



Vehicle  
Certification  
Agency

# Vehicle Certification Agency

An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport

**Business Plan 2023 to 2024**

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024





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# | Foreword





*“At the heart of this plan, remains our ambitious Agency transformation programme, which is delivering new and enhanced services for our customers and staff.”*

## 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 2023-24 financial year. It sets our plans and targets for the year ahead and describes how we will measure our performance against them.

At the heart of this plan, remains our ambitious Agency transformation programme, which is delivering new and enhanced services for our customers and staff. This programme is improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services and significantly enhancing and modernising how our customers are able to interact with us. We are now in the second year of the programme and excellent progress has already been made. The launch of our first online certification portal last year was a major step forward and we continue to build new services on this platform. Another pleasing part of the programme has been the way in which our organisation has evolved its approach to change, which is such a critical contributing factor to the success of any transformation. It has been incredibly rewarding to support the Executive Team on this journey.

The VCA's attitude to embracing change is also very evident in the approach it has taken to evolving vehicle technologies, including electrification and autonomy. The CEO, leadership team and those directly involved in this area can be rightly proud of the way they have responded to this global shift. As a result of their efforts, the organisation now has built a solid base of expertise in these evolving fields and is playing a valuable role in the UK and the International agenda in helping to evaluate and then phase in these technologies in a safe, responsible way. It has been great to see the progress made to date and this plan outlines how this will continue over the coming year.

I look forward to supporting the team to achieve the ambitions and deliverables outlined in this plan. I will do so with the help of my non-executive colleagues. In concluding I would like to recognise the contribution of Gary Dixon, who left the organisation recently. Gary brought a wealth of non-executive director experience to our Board, and we wish him all the very best.

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**Clive Scrivener | Non-executive Chair**



*“Diversity and inclusion are important threads that run through everything we do. Public service is at its best when it provides an inclusive environment where all can thrive and reflects the communities it serves.”*

## Introduction from Pia Wilkes

### Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) Business Plan for 2023-24.

This plan outlines our ambitions for the coming year and sets the tone for what I believe will be a busy and exciting period.

Demand for our core services continues to be high and this looks set to continue. In collaboration with the Department, we have recently introduced the full Great Britain (GB) vehicle type approval scheme. This will see demand increase further as this is adopted so we are not only helping to ensure that industry is ready for this change, but we are also building our capacity to deliver it.

A key objective for us over the coming year is to continue our business transformation journey. Last year we launched a digital portal to support the processing of provisional and full GB approval applications. This has helped to streamline the process and provides a much better user experience for customers and our staff alike. Over the coming year we will further develop our services to provide additional digital functionality, building on the benefits that we have already realised.

Our response to evolving technology in the automotive field also continues to be rightly at the forefront of our minds and a critical component in our ongoing planning. Of course, responding to change is something that we have always had to do but this is even more acute given the increased proliferation of complex electronics and automated driver assistance aids. Over recent years we have invested heavily in building our capability and capacity and this has paid real dividends. Our vision has and continues to be that we act as a knowledge hub in this area, and it has been extremely rewarding to see this vision take shape. This has meant that we have been able to provide even more expert support to policy colleagues on the development of approval frameworks but also means that as new technology is introduced, we have the knowledge to approve it and give the appropriate assurances. Our expertise is also acknowledged internationally and that very much endorses the steps we have taken and our standing in the approval community. Work will continue this year to build our capability across the organisation.

Diversity and inclusion are important threads that run through everything we do. Public service is at its best when it provides an inclusive environment where all can thrive and reflects the communities it serves. We are addressing this on several fronts, but recent successes include significant progress

in providing opportunities to neurodiverse individuals through a number of work placements. More is planned over the coming year and additionally, we plan to do more in the communities where we are based to help ensure that our workforce is representative. I am particularly passionate about this area and look forward to making further progress.

In concluding I would like to recognise the outstanding efforts of our staff, who continue to deliver and adapt to significant change. I'd also like to thank one of our outgoing Non-Executive Directors, Gary Dixon, for his support and wise council during his time with us.

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**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 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 adequate 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 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

“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.”



