

NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE OFFICE ESTATE STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT 2022-2025

18 June 2026





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Version No.	Date	Comments	CM Ref:	Author	Branch/ Directorate
1.0	16 May 2025	NICS Office Estate Strategy Progress Report 2022-2025 Published		Sharon Smyth	Properties Division
2.0	12 June 2026	At Para 21 The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the NIA of the in-scope Estate from 252,380m ² to 107,806m ² (i.e. 42.7%) by 31 March 2028 has been changed to The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the NIA of the in-scope Estate from 252,380m ² by 107,806m ² (i.e. 42.7%) by 31 March 2028.	FI1/26/568903	Desi McDonnell	Properties Division

Section 1 – Executive Summary

1. The [Northern Ireland Civil Service Office Estate Strategy](#) was drafted in June 2024 and provided a vision for the NICS Office Estate to 2035 in two stages:

Stage One	A Leaner NICS Office Estate (2022-2028) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Right sizing the NICS Office Estate• Reducing operational costs
Stage Two	A Greener and Modern NICS Office Estate (2028-2035) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving Energy Efficiency; and• Modernising the NICS Office Estate.

2. The baseline for the Estate Strategy is the property and accommodation data for the year ending 31 March 2022 which was gathered as part of [The Office Estate Review](#).
3. At this time, the NICS Office Estate consisted of 99 buildings. This included 33 Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) exclusively used by the Department for Communities (DfC). The JBOs are deemed 'out of scope' of the NICS Office Estate Review as the locations and ability to rationalise these can only be determined by DfC. DoF is working closely with DfC on their future demand for office accommodation which will be progressed in parallel with the NICS Office Estate Strategy.
4. As such, the 'in-scope' NICS Office Estate refers to 66 offices within Belfast and across the wider regions.
5. The implementation of the NICS Office Estate Strategy is overseen by an Estate Development Committee which was established in November 2022. The Estate Development Committee meets quarterly with ad-hoc meetings scheduled for any urgent matters impacting on delivery of the Strategy.
6. Regular consultation is ongoing with Departmental Accommodation Officers and Central Trade Union Side. Local Trade Union Side is also engaged on individual right-sizing or refurbishment projects.

7. This Progress Report covers the implementation of Phase 1 of the Estate Review (i.e. right sizing the NICS Office Estate and reducing operational costs) for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025 and includes high level priorities for the work planned for 2025/2026.
8. Table 1 below provides a summary of the progress of Phase 1 of the NICS Office Estate Strategy at 31 March 2025:

Table 1: Summary of Progress (31 March 2025)	
Number of Buildings	Reduction of 16
Net Internal Area (NIA) m²	Reduction of 30,965m ²
Annual rates costs (£m)	Reduction of £1.3m
Annual rent (£m)	Reduction of £2.3m
Energy Consumption (kWh)	Reduction of 12,287,443 kWh
Number of Workstations	Reduction of 3,385

9. Table 2 below outlines the progress against the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), for achievement by 2028, detailed in the NICS Office Estate Strategy (against the 2022 baseline). The tables show the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status of each of the KPIs to indicate the likelihood of these being achieved by 31 March 2028.
10. Table 2 indicates that Phase 1 of the NICS Office Estate Strategy is on track for delivery by 2028 for 5 out of 6 of the KPIs. It is anticipated that progress against KPI 2 (Reduction of NIA) will improve in 2025/26 as the sales of Clarence Court and Victoria Hall (which were forecast to complete in 2024/25) will be progressed within the next 12 months.

Table 2: Progress against the NICS Office (In-Scope) Estate 31 March 2028 Key Performance Indicators		
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Progress at 31 March 2025 against the 2022 baseline	RAG Status for KPI delivery by 31 March 2028
KPI 1: 28 buildings divested (40%)	16 buildings divested (24%)	Green
KPI 2: Reduction of 42.7% in Net Internal Area (NIA)	NIA reduction of 30,965m ² (12%)	Yellow
KPI 3: At least 20% reduction in Rates Bill	£1.3m reduced from the Rates Bill (8.8%)	Green
KPI 4: At least 40% reduction in rent costs	£2.3m reduced from the Rent costs through lease exits (26%)	Green
KPI 5: At least 40% reduction in energy consumption (of the in-scope NICS Office Estate)	12,287,443 kWh reduction in total energy consumption of the in-scope estate to the end of the 2023/24 financial year (23%)	Green
KPI 6: 42% reduction in workstations	3,385 reduction in workstations (20%)	Green

Section 2 – NICS Office Estate Statistics

Baseline Data

11. The baseline data was developed during the Estate Review carried out by Strategic Investment Board under the Reform of Property Management Programme in 2022.

