Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Defra Digital Strategy 2012

December 2012

Contents

1. Executive Summary

This Digital Strategy sets out Defra's 'digital by default' vision and the actions we are going to take to deliver on this ambition.

Our vision is:

- We will seek to provide digital services which are so good that everyone who can use them chooses to do so.
- Where our customers are genuinely unable to use digital channels, we will ensure alternatives are available.
- Our priority is our customers and the efficient delivery of our policies. Where this still requires face-to-face interaction, we will seek to integrate that with our digital services.
- We will develop and manage digital services in line with the new cross-government 'digital by default service standard'.

Digital is an important element of Defra's current and future service delivery, and we support the cross-government initiatives led by the Government Digital Service (GDS) in the Cabinet Office.

Under our Digital Leader's guidance, we have selected two transactional 'exemplar' services that will be redeveloped in line with the GDS's 'digital by default service standard'. These are:

- The CAP Delivery Programme, led by Defra, the Rural Payments Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission
- Waste Registration and Applications, provided by the Environment Agency

Both of these exemplar services are high-volume, with over 100,000 transactions per year. Each is a different type of transaction, with the CAP Delivery Programme involving someone applying for benefits and Waste Applications someone requesting a licence. The CAP Delivery Programme aims to deliver the new Common Agricultural Policy, which involves the distribution of large amounts of public money.

In addition, we have identified a number of key digital initiatives that are not transactional in nature, but involve improvements to our provision of information. This is an important focus for much of Defra's work. These key information-focused developments include:

- The 'My Environment' environmental data and information programme, led by Natural England (but involving other bodies such as the Environment Agency)
- The Smarter Environmental Regulation Review, led by Defra but involving a number of other bodies (in response to the recent "Red Tape Challenge")

We aim to redevelop and manage our exemplar services in a flexible 'agile' way, focusing on user needs, and providing greater ease of use for our customers and more efficient processes for government.

Our experiences in delivering these exemplars will identify the skills we need in Defra to consistently apply the 'digital by default service standard' across all of our services. We cannot predict exactly what we will need in the future. But we will share the key lessons across Defra in a 'community of practice' for digital services. Alongside this, we will take steps to significantly increase the proportion of customers using these digital services.

Beyond the specific actions that Defra has committed to doing, many of the key issues and obstacles to 'digital by default' need concerted action across government (and beyond). So we support the leadership provided by the GDS on these shared issues, like Identity Assurance, Procurement of Digital Services and 'Assisted Digital' Support.

Defra's specific actions from this strategy are:

  i.   Apply the 'digital by default service standard' to our exemplar transactional developments
 ii.   Apply this 'service standard' to key information developments
iii.   Learn the lessons from these exemplar developments so that we develop digital capability within Defra
iv.   Take action to move our audiences toward greater use of our digital services
 v.   Support the development of cross-government solutions for key issues

Defra supports the aims of the 'Government Digital Strategy' that was published by the Cabinet Office in November 2012, and our response to each of its 14 recommendations is set out in Section 6.

2. Introduction and scope

This is Defra's first digital strategy. The use of digital technology has entered the mainstream, with the convenience of the internet now an everyday expectation for a large majority of the UK. This has created a strong driver for change in our delivery of services. The speed of technological change has reinforced an increased expectation from the public for high-quality, efficient and cost-effective services.

Defra already provides a lot of services digitally. This strategy sets out Defra's vision for the provision of all of our services 'digitally by default', and then how we are going to achieve this vision. We do not underestimate the barriers to the development and extension of our digital services. But we recognise there are significant benefits – to government and, crucially, to our customers.

Making our 'digital by default' vision a reality means embracing the opportunities presented by the digital age to redesign services to improve our customers' experiences, cut costs and reduce any environmental impacts. This involves a fundamental end-to-end redesign to address internal processes, not simply to deliver an improved web experience for users.