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

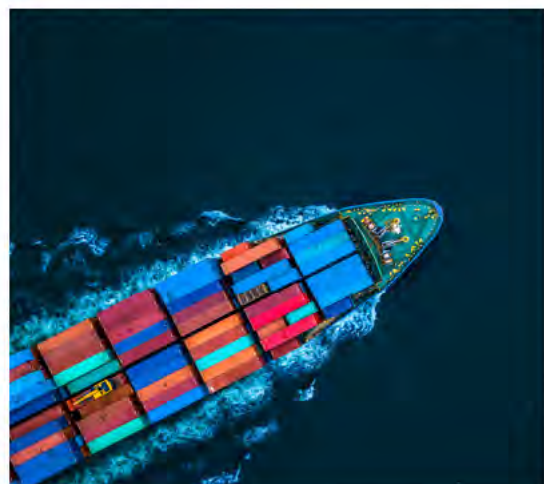
The Government is committed to enforcing vehicle safety and environmental standards. A Market Surveillance Unit exists within the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to check that vehicles and components available on the UK market comply with the legislative requirements to which they were approved.

The VCA plays a significant role in providing expert engineering resource to support this work. This will continue in 2023-24, 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. Each mode of transport has its own set of International Regulations, but all use packaging as defined in the United Nations (UN) recommendations for the transport of dangerous goods. The requirements for approved packaging are put into effect by separate Statutory Instruments. The team is also responsible for the appointment of suitable test and inspection bodies to conduct initial and periodic inspections of tanks and pressure receptacles in accordance with the regulation on the carriage of dangerous goods on the road (“ADR”), carriage of transportable pressure equipment TPED and the UK carriage regulations.

“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.”



It also operates a telephone and email enquiry service on behalf of the Department and undertakes several other functions in connection the UN based dangerous goods transport regulations.

### 1.6 Civil Traffic Enforcement

Based on other core expertise, VCA provides a certification service to local authorities who wish to operate bus lane and parking enforcement camera systems. This involves the evaluation of Technical Construction Files (TCFs) to assess compliance with the relevant requirements, with the ultimate aim of ensuring the integrity of evidence gathered using such systems. This service also covers authorities in Wales and the Highways England Thames Link Crossing at Dartford.

### 1.7 Data Provision

The VCA collects and publishes fuel consumption, CO<sub>2</sub>, 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 **1 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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 2023 to 2024



02.



# Plans for 2023 to 2024

The table at 2.4 highlights the main performance measures that we have agreed with the Department for 2023-24. The following sections explain in more detail the specific actions we will take to deliver against those objectives.

## Changing our Agency

### 2.1 Continue to take forward the Government Digital Strategy

We will continue to drive forward our plans to deliver new digital tools and systems to ensure that services are delivered as efficiently as possible and provide a great user experience. The organisation is embarked on an ambitious transformation programme. In the 2022-23 financial year, this saw the launch of a digital portal to support the delivery of both the provisional and full GB scheme applications. Over this financial year we will complete the next tranche of the programme, which will see additional functionality added to the portal as well as improvements to internal processes. The programme will result in significant improvements for customers and staff alike, establishing 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 the certifications process. We will provide further improvements to the portal throughout this year, including responding to user feedback.

#### 2.2.1 Technical Services

Our Operations department (Technical Services) plays a key role in the approval process, providing the technical expertise to deliver type approval 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.

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 the Type Approval Certification and Conformity of Production functions. 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 2023-24 financial year, the Statutory Operations department will 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 2023 we are anticipating demand for GB Type Approval to begin to increase, and we will ensure we are ready to deliver the anticipated volumes of approval applications within our agreed KPI.

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, such as Cyber Security. We will continue to invest in our team to develop expertise in Type Approval legislation and champion broad a skillset. This will be realised in new Compliance Officer roles being introduced and developed to undertake compliance reviews of test data to ensure GB standards are achieved.

We will deliver the recruitment strategy throughout the year to ensure we have the necessary resources for the increasing demand of the GB 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. We will continue to look to the future and introduce an apprenticeship scheme to the department to develop a new entry route into the VCA and improve resource planning, whilst creating exciting new opportunities across the UK.

“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.”



