



Vehicle
Certification
Agency

Vehicle Certification Agency

An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport

Business Plan 2024 to 2025

For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025





© Crown copyright 2024

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at: www.gov.uk/official-documents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at enquiries@vca.gov.uk.

| Contents

4	Foreword
8	Who we are and what we do
12	Plans for 2024 to 2025
21	Supporting delivery of the plan
27	Annexes



| Foreword





“It’s been particularly rewarding to support the team in their response to equipping the VCA with the people, skills, and relationships they need to be at the forefront of evolving vehicle technology.”

Introduction from Clive Scrivener

Non-executive Chair

As Non-Executive Chair for the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA), I’m pleased to introduce its Business Plan for the 2024-25 financial year. It sets our plans and targets for the year ahead and describes how we will measure our performance against them.

For my part, I am due to leave the VCA this year, after 7 years, initially as a Non-Executive Director and subsequently as Chair. It’s been a great privilege to be part of an organisation with such a vital function and to help guide it through a period of such significant positive change.

It’s been particularly rewarding to support the team in their response to equipping the VCA with the people, skills, and relationships they need to be at the forefront of evolving vehicle technology. Setting up a dedicated team to coordinate efforts in this area was the right thing to do and this has delivered excellent results. It has helped to ensure that we have the skills and experience needed to support our government and industry colleagues in developing a safe, deliverable regulatory framework for increased levels of vehicle connectivity and autonomy. During this financial year, work will continue with a particular focus on enabling trials through Advanced Trial Orders as well as providing support for the development of a safety investigation capability focused on automated vehicle incidents. Central to our approach is attracting the right talent and experience to the agency, whilst growing the breadth of skills of existing staff. I encourage the team to continue the great work they have started to build on our recruitment and retention strategy, and I know the intention is to do so in this financial year and beyond.

In addition, the agency is now two years into a significant business transformation programme. Again, it has been pleasing to support this initiative, one which will ultimately touch every part of the organisation. It has already delivered significant improvements to the way we deliver our services digitally, and this is just the beginning. Managing change on this scale comes with its challenges but it has been great to see the organisation rise to those. This financial year will see the team continue to build on existing tools, whilst improving processes and ways of working. As well as our own efficiencies, our customers are already realising significant benefits inside their own organisations, resulting from the changes we have made.

I would like to welcome two new non-executive directors to the team. Jonathan Beasley and Darran Messemer, joined the agency in December 2023 and bring a significant level of experience and insight. I know this will provide invaluable support to the executive team as they take a challenging agenda forward.

Finally, I would like to thank Pia Wilkes, her executive team and the entire VCA staff for their dedication, support, and commitment to the very important work that the agency delivers, and for making my tenure so enjoyable and rewarding. I wish the entire team the very best.

Clive Scrivener | Non-executive Chair





“Demand for our core certification services continues to be high and this looks set to continue during this financial year given the implementation of the full GB Type Approval Scheme in February”

Introduction from Pia Wilkes

Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) Business Plan for 2024-25.

Demand for our core certification services continues to be high and this looks set to continue during this financial year given the implementation of the full GB Type Approval Scheme in February. Implementation of this new scheme is the culmination of a significant amount of hard work between us and policy colleagues within the Department for Transport (DfT). To support the increase in certification activity that this is generating, we have developed an online digital application portal, which has helped us to manage the demand without the need to grow our staff numbers significantly. This initiative is part of our wider Business Transformation programme, which will continue at pace during the 2024/25 financial year. The programme has already delivered significant tangible and intangible benefits and will support efficiency gains and our resilience going forward, whilst improving user experience. Of course, we recognise that change can be challenging, and we have worked hard with industry and trade bodies to support the move to new ways of working.

Allied to our resilience, we will build on the work we have been doing on our recruitment and retention strategy. Like many other organisations we have experienced some challenges in this area over recent time. This is due in no small part to the buoyant jobs market and the high demand for people with the kind of skills we need. We have started to see progress from our efforts so far, and I'm sure this will continue, helping us to provide the right resource and skills at the right time. This is particularly important as we evolve our skills base to respond to changing technology.

