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Ysgrifennydd Parhaol
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay
Public Accounts Committee Chair
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Nick,

01 June 2017

During my introductory session with the Committee on 13 March 2017 Mr Lee Waters AM asked me about the challenges digitalisation will bring to the Welsh Government and the organisation's readiness to respond. I promised to write with considered thoughts on this important subject.

Background

In 2014 the Welsh Government Board approved the organisation's first Digital Action Plan (2014-2017). The plan set out to improve the Welsh Government's digital information and services, and is published on our website, please see a link for the Committee's reference: <http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/public-services/digital-first/?lang=en>

In 2014, the Welsh Government assessed itself as Level 2 on the Digital Capability Framework¹ - "senior management in place with a remit to set targets, develop overarching vision and plan, and develop necessary capability and culture. Digital is seen as a key transformation tool and advocacy is strong at key parts of the organisation."

Since then there has been significant progress. We have appointed a Chief Digital Officer and created a strategy team, established a Digital and Data Group, chaired by the Minister for Skills and Science to provide leadership and direction, implemented a digital learning programme for staff, and delivered a range of new and improved digital services.

¹ Adapted from the Framework published in the [UK Government Digital Strategy](#) and the [Digital Capability Framework](#) submitted by Kieran O'Hea (Digitigm) to the consultation phase of the Digital Agenda for Europe.



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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding

We consider that we have now reached Level 4 of the Digital Capability Framework - “senior management making significant progress in delivering the vision and plan. Processes across the organisation have been converted to digital, providing tangible benefits and efficiencies. Advocacy is increasing.” Our aim by 2020 is to be at Level 5 - “digital is at the heart of policy and strategy, contributing to all business processes and objectives. Digital culture is strong: agile, user-centred, innovative, and responsive.”

The actions in the Digital Action Plan (2014-2017) are now largely complete, and the need for a refreshed plan has been recognised. In April 2017, the Welsh Government Board considered the draft Digital Action Plan (2017-2020) which is now being finalised.

The Digital Action Plan (2017-2020) will be a comprehensive account of our objectives and planned action, so I do not want to pre-empt it too much here. However I would like to expand on four themes raised specifically during my introductory session with the Committee: digital mindset; specialist skills; enabling good government business; and big data. Given the recent widespread cyber attacks, I would also like to comment on resilience.

Fostering a digital mind-set

Digital technologies have had over many years, and will of course continue to have, a huge impact on the way people in Wales live, including how they access information and public services. Taking Wales Forward states: ‘We need to go digital-first in our delivery of government services.’ Understanding the opportunities that these technologies present for government is an essential part of the skill-set required by modern civil servants.

During the discussion with the Committee, the excellent work carried out by some of the UK Government’s big transactional offices in Wales was mentioned. The Welsh Government also provides a small number of direct transactional services to the public. The Welsh Government currently has 22 live digital services, and we run over 100 websites. We have made good progress in the digitisation of services, exemplified by *Rural Payments Wales Online* which allows 18,000 farmers to apply for and manage payments online. *Hwb* (hwb.wales.gov.uk), which hosts a national collection of digital tools and resources to support parents, teachers and children in Wales, is an outstanding example of services being developed and delivered online; Wales is ahead of the rest of the UK in this area. Digital technologies are also challenging and changing the way that we engage with citizens. Our *Real Conversation Events*, used to develop the Welsh Government’s Youth Entrepreneurship Programme 2016-2020, are a good example, and digital engagement channels for the Valleys Taskforce are live now - see Twitter, #TrafodyCymoedd #TalkValleys.



While there are strong examples of digitally-led work, improving skills and capability in this area is, and will continue to be, a priority. As part of the Welsh Government's Digital Action Plan (2014-2017), a digital learning programme was established for staff. The programme includes beginner and intermediate digital awareness courses; courses focusing on 'Agile' ways of working; and a digital leadership master-class for the Senior Civil Service and Executive bands. More than 500 members of staff have attended over the last year and more courses are planned. Classroom learning is supported by online training modules, inter-change opportunities, and more informal 'lunch and learn' sessions.

One of my early priorities as Permanent Secretary is to ensure that the Welsh Government Civil Service has the skills and capability it needs for the future. I will soon launch an organisation-wide engagement exercise to identify our skills gaps. However, in advance of that data coming through, I have already agreed with the Senior Team that policy skills, leadership, and digital skills will be a core part of a new corporate learning programme for staff.

Specialist digital skills

In addition to what we might describe as 'generalist' Civil Servants working on policy development and delivery, there are over 100 members of staff in the Welsh Government with digital and ICT roles that require specialist skills and qualifications, such as programmers, IT support specialists, and web designers. There are clearly potential benefits from reducing reliance on external contractors for this kind of work, in terms of cost, security, and sustainability. Bringing specialist skills in-house often necessitates external recruitment rather than retraining, and in a time of very tight resource constraints this is clearly a difficult challenge. However, the First Minister recognises that certain key skills sets will require this approach.

In April 2017, the organisation's external recruitment panel agreed the appointment of ten people with specialist digital skills to be deployed across departments. The Welsh Government's next apprenticeship scheme will include a digital cohort. We are also bringing data apprentices into the organisation in partnership with the ONS. In the longer term, workforce planning for digital roles will need to be built into the Welsh Government's wider workforce planning work. A cross-organisation digital workforce group has been established to support this.



Enabling good government business

During my introductory session I spoke about the opportunities that digital technologies offer to support better ways of doing the nuts and bolts of government business – I had in mind working effectively as a team, holding productive meetings, and communicating with colleagues across geographical boundaries. I know that my predecessor led a significant piece of work to improve the Welsh Government's use of email and electronic record keeping. Work is ongoing to upgrade the Welsh Government's telephone provision and support staff to connect more effectively with their colleagues using instant messaging and real-time online availability. Feedback from staff participating in the recent flexible working pilot in our Merthyr office particularly emphasised the importance of reliable and readily available mobile IT equipment to support working at home and on the move. The Welsh Government's Board has been testing software and hardware which allows its meetings to be 'paperless'. I have just approved a further year of this trial to make sure we learn as much as possible about the benefits and the changes in skills and behaviour this kind of working requires.

Resilience

While I agree with the point that Mr Waters made during my recent introductory session that this is *not all about kit*, having the right equipment available and operating effectively is of course essential for digital working - which brings me to resilience. The recent unprecedented cyber attacks on organisations across the world have emphasised once again the huge challenges posed by keeping IT systems and equipment operational, and crucially, secure. As the Welsh Government has developed more digital services and ways of working our dependence on the technology that supports them has increased. The impact of technology failure and increasingly cyber crime presents a much higher risk to the delivery of our work than previously. To address this risk the Welsh Government has invested in its core systems and requires assurance standards for its suppliers to be met. We have also developed the procedures needed to mobilise quickly in the case of an incident. IT resilience is on the Welsh Government's Corporate Risk Register and will remain a priority area for the Board. The First Minister's statement on 16 May 2017 also gives due praise to the IT resilience and emergency response work carried out by NHS Wales and other public bodies in Wales.

