



**Advanced
Workplace
Associates**

Transforming the Workplace

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: not for publication before 00.01hrs, Monday 2 August 2010

PROPERTY KEY TO GOVERNMENT SAVINGS

Public Sector spending on property could be reduced by up to a fifth, and prime city-centre property could move from the public to private sector use, if central Government departments and local authorities adopted more flexible working practices, according to Advanced Workplace Associates, AWA.

Andrew Mawson, managing director of AWA, claims that the size of the public sector's vast property portfolio which costs around £6bn a year to run, could be significantly reduced within five years by reviewing the ways in which civil servants work.

Citing the recent introduction of flexible working practices at the Home Office's head quarters in Westminster, Mawson said that there was clear evidence that a more enlightened approach to ways of working could provide a 20 per cent efficiency improvement throughout the public sector.

"By adopting new ways of working and with its forward-thinking approach, the Home Office has managed to increase the number of staff using its existing headquarters by around 17 per cent. This has allowed the department to dispose of four other buildings in central London, consolidate functions and reduce costs," says Mawson. "If this model was rolled throughout central and local government the savings would be immense."

A detailed review of working practices and adoption of new ways of working at the Home Office's Marsham Street headquarters has allowed an extra 650 people to work in the building which has 3,800 workstations, generating considerable savings.

Tony Edwards, Head of Home Office General Property is confident that considerable savings can be made across the estate through implementing flexible working on this model.

“The approach we have taken to implementing flexible working has been successful in making better use of our headquarters. By carefully researching the way the organisation worked, coming up with a tailored business-led change programme and then working with business units to implement it, we have delivered real and significant savings across our central London estate.”

According to this year’s the National Audit Office’s *Short Guide to Structured Cost Reduction*, the Government civil property estate was estimated to cost £6bn to run annually*. NAO analysis found that there is a large range in prices paid for government accommodation per person and per square metre of space. Average rents also differ greatly between Government Office regions, from £397 in London to £63 in the South West.

According to the NAO, by undertaking a strategic approach to property asset management and bringing the performance of buildings into line with the private sector, gross annual expenditure on offices would be reduced by £326m. The NAO goes on to say that: “Many departments do not have an accurate understanding of their office buildings and the utilisation of the people who work there, nor do they have strategic property asset management plans for their whole department.”

- ends-

Media contacts:

David Armstrong/Rebecca Hadley on 020 7808 7997

Founded in 1992, AWA works to deliver technologically and behaviourally complex projects to transform work, the workplace and workplace management

(* latest estimate for 2006)