12. Table 3 below provides information on the 2022 baseline 'in-scope' NICS Office Estate.

Table 3: Baseline at 31 March 2022						
Number of buildings	NIA (m ²)	Rates Cost (£m)	Annual Rent (£m)	Energy consumption (kWh)	Number of Workstations	Annual Operating Costs (£m)
66	252,380	14.8	8.7	52,860,135	16,826	37

13. Table 4 below outlines the annual progress against the 31 March 2022 baseline.

Table 4: NICS Office Estate (In-Scope) 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2025					
	2022 (Baseline)	2023	2024	2025	Totals
Number of Buildings	66	65	57	50	16 Buildings Divested
Reduction in Net Internal Area (NIA) m²	252,380	251,318	239,476	221,415	NIA reduction of 30,965
Reduction in Annual Rates (* includes out of scope reductions)	£14.8m	£47,457	£559,161	£696,387	Rates reduced by £1.3m
Reduction in Annual Rent	£8.7m	£110,510	£1,252,125	£900,000	Rent reduced by £2,262,635
Reduction in Total Energy Consumption (kWh)	52,860,135	7,186,321	5,101,122	-	kWh reduced by 12,287,443 up to the end of the 2023/24 Financial Year*
Number of Workstations	16,826	16,783	15,953	13,441	Workstations reduced by 3,385

*Actual energy consumption figures for the 2024/25 Financial Year will be available in August 2025.

14. The baseline data showed that at 31 March 2022, the operating costs for the NICS Office Estate were £37m. The operating costs include rates, rent, electricity, maintenance and some soft FM services (e.g. cleaning, waste management etc). Despite having reduced the rates bill and rent costs through divestment and vacating properties in preparation for disposal, operating costs have increased year on year. The most recent audited information on operating costs (i.e. 2023/2024) shows a 14.4% increase in operating costs against the 2022 baseline of £37m.

Right-Sizing (Number of Buildings)

15. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the in-scope Office Estate from 66 to 40 (i.e. 40%) buildings by 31 March 2028.

16. As of 31 March 2025, 16 buildings indicated in the NICS Office Estate Strategy have been removed/divested from the Office Estate portfolio through the following asset management measures:

- Lease Exit;
- Disposal/Sale;
- Demolition; or
- Transfer.

17. Table 5 below shows the annual progress on divestments within the NICS Office Estate Strategy:

Table 5 – Annual Progress on the 16 Building Divestments			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of Divestments	1	8	7

18. Details of the buildings and methods of divestment are provided in Annex A.

19. In addition to divesting of 7 office buildings in 2024/25, the Department of Finance disposed of 2 further sites. One site was a leased file storage facility at Dargan Crescent (“the Social Security Agency Superstore”) which reduced the overall portfolio by NIA 4,966m² and the annual rent of £153,760 and made rates savings of £587,075. In addition, the Tower Block and Annex at Rathgael

House, Bangor were demolished which reduced the overall portfolio by 4,502m² NIA and made rates savings of £188,634.64.

20. A number of property sales (i.e. Clarence Court and Victoria Hall, Belfast) planned for 2024/25 were not concluded within the timescale initially envisaged and will be pursued in the next financial year.

Net Internal Area (NIA) Reduction

21. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the NIA of the in-scope Estate from 252,380m² by 107,806m² (i.e. 42.7%) by 31 March 2028.

22. As of 31 March 2025, the NIA has been reduced from 252,380m² to 221,415m² equating to a **12% reduction** in NIA. The reduction is less than projected at this stage, however this can be attributed to the non-completion of the sale of Clarence Court in 2024/25 which has a NIA of 13,880m². It is hoped the sale will be concluded in 2025/26 to bring the NIA reduction target back on track.

23. Table 6 below shows the NIA reductions for each year:

Table 6 – Annual Progress on Reduction of 30,965 NIA			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
NIA Reduction (m²)	1,062	11,842	18,061

24. Further details of the NIA reductions are included in Annex A.

Annual Rates Bill Reduction

25. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the Baseline Annual Rates Bill of £14.8m by £3m (i.e. 20%) by 31 March 2028.

26. Table 7 below shows £1.3m reduction to the Rates Bill against the 2022 baseline which equates to 8.8%.

Table 7 – Rates Bill Reduction against Baseline			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Rates Bill Reduction against Baseline	£47,457	£559,161	£696,387

27. Further details of the Rates reductions are included in Annex A.

Annual Rent Costs Reduction

28. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to a reduction of 40% against the 2022 baseline for Annual Rent Costs (i.e. £ reductions of 3.5m) by 31 March 2028.

29. Table 8 below provides details of the Rent Bill reductions of £2,262,635 over the 3 years. This equates to a reduction of 26% against the baseline.

Table 8 – Rent Costs Reduction against Baseline			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Rent Costs Reduction against Baseline	£110,510	£1,252,125	£900,000

30. Further details of the rent reductions are included in Annex A.

Energy Consumption Reduction

31. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to reducing the Energy Consumption (kWh) from 52,860,135 to 21,144,054 (i.e. 40%) by 31 March 2028.

