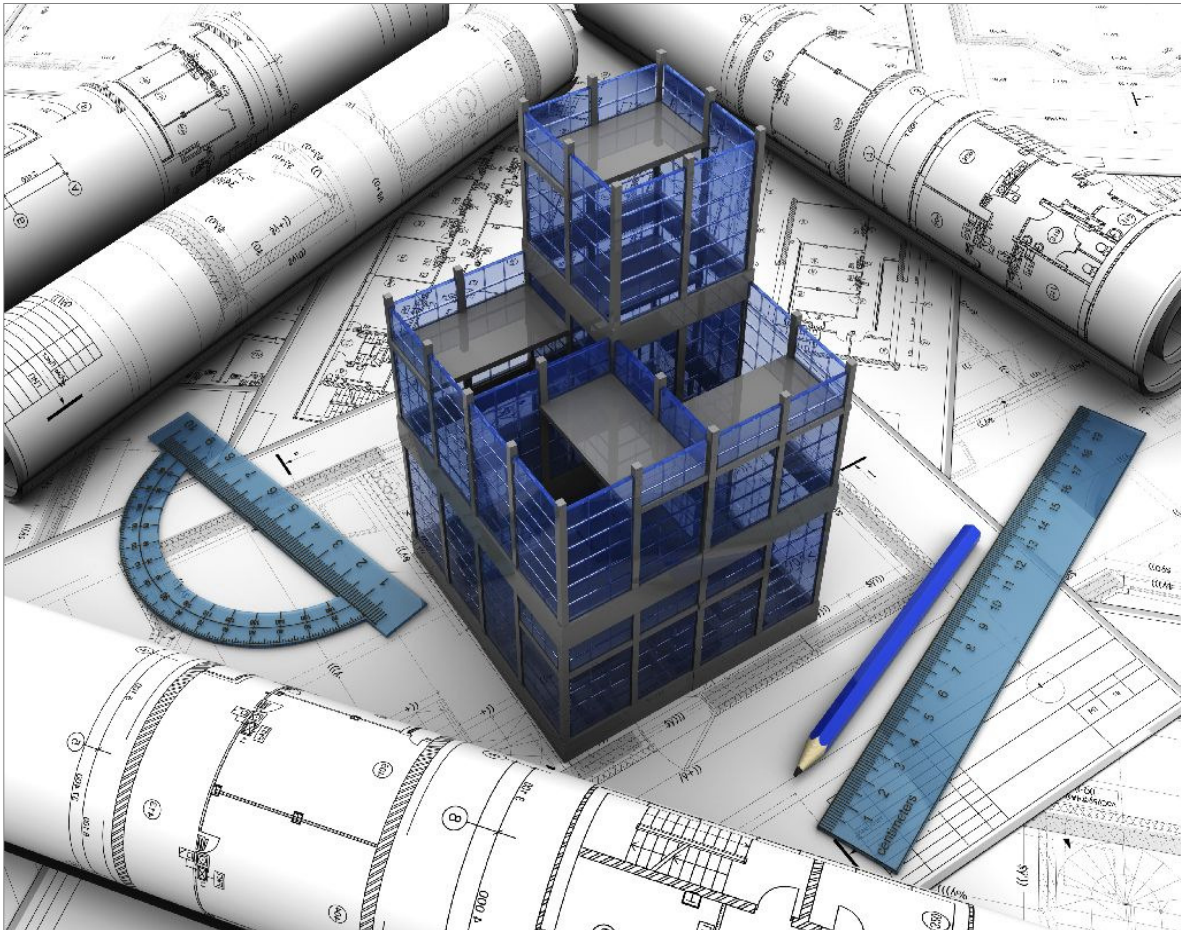


*'Accommodating Change – Measuring Success'*  
**Property Asset Management Delivery Plan**

*30 July 2013*



# *‘Accommodating Change – Measuring Success’*

## **Property Asset Management Delivery Plan**

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## OVERVIEW

### *'Accommodating Change – Measuring Success'*

The Government's programme of public service reform is driving fundamental change to the way the State delivers its services to the public. The Government's Reform Plan sets out commitments relating to Property Asset Management to drive public service-wide efficiency and ensure that optimal value for money is achieved in the management of the State's property portfolio.