#### 2.2.4 Conformity of Production

During 2023 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 undertake this work using our ISO17021 process and continue to work with industry to increase awareness of the requirements to mitigate any possible delays. We have introduced a new KPI this year to monitor our performance in 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 accreditation with UKAS to include this new global approach following the business transformation activities and start preparatory work to expand the scope of accreditation to UK(NI) and UNECE legislation.

We will deliver the recruitment strategy throughout the year to ensure we have the necessary resources for the increasing demand of the GB Scheme, considering the global nature of the automotive industry. This includes looking to the future and utilising apprenticeships and trainee engineering schemes to develop a new entry route into 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. RTG 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 2023/24 the 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.

### 2.2.6 Connected and Automated Vehicles

In August 2022 the UK government published Connected and Automated Mobility 2025, a plan to realise the benefits of self-driving vehicles. This document set out the UK government's vision for Connected and Automated Mobility, but also set out how to get there. The commercialisation of self-driving vehicles is fast approaching, and it has been estimated that by 2035 40% of new car sales will have self-driving capability. To realise this ambition the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles run the cross governmental CAVPASS programme preparing the UK for the trialling, deployment, and certification of automated vehicles.

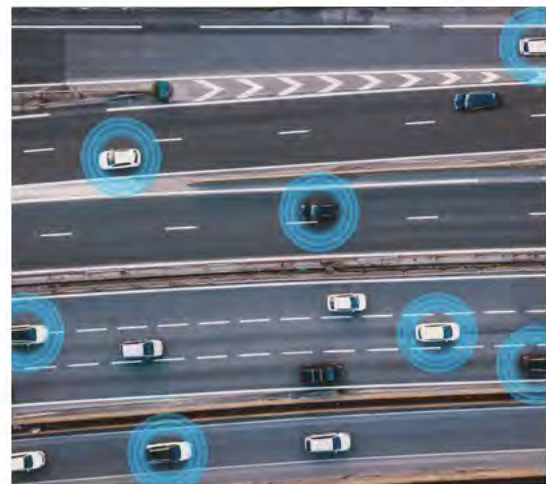
In 2019, we established the Automated Vehicle Technologies Group (AVT), a dedicated, highly skilled group of engineers to lead in the development and delivery of Connected and Automated Vehicle (CAV) approval services at National and International levels. The work of this group has been around 5 strategic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

1. Provide technical scrutiny at the Type Approval Authority level
2. Develop CAV skills globally within 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 2023-24 financial year the work of AVT will further these strategic areas.

In terms of support to the CAVPASS programme, we will continue to provide support to workstream activities by giving the Agency perspective to ensure that policy developments are appropriate. We will begin to support trialling organisations being funded through the Commercialising

“The commercialisation of self-driving vehicles is fast approaching, and it has been estimated that by 2035 40% of new car sales will have self-driving capability”



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. Lastly, we will take the first steps in preparing the Agency for the new self-driving vehicle safety regulatory framework.

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.

### 2.2.7 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.

The VCA has previously gained accreditation to ISO 17025 for our laboratory operations, and ISO 17020 for our inspection activities. These valued accreditations will be maintained and scope expanding to meet the changing legislative landscape. ISO17021 for Conformity of Production and ISO17065 for Product certification will continue to be developed during the financial year.

To support our quality management system the agency's internal quality and audit teams have been expanded to support the delivery of the 2023-24 audit plan.



## Finance and Efficiency

### 2.3 Finance

We will ensure that our financial management enables delivery against our strategic priorities, focussing on sustainability and value for money. We are embarked on a programme of business transformation, which is starting to deliver efficiencies, and will continue to do so. Work also continues to ensure that our fees reflect the cost of delivering an excellent service that meets the needs of our customers.