Over recent years we have done a lot to improve our infrastructure, transform our digital estate, build our skills base, and prepare for the implementation of the new GB Type Approval Scheme. All these things have added to our cost base. During this financial year we will continue downward pressure on our financial deficit through a combination of additional income and efficiencies.

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to recognise our Non-Executive Chair, Clive Scrivener who leaves this year after 7 years with the organisation. Clive has made a significant contribution to the organisation during his time with us, particularly as we have navigated our approach to skills development. I'd like to thank him for his support and wise council, which have been invaluable.

Pia Wilkes CBE | Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Who we are and what we do



01.



Who we are and what we do

1.1 Vehicle Certification Agency

The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) is an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) and part of the Roads and Local Group, through which it receives its corporate sponsorship.

The VCA's core aim is to improve vehicle safety and environmental protection by providing vehicle and component testing, certification, information and other related services.

The agency consists of around 250 people, delivering service from locations in the UK and overseas.

The VCA performs a number of core activities:

1.2 Vehicle Type Approval

As the UK Type Approval Authority (TAA) for new on and off-road vehicles, systems, and components, we are responsible for approving that these have been designed and constructed to meet national and international standards for safety, security, and environmental protection. We take the policy lead from the DfT.

1.3 Conformity of Production (CoP)

This is an integral and essential part of the certification process and approval cannot be granted without suitable CoP arrangements being in place. CoP provides confidence to industry, government and consumers that vehicles or components covered by the regulations are manufactured in accordance with the approved specification and that measures are in place to ensure ongoing compliance.

The CoP process involves an initial evaluation of manufacturing quality processes to ensure that each product is built in accordance with the approved specification. Ongoing conformity is assessed throughout the manufacturing life of a product. This will involve manufacturing site visits and reviewing relevant records. Where evidence of non-compliance is discovered, this will be rigorously investigated, and the appropriate steps

“The Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) is an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) and part of the Roads and Local Group, through which it receives its corporate sponsorship.”



taken to ensure conformity is restored.

We recognise the importance of a robust regime which ensures that all new vehicles are safe, reliable and deliver the expected environmental performance. Where concerns of non-conformity are raised through non-CoP related activities such as “whistle blowing” we will take all reasonable actions to investigate the non-conformance and where necessary take action to bring the vehicle, system, or component back into conformity; and where appropriate work with other agencies to ensure a product remains in conformity. We are clear that only fully compliant vehicles or components should be offered for sale. Where non-conformance occurs, the manufacturer should rectify any issues at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the type approval legislation. Where a manufacturer cannot or will not take the necessary steps to bring products back into conformity, the VCA may suspend the Conformity of Production status. This suspension would prevent vehicles being registered. Ultimately steps may be taken to withdraw an approval, in accordance with the relevant type approval legislation.

1.4 Market Surveillance

The Government is committed to enforcing vehicle safety and environmental standards. A Market Surveillance Unit exists within the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to check that vehicles and components available on the UK market comply with the legislative requirements to which they were approved.

The VCA plays a significant role in providing expert engineering resource to support this work. This will continue in 2024-25, ensuring that the right skills are available to support constantly evolving standards and technology.

1.5 Certification of Dangerous Goods Packaging

The VCA also administers the operation of a scheme for the certification of packaging used for the carriage of dangerous goods in the UK. The dangerous goods team is also responsible for the appointment of suitable test and inspection bodies to conduct inspections of tanks and pressure receptacles in accordance with the international agreement on the carriage of dangerous goods by

“We recognise the importance of a robust regime, which ensures that all new vehicles are safe, reliable and that they deliver the expected environmental performance.”



road (“ADR”) and the UK carriage regulations. It also operates a telephone and email enquiry service on behalf of the Department and undertakes several technical and advisory functions in connection with the UN Regulations on the transport of dangerous goods.

1.6 Civil Traffic Enforcement

The VCA undertakes several certification schemes for organisations carrying out civil traffic enforcement activities using camera-based systems. The largest of these is a statutory scheme undertaken on behalf of DfT covering local authorities enforcing bus lane, parking and specified moving contraventions in England. This, and the other certification schemes mentioned below, involves a compliance assessment of the applicant’s system design against the relevant requirements. The aim of the assessment is to ensure that the system can provide images of sufficient quality and integrity to act as the primary evidence in settling any appeal. The other schemes that the VCA undertake are for the Welsh Government, Clean Air Zones in England, Low Emission Zones in Scotland and two free flow tolling schemes including the Dartford Crossing.

