strategy.

### Priorities for 2024-25

#### Places for Growth

We will continue to relocate and fill roles outside London, reducing our London footprint and growing nationally to meet our targets.

#### Hybrid working

We will implement our hybrid working policy for our staff, to increase learning and collaboration alongside our vibrant office culture.

#### London accommodation

We will agree our future office accommodation in London, including initial preparations for any required office moves from our current estate.

#### Bristol relocation

We will prepare to relocate existing staff from our Rivergate office to our new office in Temple Quay in July 2025.



# Rewarding Careers for All

## Rewarding Careers for All

Colleagues across GLD understand clearly how they contribute to our Purpose, Vision and Values. They feel valued and respected and have a clear and accessible career pathway which supports them to progress within their chosen professions and specialisms. We attract and retain sufficient talent across many Civil Service professions including the law, maintain our high standards and provide colleagues with an attractive work-life balance in a diverse and inclusive community.

What success looks like:

- 6 We champion our unique role at the heart of government, highlighting the real impact of everything we do in service of our fellow citizens.
- 7 The ‘Our GLD’ culture fosters an inclusive, integrated community with a sense of belonging and a commitment to high standards and collaboration, irrespective of location or profession, where people are empowered to progress and thrive within GLD and beyond, supported by clear career frameworks.

- 8 We invest in high-quality learning opportunities and excellent management and leadership development, to build a diverse cohort of highly skilled professionals and inspiring leaders, including Senior Civil Service, based in all our locations.
- 9 We maximise our reward and recognition opportunities and improve our visibility in the national job market with a new Employee Value Proposition and enhanced media and communications, so that our people feel valued and have pride in themselves and their work, and we attract and retain the right number and quality of staff.
- 10 We use private sector partners strategically, with clear sourcing principles which ensure that we develop and cherish the unique experience and skills of GLD lawyers.

The Pay and Reward Modernisation (PARM) project that introduced capability-based pay for our grade 6 and grade 7 lawyers in 2023-24 will soon complete. This year we will undertake a number of important initiatives in support of our Rewarding Careers for All strategic ambition. Diversity and inclusion will continue to be central to all we want to achieve and will be core to our evaluation of success across GLD.

## Priorities for 2024-25

### Capability-based pay – Year 2 payment

We will implement the second year pay uplift for our grade 6 and 7 lawyers that was agreed in our Pay Business Case to Cabinet Office. The average increase in each of the 2 years is 7.8%.

### Refresh our People Strategy

We will develop and publish a new GLD People Strategy to reflect the new [GLD Strategy 2024-27](#), as well as the Government People Plan and Civil Service Modernisation and Reform.

We will continue to deliver our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

### Leadership development

We will continue to invest in and build our shared leadership capability, including undertaking an assessment of leadership development needs and the investment required to ensure that our leaders are fully equipped to drive delivery of GLD’s work and strategic ambitions.

### Improve the Legal Learning Framework

We will update our Legal Learning Framework training materials and pathways and introduce new legal practice skills training to equip our lawyers to meet the changing needs of the legal profession.

### Early Talent

We will continue to grow and improve our approach to Early Talent, which refers to our talent cohorts of legal trainees, apprentices and paralegals. We will continue to refine and target our approach to outreach. We will increase organisational agility and expand/grow our talent pipelines.

### Capability and development needs

We will develop and publish career pathways for legal and cross-functional professionals and revisit our development offer for lawyers. This will enable better alignment to business needs and incorporate data we have now on legal capability strengths and areas for development.





# Environment Fit for the Future

## An Environment Fit for the Future

We are a modern, sustainable and innovative GLD, equipped to respond to a rapidly changing world. We embrace the opportunities of technology to streamline our processes and deliver excellent legal services in a high-quality working environment. We are committed to continuous improvement ensuring outstanding value for money for the taxpayer.

What success looks like:

- 11 We are proactive and strategic about how we deliver our legal services, including the unique value GLD brings, and how and when we use external legal professionals and technology.
- 12 Our structures and processes are responsive and adaptive, so that we anticipate and meet changing priorities in the most cost-effective way.
- 13 We invest in state-of-the-art technology, including AI, and our people have access to excellent, modern digital tools, which they use confidently to deliver high-quality services efficiently and smoothly.

- 14 Our data strategy delivers comprehensive, accurate and relevant cloud-based data, supporting evidence-based business decisions with measurable impact.
- 15 We meet enhanced sustainability targets, achieving our commitment to reduce emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050.

The focus of our projects and initiatives under this strategic ambition is to improve our systems, processes and data in ways that support legal colleagues to carry out their work and to enable the organisation to operate more efficiently and sustainably. We will also consider the way we organise our work and operate as an organisation in order to ensure we provide the best value for money and to enable us to achieve our strategic ambitions. This year we will undertake a number of important and complex projects that support our An Environment Fit for the Future strategic ambition.

## Priorities for 2024-25

### Strategic sourcing

We will implement our strategic approach to outsourcing legal work and retaining the unique career offer that attracts talented and motivated people to GLD.

### Legal Panel for Government

We will collaborate with the Crown Commercial Service to procure legal panels which will provide us with the right service at the right price in the right location.

### Legal Practice Management

We will invest in the Legal Practice Management project to reduce effort in case management, potentially through AI and automation. This will ensure we have the most productive and effective Legal Practice Management capability by joining all legal matter management across GLD.

### Information-sharing

**LION** – We will improve the stability of our system for cross-government information-sharing, providing a better user experience.

**AI** – We will explore emerging AI solutions to improve how we deliver our legal services and continue to improve our organisational knowledge and awareness about the opportunities presented by the new technology.