Exploiting Big Data

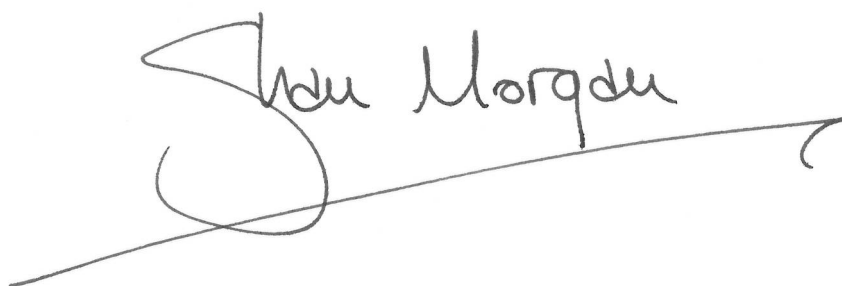
Digital transformation not only results in more data being produced, in a more timely fashion, it also provides new ways to collect, manage and analyse data. As an organisation the Welsh Government continues to look at ways in which we can better exploit data using both traditional and innovative techniques. For example, colleagues in Transport are making innovative use of anonymous big data sets on GPS and mobile phone data for transport analysis.

In recent years the Welsh Government has also improved its own statistical and spatial data, making it available in machine readable formats, and as outlined in the Welsh Government Open Data Plan, is committed to pushing forward with the open data agenda.

With an increasing number of data driven organisations being established – as noted by Mr Waters - there is the potential for Wales to become a world leading data-hub. Colleagues are already working on projects with both the ONS Data Science Campus and the Administrative Data Research Centre for Wales, and over the years we have provided significant funding to develop the SAIL data bank in Swansea University. Our work with the Administrative Data Research Centre for Wales has led to publications looking at the outcomes of policy interventions such as supporting people and fuel poverty by linking data – securely and ethically – from different sources. The Welsh Government is seen as one of the leading partners of the UK Administrative Data Research Network.

I hope that this update has provided the Committee with assurance that digital technologies and the challenges and opportunities they present are high on the Welsh Government's agenda and that progress is being made. I look forward to sharing the Digital Action Plan (2017 – 2020) with the Committee in due course.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Shan Morgan'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S' that extends across the line below it.

Shan Morgan

Ysgrifennydd Parhaol/ Permanent Secretary
Llywodraeth Cymru/ Welsh Government



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DIGITAL ACTION PLAN

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1. Our vision

Making it easier and more convenient for customers to deal with us, wherever they are and whenever they choose

By this we mean that our digital services are so straightforward and convenient that those who want to use them will, whilst those who cannot or do not want to are not excluded.

Achieving this vision means that we will:

- have strong digital leadership
- have the right skills to understand and realise the benefits of digital
- have a reputation for high-quality, efficient, user centric, secure digital services
- use digital to deliver better policy outcomes and value for money
- manage the digital continuity of our information to ensure that it is usable, accessible, understandable and trustworthy
- use data and customer feedback to continually improve our services

A blueprint for how we will achieve this vision is in [Section 5](#) of this Plan.

2. What this Plan is about

This is a three-year plan to improve the Welsh Government's digital information and services and save money. 'Digital' means different things to different people. For the purposes of this Plan it covers:

- i. publishing user-focused content
- ii. our use of social media to engage with the public, customers and stakeholders on our legislation and policy-making
- iii. the complete transformation of transactional services
- iv. our approach to assisted digital (supporting those who cannot use digital services independently)

All the above are underpinned by our ability to use the information we collect, store and retrieve about our customers much better than we do today.

We already use many digital tools and technologies to provide services to the people of Wales. Our services are both informational, e.g. [wales.gov.uk](#), and transactional, e.g. WEFO Online. [Annex 1](#) is a pictorial representation of the current state of our transactional services. It shows that while we already provide a small number of digital transactional services, there are opportunities around a range of other services we provide in a semi-digital way. [Annex 2](#) shows the current status of our information provision. It shows that we have a small number of 'core' information platforms but that we also have a large number of other individual and sometimes

isolated websites where we provide subject and customer specific information. Taken together these annexes show that over time our digital estate has grown organically in a way that does not represent value for money or provide a consistently good customer experience.

This Plan contains 20 actions that we will take which will lead us towards providing more cost-effective services whilst meeting customer needs. The actions are intended to move us up to Level 3 in the Digital Capability Framework (see [Section 3.3](#)). Digital transformation cannot be delivered overnight and will require sustained effort and commitment over a number of years.

2.1 What this Plan does not include

This Plan does not cover digital services provided by Welsh public sector bodies such as the NHS or local authorities. Nor is this Plan about ICT (infrastructure, hardware or software etc) although our ability to use ICT (including skills such as an ability to use email, word processors, spreadsheets and the internet) is important to truly understand the opportunities provided by digital. The Welsh Government ICT Strategy (2012-2016) sets out our approach to ICT.

This Plan is also not designed to be an information management strategy although our approach to treating information as a valued asset, managing it properly, making sure it is fit for purpose, making it standardised and linkable, reusing it and publishing it is fundamental to us providing good digital services.

This Plan does not address digital inclusion, which is about making sure that people have the ability to use the internet to do things that benefit them every day. The Welsh Government Digital Inclusion Framework and Delivery Plan sets out our actions on this matter.¹

It is also not about improving broadband availability across Wales. This is being addressed through our Superfast Wales project and a range of other related broadband improvement activities.

3. Why we need to act

3.1 Because we've said that we will

One of our Programme for Government commitments is to implement *Delivering a Digital Wales*² - using digital technologies to provide better, more cost-effective and accessible services for citizens, businesses and communities. Moreover, the Welsh Government ICT Strategy (2012-2016) re-states our vision as an "ICT organisation that has the customer's interests at heart and identifies innovative solutions to meet

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/digital-inclusion/?lang=en>

² <http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/?lang=en>

business needs.” The Welsh Government has been working towards this goal but this Plan involves a step change in how we exploit digital to deliver our business.

In addition, Welsh Ministers have endorsed a Digital First³ approach for the whole Welsh public sector following a recommendation made by the Digital Wales Advisory Network (DWAN) in its *Digital First: Delivering Welsh Public Services Online* report.⁴

“Digital First is about delivering public services that are focused on the needs of the citizen. We want to make it much easier for people to find and use public services – at any time and on any device.”

Minister for Economy, Science and Transport (March 2013).

3.2 Because our customers expect us to

According to Ofcom research, 100% of premises in Wales are able to receive fixed broadband (ADSL), with 41% having access to fibre broadband, and 98% having outdoor 3G mobile coverage from at least one operator. In 2013 broadband take-up in Wales was 66% and smartphone take-up was 49%.⁵ Approximately four in five adults in Wales have access to the internet at home⁶ and Welsh citizens claim to spend an average of 14 hours per week online.⁷

Our customers’ expectations are being shaped by their experiences of transacting with the likes of Amazon and eBay – organisations that put the user at the heart of their business. As Figure 1 shows, our customers are conducting personal transactions online: around six in ten internet users buy goods or services online and a similar number perform personal banking, financial and investment activities.⁸

84%	Email
63%	Buying or ordering tickets, goods or services
58%	Personal banking, financial and investment activities
45%	Listening to the radio or watching TV programmes
26%	Selling goods or services

Figure 1: Selected activities carried out by internet users⁹

In Wales, almost two thirds of adults have accessed public service websites in the past 12 months. This figure remains significant even among those groups that are less likely to use the internet: almost half of adults living in social housing and over a third of people between 65 and 74 years of age have done so.¹⁰ As Figure 2 shows, Welsh citizens are already heavy consumers of non-devolved digital public services.