1.7 Data Provision

The VCA collects and publishes fuel consumption, CO₂, noise and regulated pollutant data for new cars, underpinning the Vehicle Excise Duty and Company Car Tax schemes. Accessed through GOV.UK, the data tools continue to be popular with consumers, with approaching half a million users over the last year alone. This supports Government’s strategic drive to reduce exhaust emissions by providing consumers with the information they need to make informed choices.

1.8 Average Emissions Monitoring

We have been nominated by the Secretary of State for Transport to manage the collection and processing of average CO₂ emissions data for both Light Duty Vehicles (LDVs) and Heavy-Duty Vehicles (HDVs). This supports the drive to improve the efficiency of new vehicles, and the Government’s ambitions in transport decarbonisation.



Plans for 2024 to 2025



02.



Plans for 2024 to 2025

The table at 2.4 highlights the main performance measures that we have agreed with the Department for 2024-25. The following sections explain in more detail the specific actions we will take to deliver against those measures.

Changing our Agency

2.1 Continue to take forward the Government Digital Strategy

We are now well into the delivery of an ambitious transformation programme that will touch every part of our organisation. The programme is aimed at improving service provision and helping us to realise some efficiencies associated with digital delivery. In the 2022-23 financial year, we launched a digital portal to support the applications for both provisional and full GB Type Approval Scheme approvals. This has enabled us to deal with a significant increase in workload without the associated increase in headcount. The portal has been further enhanced to cover applications for all schemes and during this financial year we will build on this further, including improvements to internal processes. The programme will result in significant improvements for customers and staff alike, building on service resilience and performance. Ultimately it will give us a great platform for the future.

Our services

We have a critical role to play in ensuring that vehicles and their systems and components meet internationally agreed standards, providing confidence to consumers and regulators alike.

2.2 Product Certification

Demand for our core certification activity remains high and we are working hard to meet this. As outlined above, our product certification area has benefited from the introduction of a digital portal to support the administration aspects of this process. We will provide further improvements to the portal throughout this year, including responding to user feedback on progress to date.

2.2.1 Technical Services

Our Operations department (Technical Services) plays a vital role in the approval process, providing the technical expertise to deliver testing to national and international standards. During this financial year, our priority is to maintain and grow our capacity to ensure that we have the right people in place at the right time. As part of our recruitment strategy, we will continue to utilise our highly successful Graduate Engineering intake programme.

We are expecting a growth in demand for our Technical Services due to the growing global interest in Electric Vehicles, notably in the US, European and East Asian markets. Delivering our services from the UK and a number of overseas locations means that we are well placed to support this.

In addition, we will continue to grow our capability as the technology we deal with evolves and changes. This will ensure that we are not only ready when the time comes, but that we can also inform policy development to support key changes.

2.2.2 Statutory Operations

Our Statutory Operations department includes Type Approval Certification and Conformity of Production teams. Together these departments play an important role in ensuring that the approvals issued by the VCA meet and maintain the expected quality standards and legislative requirements.

In the 2024-25 financial year, the Statutory Operations department will continue to work towards three important objectives. First, we will endeavour to become more agile in our working practices to improve our reaction to peaks in demand for our services and therefore provide an improved experience to the automotive industry. Second, we will refocus our activities to generate the most value and seek methods to optimise processes through technology and other means. Third, we will utilise lean principles and improve our understanding of our performance through seizing the full potential of our data, with the objective to take action to become more efficient and more effective.

We will continue to work with the automotive industry to communicate the GB Type Approval Scheme and enable interaction such that we can work to improve service delivery. We will continue the successful use of written communication through trade bodies and the use of webinars to share key messages and offer training to industry to improve application quality.

This is an ambitious plan to strive for excellence in service delivery to ensure approvals are delivered to the required quality and in a timeframe that meets the automotive industry's needs and improve the experience for our customers.