This is not an ICT initiative, though ICT skills and systems are an important part of digital delivery. Defra will harness new technology and techniques to support our policy objectives and deliver better customer service. We recognise we cannot predict future needs or delivery options. So our strategy sets out:

- how we will approach **digital service development**; and
- the **digital capabilities** we will develop going forward.

This strategy makes no definite spending commitments but, instead, highlights the broad approach and principles that we will apply in transforming our services during the next spending review period.

Many of the key challenges need to be addressed across government (and beyond), and Defra will support the planned initiatives by the Government Digital Service (GDS) in the Cabinet Office to do so. We will avoid developing solutions within a Defra 'silo'.

Defra (the core department) will co-ordinate the implementation of this Digital Strategy across its network of delivery bodies (both Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies). This includes engaging with the GDS on cross-government initiatives, though delivery bodies may be best placed to lead on particular areas of work.

Defra's digital strategy must be viewed in the light of other key initiatives:

- the overarching Government Digital Strategy, published by the Cabinet Office in November 2012
- the Defra ICT Strategy, which likewise feeds into an overarching Government ICT Strategy
- the Civil Service Reform Plan, where this strategy fulfils one of its main pledges

- the independent [Farming Regulation Task Force](), which makes important recommendations on 'digital by default' services for farmers
- the '[Red Tape Challenge]()', where it focused on simplifying environmental regulation for businesses

This strategy focuses only on external systems, and not internal-facing digital services like Intranets and closed collaborative spaces. However, definitions of what are internal or external systems may become increasingly fluid over time. Other key terms and descriptions are defined in Annex A.

Defra will review its digital strategy with the Government Digital Service annually to ensure it remains relevant in light of changes in policy, technology and wider society.

3. Vision and challenges

Defra supports the cross-government 'digital by default' principle set out in the overarching Government Digital Strategy:

Digital government services are the default, and they are so straight-forward and convenient that all those who can use digital services choose to do so.

Over time, less convenient, effective, sustainable and cost-efficient delivery methods (like telephone, face-to-face and post) will reduce in profile and scale. Where these remain, they will do so to form a safety net to assist the small core of customers who will never be able to use a digital service unaided. We recognise this will be a transition for some, with a key dependency on the government's rural broadband initiative.

Defra's 'Digital by Default' commitment

Our vision is to extend digital delivery across the full range of Defra's services – to deliver better policy outcomes and value for money. Our fundamental 'guiding principles' will be:

Guiding principles

- Defra will seek to provide digital services which are so good that everyone who can use them chooses to do so.
- Where Defra's customers are genuinely unable to use digital channels, we will ensure alternatives are available.
- Defra's priority is our customers and the efficient delivery of our policies – in some cases this will still require face-to-face interaction. Where it does, we will seek to integrate that experience with our digital services.
- Defra's digital services will be developed and managed in line with the 'agile' approach set out in the new 'digital by default service standard'.

The new 'digital by default service standard' is detailed in [Annex 3 of the Government Digital Strategy](). Key aspects include:

- An overriding focus on meeting user needs
- Aiming for simplicity – so that all who *could* use a digital service *do* use it, and so that users succeed first-time unaided
- Use of 'agile' iterative development, with a preference for open source software and common cross-government technology platforms
- End-to-end redesign of the whole business process, not just the customer transaction, aiming for efficiency, re-use, and less environmental impact
- Seamless integration of digital and non-digital service elements
- Ongoing management by a new 'service manager' role, who can change and improve regularly in response to customer feedback and usage data

The potential benefits are significant. Well-designed digital services can lead to greater efficiency – for users by saving them time, and for government by cutting costs through minimizing process errors and avoidable contact through other channels (such as telephone helplines). Crucially, it will promote growth: for rural areas, and for the economy as a whole.