³ <http://gov.wales/topics/science-and-technology/digital/public-services/digital-first/?lang=en>

⁴ <http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/130304digitalfirsten.pdf>

⁵ https://www.ofcom.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/24576/2013-cmr-wales.pdf (Ofcom 2013), p.8

⁶ National Survey for Wales (April 2012-March 2013)

⁷ Communications Market Report: Wales (Ofcom 2013), p.64

⁸ National Survey for Wales (January-March 2012)

⁹ National Survey for Wales (January-March 2012)

¹⁰ National Survey for Wales (March 2012-April 2013)

UK Government service	Estimated number of online transactions by Welsh users per year
Tax a vehicle	1.4 million
Corporation tax	270,000
Practical driving test bookings	80,000
Theory driving test bookings	80,000
Passport applications	30,000

Figure 2: Estimated numbers of online transactions by Welsh citizens and businesses using selected UK Government services online, October 2012-September 2013¹¹

The UK Government has embarked on a radical programme of digital transformation that aims to make digital services “so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them prefer to do so.”¹² It has committed to redesigning and rebuilding 25 ‘exemplar’ services by July 2015.¹³ Figure 3 shows the forecast number of Welsh citizens using some of the forthcoming ‘exemplar’ services every year. Through the consumption of non-devolved services, the UK Government is increasingly providing Welsh customers with an experience that compares favourably with the best on the internet.

UK Government ‘exemplar’ service	Forecast number of Welsh users
Universal Credit	500,000
View driving record	300,000
Electoral registration (applications)	250,000

Figure 3: Forecast of Welsh citizens using selected UK Government ‘exemplar’ services online every year¹⁴

Prior to embarking on the transformation of its transactional services, the UK Government radically simplified, consolidated and improved its online publishing approach. GOV.UK was developed as a single, consistent publishing platform to house the digital content for 24 Whitehall departments and over 150 agencies and other public bodies – many of whom deliver information to Welsh customers. Thousands of people from across the UK, including Wales, visit GOV.UK every week to find information on pensions, foreign travel advice, maternity and paternity leave, bank holidays and many other topics. People who have visited GOV.UK have found it simpler, clearer and much easier to find information than the websites it replaced;¹⁵ it has raised the bar for public service information provision and the model used is being copied by a number of countries across the world.¹⁶

¹¹ Multiplying [Transactions Explorer](#) data for the UK by 0.05 (the Welsh share of the UK population), rounded to the nearest 10,000.

¹² UK Government Digital Strategy: <http://www.publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/transformation>

¹⁴ Multiplying [UK forecasts](#) by 0.05.

¹⁵ <http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/2012/01/13/quantitative-testing-betagov/>

¹⁶ Minister for the Cabinet Office: “Foreign delegations from as far afield as South Korea, Kazakhstan, and the Netherlands have visited the Government Digital Service in Holborn, keen to learn from their experience. The New Zealand government is using our open code to build its own version of GOV.UK.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sprint-14-speech-by-francis-maude>

Because we have not had an organisation-wide approach to digital, we have not taken advantage of the opportunity to exploit the standards, design, code and other assets that the UK Government has developed.

As an organisation Welsh Government publishes a huge amount of information including policy consultations, statutory guidance, ministerial letters, newsletters and research. Indeed, we have 34,000 bilingual published pages on wales.gov.uk alone.

By contrast, we deliver a far smaller number of transactional services than the UK Government. For example, there are around 60,000 customers who have received payments from us while the Department for Work and Pensions alone serves over 20 million customers.¹⁷ To date, our digital services, both informational and transactional, have not been subjected to such a systematic review and transformation process as those provided by the UK Government. If we do not act to improve our offering then Welsh citizens will get an increasingly inconsistent experience of government online and we will risk being seen as outdated.

3.2.1 Commission on Public Sector Governance and Delivery

The Commission on Public Sector Governance and Delivery identified that the use of information and technology in public services is not good enough to meet either expectations of the public or the needs of the organisations concerned. It said that securing benefits such as integrated, effective information management can only be achieved through a strategy and programme, which prioritises, plans and delivers improvements in digital and information services across the public sector in Wales. It recommended action to provide “joined up, digitally transformed services which deliver better outcomes and more efficient services for citizens.”¹⁸

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about>

¹⁸ Commission on Public Service Reform and Delivery, [Final Report](#) (2013), p. 152

3.3 Because we need to improve what we're already doing

We already provide many digital information and transactional services but we have significant potential to improve. We have assessed ourselves at Level 2 in the Digital Capability Framework set out in Figure 3.

MATURITY	5	Digital is at the heart of policy and strategy, contributing to all business processes and objectives. Digital culture is strong: agile, user-centred, innovative, and responsive.
	4	Senior management have made significant progress in delivering the vision and plan. Processes across the organisation have been converted to digital, providing tangible benefits and efficiencies. Advocacy is increasing.
	3	Senior management in place with a remit to set targets, develop over-arching vision and plan, and develop necessary capability and culture. Digital is seen as a key transformation tool and advocacy is strong at key parts of the organisation.
	2	Some digital services, but often of limited quality. Digital teams in place but tend to be silos in business units or programme teams and have limited budget and remit. Senior digital management not in place.
	1	No awareness of digital capability, no resources allocated, no digital strategy, plan or metrics, no understanding of best practice, no digital services.

Figure 3: Digital Capability Framework¹⁹

“Going digital” is not just a case of delivering our services better. It involves a change of mindset in all aspects of our business and in particular affects those staff involved in communications and marketing, IT, knowledge management, operational delivery, policy delivery, procurement and contract management, project and programme management, research and statistics. This equates to at least 75% of our staff.²⁰

Figure 4 below shows the key essential inter-related building blocks which need to be in place to move us up the Capability Framework. These blocks (digital, technology, communications and policy) are supported by us using the information and data we have on our customer better, underpinned by the right skills and training to allow us to do so.

¹⁹ Adapted from the Framework published in the [UK Government Digital Strategy](#) and the [Digital Capability Framework](#) submitted by Kieran O’Hea (Digitigm) to the consultation phase of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

²⁰ <http://wales.gov.uk/about/civilservice/how-we-work/facts-figures/our-role-as-an-employer/welshgovernmentemployerequality/welsh-government-employers-equality-report-12-13/?skip=1&lang=en>