The rationalisation of State bodies, the use of online services and the reduction in public service numbers over the past few years have resulted in a focus on changing business practices combined with reduced property requirements. These developments require a multi-faceted adjustment to the management of the State's property portfolio to consolidate operational locations consistent with service delivery and review public service accommodation policies particularly in relation to space norms, open plan accommodation and maximising energy efficiency.

The Chairman of the Office of Public Works is the appointed Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) assigned to lead the development and implementation of a Property Management Delivery Plan which will *"incorporate strategies for shifting the focus of property managers in the Public Service from management solely of their own property portfolio, towards a strategic view of their property as part of the wider State property portfolio"* (Public Service Reform Plan, November 2011). The SRO chairs the Steering Group on Property Asset Management which is the forum through which the wider public service has been working collaboratively to bring a 'whole of Government' perspective to managing the State's property portfolio.

The Plan aims to improve the planning and management of the public service property portfolio in Ireland by improving co-ordination of strategies and activities, processes for strategic planning, projects and property management, standards for accommodation fit-out and data capture, accountability for decision making and deployment of resources. This is an ambitious programme that springs from the recommendations in the Government's Public Service Reform Plan of November 2011 section 6.1 (<http://per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Public-Service-Reform-pdf>). The premise is that efficiencies can be achieved by adopting a more strategic and standardised approach to property asset management. The scope of data collection, reporting, benchmarking performance and setting standards is significant and will require flexibility in terms of prioritising resources within the OPW and other property holding organisations.

Successful asset management requires a long-term perspective, vision and leadership to optimise the benefits to be gained from rationalisation and sharing expensive and scarce resources on a national level. In future, State property managers will be required to operate in a strategic way to identify opportunities for asset sharing beyond their individual Department's needs.



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Minister of State for  
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Office of Public Works

## 1: CURRENT POSITION AND FUTURE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this plan is to set out a series of actions aimed at improving the planning and management of the public service property portfolio through improved co-ordination, processes, standards and accountability.

### **1.1 Public Service Property Management**

The global economic crisis has focused the attention of public authorities on generating efficiencies in public services. Specifically, attention has focused on generating savings in the current public property portfolio through rationalisation programmes, lease surrenders, sales of surplus State-owned assets and making property management efficiencies (including facilities management) as integral to cost reduction strategies.

In 2012, Deloitte undertook a real estate study of UK public sector leaders and identified key strategies to achieve greater property asset efficiencies. Deloitte acknowledged that austerity measures have been exerting pressure on Governments to adopt bolder approaches through greater collaboration across public services, smarter utilisation of floor space, more flexible working and a fundamental reshaping of how public sector assets are utilised.

### **1.2 Property Management - the current situation in the Irish Public Service**

The current approach to property management is individual to each State organisation legally permitted to hold property. Different legal frameworks set out the governance arrangements that are specific to each organisation e.g. Local Government Acts, Health Acts and the State Property Act 1954, among others. As a consequence, there are variances in valuing and recording property assets in asset registers, albeit in accordance with the Public Financial Procedures. Obviously, interaction among the main property stakeholders is evident from the range of property asset transfers that have occurred in the past and the ongoing engagement in recent years.

However, Government policy on Property Asset Management and contraction in overall public service numbers have increased the need for much greater flexibility in terms of matching property requirements to changing service delivery systems e.g. one-stop shops, online services and accommodation sharing.

In light of these developments, the State has had to shift its focus completely, from one of expanding the portfolio to meet increasing demands, to addressing the Government policy of property rationalisation and reduced demand for office space. The Steering Group acknowledge that greater efficiencies can be achieved by adopting a more strategic and standardised approach to property asset management.

### **1.3 Property Related Reform Programme**

In Ireland, the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes, which published its report (McCarthy Report) in July 2009, examined the area of public property asset management. The Government's Public Service Reform Plan, November 2011, building on the findings of the McCarthy Report, sets out commitments relating to Property Asset Management which are aimed at driving public service-wide efficiency in property management and ensuring that optimal value for money is achieved in the management of the State's property portfolio.

### **1.4 Government Decision on Property Asset Management**

In addition to the Reform Plan commitments, the Government on 18 December, 2012 agreed, *inter alia*, that the Steering Group on Property Asset Management should prepare a delivery plan setting out the detailed arrangements necessary for implementation of the property reform agenda.