The key actions we will take to achieve our vision are explained in Section 5. Defra will:

- Move ahead quickly to apply the 'digital by default service standard' to some key digital developments – both transactional and information-focused
- Use the lessons from these developments to develop digital capability within Defra – embedding the new 'service standard' as the default approach going forward
- Take action to increase the use of our digital services
- Support the development of cross-government services and solutions

Key challenges

These are set out below. We consider that many of these challenges can only be effectively tackled at a government-wide level. Defra will support cross-government action to do so under the leadership of the Government Digital Service.

External (to UK government)

- Audience preference – for traditional methods of interaction with government such as face-to-face visits, reinforced by a lack of faith in government ICT
- Access to technology – involving a combination of no or slow broadband coverage in some areas, the expense of purchasing technology, and a lack of skills and confidence in using it.
- EU regulations – which can impose complex administrative processes that are difficult to replicate or support digitally.

Cross-Government

- Online Identity Assurance – a lack of confidence and trust in using digital services, underpinned by experience or awareness of past problems in this area (both within government and more widely)
- Data sharing – organisational and legal barriers to sharing data and information across central government bodies and beyond (for example, with local authorities with whom we share many key audiences, or specialist environmental groups)
- Procurement – internal processes that can hinder government's use of specialist companies to develop and support digital services
- Legal obligations – where non-digital methods of interaction or production of hard-copy documents may be mandated by law

Internal (to departments)

- Budgets and financial systems – processes and attitudes can hinder approval and funding of shared developments across government (and external partners)
- Service management – existing arrangements can be inflexible and discourage a quick response to customer feedback or changed requirements
- Skills and competencies – specific 'digital capabilities' are not currently present within many government bodies, and cannot be quickly introduced
- Policy-making – this often designed top-down, with the focus on the policy itself rather than the delivery and impact on customers

What about those who don't use digital services?

Non-users of government digital services fall into three broad categories:

1. Those who <u>should</u> use them – they choose not to use them but already use non-government digital services (such as online shopping or banking).
2. Those who <u>could</u> use them – if they had internet access and were given initial support. This group will decline over time.
3. Those who will <u>never</u> use them – and who will continue to need 'assisted digital' support.

Where customers of our services are genuinely unable to use digital channels, Defra will ensure alternatives are available. This will increasingly likely to be by partners or intermediaries offering 'assisted digital' services, rather than by Defra directly.

Defra will benefit from an improving digital literacy among the business community to support their increased use of digital services. We must learn from other departments' experience of successfully achieving this, particularly DVLA and HM Revenue & Customs.

4. Services and audiences

Defra's high-level responsibilities are environment, food and rural affairs. Unlike some other departments, we support a broad network of delivery bodies (both executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies) across these areas of responsibility. The relationship between the core department and these delivery bodies is collaborative rather than hierarchical, and delivery bodies often have a stronger profile and awareness amongst external partners.

Services

Some of our key services are now provided digitally. Notable examples include:

- [Cattle Tracing System](#) (Rural Payments Agency)
- [Single Payments Scheme](#) (Rural Payments Agency)
- [Rod Licence purchases](#) (Environment Agency)
- [Sales Notes submission](#) (Marine Management Organisation)
- [Pig Movement Reporting](#) (Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency)

A fuller list of key transactional services provided by Defra is given in Annex B.

We must move forward and build on this investment. This includes identifying opportunities to join-up services and build partnerships across central and local government, and the voluntary and private sectors (including with bodies that we haven't worked with before). We must build on the experiences and successes of other government bodies in delivering digital services.

Defra has a significant role in advising, educating and influencing our audiences on key issues within our policy portfolio. So we consider digital services that provide information or data to be important. However, transactional services offer the greatest scope for improving efficiency, both for users and government. While Defra is not responsible for the most commonly used government-to-citizen and -business transactions (like tax or benefits), we do provide some significant transactional services for some key sectors of the economy (like the farming and fishing industries).

