7 December 2017

Dear Ms Hillier

HMRC signs Agreement for Lease for regional centre in Stratford

Following previous correspondence and dialogue about HMRC’s location strategy I would like to update you on progress of the plans for the future regional centre in Stratford as I recall this being of particular interest to you, not least due to being the member for a neighbouring constituency.

I can now confirm that HMRC has taken the first formal step in opening the new regional centre in Stratford with the signing of an Agreement for Lease for 14 Westfield Avenue, Stratford. This is another significant step in HMRC’s transformation which will contribute savings of £300 million up to 2025, annual cost savings of £74 million in 2025-26, rising to around £90 million from 2028.

When the Stratford Regional Centre opens in 2020-21, it will be home to around 3,800 full time equivalent (FTE) HMRC employees, making HMRC one of Stratford’s largest employers. HMRC is making a real, long-term commitment to Stratford. This means providing high quality, skilled jobs, contributing to the local economy and engaging with schools and universities locally and across the region. The Stratford Regional Centre provides HMRC with the opportunity to form strong relationships with the local community and become a visible and active contributor to the regeneration of the area.

The centre will be a state-of-the-art hub for HMRC staff, allowing them to work together in a modern environment that meets the highest standards. Teams based in Stratford will cover a range of work, including fraud investigation and intelligence, policy and corporate services working together to help the honest majority get tax right and to crack down on the dishonest minority.

It also provides a better value for money alternative to an equivalent central London location. Stratford offers excellent transport links to Central London and the wider region, all located

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Text Relay service number – 18001
in close proximity to Westfield Avenue. We envisage that the majority of staff in the London area and parts of the East of England will be able to travel to this new location.

As our intention is to move roles out of London over the coming years, Stratford Regional Centre will be smaller than originally announced in 2015 (3,800 rather than 5,500 FTE). This will enable us to improve the balance and spread of roles, senior grades and professions in some of the other regional centres, reduce our reliance on London, and give us more flexibility as well as saving money through only keeping essential roles in the London area. We expect the reduction in London to be covered by natural wastage and recruitment controls over the coming years. We have the option to keep Jubilee House in Stratford open for longer, should we need to, in order to accommodate existing people as work is gradually moved to other regional centres.

We will continue to keep you informed on our plans for the new regional centre, but if in the meantime you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact our regional implementation lead for Stratford, Sara OByrne. If you would like more information please contact sara.obyrne@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

JON THOMPSON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND PERMANENT SECRETARY