### **1.5 Terms of Reference of the Steering Group**

In 2012, the SRO established the Steering Group on Property Asset Management, drawn from public service property stakeholders, to develop a property management plan and, in that context, to promote greater

efficiencies with a particular focus on office accommodation. A Subgroup was established to examine potential arrangements in relation to intra public service property asset sharing and transfer. Initially the work of the Steering Group focussed on public service office accommodation. The Terms of Reference and membership of the Steering Group and the Subgroup are set out at Appendix A.

### ***1.6 Scope of the Plan***

The scope of this Delivery Plan is primarily determined by the actions set out in the Government's Public Service Reform Plan and subsequent Government decision. This Plan seeks to address relevant common issues for public service property managers in order to streamline processes in managing the State's property assets.

### ***1.7 Size and composition of the portfolio***

The composition of the State's property portfolio ranges from heritage properties to third generation office accommodation. The portfolio is a combination of State-owned properties and properties leased for the use of public service. The majority of Government Departments, the Local Authorities, the Health Service Executive and the Education sector hold a mixture of operational, both owned and leased, and Heritage Assets. It should be noted that there are deficiencies in the recorded property asset related information across the civil and public service. This presents difficulties in establishing an accurate baseline position and highlights inconsistencies in property related data collection. The development of baseline data is required both to address these difficulties and to identify future reporting obligations on the State's portfolio.

#### ***1.7.1 Savings to date***

Given the relatively illiquid nature of property assets and the long lead times required for most acquisitions and disposals, there is a time lag between reduced space demands and the disposal of surplus space. This is particularly pertinent to the current poor market conditions.

The Office of Public Works has achieved savings in annual rent every year since 2009 through a targeted lease rationalisation programme, and targeted rent review negotiations - reducing both the annual rental bill and the office property footprint occupied by the civil service. Rationalisation, combined with rent reductions achieved at rent reviews and renewals, has yielded ongoing annual savings of almost €30m, or almost 20%, since 2009. The rationalisation programme will continue in 2013 and further surrenders of office space are planned, combined with modernisation of existing State property. Government Departments and other major public bodies have instigated initiatives to reduce the annual rental bill, in tandem with a reduction in the overall property footprint occupied by the public service. These programmes are being achieved through surrenders of leasehold property (where circumstances arise/permit) linked to the greater use of property sharing and will include a programme of disposals of properties identified as surplus.

### ***1.8 Outline of actions proposed***

The Steering Group on Property Asset Management examined the main issues for public service property holders and recommended how these issues will be addressed through a series of coordinated actions. The Group considered how the planned changes may be implemented without a significant impact on the ongoing service delivery of public bodies. In future, State property managers will be required to operate in a strategic way to identify opportunities for asset sharing beyond their individual Department's needs.

Adopting a more strategic approach to managing the State's property portfolio will require the following actions:

#### ***(i) Governance***

Strong governance is vital to effective implementation of change and to sustain the reforms being put in place. The aim is to establish a process that involves the main public property stakeholders committed to applying standards that minimise costs to the State. The Steering Group on Property Asset Management,



led by the OPW, will provide oversight and monitoring of the implementation of the Government's programme of reforms and the actions outlined in this Delivery Plan.

Future structural arrangements will include:

- the SRO and the Steering Group;
- a Property Managers Network;
- the determination of and reporting on standards for property performance;
- sectoral monitoring and reporting.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *Public property holders will nominate representatives to a Property Managers Network led by the OPW (including Departmental property professionals) (Target date Q3 2013)*
- *The OPW will provide regular reports on progressing the implementation of the reform recommendations (Ongoing)*

***(ii) Business Planning and Common Strategies.***

The introduction of corporate property plans is intended to raise awareness at a corporate level to encourage the public sector partners to adopt a more strategic approach to property asset management, both within and across departments and other bodies. In accordance with the Government Decision of 18 December 2012, Departments/Offices must take into account any future property implications alongside rationalisation or service provision requirements in their Strategy Statements and Business Plans.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW in consultation with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will prepare a template for Departments/Offices to use in preparing the property-related section of their future Strategy Statements/Business Plans to facilitate strategic planning (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *The OPW will assess office accommodation requirements for the Civil Service, as set out in Strategy Statements, and make recommendations on future property requirements, in conjunction with sectoral stakeholders (Ongoing)*

***(iii) Communications Strategy***

A number of the actions contained in this Plan will form the foundation for effective communication. The continuation of the Steering Group, the introduction of the mapping and the development of a Property Managers Network, combined with protocols on asset sharing and transfer, etc all form part of an intra public service communications strategy.