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

### 2.4 2023 to 2024 Key Performance Measures

Category	VCA Measure	In 2023 to 2024
<b>1. Changing our agency</b>	1.1 Actively progress the Government ICT and Digital strategies by using ICT to commence delivery of a wide-ranging programme of change, including:	
	Delivering the next tranche of the Agency business transformation programme, drawing on the work completed to date. The next phase to be completed by the end of March 24.	31 March 2024
	Build on the initial implementation of our new IT Service Management (ITSM) toolset, with the overall aim of improving the internal service offering by establishing new and improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Service Level Agreements (SLAs).</li> <li>b. Service Tiers.</li> <li>c. Automated Joiners, Movers, Leavers (JML).</li> </ul>	31 March 2024
	1.2 Continuing to diversify our recruitment and retention strategy by publishing an apprenticeship scheme for the required skills needed by the agency over the coming years. We will aim to recruit 5 apprentices by the end of March 2024.	31 March 2024
<b>2. Our services</b>	2.1 Type Approval Certification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	92%

Category	VCA Measure	In 2023 to 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance reviews for GB Type Approval Scheme applications to be completed within 10 working days of receipt of a valid work order and documentation</li> </ul>	92%
	2.2 Externally audited test reports deemed to have no critical defects.	99%
	2.3 Conformity of Production (CoP) – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> </ul>	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance Statements to be issued no later than 10 working days following the completion of the audit and the appropriate closure of all non-conformances raised.</li> </ul>	90%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conformity of Production Audit reports to be issued no later than 3 working days following the completion of the audit</li> </ul>	90%
	2.4 VCA customer satisfaction survey score to be 90% or higher.	90%
	2.5 VCA will continue to expand the scope of its ISO accreditation in line with operational requirements.	31 March 2024
<b>3. Financial responsibilities</b>	3.1 Agency Finance - Deliver the financial performance outlined in the Business Plan for the 2023-24 financial year.	31 March 2024
	3.2 Sick Absence - Ensure average number of working days lost to sickness absence does not exceed 6 days per FTE.	6 days

# | Delivering the plan



03.



# **I** Delivering the plan

## **3.1 Human Resources**

We will continue to 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 flexibility of working, recruitment and onboarding and attracting the rights skills into the agency in order to deliver to our stakeholders

A priority will be to continue with a number of 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 continue to 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 are focusing progress from last year on apprenticeships to support new technologies where we can. 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.

The progression of the Information Technology (IT) and Digital Strategies will help HR to improve the functionality and efficiency of its service platforms. Over the last year we have worked to develop our HR digital platforms to provide additional advice, guidance, and content during the pandemic and this has been invaluable. This work is ongoing so that we continually improve our user experience and functionality.

We continue to work in a flexible way, 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 wellbeing. 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, the provision of mental health guidebooks to all employees, and online sessions highlighting what support was available from our employee assistance provider. We also improved our wellbeing intranet pages highlighting information relating to our mental health first aiders, tips on maintaining wellbeing and where to go if staff were struggling.

In order 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. More training has been provided to staff on interview techniques so that they are equipped to present well during interviews. Our website platform now

allows us to further develop our ability to attract great people, building on our reputation as a great place to work and championing our employee value proposition. Looking at the year ahead, we will work to improve our recruitment intranet page so that hiring managers can access guidance quickly and staff 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.

### 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 behaviours they need to build inclusive teams that allow everyone to thrive. We will continue to build on the good work achieved through our Local Inclusion Plan, working in partnership with the DfT family to achieve our goal in becoming the leader on diversity and inclusion.

We will further develop partnerships with charities and stakeholders to understand how we can open up career opportunities within the neurodiverse community. On the back of last year's successful pilot, we will once again be taking part in the multi-award-winning Autism Exchange Internship Programme. This programme will see us offering an internship that provides workplace exposure and upskilling opportunities to young people with autism.

A new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy has been drafted for the 2023-24 financial year. Three main objectives have been outlined, in line with the Department for Transport, focusing on:

- Being Confidently Diverse
- Being Inclusive for Everyone
- Maximising Potential for All

An EDI Committee will be established within the VCA, amalgamating with the current Wellbeing Committee, who will now be responsible for delivering key actions within the EDI Strategy. Meetings will be held with existing committee members to discuss the change in structure,

“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.”



different champion roles available, such as LGBT Champion, as well as those members who would like to continue as part of the committee or step down. Job descriptions have been created for all champion roles and will be shared with committee members, outlining the roles and activities required. Additional training will be sought for each role, by the HR department, to ensure that champions can carry out their role to its full potential. A sponsor has been allocated, who will support the HR team in implementing the actions across the organisation and ensure that the intended outcomes are delivered.