**Eagle** – We will upgrade GLD’s intranet, introducing improved functionality to make it more accessible for our users.

We will embed the use of Microsoft Office 365 both internally and collaboratively with our clients (to be achieved by following Cabinet Office guidance) and actively participate in the Central Digital and Data Office Cross Government Interoperability Programme.

**Single identity discovery (interoperability)** – We will undertake work to understand how we could introduce a single GLD user account for colleagues in co-located teams whilst still working effectively with our client departments. This would ensure our lawyers can work collaboratively across government, maintaining both an identify in their client department as well as within GLD.

We will continue to improve the understanding and exploitation of data within A Modern Civil Service.

### Sustainability

In line with our Greener Litigation Pledge to reduce the use of paper, we will work with litigation teams to reduce paper holdings significantly by April 2025.

We will review our policies to ensure that we have sustainability objectives where possible (IT investment, accommodation and procurement).

We will establish clear methodology for measuring GLD’s sustainability targets and use it to produce clear baseline data against which to measure and report from April 2025.

### Investing in resilience

We will invest in our IT resilience to transition away from costly, unsupported legacy systems (for example re-platforming systems to Microsoft 365).



# How we are structured

The majority of our employees (around 2,500) are lawyers. The remainder of the workforce are paralegals, business management and cross-functional professionals required to support the operation of the organisation and delivery of change.

For more information about our structure, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).



## The Executive Committee

Top row left to right: **Susanna McGibbon**, Permanent Secretary, Treasury Solicitor and Chief Executive of GLD; **Sarah Goom**, Director General, Commercial with Trade and International; **Caroline Croft**, Director General, Employment with Economic Recovery and UK Governance; **Mel Nebhrajani CB**, Director General, Litigation with Justice and Security.

Second row left to right: **Richard Cornish**, Chief Operating Officer; **Carmel Thornton**, Finance, Operations and Digital Director; **Damian Paterson**, Strategy, People and Culture Director.

# Our resources

We plan to use the following number of people to deliver our business plan this year:

	Full time equivalent
Advisory divisions	1,699
Litigation Group	735
Commercial Law Group	244
Employment Group	167
Legal trainees	83
Bona Vacantia	46
Corporate and central services staff	404
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>3,378</b>

We operate with a balanced budget and plan to spend circa £332m (net), broken down as follows:

	£'000
Staff costs	286,850
Other operating costs	2,435
Accommodation (net of income)	15,418
Depreciation	3,200
Project delivery and assurance	2,803
ICT maintenance and network	10,582
Training	2,954
LION (net of income)	2,210
Other administration costs	5,354
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<b>331,806</b>
Net disbursements	200
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>332,007</b>

These costs will be funded by:

	£'000
Legal fees and charges to clients	326,642
Recovery of the cost of Bona Vacantia	4,965
Funding from the Parliamentary Estimate	400
<b>Total income</b>	<b>332,007</b>

# Governance of business plan delivery

Some priorities within the business plan will receive Project Delivery Team support. Others will not require it. Our delivery progress is monitored by a relevant sub-committee or project delivery board and reported quarterly to the Executive Committee by GLD's portfolio office. GLD has an ambition to improve its performance monitoring and analysis capability. Our financial performance and management of risk will be monitored closely by the Executive Committee and the Board throughout the year. A number of risks have been identified, specific to delivery of this year's business plan, and will be overseen by the relevant risk owners.

We have proposed a performance framework for evaluating the Strategy 2024-27. This will enable us to report progress towards the delivery of our strategy to the Executive Committee and Board.







The Board is chaired by the Lead Non-Executive Director (Rt Hon Dame Janet Paraskeva) and is made up of 3 NEDs (Tim Fallowfield OBE and Mike Green in addition to Dame Janet), the Permanent Secretary, Chief Operating Officer, Finance, Operations and Digital Director, and the Director General of the Attorney General's Office (Doug Wilson OBE).

The Executive Committee (pictured on page 13) is chaired by Susanna McGibbon, GLD's Permanent Secretary, Treasury Solicitor and Chief Executive, and is made up of GLD's Executive Team: the 3 legal directors general, Chief Operating Officer, Finance, Operations and Digital Director, and Strategy, People and Culture Director.

The Board is advisory and the Executive Committee is the ultimate decision-making body.

# Business plan on a page

The table shows how the business plan priorities are grouped together for governance purposes and that many will be delivering against more than one ambition.

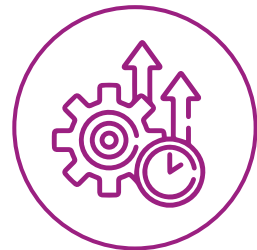
Business plan priority		Which ambitions does this target?		
		 A National GLD	 Rewarding Careers for All	 Environment Fit for the Future
 A National GLD	Places for Growth	✓	✓	✓
	Hybrid working	✓	✓	✓
	London accommodation	✓	✓	✓
	Bristol relocation	✓	✓	✓
 Rewarding Careers for All	Capability-based pay – Year 2 payment	✗	✓	✗
	Refresh our People Strategy	✓	✓	✓
	Leadership development	✓	✓	✓
	Improve the Legal Learning Framework	✗	✓	✓
	Early Talent	✓	✓	✓
	Capability and development needs	✗	✓	✓
 Environment Fit for the Future	Strategic sourcing	✗	✓	✓
	Legal Panel for Government	✗	✗	✓
	Legal Practice Management	✗	✗	✓
	Information-sharing	✗	✓	✓
	Sustainability	✗	✗	✓
	Investing in resilience	✗	✗	✓



A National  
GLD



Rewarding  
Careers for All



Environment  
Fit for the Future