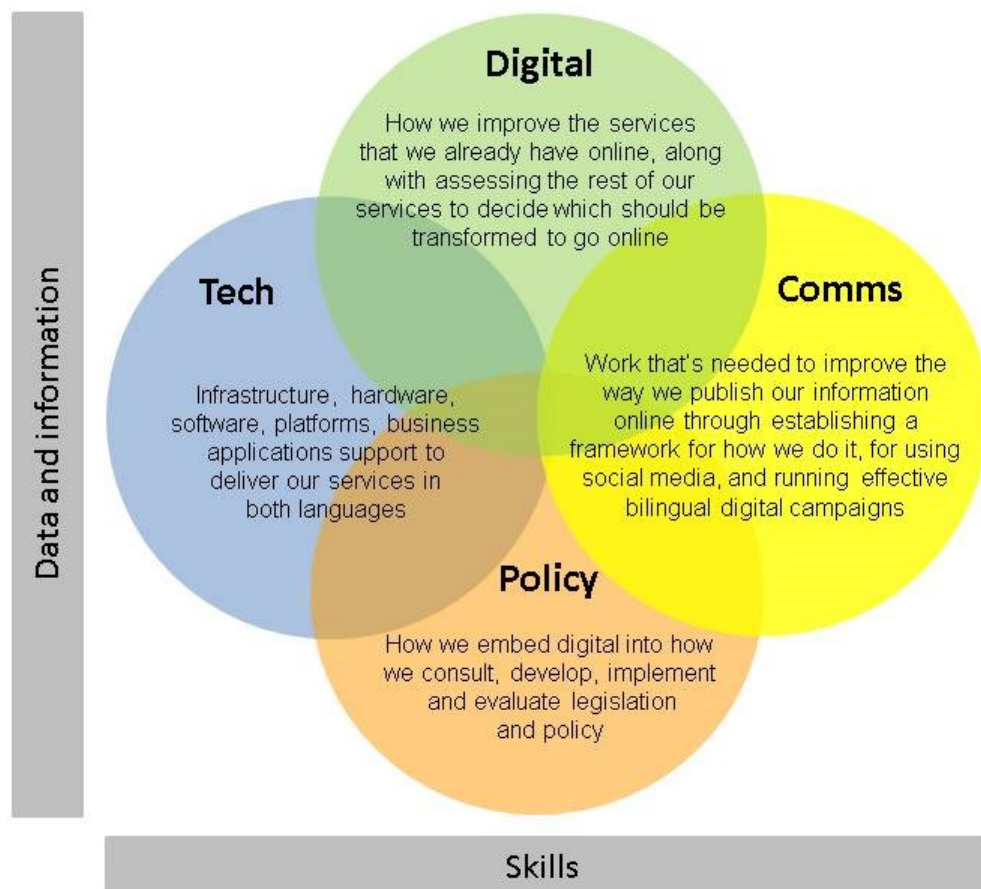


Figure 4: Essential elements to the digital transformation of Welsh Government

We currently have all of these operating within and sometimes across Welsh Government. However, they are pocketed, exist in silos, and we do not maximise them to best effect in the way we deliver our digital business and online presence. In turn, this creates confusion, duplication, frustration, wastes money and hampers our ability to get on with delivering our business.

3.4 Because there are benefits to be had

3.4.1 Customer benefits

UK Government research has found that saving time is the primary customer benefit of using a digital service.²¹ With digital, there is no waiting in a queue in an office or on hold on the phone. Saving customers time also saves them money: it has been estimated that an hour spent interacting with government costs the average citizen

²¹ Digital Landscape Research, <http://www.publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/research/#fig-4>

£14.20.²² Other aspects of digital services that are appreciated by customers include accessibility outside office hours and ease of use compared to other channels. In addition, because accessing services in Welsh either face-to-face or over the phone is often not straightforward, the provision of multilingual digital services that are ‘always on’ makes it easier for customers to access services in the language of their choice.

3.4.2 Financial benefits

Improving how we use digital will also bring us financial benefits. Service redesign can also deliver savings: for some government services the average cost of a digital transaction is almost 20 times lower than the cost of a telephone transaction, about 30 times lower than the cost of postal transaction and about 50 times lower than a face-to-face transaction.²³ We can expect to make savings by re-using digital service components that we already own. Too often we procure multiple solutions to fix the same problem faced by different parts of the organisation – sometimes knowingly, but done to meet a specific, urgent business need. The continued pressure on our budget means that addressing this situation is both increasingly unavoidable and ever more urgent. We simply cannot make the financial savings we need without major changes in the way we operate.

There are also financial benefits associated with how we collect, store and re use information. Adopting the Open Standards Principles²⁴ will help realise financial benefits as well as putting users at the heart of our standards choices.

3.4.3 Reputational benefits

As a modernised government providing improved digital services, it is likely that our customers’ perception of us will improve. One of the UK Government’s 25 ‘exemplar’ services is the Lasting Power of Attorney application run by the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG). After the public beta service was launched in July 2013, the OPG had to update its systems to allow staff to record positive feedback – prior to redesign it had only ever received negative feedback.²⁵

We will also change the way we are perceived by our own staff and by those who are interested in working for us. UK Government departments such as the Ministry of Justice have found that creating the right conditions for digital transformation has given them a reputation as inspirational places to work, and they have attracted and retained high-calibre people as a result.²⁶

²² <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/cost-of-time.pdf>

²³ Driving Standards Agency data quoted in UK Government Digital Efficiency Report, <http://www.publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/efficiency/#introduction>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-standards-principles>

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/transformation/lasting-power-of-attorney>

²⁶ ‘Building digital capability’ slides from Sprint 14, <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2014/02/12/sharing-sprint-14/>

3.4.4 Welsh Language

Welsh Ministers have stated their ambition and expectation that Welsh speakers “should be able to conduct their lives electronically through the medium of Welsh, should they so desire, including for...informational [and] transactional purposes.”²⁷ Our Welsh Language Strategy recognises that we have an important leadership role to play in achieving this ambition, including ensuring that we – and the rest of the public sector – are developing best practice in this field.²⁸

Whilst we currently provide the majority of our digital services bilingually, our approach is not consistent and this has a negative impact on the user experience. The forthcoming Welsh Language Standards will place duties on us to deliver services with front- and back-end systems that can work in both Welsh and English, and to promote our Welsh services and Welsh more generally. The way in which we design new services and deploy new technologies must improve the Welsh language user experience and empower people to use Welsh more often when dealing with us.

3.4.5 Compliance, Continuity and Preservation

The amended European Directive on the Re-use of Public Sector Information 2013/37/EU requires the Welsh Government to make the digital information we produce available for re-use and recommends that data/information is available to people in digital format. This involves:

- the ready identification of documents that are available for re-use
- the availability of public sector documents for re-use at marginal cost
- clarity of any charges to be made for re-use
- processing of applications for re-use in a timely, open and transparent manner
- application of fair, consistent and non-discriminatory processes
- transparency of terms, conditions and licences
- establishment of a quick and easily accessible complaints process

Digital continuity and continued access to our digital information is vital for us as Government. As a Public Records body we have a legal obligation to ensure we have continued access to our digital information in the future. There are a range of activities we should be doing to achieve this including using agreed file formats, having a consistent way of transferring digital information into storage and maintaining its continued accessibility.

3.4.6 Economic benefits

- Direct benefits through smarter procurement

²⁷ [Iaith fyw: iaith byw](#), p.46

²⁸ [Iaith fyw: iaith byw](#), p.47

Digital technologies offer opportunities for innovative, smarter approaches to procurement and make it easier for smaller firms to access procurement opportunities.

The use of digital procurement tools across the Welsh public sector has helped generate significant process efficiencies, cash savings and sustainability benefits. Simplified, standardised processes have made procurement more straightforward for both the public sector and the suppliers with whom they trade, leading to faster processes, reduced payment times and administrative savings. Over the last five years the measured benefits of our eProcurement programme were efficiency savings of £84million and savings of 187 tonnes of CO₂; 3,120 trees and 57,627 reams of paper by moving to 'paperless' processes.