### 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. We aim to ensure that the running of our estate provides a safe working environment and 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 do this by providing specific information through staff engagement, trained support and the provision of specialist equipment where required.

In support of the Estates function we attend numerous DfT forums where key issues are discussed, and best practice is shared. We also work in partnership with the other DfT agencies and the Environment Agency (EA) to manage a DfT estate-wide Total Facilities Management Contract and the procurement of next generation versions of the contract. The aim being to continuously develop and support efficiency savings over any previous arrangements in place and provide a safe, cost effective and timely management service of our FM requirements.

During recent years we have carried out refurbishment work to our buildings and facilities to ensure that these continue to be maintained to a consistent standard, meet staff needs and provide a safe and comfortable place to work.

Sustainability and reducing our environmental impacts continue to be a key focus for the Agency. Great progress continues to be made in this area

“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.”



and in fact, we surpassed our commitments to the 2021 Greening Government Commitment (GGC). We continue to make further progress beyond these targets with new GGC goals having been set for 2025 and 2032 respectively. This progress has been aided by selective building refurbishments, the better use of building management systems and the procurement of more efficient technology across the agency.

It is worth noting that there has been a continued reduction in our Carbon emissions year on year, despite increases in the number of staff employed on our sites.

The process of eliminating non-essential Single Use Plastics from our sites has now been completed with many items removed from both use and our supply chain.

In addition to achieving and exceeding the Government Fleet Commitment to electrify 25% of our vehicle fleet by 2022 we have included adding sustainable infrastructure as part of our refurbishment program to stay on track to meet the revised 100% electric fleet target before 2027.

Over the next proposed period of the GGC (2021-2025), we will monitor our performance against the following parameters:

- 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

Finally, some of the working practices deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic mean that sustainability figures that are recorded for the 20/21 and 21/22 reporting years will be unusually low. This is due primarily to the impact of remote working and reduced travel. We aim to learn from some of these working practices to benefit sustainability and continue to focus our attention on reducing our environmental impacts through sustainable practices.



### 3.4 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
  - » Replacing legacy devices, including laptops and mobile telephones
  - » Delivering new collaboration and conference technology
  - » Developing our service management capability
- Increase the value of our data by:
  - » Embedding a data architecture methodology
  - » Implementing new technology, utilising cloud services for storage and reporting
- Protect our staff and digital technology from cyber threats by:
  - » Building user awareness
  - » Continuing to understand and act on threats
  - » Demonstrating our commitment to good practice
- Develop our Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) skills across the VCA by:
  - » Delivering targeted training via differing delivery methods
  - » Embedding a skills framework for staff in Digital Services & Technology

### 3.5 Other Cross-department/agency commitments include:

Category	DfT / VCA target	2023 to 24
<b>Cross-department / agency commitments</b>	<b>Prompt payment</b> - Payment of invoices within 5 working days.	80%
	<b>Freedom of Information</b> – Provide a response within 20 working days.	90%
	<b>Parliamentary Questions</b> – Provide a response by the due date.	100%
	<b>Ministerial Correspondence</b> – Provide a response within agreed DfT timescales.	95%
	<b>Official Correspondence</b> – 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
	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
	£'000	£'000
Statutory fee income	18,976	18,456
Other income	2,631	2,873
<b>Total income</b>	<b>21,607</b>	<b>21,329</b>
Staff costs	(12,602)	(13,292)
Travel & Subsistence	(1,761)	(1,821)
Agents fees	(4,534)	(4,525)
ICT charges	(2,344)	(2,238)
Accommodation	(727)	(826)
Consultancy and Professional Services	(332)	(304)
Postage and printing	(80)	(75)
Depreciation	(1,349)	(1,140)
Other costs	(747)	(345)
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>(24,476)</b>	<b>(24,866)</b>
<b>Net Operating (cost)</b>	<b>(2,869)</b>	<b>(3,537)</b>



Vehicle  
Certification  
Agency

# Vehicle Certification Agency

An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport

## Business Plan 2023 to 2024

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