32. Table 9 below shows the reduction in energy consumption for the In-Scope Office Estate (a reduction of 12,287,443 kWh from the baseline year to the end of the 2023/24 financial year) which equates to a reduction of 23%. The total energy consumption information is currently being gathered for the 2024/25 financial year and will be available in August 2025.

33. The total reduction in the energy consumption includes both reductions due to the divestment of buildings and energy efficiency measures in buildings.

Table 9 – Total Energy Consumption Reduction (kWh) against Baseline			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total Energy Consumption Reduction of the In-Scope Office Estate	7,186,321	5,101,122	-

34. Further details of the reduction in energy consumption is provided at Annex A.

Workstations Reduction

35. The NICS Office Estate Strategy committed to a reduction of 7,049 workstations by 31 March 2028 which equates to a reduction of 42%.

36. Table 10 below shows a reduction of 3,385 workstations against the 2022 baseline which equates to a reduction of 20%. The workstations reductions for each year are listed below.

Table 10 – Workstations Reduction against Baseline Year			
Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Workstations Reduction against Baseline Year	43	830	2,512

37. The 2024/25 reduction includes the workstations which have been removed from buildings which have been vacated in preparation for sale or demolition. Further details of the workstations reduction is included in Annex A.

Section 3 – Priorities for 2025/2026

38. There are a number of 2025/26 priorities to progress Phase 1 of the NICS Office Estate Strategy including:

- Victoria Hall and Clarence Court to be revalued and remarketed in June 2025; and
- 4 offices to be divested to further reduce the in-scope Office Estate by 18,427m².

39. In preparation for Phase 2 of the NICS Office Estate Strategy, the Department also plans to commence a procurement for a carbon baselining exercise of the retained Office Estate; and appoint a contractor to deliver Photovoltaic (PV) equipment on the Stormont Estate to generate renewable energy.

ANNEX A Divestment Details and Impact on Costs

Summary

Year	NIA (m ²) Reduction	Rates Cost Reduction (£m)	Annual Rent Reduction (£m)	Energy Consumption (kWh) Reduction for the whole In-Scope Office Estate	Number of Workstations Reduction
2022-2023	1,062 m ²	£47,457	£110,510	7,186,321	43
2023-2024	11,842m ²	£559,161	£1,252,125	5,101,122	830
2024-2025	18,061m ²	£696,387	£900,000	-	2,512
Accumulated Total	30,965m²	£1,303,005	£2,262,635	12,287,443	3,385

Annual Progress

2022-2023	Divestment Method	NIA (m ²) Reduction	Rates Cost Reduction (£)	Annual Rent Reduction (£)	Number of Workstations Reduction	
Park House	Lease Exit	1,062m ²	£47,457	£110,510	43	
1		1,062m²	£47,457	£110,510	43	Total

2023-2024	Divestment Method	NIA (m²) Reduction	Rates Cost Reduction (£)	Annual Rent Reduction (£)	Number of Workstations Reduction	
Design Centre	Lease Exit	3,794m ²	£237,084	£710,000	353	
Carlisle House	Lease Exit	4,029m ²	£222,761	£542,125	350	
Downpatrick Social Security Office	Sale	548m ²	£11,262	-	0	
Dundonald House Annex D	Demolition	725m ²	£10,779	-	26	
Dundonald House Annex B	Demolition	340m ²	£8,928	-	15	
Elmview	Departmental Transfer	204m ²	£5,885	-	15	
Corporation Street Roads Depot	Departmental Transfer	1,834m ²	£62,462	-	71	
Arvalee		368m ²	-	-	0	
8		11,842m²	£559,161	£1,252,125	830	Total

2024-2025	Divestment Method	NIA (m²) Reduction	Rates Cost Reduction (£m)	Annual Rent Reduction (£m)	Number of Workstations Reduction	
Klondyke Building	Lease Exit	5,208m ²	£375,586	£900,000	441	
Cookstown Social Security Office	Sale	405m ²	£9,864	-	0	
Netherleigh House	Sale	5,528m ²	£217,530	-	114	
Falls Rd SAU	Sale	541m ²	£30,416	-	39	
56 Ann Street	Sale	278m ²	£24,007	-	22	
Walled Garden (Stormont Estate)	Demolition	274m ²	£21,128	-	19	
Hillview Buildings	Demolition	340m ²	£17,856	-	59	
7		18,061m²	£696,387	£900,000	694	Total

In addition to the above 7, a further 10 buildings have been cleared						
Rathgael House Tower Block and Annex	Demolition	4,502m ²			86	
Castle Buildings Annex 7	Demolition	965m ²			119	
Clarence Court	Vacated in preparation for sale	13,880m ²			707	
Victoria Hall	Vacated in preparation for sale	1,680m ²			7	
Limavady Main Street	Vacated in preparation for sale	227m ²			5	
Castle Buildings Annex 6	Demolition	420m ²			51	
4 Further buildings cleared	Vacated in preparation for sale	9,534m ²			843	
10 Cleared buildings		31,208m²			1,818	Total
Total Number of Workstations Reduction					2,512	