The Welsh Government's own online Supplier Qualification Information Database (SQulD) simplifies part of the procurement process saving suppliers time and cost in bidding for public sector work. It has given smaller, more local businesses better access to contract opportunities and Welsh contractors are now winning 75% of all major contracts and framework awards placed via www.Sell2Wales.gov.uk -up from around 30% prior to its introduction.

All major public bodies in Wales use the online sell2wales portal to advertise contract opportunities, meaning that suppliers have one source of information to search in order to bid for public contracts. Visibility of lower value contracts is of paramount importance to smaller, more local suppliers and the number of sub-OJEU contract opportunities advertised via sell2wales stands at 81% of all contracts advertised during 2013-14.

Building social clauses into public sector contracts as part of our Community Benefits policy is also having a positive impact on the Welsh economy. Community Benefits (across 80 projects) are valued in excess of £4.2billion – much of which has been re-invested in Wales through salaries and spend with Wales-based businesses.

- Indirect benefits through making public sector data more accessible

We can also help boost the Welsh economy by working to increase the economic impact of our published information and by releasing new information to expand the market. Research commissioned by the UK Government as part of the Shakespeare Review would suggest that there are benefits for Wales from open data.²⁹

“Knowledge is a source of competitive advantage in the ‘information economy’, and for this reason alone it is economically important that public information is widely diffused.”³⁰

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shakespeare-review-of-public-sector-information>

³⁰ [Review of Recent Studies on Public Sector Information Re-Use and Related Market Developments](#), G. Vickery, 2011, p.3

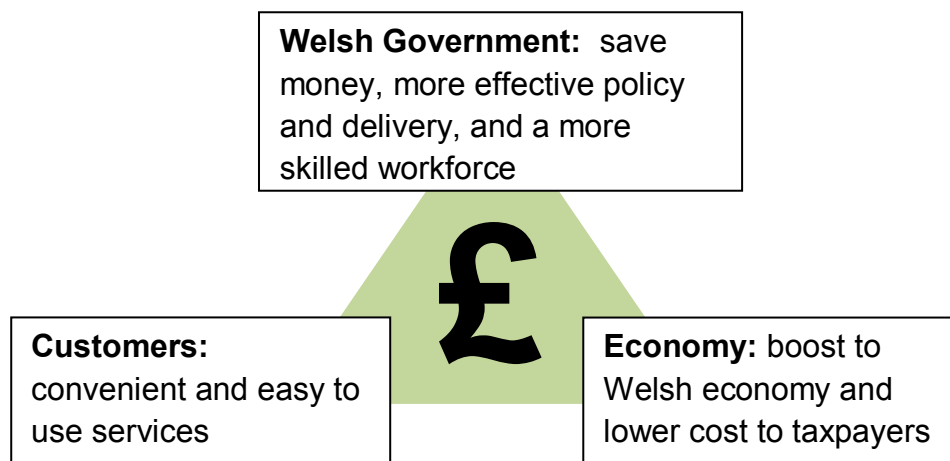


Figure 5: The main beneficiaries of this Plan

4. Where we are now

As explained earlier, Annexes 1 and 2 are a pictorial representation of the current status of the Welsh Government's digital services. [Annex 1](#) categorises our transactional services according to the nine types of customer interaction with government. The inner ring contains those services that we already provide digitally, while the outer ring includes non-digital services which have the potential to use digital to improve their delivery.

[Annex 2](#) shows the breadth of websites currently being used to deliver Welsh Government information. It indicates that we have a number of websites, platforms, infrastructures, content management systems, contracts and people supporting a disjointed plethora of information provision. All of these have involved procurements, delivery projects, and support contracts. A major programme of work is starting to better understand the real whole life costs associated with the way we deliver our information digitally with a view to rationalising and streamlining our approach to achieve savings and to improve the journey for our customers.

The annexes have informed our self-assessment against the European Digital Capability Framework, which puts us at Level 2 (see [Section 3.3](#)). This Section explains in more detail the reasons for this result and the actions described in [Section 6](#) are designed to move us to Level 3.

4.1 Capability

4.1.1 Leadership

There is currently no individual with responsibility for keeping Welsh Government Board members up to speed with global digital developments, or for translating how these can help us improve the way we deliver our services. The Prime Minister has publicly stated that such advice to UK Government Ministers has “helped establish a digital culture at the heart of government. That culture is, in turn, transforming how government works and stimulating a new digital economy, improving millions of lives every day.”³¹

There is also no recognised and empowered leader to drive digital across WG. Instead we have a federated and dispersed approach to how we deliver digital services, and the IT systems which support them. DGs decide on a case-by-case basis according to their individual priorities – rather than on the overall priorities of the Welsh Government.

We need an empowered, recognised and strong Digital Leader (DL) to fill this gap and be a strong advocate for digital transformation, across and within DG areas. The DL would set our strategic digital goals and use digital to deliver business and culture improvements across WG. They would also act as Head of Profession for digital to develop and embed digital skills across all the Professions in WG. The DL needs to be supported by a similarly empowered network of Leaders to lead digital transformation in their respective DG areas.

The UK Government recognises the DL function as being central to successful digital transformation³² and many UK Government departments have recruited Digital Leaders to lead their digital transformation programmes.³³ The job description for DLs³⁴ designates their main responsibilities as leadership on digital, deliver excellent digital services, and implement significant business and cultural changes across organisations. Culture change is fundamental: improving how we produce digital services is more about cultural and behavioural change than IT.

Actions to improve Leadership:

1. Nominate/appoint an independent senior industry advisor to provide inspiration, experience, scrutiny and challenge on digital transformation to Board members
2. Nominate/appoint a Welsh Government Digital Leader (DL) who is empowered to lead and champion digital transformation, implement this Plan and act as Head of Profession
3. Establish a small Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support 2) above

[chief-digital-and-information-officer](#)

³⁴ Digital Leader Job Description (UK Government):

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/the-team/recruitment/CDO-applicant-pack-SM.odt>

4. Assign a Digital Leader in each DG area to be responsible for the effective delivery and championing of digital in their department
5. Align individual existing work in each DG area to this Plan (eg Business Plans, ICT Investment Plans and existing 'in flight' digital delivery projects)

4.1.2 Legislation and policy-making

Policy making is a major part of Welsh Government business. However, we do not consistently think digitally when we develop or deliver policy. We make policies and legislation and then try to retrofit digital into them. In doing so we create our own barriers to digital transformation, for example by requiring hard-copy signatures on documents in cases where legally admissible electronic signatures would suffice, or not thinking through what information we already hold on our customers and how we might use that better to deliver a policy objective. The opportunities created by digital are not systematically considered as part of business planning and, again, tend to be added as a bolt-on.

Our use of digital in policy-making is often limited to publishing PDFs on wales.gov.uk and, in some cases, accepting responses via an online form. We do not exploit the potential of digital to capture and engage with the issues that people are discussing, which may not be the same issues that we are addressing in our policy work.

There is significant potential to do better. Digitally proficient policymakers will identify potential digital-enabled service transformations that would have a major impact across the Welsh public sector. As well as doing our own business better, Welsh Government can lead digital service reform throughout all our policy areas.