An effective communications strategy among the main stakeholders will inform acquisitions, disposals, rent reviews and will improve decision-making and generate greater efficiencies. It will also provide the basis for sharing of limited professional resources in this area.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW in consultation with other public property holders will develop a communications strategy around the phased implementation of the property asset management reform actions (Target date Q4 2013)*

*The Strategy will include: identified stakeholders; responsibilities; promoting the reform agenda; implementation phase; the process through which information on the reform agenda will be conveyed; risks and mitigating actions.*

***(iv) Adopting ISEN 15221 Standard for Facility Management***

Data collection and management are critical to property performance measurement, facilitating procurement savings and benchmarking. Establishing an accurate baseline position across the State's

current property portfolio has not been possible because of inconsistencies in terms of the methods of measurement and collection of data. The introduction of the ISEN 15221 Facility Management suite of European standards will provide a consistent, standard method for data collection, benchmarking analysis and reporting on performance of property assets. The key performance indicators (KPIs) will reflect space utilisation, cost and energy usage.

The OPW will work closely with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) on all issues relating to facility management contracts. In procuring facilities management and maintenance, the OPW is conscious of the need to maintain accurate data on category expenditure and to share this information, as appropriate, with other contracting authorities. Significant efficiencies can be extracted for the benefit of the Exchequer through optimising procurement aggregation in property related purchasing.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *Public property holders will implement the ISEN 15221 standard on a phased basis. Relevant Departments are to ensure that the standard is adopted across their areas of responsibility. The Standard will define financial, spatial and environmental KPIs to assess asset performance (Target date Q4 2013)\**
- *The OPW will produce a baseline report on the current position in relation to the State's Civil Service office accommodation portfolio, to enable trend analysis (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *The OPW will engage with the OGP on their facilities management contracts and the relevant service level agreement sections of the ISEN Standard (Target date Q4 2013)*

*\* subject to stakeholder engagement*

#### ***(v) Implementing the web-based mapping register***

This will provide a communications mechanism for sharing public service property-related information across the public service. The information required for each property has been defined and will facilitate communication and improved decision-making.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW will complete the development of a prototype of the web-mapping register populated initially with OPW property data (Target date Q2 2013)*
- *The OPW in consultation with other property holders will prepare a phased implementation plan to capture the required data from other public bodies (Target date Q3 2013)*
- *The OPW will facilitate public property holders in:*
  - *their assessment of the information and processes involved in the mapping application (Target date Q3 2013), and*
  - *identifying contacts and/or technical representatives responsible for populating the map (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *Public property holders will undertake a process of data validation (prioritising office accommodation) in accordance with the data attributes required for the mapping application (Target date Q2 2014)\**

*\*subject to stakeholder engagement and estimated volume of work*

#### ***(vi) Standardising (i) property asset transfer and (ii) property asset sharing arrangements***

The Subgroup on Asset Sharing/Transfer has agreed to the introduction of co-ordination protocols to standardise arrangements for intra public service property asset sharing and transfer. Effective communication is a key element in the process. The protocols relate primarily to office accommodation, but will be extended to other property types in the longer term. This coordinated and agreed intra public service approach has already been effective in negotiating the acquisition of accommodation for the Government's INTREO programme within the wider State property portfolio.