Where existing transactions are digital versions of existing business processes, we will only maximise benefits through a user-centric, 'digital by default', and end-to-end redesign of these processes. We recognise that some Defra services will be more of a challenge to provide digitally, as they can be complex, variable or have a small customer base. We will continue to carry out a clear cost / benefit analysis of potential developments as part of our business case approval process. Accordingly, we will focus our initial efforts on developments that deliver cost efficiencies and provide most benefit to our customers.

Audiences and partners

Across Defra we engage with citizens, businesses and wider society (including specialist partners in the voluntary sector) to develop policy, gather evidence, provide expert advice, licensing and permitting, and administration of subsidies. We have an extensive and varied customer base including:

- The Food and Farming Industries (animal keepers, growers, land managers and food processors)
- Veterinary Practitioners
- The Fishing Industry (fishermen, food processors and ancillary activities)
- Business in general (in particular the Building, Extractive, Manufacturing, Pharmaceutical, Waste and Water Industries)
- Scientists and Academia
- NGOs / the Voluntary Sector
- Local Authorities
- The General Public (for leisure pursuits, householders at risk of flooding)

However, we are primarily a "business to business" organisation, with generally fewer interactions with consumers or the general public. We will therefore partner where possible (for example, HM Revenue & Customs) to share data and co-ordinate our approaches to the business audience. This could include working together on a single digital business identifier that would facilitate collaboration and efficiency.

We will need a legislative and contractual framework that will allow the re-use and sharing of data across government as a default position (with appropriate safeguards). Given the pace of technological development, this needs to include permission to share data and re-use on new devices or systems yet to be developed.

We also need to partner with other digital service providers (not just other departments, but local government or the private sector) with whom we share many processes and audiences. An example is sharing data with farm suppliers (in line with the "earned recognition" principle), which would allow us to better target farm inspections.

As we increasingly work with trusted co-delivery partners, they should have easy access and a frictionless experience to our systems, and have a security status proportionate to their trusted status.

Data and evidence

Defra has important responsibilities and obligations for the management of data and evidence. We will improve our evidence base by using digital opportunities to gather and share data.

We manage some of the largest, most rich data-sets across government and provide some good data-access services in MAGIC and INSPIRE. Mapping and geographic-based

systems will be particularly important to the development of digital services by Defra. This is an area where we will need collaboration across government in line with the government's [Open Data Strategy](#).

There are significant differences by sector in the data we hold and our relationship with the relevant expert community. We recognise that some people worry about data they provide to us to aid scientific research being used against them for regulatory purposes. Digital services that allow the public to easily provide us with data must also allow easy identification of who is an expert and who is not.

5. Actions

To deliver our 'digital by default' vision, Defra commits to the five actions set out below. We will:

i. Apply the 'digital by default service standard' to Defra's exemplar transactional developments

Defra has selected the two major transactional services listed below as our exemplar developments on which we will focus initial attention.

- The CAP Delivery Programme, a Defra-led initiative involving four delivery bodies (the Rural Payments Agency, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Defra's RDPE Delivery Team)
- Waste Registration and Applications, provided by the Environment Agency

More detail on each is given below. This strategy does not make definite commitments that any particular work will take place. Business case approval will continue to be needed for individual projects and initiatives to secure necessary funding and endorsement.

The CAP Delivery Programme

The CAP Delivery Programme has been set up to design, procure and implement the solution that will deliver the European Union's new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This involves assessment against complex rules on food production, environmental performance and land use for approximately 110,000 claimants in England. Approximately 40% of these applications are currently submitted online.

The CAP is currently delivered through over 40 schemes by four delivery bodies that each have their own IT systems and technologies. This Programme will deliver a fundamental end-to-end redesign of the whole process, introducing a single IT solution with digital delivery as a core design principle. In particular, it will provide the following benefits:

- Ease of use for customers
- Greater use of the digital channel
- More efficient processes
- Common IT solution across schemes
- Reduced exposure to penalties

The CAP Delivery Programme is already working with the Government Digital Service (GDS) on implementation. Prototyping of aspects of the solution has already begun, so as to test key aspects of the new system and inform future development. The components of the IT solution have been split into separate (but interlinked) projects that potentially increase the likelihood of involvement of specialist digital partners and support a phased delivery approach. The new CAP schemes are currently expected to start in 2015.