Actions to improve Legislation and policy-making:

6. As part of capability improvement, understand our existing digital skills and capability, and identify resources to meet learning and development needs, and integrate this within a refreshed policy learning and development curriculum
7. As major policy initiatives emerge, ensure that digital service options are effectively considered, e.g. taking forward Welsh Government's response to the Commission on Public Service governance and delivery review

4.1.3 Sourcing

We currently spend around £90million per annum on ICT, including around £40million through our Merlin contract. £12million of the total spend relates to core ICT services such as desktop and telephony, with the remaining £78million being spent on non-core ICT projects, including digital transformation projects.

Historically we have adopted a strategy of out-sourcing our digital delivery, relying on a couple of large companies for the majority of our work. This has had mixed success, with some good examples of value for money being achieved but many more where our ability to act as a challenging and informed client has been have not been as good as we could be. From a Welsh language perspective, outsourcing can result in us working with companies that have limited experience of working bilingually.

Furthermore, our category management has been more focused on ICT rather than digital and also we do not have a designated source of expertise to help us navigate around the various commercial or framework contracts, the products or services available to us to deliver digital projects. This in turn leads to confusion about the best value route to delivery and also minimises our ability to aggregate requirements together to generate better deals. We need a designated Category Management function for digital to understand the frameworks, contracts, and services that are available to us and help digital delivery teams navigate their way through these in the most effective way.

The best practice model emerging from the Government Digital Service suggests a lot more in-sourcing digital delivery alongside increasing the level of digital skills within government to improve our ability to better use the commercial marketplace. Delivering more in-house, rather than always relying on the market, has allowed the UK Government to be more agile, innovative and cost-effective. This in-sourcing approach also creates a virtuous circle for the skills and overall capabilities of the organisation.

Actions to improve Sourcing:

8. Identify/appoint a Category Manager for digital to provide contractual advice and procurement support in delivery of digital projects

4.1.4 Skills

We have some digital skills available within the Welsh Government but they are dispersed, not readily visible, not generally accessible or across the full range of specialisms we need. By digital skills we mean both technical skills such as developers, architects, designers, web operations, business analysts, language technologists, business IT skills, service and delivery managers, product managers as well as the digital leadership skills associated with Digital Leaders, Chief Digital Officers and digital policy and customer insight/performance skills.

We have some expertise in digital communications, publishing, marketing, engagement, campaigns, project delivery including strategy alignment, business analysis and project and process management. However we do not have a reliable view of our digital skills base, either in terms of number and type of roles or how mature we are as an organisation. Nor do we exploit the skills that we do have to the

benefit of the whole organisation: skills are seen to belong to DG areas rather than to Welsh Government as a whole.

Our Capability Plan (October 2013) identified digital as one of nine high-value skills that are crucial to the future success of our organisation. That Plan committed us to better understanding our current digital capability and gaps, and to developing learning that addresses our digital training needs. It is not anticipated that a huge programme of learning be developed on digital, but that is instead that all staff to develop a basic awareness of digital and the opportunities it offers. A smaller number will need more specialist and practical/operational knowledge of digital, while it is envisaged that an even smaller proportion will need expert skills such as developer and architect skills.

Work is already underway to develop learning on a range of core professions and digital needs to be embedded across these.



Figure 6: The different skills levels required to deliver this Plan

Actions to improve Skills:

9. Embed digital into our skills and capability planning and delivery

4.2 Delivery

4.2.1 Information services

Information services cover the publishing of information to help our customers engage with us. Wales.gov.uk / Cymru.gov.uk is our primary information service with 3.8 million visits in 2013. It is a hugely important asset since most people would use the internet to find out about us and around one in five people in Wales has used the

site.^{35 36} It sits on our corporate publishing platform along with around 30 other sites, such as Wales The True Taste and Change4Life Wales.

We also provide a business support service via business.wales.gov.uk that contains information about starting and running a successful business, including general business advice, how to tender for government contracts and international trade support. Business.wales.gov.uk attracted 350,000 visits in 2013 and was re-launched in April 2014 with much improved functionality, navigation and content. Visitwales.com provides the world with information about holidays and things to do in Wales and it was accessed by 2.4million people in 2013. The Welsh Government's Stats Wales site provides a range of statistical information about Wales and this attracts thousands of customers each month.

There are around a further 100 websites that we maintain or fund that are managed on different platforms and content management systems, according to different contract terms and conditions. We also have at least 50 social media accounts but most of them are not being used to engage with the public; they are primarily used as another broadcast channel.

Digital channel choices are made locally by DG areas or even by teams within them. This has had an impact on operational efficiency as sub-channels have multiplied and new channels have been deployed without reusing existing infrastructure, code or people. In practice this means that our customers can only access a small percentage of our information and services from one place and often need to move between websites, potentially using different log-in mechanisms, when they engage with us. This is confusing and frustrating and not acceptable in a world where people expect to move easily from one place to another online. With so many access channels provided across all services and DG areas, we need to focus our efforts on those channels that have strategic importance for engaging customers and reduce the number of those that don't.

Customers expect a personalised service and for the companies and organisations they deal with to know who they are, what they've signed up for and what they don't want. We have not adopted a Welsh Government-wide approach to the way our customers register for our services (or for how we authenticate them), nor for how we store their details in a way we can usefully retrieve them. We are not able to provide this level of service.

There is no one central place that can deliver digital components which are common to all digital projects which results in the creation of multiple, differing components delivering similar (but not identical) services to our customers.

Actions to improve Information services:

10. Continue with the work to improve, standardise and rationalise our information services

³⁵ [Perceptions of wales.gov.uk](http://Perceptions.of.wales.gov.uk) (Beaufort Research 2011), p.8. 54% would use the internet, compared to 10% phone and 6% visit a Welsh Government office.

³⁶ [Perceptions of wales.gov.uk](http://Perceptions.of.wales.gov.uk) (Beaufort Research 2011), p.18

4.2.2 Transactional services

Transactional services involve an exchange of information, money, licences, goods or services and result in a change in the records held by government. We provide a relatively small number of them. One of the most high profile, WEFO Online, significantly enhanced Wales's reputation in Europe as we were the first to develop a fully functional online funds processing system. Another high profile digital service is in development that will enable farmers to submit, manage and receive payment for EU farming subsidy applications.

There are also transactional information services in operation between the public services in Wales. Exchanges of data at an aggregate and individual level are a necessary part of the delivery and the effective performance management of many public services. Examples include the National Statistics produced on topics such as road accidents, social services and school performance. All of these use online services for the exchange of the detailed information.

However, over a number of years, DG areas, and sometimes even teams within them, have each taken responsibility for scoping and developing their own digital services. This means that our services have different user interfaces, infrastructure, language choices and technology solutions. We also lack a consistent approach to assisted digital, which is about supporting those who can't use our digital services independently. Each time a service is developed without giving consideration to reusing the assets we already own, we miss an opportunity to maximise the return on investments that we have already made. This approach has also helped to create a confusing user experience of Welsh Government online and has restricted the value that we are able to extract from the data we capture.

The Online Information and Services Programme (OISP) was created in 2011 to improve this situation through better co-ordination of our digital services. For two years the Programme worked with departments to understand their business requirements and provided digital infrastructure to help them deliver their services. The OISP established itself as the focal point of activity in the delivery of Welsh Government online services which helped ensure successful delivery of a range of online service projects and programmes, including Rural Payments Wales Online, Jobs Growth Wales and WEFO Online. However, the ultimate success of the Programme was limited by the absence of a mandate to lead truly digital transformational improvements across the organisation.