Property Asset sharing is the utilisation of existing assets by two or more State bodies. However, there are a range of issues to be considered here vis-à-vis security, I.T., tenure and potential cost implications for individual bodies.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The Chief State Solicitor's Office in consultation with public property holders will draft and circulate agreed set of standard protocols (and/or statutory declaration, where appropriate) for intra public service property asset transfer and sharing (Ongoing)*
- *The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will communicate the standard protocols across the public service by way of Departmental circulars (Target date subject to above)*
- *Agreed valuation methodology will be developed as part of the asset transfer policy. This may include the use of a single independent valuer (instead of each party hiring their own valuer) (Target date Q1 2014)*

***(vii) Streamlining legal administration***

Currently many leases have covenants that restrict flexibility on the use of properties, potentially limiting sharing or precipitating additional costs in implementing change. Similarly, clauses in leases tend to be unnecessarily varied causing confusion to both landlords and tenants. Developing standard clauses for insertion in leases should expedite the legal process and reduce the associated administrative burden.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The Chief State Solicitor's Office (CSSO), in consultation with public property holders, will draft pro forma terms acceptable to the State when leasing commercial office accommodation. (This will include an approval process where there is a derogation sought from the above) (Target date Q4 2013)\**
- *The CSSO, in consultation with public property holders, will draft pro forma terms for inclusion in leases and licences granted to third parties (office accommodation) (Target date Q4 2013)\**

\* subject to resource prioritisation

***(viii) Setting targets for registration/perfecting title on State-owned properties***

Clear title is essential where property assets are being bought or sold. For example, the majority of the OPW's property is registered in the Registry of Deeds (ROD), which is perfectly acceptable, but can be cumbersome in certain property transactions where ownership is being transferred.

Accordingly, the OPW has consulted with the Property Registration Authority of Ireland (PRAI) and the CSSO, with a view to putting in place a programme to register its property in the PRAI. This would provide a readily accessible record of State property with clearly defined boundaries and any ancillary or appurtenant rights, easements or burdens.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *Public property holders will identify the State's portfolio of properties that require PRAI registration and set annual targets to register these properties. Prioritise each year – linked to the State's disposal programme (Target date Q1 2014)*
- *Public property holders will identify a programme of work to acquire the freehold interest on properties held under long leaseholds, having regard to statutory provisions (Ongoing)*

***(ix) Revise office space allocation per person***

In the civil service, the current allocation per person is based largely on grading structure where greater office space is allocated to the most senior grades. The Government's rationalisation programme is exerting pressure on State organisations to optimise space utilisation and find more innovative, cost-effective ways of working. The OPW is examining this as part of its overall standards and policies review of office accommodation provision. The review will assess the suitability and financial implications of open plan



design and more innovative ways of working. While new space norms are emerging, it should be borne in mind that their implementation will require some investment, particularly in relation to older generation buildings.

Record management arrangements involving paper storage will be reviewed through the Business Plan template. Each Department will be required to critically examine its current record management policies to assess the potential for electronic record management.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW will set targets for Civil Service space norms (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *The OPW will define modern, flexible workplace design and more innovative working environment as the norm for Civil Service accommodation (subject to building type) (Target date Q1 2014)*
- *Government Departments/Offices will examine the potential to move to electronic storage in order to reduce record management space requirements (Ongoing)*

***(x) Building property management expertise and capacity***

The development of training programmes encompassing all aspects of property management from asset registers to facility management needs to be co-ordinated at a central level to enhance shared knowledge and expertise. The risks arising from the rationalisation of the public service include loss of corporate knowledge in this specialised area.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW and public property holders will identify the professional and administrative skills and competencies required in the property management area (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *The OPW will engage external expertise to undertake a capacity and capability review of its activities in relation to the property asset management reform commitments across the public service (Target date Q4 2013)*
- *The OPW and public property holders will identify an accredited qualification for staff in property management and implement a programme to achieve the required standard (Target date Q1 2014)*
- *Each public service sector will ensure the sustainability of professional expertise in the property management area, including professional collaboration across the public service (Ongoing)*

***(xi) Energy Efficiency***

In 2008 the OPW launched a state-wide staff energy awareness campaign, entitled *Optimising Power @ Work*. Average annual energy savings of 18% have been achieved in the 270 participating buildings. The success of the initiative relies on the following key activities in each building: logging energy data, establishing a proactive energy team, working closely with the energy team to identify areas where energy can be saved and benchmarking progress against targets.