Waste: registration of carriers, and applications for permit exemptions

This is a service provided by the Environment Agency, covering applications by businesses and individuals for authorisation to carry, treat, store, sort, shred or spread waste. There are currently about 250,000 applications submitted for these activities each year, around half of which are made using on-line submissions, with the option to download forms and submit by post.

Key benefits of service redesign will include:

- Provision of a user-friendly and convenient digital service channel
- Reducing the costs associated with the current paper-based system for business and government
- Potentially integrating with other business-focused transactions across government

We are only at the very initial stages of this service redevelopment. We will discuss best approaches with the GDS in early 2013, to align any service with their customer standards. The timing and approach to this work will be aligned with activity under Defra's 'Smarter Environmental Regulation Review' to streamline all environment-related data and regulatory requirements, including in the waste area.

ii. Apply the 'service standard' to key information developments

In addition to our exemplar transactions, we have identified a number of key digital initiatives that are not transactional in nature, but involve improvements to our provision of information. This is an important area of focus for many of Defra's areas of responsibility. These are:

- The 'My Environment' environmental data and information programme, led by Natural England (but involving other bodies such as the Environment Agency)
- The Smarter Environmental Regulation Review, led by Defra but involving a number of other bodies (in response to the recent "Red Tape Challenge")

More detail on each is given below.

'My Environment' Programme

The 'My Environment' programme will deliver a key commitment in the Natural Environment White Paper – improving access to information that connects people and nature. Public feedback indicated that people (and professional audiences, non-government organisations and the voluntary sector) would do more to improve their local environment if they had easy access to information that helped or motivated them.

The initial focus will be a new signposting service to information about the natural environment and the replacement of the existing MAGIC and 'Nature on the Map' interactive map services.

The ultimate goal is to provide access to the information people need to explore, enjoy, understand, protect and help improve the natural environment in England. Future

enhancements will be developed iteratively to meet user needs, but we anticipate adding "My Map" functionality that allows people to create maps of their local environment that incorporates both national datasets (from MAGIC and other services) and local data that they can upload themselves.

Discussions with the GDS on 'My Environment' have already commenced. Although the timescale for integration with GOV.UK has not yet been fixed, the service will be designed to meet GOV.UK design principles from the start.

Smarter Environmental Regulation Review

In response to feedback received from business and the public in the "Red Tape Challenge", we aim to rationalise environmental regulatory guidance and information reporting taking advantage of digital solutions. This includes:

- A thorough review of environmental guidance to remove redundant material and produce clear and succinct information for users on their regulatory obligations on www.gov.uk.
- A user-friendly streamlined data portal to which users would report only those data that are needed for regulatory or compliance purposes, subject to a successful proof of concept and pilot phase.

Discussions with the GDS on this initiative have already commenced.

On guidance, a pilot phase has begun using a number of case studies to establish the model structure for other areas to follow and to draw up a clear timescale for rationalising all relevant guidance by March 2014. We will also work with the GDS to improve access to information for non-technical users.

On information reporting, the aim is likewise to develop a pilot system in 2013, which can indicate a feasible timescale for incorporation of all reporting requirements over the period 2014-2017. A data scrutiny exercise will also take place to critically examine the need for data to be collected, with the aim of significantly reducing the burden of data reporting on business and other providers.

iii. Learn the lessons from these exemplar developments so that we develop digital capability within Defra

We will learn from these developments to review and redevelop our other services. The new 'digital by default service standard' will be used as starting point for all Defra's digital development going forward. The lessons from the 'exemplar' developments we have identified will highlight those areas where we need to further develop in-house digital capability going forward. Our plans for increasing our expertise in this area will be included in the 2013/14 Defra Business Plan.

