

# REALISING STRATEGIC GOALS THROUGH EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

*“With so many different targets, reports and drivers it is all too easy for a Department to respond to individual drivers rather than adopt a holistic approach. Real improvement in sustainable operations will only be delivered if it becomes part of overall business planning.”*

Sustainability Planning is currently in many departments confined to the facilities Management and estates teams in charge of new builds and refurbishments, and the day to day running of the estate. However, for maximum impact the overall business plan needs to be informed by sustainable initiatives.

## The starting point is strategic asset management

The way front line government services - indeed all Public Sector services - are delivered is changing. The estate of today and the business practices of today will not be necessarily the best fit for the business in five, ten or fifteen years.

Government Departments should start with a review of their real business needs as if they had a blank sheet of paper. The first stage is to confirm the long-term asset strategy, the workforce strategy and the change management agenda. The solution in terms of the built environment and the

support services needs can then be crystallised into an ‘ideal’ specification.

The challenge then is to produce a best value route from where a Department is to where the ideal says it should be. Different scenarios give rise to different optimum solutions.

## Sustainability within an existing estate

Where options are limited to staying within existing buildings, property footprints and locations, then sustainability options can be greatly enhanced by planning them into an overall property strategy.

Refurbishments and alterations can be planned with a simple sustainability checklist that applies to all works. Best practice construction methods can reduce building waste and maximise the use of sustainable resources, and the move to long term life cycle costing as opposed to lowest capital cost allows ‘spend to save’ investment in terms of plant and equipment.

And ultimately, assuming a Department hits its High Performing Property targets, there will be an automatic reduction in carbon footprint as the space per employee is reduced.

### Sustainability within a Departmental family

Increasingly, Departments whose 'family' includes Arms Length Bodies are looking at shared accommodation and services, co-locations and property hubs as opposed to individual property strategies.

As well as economies of scale, managing a sustainable regime across a whole family can deliver greater benefits than a myriad of small individual programmes

### Sustainability in long term property rationalisation programmes

'London centric' Central Government property portfolios - as the Lyons Report called them - will continue to decline. There will always be a need for Civil Service support for Ministers and policy decision makers to be located close to the seat of Government in Whitehall, but increasingly, transactional business will be carried out in cheaper locations.

In choosing new buildings, new leases, Departments will have to insist on BREEAM ratings and energy efficient buildings as part of Treasury investment approval procedures. Currently, the Central Government covenant is extremely attractive to private sector developers and there will be more of the purpose built 'Government Parks' that are appearing. Departments will be able to insist on accommodation meeting exacting standards and not expect to pay a premium.

### But how sustainable is the Central Government Estate in principle?

As Government becomes more joined up, as front line service delivery gets closer to the end user, and as the Varney agenda of shared services begins to have an effect - just how sustainable is the very idea of a large Central Government estate?

If business planning is truly looking to deliver the Varney ideals - just how much Central Government property will be surplus to real needs - and therefore simply not sustainable in the very simplest meaning of the word?

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