

Boosting public sector productivity

One of the areas that could free some cash, curb costs and improve working in the civil service and quangos is the property estate.

Now that many officials wish to work from home for much of the week, there could be less office space with hot desking. Now that government and Unions are firmly committed to improved insulation and reduced heating and air conditioning bills in offices there needs to be more modern space. As many officials dislike travelling into large city centres, especially London, given the inconvenience and cost the government needs more modern office space away from these high cost locations.

The government should keep the heritage buildings like Downing Street, the Foreign Office and Treasury. The rest of the central London estate should be reviewed with plans to move early to replace them or to do so as leases expire. Rents are much lower as little as 20 miles out of London. There are better modern offices with lower fuel bills, higher standards of accommodation and better working space for people available at much lower rents.

If the government is serious about net zero it has to show by example how a major reform of its offices estate could both lower carbon emissions and cut taxpayer bills.