Potential areas where we may need to improve our capability include:

- Business analysis

- 'Agile' techniques and prototyping
- Procurement and supplier engagement
- Digital policy-making
- Service management
- Strategy and co-ordination of development

Our commitment is to make all our services 'digital by default'. However, we will adopt a targeted '80/20' approach and prioritise service redevelopment that demonstrably shows change, user benefit and value for money. We aim to minimise development and support costs as far as possible, which includes challenging existing ideas around security and the need for bespoke solutions.

We will link our digital service development work to our wider continuous improvement process, so that digital is not seen as an 'add-on'.

We need to have the right structure to meet the challenges of 'digital by default' service delivery. We are already moving towards more collaborative working across all Defra bodies, and we will ensure that structural or accountability issues are not a barrier to shared digital service development.

We will share digital expertise through a dedicated 'community of practice' involving relevant staff across Defra (both the core department and its delivery bodies).

We will use the quarterly updates of Defra's 'Digital Roadmap', in collaboration with the Government Digital Service, to co-ordinate our digital service developments. This will link with existing review bodies and processes, like Defra's Network Architecture and Design Board (NADB) and Chief Information Officer Board.

All service development will continue to require separate business case approval, and this strategy does not make any absolute commitments that particular work will take place.

iv. Take action to move our audiences toward greater use of digital services

Access to a broadband internet connection is a barrier to the use of digital services by some individuals and businesses. A key priority for Defra is to ensure broadband is rolled out to all rural communities as soon as possible. Defra is working closely with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Broadband Delivery UK on the Government's £530m rural broadband programme to meet the objective of achieving universal broadband access by 2015.

Where genuine barriers to use of digital services exist, Defra will ensure that there is an alternative option. We will partner with other organisations to provide a consistent 'assisted digital' service across government. A consistent approach across government will allow potential partners and intermediaries to develop commercial offerings to support people who cannot use digital services directly. We consider this to be particularly important for some of Defra's key audiences and services.

Defra will consider the use of a broad range of incentives and techniques to move people towards use of our digital channels including:

- rewarding digital users
- passing on full costs of non-digital channels
- raising awareness of digital channels
- using behavioural and customer insight for 'targeting'
- effective engagement and promotion by staff
- managing security issues
- sharing data with government and non-government partners (with safeguards)
- increasing capacity and resilience of digital services
- innovative use of new technology (where justified by customer demand)
- mandation (again, with necessary safeguards)

As these measures take effect, we will reduce our non-digital channels (such as telephone helplines) as appropriate.

There will be no blanket mandation of the use of Defra's digital services. However, we will consider the potential for mandating the digital use of particular services where this is feasible and appropriate. In practice, this is likely to be services focused on a business audience or where it involves provision of payments.

v. Support the development of cross-government solutions in key areas

In addition to 'assisted digital', there are a number of issues that also need to be addressed through a cross-government approach. Defra will support such initiatives, and look to the Government Digital Service to provide the central co-ordination and leadership that is essential to ensure they are effectively tackled.

These other issues include:

- **Provision of Shared Platforms** (building on, and in addition to, the new GOV.UK platform for government web information)
- **Co-ordination of Service Developments** (to support departments' understanding and re-use of existing capability across central government)
- **The Identity Assurance Programme** (to foster trust in government digital services, which is an essential prerequisite in the development of a network of third-party intermediaries)
- **Removal of Legal Barriers** (including barriers to greater data sharing across government and with other partners, though in some cases there are also significant EU-wide considerations)
- **Consistent Standards and Metrics** (in a wide range of areas including performance data and digital engagement)
- **Procurement Frameworks** (that give departments a 'route to market' for appropriate digital suppliers)

6. Responses to Government Digital Strategy actions

Defra supports the aims of the 'Government Digital Strategy', and our response to its recommendations is set out below.