Actions to improve our Transactional services:

11. Develop criteria for determining which services should be prioritised for digital transformation, including ensuring that appropriate assisted digital provision is built into delivery
12. Baseline and then maintain a register of our transactional services (cost per transaction, user satisfaction, completion rate and digital take-up)

Actions common to Information and Transactional Services:

13. Implement a Digital Service Standard and Guidance Manual, based on the UK GDS Manual, to support all staff involved in policy development and delivery of digital projects
14. Formally adopt the new UK Government approach to identity assurance and develop an implementation plan for existing and planned Welsh Government digital services
15. Determine the core common digital components required across WG and establish a 'pay as you use' delivery capability for these
16. Seek to develop an information architecture for our online digital services

4.2.3 Data and transparency services

People have a right to know how we are managing and spending public money, and we have a specific policy commitment to deliver greater transparency and accountability for our public services. Digital has a significant role to play in providing a clear explanation of public service performance measures and giving access to open and reusable data for others to scrutinise in detail.

In the last year, new digital transparency services have been made available for education, health and Programme for Government outcomes. Together with the long-standing StatsWales website, over 20,000 people each month are finding out about the performance of their local schools, hospitals and other services. We also see the open data resources behind these services being harnessed by the wider mainstream media to deliver 'added value' information resources.

Transparency services are critical to the future of Welsh public services and will benefit from the improvements in digital leadership and capability.

In addition to these public-facing transparency services, we see significant potential for digital ways of working in improving the transparency and connectivity between public sector organisations and in harnessing our digital resources for research into service improvements. We have committed to working in partnership with the research community to take forward Wales' participation in the Administrative Data Research Network.³⁷

³⁷ Through the careful analysis and linking of secure, anonymised records from across our public services we will support the Administrative Data Research Centre for Wales (a collaboration between researchers in Swansea and Cardiff universities) to generate fresh insights into the performance and effectiveness of our public services.

Actions to improve Data and transparency services:

17. Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach for making available our key information assets to help drive economic growth

4.2.4 Performance and insight

We do not have a consistent approach to collecting service performance data. The key performance indicators for digital services are cost per transaction, user satisfaction, completion rate and digital take-up.³⁸ Without this data we cannot act confidently to improve our services: any changes will be based on intuition rather than data.

We need to collect, use and publish this data regularly and consistently in order to improve our digital services and transparency, and to demonstrate value for money to our customers. The UK Government publishes the performance dashboards of a growing number of its services, along with activity on GOV.UK.³⁹ Its Transactions Explorer allows everyone to see the transactional services provided by each department, along with the number of transactions per year, the digital take-up and the cost of each service.⁴⁰

Furthermore, we can improve how we understand the long term impact of digital in how we make and deliver policy if we embed it in our research and evaluation programmes from the outset.

Actions to improve Performance and insight:

18. Develop and agree a common set of digital service metrics for publication, based on the UK Government approach

19. Evidence and evaluate digital as part of DG Evidence Plans

20. Regularly publish progress on the delivery of this Plan including lessons from across departments and wider afield in the effective use of digital to improve policy design and impact

³⁸ Defined in the UK Government Digital Service Manual:

<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/measurement>

³⁹ UK Government Performance Platform: <https://www.gov.uk/performance>

⁴⁰ UK Government Transactions Explorer: <https://www.gov.uk/performance/transactions-explorer>

5. Blueprint for achieving our vision

	From	To	Leadership challenge
Senior leadership	Digital having little visibility at senior levels in the organisation	A Board and SCS that understands digital and inspires and encourages staff to exploit it	Making a commitment to increase personal digital understanding and to promote awareness within DG
Good services	Maintaining around 150 sites and 50 social media accounts, giving little thought to the customer's overall experience of Welsh Government online	A smaller, coherent digital estate that has the customer at its heart and delivers value for money for us as a business	Taking tough decisions on rationalising Welsh Government's presence – exiting from older brands and sites
	Delivering digital projects in an ad hoc way, creating an inconsistent customer experience – including in Welsh	A standardised approach to digital projects that enhances the customer experience of Welsh Government	Mandating compliance with an agreed best practice approach to digital delivery
	Relying on a couple of large companies and letting expensive, inflexible contracts	A framework that makes it easier to work with Welsh SMEs in a more agile way	Including digital and ICT sourcing and spend as part of performance management
Policy	Having a patchy record in using digital tools and techniques to aid our legislation and policy-making processes	Processes that are more engaging to more people, producing more robust legislation and policies	Accepting the risks that come with opening up the policy-making process
Continuous improvement	Lacking a comprehensive approach to collecting service performance data and acting upon it (cost per transaction, user satisfaction, completion rate and digital take-up)	An organisation that values data and information, and uses it wisely to improve its performance	Understanding the value of data and how to exploit it
Skills	Identifying digital as a high-value skill	A workforce that understands and embraces the potential of digital as part of its business delivery	Emphasising the importance of the digital skills for every member of staff

6. Actions

The actions described below are designed to address the key issues identified above, namely:

- A digital leadership model that does not consistently promote corporate behaviour
- A blind spot with regard to what digital skills we have and will need – and how we'll develop them
- An organisational culture that does not consistently recognise how digital might be used to improve performance
- A disjointed model of digital service delivery that leads to poor value for money and a confusing and unsatisfactory user experience of Welsh Government online

The actions fall into two categories:

1. **Capability**: intended to improve our overall digital skills and digital leadership, embedding digital into the way we think and act, in particular in our policy-making and improving our procurement approach when we buy or make digital services.
2. **Delivery**: intended to put the customer, and not our internal structures, at the heart of our service delivery, to make our services more efficient and to make us look and feel like a modern government who communicates and engages with people in ways that suit them.

Capability	Leadership	Legislation and policy-making	Sourcing	Skills
Delivery	Information services	Transactional services	Data and transparency services	Performance and insight

#	Action	Category	Who	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	New or existing resource
1	Nominate/appoint an independent senior industry advisor to provide inspiration, experience, scrutiny and challenge on digital transformation to Board members	Capability	The Board	X			New but part-time function
2	Nominate/appoint a Welsh Government Digital Leader (DL) who is empowered to lead and champion digital transformation, implement this Plan and act as Head of Profession		The Board	X			Could be achieved through realignment of existing resources
3	Establish a small Centre of Excellence (CoE) to support 2) above.		Digital Leader	X			Could be achieved through realignment of existing resources
4	Assign a Digital Leader in each DG to be responsible for the effective delivery and championing of digital in their DG		Digital Leader	X			Existing. This is a function not a post.
5	Align individual existing work in each DG to this Plan (e.g. Business Plans, ICT Investment Plans and existing 'in flight' digital delivery projects)		DG Digital Leaders	X			Existing. See above.
6	As part of capability improvement, understand our existing digital skills and capability, and identify resources to meet learning and development needs, and integrate this within a refreshed policy learning and development curriculum		Heads of Profession for Policy and Legislation and Digital CoE	X			New