It is proposed to expand the programme into an additional 500 public sector buildings. The OPW will manage the overall delivery of the programme with the bulk of the required services largely being outsourced to specialist external service providers. Funding of €9m over a 3-year period has been earmarked for this purpose.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *The OPW will seek tenders for a) Specialist Engineering and Technical Resources; b) Data Logger deployment; and c) an Energy Efficiency Campaign (Target date Q3 2013)*
- *The OPW and public property holders will identify suitable buildings across the public service to participate in the new campaign (Ongoing)*

### ***(xii) Acquisitions and Disposals Strategy***

The current general arrangement could be described as reducing the existing property footprint with little or no activity in the area of acquisitions. The main area of current activity is the rationalisation of the leased portfolio. The Steering Group acknowledge that acquisitions and disposals are vital areas in property management where specific actions are required to integrate a 'whole of government' approach. The decisions made at acquisition of property or leases need to take account of the lifecycle cost of the asset and the total life cost implications.

An effective communications strategy among the main stakeholders will help to improve decision-making on acquisitions, disposals, rent reviews and will help to optimise the value of the State's covenant.

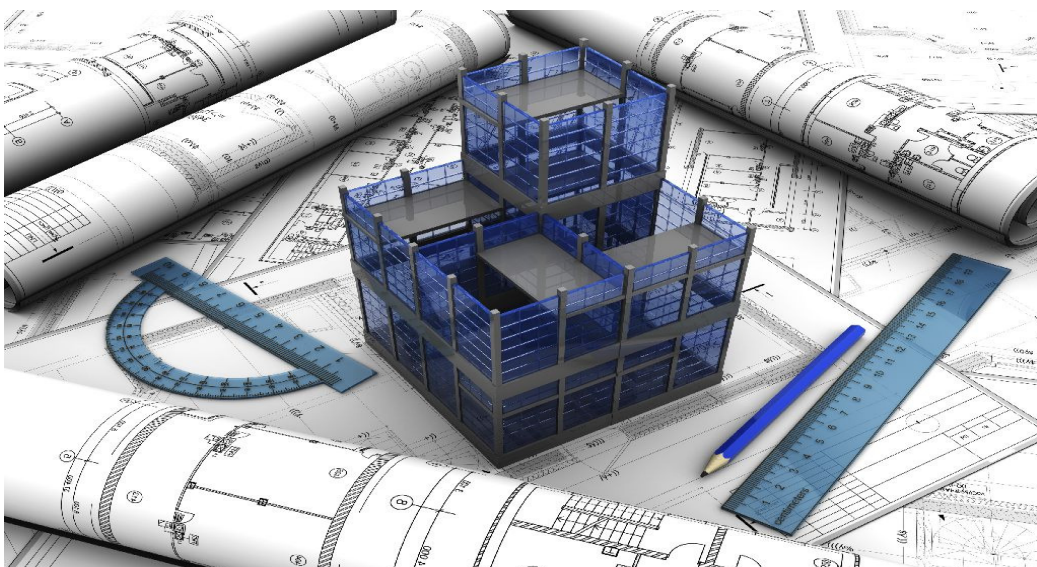
The policy relating to the disposal of surplus State property will be that all public property stakeholders must ensure that the property is advertised across the public service to determine if it is surplus to current or future State requirements, before any property is placed on the market.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

- *Public property holders will develop a coordinated acquisitions appraisal process for leasehold and freehold premises following the principles of the Capital Appraisal Guidelines - to be applied to the public service, including local authorities (Target date Q2 2014)*
- *Public property holders will formalise an agreed intra public service policy in relation to the disposal of surplus State property (Target date Q2 2014)*

The Plan is focussed on improving coordination by ensuring Departments/Offices take property implications into account in their business plans; sharing property information with other Departments/Offices by making property data visible across the public service; streamlining legal and valuation issues; and harmonising policies and strategies on acquisitions, disposals and standards. It is important not to underestimate the financial investment and benefit issues arising in coordinated rationalisation and relocation schemes between different property owners where the State benefit does not necessarily align with the best value to individual property owners.

It is important to acknowledge that many of the State's property holders have already adopted innovative approaches to space utilisation alongside rationalisation and energy saving initiatives. The broad-ranging membership of the Steering Group on Property Asset Management ensures a 'whole of Government' perspective to enable a more strategic, coordinated approach to managing the State's property portfolio.



## 2: CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the Government's programme of property asset management reforms is to reduce the cost to the exchequer of the provision of office accommodation in the civil and public service in light of current and future office accommodation demands. This involves a new approach to accommodating State organisations around how it will deliver its wide range of services and examining options such as increased electronic storage, more open plan and flexible working arrangements and sharing resources across the public sector.