2.2.3 Type Approval Certification

During 2024 we are anticipating demand for GB Type Approval to continue to increase, and we will ensure we are ready to deliver the anticipated volumes of approval applications within our agreed Key Performance Indicator (KPI). This will see a change in how we have historically operated, with a majority of applications for GB Type Approval coming direct to the department with existing evidence from Technical Services rather than using the VCA for testing services directly.

We will ensure that we have the required skills and develop our team where there are gaps, in particular where there are new technologies being introduced to vehicles. We will continue to invest in our team to develop expertise in Type Approval legislation. This will continue to be developed through our new Compliance Officer roles to undertake compliance reviews of test data to ensure the legislative standards are achieved.

“We recognise the importance of accredited management systems, as evidence of transparent operations. This is important to give our stakeholders trust and confidence in what we do.”



We will deliver the recruitment strategy throughout the year to ensure we have the necessary resources for the increasing demand of the GB Type Approval Scheme. Considering the global nature of the automotive industry, we will commit to a global Certification Department with key hubs located in Japan and the USA in key automotive locations, in addition to the UK offices.

2.2.4 Conformity of Production

During 2024 we are anticipating an increase in demand for CoP clearances for GB Type Approval, in advance of applications reaching the Type Approval Certification team. We will continue to work with industry to increase awareness of the requirements to mitigate against any possible delays. We will monitor the COP delivery through our KPI on issuing compliance statements.

We will ensure a global perspective through our business transformation activities and provide a targeted process which is more efficient and more effective, utilising technology to improve our services. We will update our ISO17021 scope of accreditation with UKAS (the national accreditation body for the United Kingdom) to include this new global approach following business transformation activities and start preparatory work to expand the scope of accreditation to UNECE legislation.

We will deliver on our recruitment strategy throughout the year, including looking to the future and utilising apprenticeships and trainee engineering schemes to have an entry route into the VCA and improve resource planning, whilst creating exciting new opportunities across the UK.

2.2.5 Regulatory and Technology Group

The Regulatory & Technology Group (RTG) leads on technical policy and regulatory affairs in support of the VCA's type approval activities. The group is comprised of sub-teams of technical specialists and regulatory experts each focusing on specific technical areas:

- Automated Vehicle Technologies Group (AVT)
- Propulsion Technologies Group (PTG)
- Safety Technologies Group (STG)
- Vehicle Frameworks & Regulation Group (VFR)

RTG also undertakes a number of operational activities such as the issuing of Vehicle Special Orders and End-of-Series Derogations for vehicles that cannot comply with type approval regulations, the designation of Technical Services for type approval activities, and the management and maintenance of the VCA's regulatory information systems. PTG also manage the delivery of legislated in-service conformity schemes and support DVSA in the delivery of annual market surveillance programmes contributing to ongoing reduction in emissions from road vehicles.

During 2024/25 RTG will continue to support the Department for Transport in development of new and improved vehicle regulations in both international and domestic legal frameworks.

We will continue to develop our own technical skills, as well as developing training material for internal and departmental colleagues to better inform future policy and regulatory decision making. This activity is well advanced in the area of future alternative propulsion systems, with further developments to come this year in the fields of safety technologies, vehicle connectivity and type approval frameworks.

We will support the ongoing delivery of the VCA's business transformation programme including the development of a new regulatory information system and additional digital solutions to facilitate approval authority oversight of applications to the new GB Type Approval Scheme.

We will deliver according to our recruitment strategy to ensure adequate resource is available for successful operational delivery of the new GB Type Approval Scheme alongside continued activity in other areas. This will involve a mix of long-term options such as apprenticeships and graduate training programmes supporting our future skills plan and anticipated activity levels, in addition to a more immediate recruitment agenda reflecting the rapid implementation and scale of the GB Type Approval Scheme and a need to deliver our statutory obligations.

2.2.5.1. Propulsion Technologies

In addition to their policy and regulatory duties, our Propulsion Technologies Group (PTG) also support the DVSA in the delivery of annual market surveillance programmes contributing to ongoing reduction in emissions from road vehicles. This involves providing expert technical advice in relation to the development of new testing methodologies and supporting in the evaluation of vehicle behaviour and performance during tests. PTG also provide support to the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) in making technical assessments relating to applications to the plug-in vehicle grant schemes.