7	As major policy initiatives emerge, ensure that digital service options are effectively considered, e.g. taking forward Welsh Government's response to the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery review	Capability	Digital CoE	X			New
8	Identify/appoint a Category Manager for Digital to provide contractual advice and procurement support in delivery of digital projects		Corporate Procurement Service	X			Could be achieved through realignment of existing resources
9	Embed digital into our skills and capability planning and delivery		Corporate Learning and Development and Digital CoE				New
10	Continue with the work to improve, standardise and rationalise the presentation of our information services	Delivery	Director of Strategic Communications and Digital CoE	X	X		Existing
11	Develop criteria for determining which services should be prioritised for digital transformation, including ensuring that appropriate assisted digital provision is built into delivery		Digital Leader		X		New
12	Baseline and then maintain a register of our transactional services (cost per transaction, user satisfaction, completion rate and digital take-up)		CoE	X			New
13	Implement a Digital Service Standard and Guidance Manual, based on the UK GDS Manual, to support all staff involved in policy development and delivery of digital projects		Digital CoE	X			New
14	Formally adopt the new UK Government approach to identity assurance and develop an implementation plan for existing and planned Welsh Government digital services		Digital CoE	X			New

15	Determine the core common digital components required across WG and establish a 'pay as you use' delivery capability for these	Delivery	Digital CoE and DG DLs		X		New
16	Seek to develop an information architecture for our online digital services		CoE and Head of Profession for Knowledge and Information Management		X		New
17	Develop and implement a co-ordinated approach for making available our key information assets to help drive economic growth		Knowledge and Analytical Services		X		New
18	Develop and agree a common set of digital service metrics for publication, based on the UK Government approach.		Digital CoE in conjunction with Social Research		X		New
19	Evidence and evaluate digital as part of DG Evidence Plans		Digital CoE/ Knowledge and Analytical Services and DG Digital Leaders		X		New
20	Regularly publish progress on the delivery of this Plan, including lessons from across departments and wider afield in the effective use of digital to improve policy design and impact		Digital CoE	X	X	X	New

Annex 1: Welsh Government Transactional Services

**WELSH GOVERNMENT
TRANSACTIONAL SERVICES**

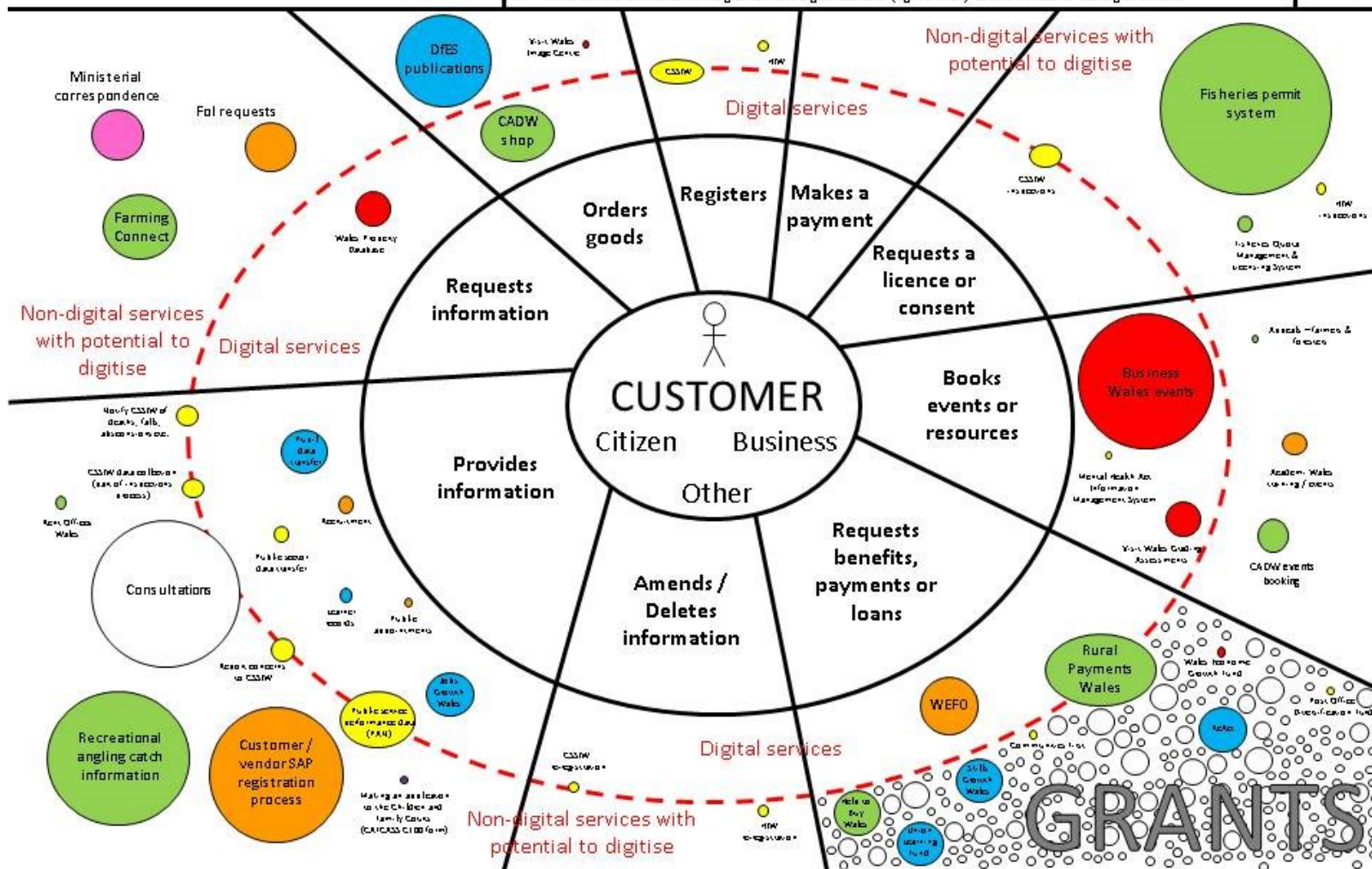
Transactional services involve an exchange of information, money, licences, goods or services and result in a change in the records held by Welsh Government.

NOTES:

1. The services are categorised according to the nine types of transactional service identified by the UK Government.
2. It's not complete – it's based on staff input at workshops run by the Online Information and Services Programme; there has not been a comprehensive exercise to understand what services we provide and at what volume.
3. The size of the circles represents the number of customers that use the service (or the number of transactions where customer numbers are not available) and is indicative only.
4. Some services defined as 'non-digital' do have digital elements (e.g. via email) but are not end-to-end digital services.

Key

EST	
DfES	
LGC	
SF	
HSS	
PSD	
FCS	



Annex 2: Welsh Government Information Services

WELSH GOVERNMENT INFORMATIONAL SERVICES (DIGITAL)

Informational services cover the publishing of information to help citizens and businesses in their engagement with Welsh Government.

NOTES:

1. It's not complete – it's based on research conducted by the Online Information and Services Programme; there has not been a comprehensive exercise to understand what digital informational services we provide and at what volume.
2. It represents just a small part of our customers' digital experience of the public sector online (UK Government, local councils, etc.).
3. The size of the circles represents the number of unique visitors to each website in 2013 and is indicative only.
4. The distribution of websites per DG is indicative only.

Key

EST	Red
DfES	Blue
LGC	Yellow
SF	Green
HSS	Purple
PSD	Pink
FCS	Orange