The Steering Group on Property Asset Management recognised that intra public service communication is an essential element in achieving the goals of the Government's Public Service Reform Plan. The establishment of the Property Managers' Network and the implementation of an intra public service map-based inventory of the State's property assets will greatly assist the assessment of property solutions and ensure effective coordination of the decision-making process by key property stakeholders. The development of protocols around property assets transfer/sharing and associated legal administration is recognised as a key component in reducing the administrative and legal costs to the State.

Political leadership is vital for driving change. It must be acknowledged that the Government's Public Service Reform Plan and political leadership has provided the impetus for these property related reforms. The continued support of Ministers and senior management will be critical to delivering reform. This is an ambitious project in terms of the significant change that will be required to the approach to be adopted to managing the State's property portfolio and optimising value for money. This will be particularly evident in the longer-term as the actions in this Plan are implemented alongside the measures being put in place by the OGP to aggregate facilities management contracts. The strategic approach to public property management that is being driven by the Government will result in a more planned approach by Government Departments in their business strategies. Departments/Offices will be required to take account of the property related implications of future service provision, which will highlight the potential savings to be achieved through rationalisation and modernisation.

The introduction of the ISEN 15221 Standard for Facilities Management is critical to the development of effective spatial, financial and environmental key performance indicators (KPIs) in order to facilitate property benchmarking. The Steering Group acknowledge that the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) will be addressing the various cost categories arising in the facilities management area - a vital component in developing effective benchmarking analysis of the State's property portfolio. There are significant further savings to be achieved through the aggregation of facilities management contracts across the public service.

The OPW is finalising a comprehensive Standards and Policies guide to sustainable building design that seeks to optimise building performance. The guide aims to identify cost-effective design models to accommodate the State's civil and public servants and reduce the cost of managing the State's property portfolio over the medium to long term. The OPW's Optimising Power @ Work scheme will be extended across the public service to raise awareness of energy usage and reduce energy consumption.

A coordinated approach to public property asset acquisition and disposal will serve to strengthen the State's leveraging power and obtain the best value for the taxpayer. The appraisal of property acquisitions and property-related projects needs further examination to ensure that value for money is being achieved across the State's portfolio in the longer-term. The process needs to include a comprehensive capital appraisal of the full lifecycle cost of acquisition proposals.

This Plan recognises the need to enhance and build expertise in the public service in the property management area in line with best international practice. As the lead agency in terms of public property management, the OPW will engage external expertise to undertake a capacity and capability review of its operations to ensure it is 'fit for purpose' to deliver the Government's extensive property related reforms.

## Appendix A

### 1. Terms of Reference and Membership of the Steering Group on Property Asset Management

#### **Terms of Reference:**

To review existing property management arrangements across the public sector

To examine current stakeholder involvement and develop communication and data management strategies that provide an overview of State property and facilitate data sharing

To develop a framework to drive the extraction of efficiency and value from the assets involved, both owned and leased, and recommend office accommodation policies that include: space norms; open plan accommodation; and efficiency drivers

To report to Government defining long-term objectives; resources necessary to implement the objectives; and the authority assignments required to achieve the outcomes envisaged in the Public Service Reform Plan

#### **Membership:**

- **Departments/Offices:**
- Office of Public Works (Chair)
- Public Expenditure and Reform
- Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Defence
- Environment, Community and Local Government
- Education and Skills
- Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Health (and Health Service Executive)
- Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- City and County Managers' Association
- Office for Local Authority Management

### 2. Terms of Reference and Membership of the Subgroup on Asset Sharing and Transfer

#### **Terms of Reference:**

- To examine current arrangements in relation to intra public service property asset sharing and transfer
- To identify options to maximise efficient transfer, including standard policy approaches to valuations and asset register recording
- To identify options around intra public service 'temporary' use
- To include consideration of particular issues for smaller State agencies
- To revert to the Steering Group with recommendations on options and an agreed policy approach.

#### **Membership:**

##### **Departments/Offices:**

- Office of Public Works (Chair)
- Public Expenditure and Reform
- Environment, Community and Local Government
- Defence
- Office for Local Authority Management
- City and County Managers' Association
- Health Service Executive
- Chief State Solicitor's Office