2.2.5.2 Connected and Automated Vehicles

In May 2024 the [Automated Vehicles Act received royal ascent](#), which will put safety at the heart of the roll-out of self-driving vehicle technology and position the UK as world-leaders of this exciting £42 billion industry.

The Automated Vehicles Act 2024 implements the recommendations of the 4-year review of regulation for self-driving vehicles carried out by the [Law Commission](#) as responded to in the Government's published Connected and Automated Mobility 2025: Realising the benefits of self-driving vehicles in the UK (CAM 2025). This will include a comprehensive safety framework for the regulation of self-driving vehicles with the VCA having an instrumental role in ensuring robust safety testing is carried out before they are permitted to drive on UK roads.

“The future certification of self-driving vehicles will be supported by a range of engineering teams that will make the VCA a world class approval authority and technical service.”



To realise this ambition the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles run the cross governmental CAVPASS programme preparing the UK for trialling, deployment, and certification of self-driving vehicle technology.

In 2019, we established the Automated Vehicle Technologies Group (AVT), a dedicated, highly skilled group of engineers to lead in the development and delivery of Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) approval services at National and International levels. The work of this group has been around 5 strategic areas:

1. Provide technical scrutiny at the Type Approval Authority level.
2. Develop CAV skills globally within the VCA.
3. Engage in international and national policy making.
4. Further the formation of dedicated, highly skilled groups of engineers.
5. Deliver on CAVPASS workstream activities and projects.

In the 2024-25 financial year the work of AVT will further these strategic areas.

In terms of support to the CAVPASS programme, we will continue to provide input to workstream activities by giving Agency perspective to ensure that policy developments are appropriate. For 2024, particular focus will be on enabling of advanced trials through Advanced Trial Orders and support for the development of a safety investigation capability focused on automated vehicle incidents.

We will also support trialling organisations being funded through the Commercialising Connected and Automated Mobility Deployments competition by auditing of safety and security management systems. The aims of these audits are to provide feedback to Government on the maturity of the safety management systems and to provide a co-operative learning opportunity for Government and the projects on the future GB assurance scheme. We will also carry out targeted research and development that furthers the understanding on the safety and security assurance of connected and automated vehicles, including on-track testing of complex scenarios and assessment methodologies based on the Operational Design Domain.

The development of engineer skills is a key part of our preparations for the certification of self-driving vehicles. To date our focus has mostly been on safety acceptance, including Functional Safety and Safety of Intended Functionality, Cyber Security and Software Updating. We will continue to maintain our knowledge in these areas, work to ensure it keeps pace with the latest developments and take further steps to bring training in-house. We will also work on furthering our knowledge into new areas and will continue to commission new training on topics that include machine learning, and modelling and simulation.

The future certification of self-driving vehicles will be supported by a range of engineering teams that will make the VCA a world class approval authority and technical service. We will continue to progress the growth in engineering capability across all technical parts of the Agency and support them by putting in place new facilities that best enable their skills. There are also limitations to our capability to develop engineering capability so will target partnerships with external organisations, where deemed appropriate.

2.2.6 Quality

We recognise the importance of accredited management systems, as evidence of transparent operations. This is important to give our stakeholders trust and confidence in what we do.

VCA have previously gained accreditation to ISO 17025 for our laboratory operations, ISO 17020 for our inspection activities and ISO17021 for our Conformity of Production activities. These valued accreditations will be maintained and scope expanded to meet the changing legislative landscape as required. ISO17065 for Product Certification will continue to be developed during the financial year. We plan to have this in place during the 25/26 financial year.

The agency will continue to deliver its internal quality audit plan for the financial year.



Finance, Efficiency and Key Performance Measures

2.3 Finance

Demand for our services remains at a high level and we are working hard to meet this. As part of this work, we have been looking at our recruitment and retention arrangements to ensure that we can not only attract new talent to our organisation, but we can also develop and maintain this. This has been challenging against the backdrop of a buoyant jobs market where the skills we need are in high demand. In addition, our organisation is currently in a period of consolidation as we improve our infrastructure, transform our digital estate, build our skills base, and prepared for the implementation of the new GB Type Approval Scheme. All these things have added to our cost base. During the 2024-25 financial year we will continue downward pressure on our financial deficit through a combination of additional income and efficiencies through our transformation work and new ways of working.

Our governance arrangements reflect best practice and give confidence that we use our resources efficiently, embracing functional standards to support continuous improvement within the agency and to meet our strategic priorities.

2.4 2024 to 2025 Key Performance Measures

Category	VCA Measure	In 2024 to 2025
1. Changing our agency	1.1 Actively progress the Government ICT and Digital strategies by using ICT to delivery of a wide-ranging programme of change, including:	
	Delivering the next tranche of the Agency business transformation programme, with significant positive impact on our back-office functions. The next phase to be completed by the end of March 25.	31 March 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with the central Government Cybersecurity Strategy and implement Information Security tools in line with good practice. Fully deploy tools of choice to maximise investment and security posture. 	31 March 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build out the Digital Services & Technology (DS&T) Centres of Excellence and equip the team with the skills needed to deliver and support the new services as part of the transformation programme. Implement the operating model necessary to support this. 	31 March 2025
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further align DS&T ways of working with good practice, extending the use of the IT Service Management (ITSM) tool with effective problem management, change management and asset management. 	31 December 2024
	1.2 Continuing to diversify our recruitment and retention strategy by completing our current projects which implement several new initiatives.	31 March 2025

Category	VCA Measure	In 2024 to 2025
2. Our services	<p>2.1 Type Approval Certification:</p> <p>VCA Type Approval Certificates to be issued no later than 10 working days from technical clearance and/or certification decision unless a longer period has been agreed to meet manufacturer’s expectations. Certificate issue is predicated on appropriate Conformity of Production (CoP) arrangements being in place</p>	31 March 2025 - 92%
	<p>Compliance reviews for GB Type Approval Scheme applications to be completed within 10 working days of receipt of a valid work order and documentation</p>	31 March 2025 - 92%
	<p>2.3 Conformity of Production (CoP) –</p> <p>All existing VCA type approval certificate holders are contacted at least 3 months prior to clearance expiry to review their ongoing Conformity of Production (in line with ISO 17021 accreditation as applicable)</p>	31 March 2025 - 100%
	<p>Certificates of compliance to be issued no later than 10 working days following the completion of the audit and the appropriate closure of all non-conformances raised.</p>	31 March 2025 - 90%
	<p>Conformity of Production Audit reports to be issued no later than 5 working days following the completion of the audit</p>	31 March 2025 - 90%
	<p>2.4 VCA customer satisfaction survey score to be 90% or higher.</p>	31 March 2025 - 90%
	<p>2.5 The VCA will continue to maintain and expand where appropriate the scope of its ISO accreditation in line with operational requirements.</p>	31 March 2025
3. Wellbeing	<p>3.1 Sick Absence - Ensure average number of working days lost to sickness absence does not exceed 6 days per FTE.</p>	31 March 2025 - 6 days

Supporting delivery of the plan



03.



I Supporting delivery of the plan

3.1 Human Resources

We will build on our current people processes in alignment with the wider Government HR strategy and in support of the Civil Service core values and the Brilliant Civil Service vision.

As part of this we will maintain strong relationships with the Department and its agencies, sharing best practice and working collaboratively to provide a great place to work. This collaboration will be key to the way we shape the future HR landscape in terms of recruitment and onboarding and attracting the rights skills into the agency to deliver for our stakeholders.

A priority will be to continue with several training and development streams to empower our leaders and develop our teams, always improving and equipping our staff to provide the high-quality service expected of us. We will draw on these initiatives but also unite them to provide a focused staff development agenda tailored to the agency's ever-changing needs.

We understand the great development opportunities that apprenticeships can offer our staff and the variety of ways that they could be used within the agency. We will continue to promote apprenticeships across the VCA via our dedicated apprenticeship intranet page. This will engage managers and staff around the benefits of apprenticeships and provide simple steps on where to start. We will also increase the number of external campaigns that are attached to an apprenticeship as we understand the value that this has in providing new employees with a formal qualification that supports life-long learning.

We continue to work in a flexible way, and this has challenged us to better use technology to enable us to continue to deliver our services and provide support to our staff. We will be looking closely at the long-term effect on morale, connection, and communication to ensure we stay connected as an agency.

We continue to develop content for the intranet hub, and this gives us a great platform to provide our staff with much improved access to our HR news and guidance updates. We have developed comprehensive guidance on recruitment, learning and development and apprenticeships. The intranet provides a live communication stream for people news, initiatives, and success stories, allowing all of our staff to be involved, no matter where they are.

We continue to focus on health and wellbeing of our people. We have put in place various wellbeing initiatives including online mental health fitness sessions, flu vaccinations, health checks and online sessions highlighting what support was available from our employee assistance provider. We also improved our wellbeing intranet page, highlighting information relating to who our mental health first aiders, tips on maintaining wellbeing, support with financial wellbeing and where to go if staff were struggling.

To maintain, and where necessary grow our workforce, we have worked to improve our recruitment processes. We offer a face to face or online recruitment process to support the needs of candidates and our hiring managers.

A job evaluation and grading panel has been established to provide a rational basis for the maintenance of our grading structure. The panel will meet quarterly to receive updated training to ensure that all employees are competent in grading new roles to the organization at the appropriate grade. Staff training will be provided to employees who are new to the recruitment process, in either leading, or supporting, recruitment campaigns to ensure a consistent approach when sifting applications and interviewing potential candidates.

We will work with our Corporate Affairs team in developing our employee value proposition to further develop our ability to attract great people and build on our reputation as a great place to work. The HR internet page will continue to be updated with guidance so that employees can access training material more effectively. We will also create tailored candidate packs, specific to the role and department, which will be embedded in every advert. The HR team will review the onboarding and induction process to ensure that new employees receive a well-structured induction program for their first few months when joining the agency.

3.2 Diversity

Creating an inclusive culture is the most sustainable way of helping people to feel safe, happy, and more productive in work, making the organisation a great place to be for all. We want to ensure that every line manager has the skills, knowledge, and behaviors they need to build inclusive teams that allow everyone to thrive. We will work with DfT in moving towards a range of agency and department objectives that support the Civil Service Inclusion Strategy.

We will further develop partnerships with charities and stakeholders to understand how we can open career opportunities for a range of diverse groups. This year, we will work with the Prince's Trust to establish a talent pipeline in recruiting people from a range of diverse backgrounds.

A Neurodiversity support group has been established at within the organisation who will work with senior management to discuss how neurodiverse employees can further be supported within the agency. The HR team will work with the neurodiverse support group to develop new guidance on how line managers can support employees who identify as neurodiverse. Line managers will receive training on the implementation of the guide.

“Creating an inclusive culture is the most sustainable way of helping people to feel safe, happy and more productive in work, making the organisation a great place to be for all.”



3.3 Estates

The Estates team covers several key areas of the Agency. These include the management of Health & Safety, Facilities Management (FM), Sustainability, Vehicle Fleet and Physical Security.

As a priority we will, meet all statutory compliance obligations that are required by law in our areas of responsibility and strive to meet exemplary standards of 'Best Practice' wherever possible. For our daily operations, we aim to ensure that the running of our estate provides a safe and pleasant working environment that supports operational delivery in both a sustainable and efficient way. We also aim to provide the best facilities possible for anyone using our sites to ensure that their occupational health, wellbeing, and mental health needs are catered for. We compliment this by providing further specific information through staff engagement, trained support and the provision of specialist equipment where required.

In support of the Estates function, we attend numerous relevant DfT forums where key issues are discussed and best practice is shared. We also work in partnership with the other DfT agencies to manage a DfT estate-wide Total Facilities Management Contract (TFM) and have been key members in the development and procurement of 3rd generation of the contract. The key aims of this being to ensure a top-quality service is provided by the incumbent suppliers, that they in partnership with the VCA and other agencies, continuously develop and support key services and provide efficiency savings beyond any previous arrangements in place. They will, with the direction of our Estates team, deliver a safe, cost effective and timely management service of our FM requirements.

During recent years we have continued to carry out major refurbishment work to our buildings and facilities to improve the working environment and to facilitate hybrid working. This work has been carried out with sustainability in the forefront and aims to ensure that we adhere to a consistent and modern standard, meet all our staff needs and provide a safe and comfortable place to work.

“We also aim to provide the best facilities possible for anyone using our sites to ensure that their occupational health, wellbeing and mental health needs are catered for.”



3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability and reducing our environmental impacts continue to be a key focus for the Agency. Great progress continues to be made in this area and in fact, we continue to build on past achievements such as surpassed our commitments to the 2021 Greening Government Commitment (GGC). Despite the VCA's growth in recent years our CO₂ emissions continue to fall year on year resulting in further progress being made, well beyond the latest round of GGC targets. This progress has been driven by several factors such as:

- The use of modern materials whilst carrying out building refurbishments
- The introduction of improved building management systems
- The procurement of more efficient technology across the agency
- The removal of Fossil Fuel reliance for heating at our HQ site

In addition to this we are well on track to meet the Government Fleet Commitment to electrify all of our fleet by late 2027 with 66% of our vehicle fleet now 100% electric. To support this, we have ensured that we have the correct sustainable infrastructure in place as part of our refurbishment program to ensure we can meet our well-defined targets.

As defined by the current GGC target areas for sustainability (2021-2025), we will continue monitor our performance against the following parameters and aim to identify other areas where improvements could be made:

- Carbon reduction and Net Zero by 2050
- Minimising waste and promoting resource efficiency
- Provision of clean and plentiful water
- Sustainable procurement
- Nature recovery plans, Biodiversity, and green capital
- Adapting to Climate Change
- ICT and Digital Technology



3.5 Digital, Data and Technology

To support the VCA's strategic objectives, this year we will:

- Continue to improve our user experience by:
 - » Building new digital services to support our core certification activities
 - » Delivering new collaboration and conference technology
 - » Continuing to build on our service management capability, extending the use of IT Service Management tools to cover problem, change and asset management
 - » Support our business transformation with an integrated digital platform through the inclusion of time recording, expenses, and billing as well as the replacement of financial systems
 - » Improving our digital portal based on customer feedback and extend the service to our other type approval schemes and business areas

- Increase the value of our data by:
 - » Implementing a new strategic reporting platform with a reporting layer able to provide business intelligence to aid evidence-based decision making
 - » Providing the skills and knowledge to provide operational teams with self-serve reporting capabilities

- Protect our staff and digital technology from cyber threats by:
 - » Continuing to build on our user awareness
 - » Ensuring all services are secure by design, in line with central government standards
 - » Comply with, and accredit against the GovAssure standard

- Develop our Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) skills across the VCA by:
 - » Changing our ways of working and fully utilize the new digital services being delivered
 - » Embedding a skills framework for staff in Digital Services & Technology
 - » Increasing the digital dexterity of our people allowing us to be more collaborative, think analytically, and make creative use of technology
 - » Delivering training on our new digital tools and services across the organization to increase our capability and confidence in using our new integrated platform

3.6 Other Cross-department/agency commitments include:

Category	DfT / VCA target	2024 to 2025
Cross-department / agency commitments	Prompt payment - Payment of invoices within 5 working days.	80%
	Freedom of Information – Provide a response within 20 working days.	90%
	Parliamentary Questions – Provide a response by the due date.	100%
	Ministerial Correspondence – Provide a response within agreed DfT timescales.	95%
	Official Correspondence – Provide a response within 20 working days.	80%

| Annexes



Annex A

Note: Bracketed figures in the table below denote a debit (cost).

Financial forecast	Forecast Outturn	Business Plan
	2023 to 2024	2024 to 2025
	£'000	£'000
Statutory fee income	19,897	22,543
Other income	2,575	2,798
Total income	22,472	25,341
Staff costs	(13,817)	(14,093)
Travel & Subsistence	(2,628)	(2,715)
Agents fees	(4,257)	(4,269)
ICT charges	(3,125)	(3,250)
Accommodation	(767)	(780)
Consultancy and Professional Services	(332)	(250)
Postage and printing	(80)	(85)
Depreciation	(1,536)	(1,785)
Other costs	(616)	(625)
Total expenditure	(27,158)	(27,852)
Net Operating (cost)	(4,686)	(2,511)



Vehicle
Certification
Agency

Vehicle Certification Agency

An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport

Business Plan 2024 to 2025

For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