1) Departmental and transactional agency boards will include an active digital leader

Defra already has a Board-level Digital Leader, who takes management responsibility for some of our key agencies. We will review whether it is necessary to have digital skills represented at Board level across our delivery bodies.

2) Services handling over 100,000 transactions per year will be redesigned, operated and improved by a suitably skilled, experienced and empowered Service Manager

As indicated in Section 5 (i), we have committed to two 'exemplar' transactional developments. In light of the experiences from these exemplar developments, we will review our other high-volume transactions. As redevelopments take effect, Service Managers will be put in place when appropriate.

3) All Departments will ensure that they have appropriate digital capability in-house, including specialist skills

Our 'exemplars' will be the catalyst for the development of appropriate in-house digital capability in Defra in the future, demonstrating what expertise and skills we will need in the future. We aim to include our plans for developing this capability in the Defra Business Plan for 2013/14. Again, more detail is provided in Section 5.

4) Cabinet Office will support improved digital capability across departments

We welcome the Cabinet Office's support in this area, particularly in sharing benefit and expertise beyond departmental boundaries.

5) For "transactional departments" three exemplar services will be selected. Redesign starting April 2013, implemented March 2015 (to be included in relevant business plans). Following this, departments will redesign all services handling over 100k transactions a year.

We have selected two 'exemplar' transactional redevelopments:

- The CAP Delivery Programme (for farmer payments)
- Waste Registration and Applications

Our plans for these developments are set out in our Section 5 (i). In light of the experiences from these exemplar developments, we will review our other high-volume transactions.

6) From April 2014, all new or redesigned transactional services will meet the Digital by Default service standard.

Defra welcomes the new digital by default service standard, which will be used as the basis for all our digital development from April 2014.

7) Corporate publishing activities of all 24 central government departments will move onto GOV.UK by March 2013, with agency and arms length bodies' online publishing to follow by March 2014.

Defra is already engaged in moving its online publishing activity to GOV.UK by 31 March 2013 (with specialist content following by 31 December 2013). We will work to support the subsequent effort to transfer online publishing from the websites of our delivery bodies (except where exceptions have been agreed).

8) Departments will raise awareness of their digital services so that more people know about them and use them

Defra will take steps to move our customers toward greater use of the digital services we provide. Our aims and plans on this are indicated in Section 5 (iv).

9) We will take a cross-government approach to assisted digital. This means that people who are have rarely or never been online will be able to access services offline, and we will provide additional ways for them to use the digital services

Defra welcomes the planned provision by the Government Digital Service (GDS) of a common procurement framework to make it easier to set up 'assisted digital' support services. We will encourage the development of intermediaries and 'franchises' (with partners like farm software providers) which will allow others to provide services on our behalf.

10) Cabinet Office will offer leaner and more lightweight tendering processes, as close to the best practice in industry as our regulatory requirements allow.

Defra welcomes the Cabinet Office's efforts to develop new procurement arrangements that will help departments use a wider range of digital partners, while maintaining appropriate commercial and contractual safeguards.

11) Cabinet Office will lead in the definition and delivery of a new suite of common technology platforms which will underpin the new generation of digital services

Where justified by cost and efficiency, Defra supports the delivery of common technology platforms to underpin digital services in the future. Trust is a particularly important issue for the development and usage of digital services in the future, and we will support the GDS's development of a common federated approach to Identity Assurance, in replacement of the existing 'Government Gateway' system.

12) Cabinet Office will continue to work with departments to remove legislative barriers which unnecessarily prevent the development of straightforward and convenient digital services

Defra will review relevant regulations to identify where they are a real barrier to digital service delivery. We support the Cabinet Office's efforts to address these barriers, and the intention to legislate to allow greater data sharing between government organisations.

13) Departments will supply a consistent set of management information (as defined by the Cabinet Office) for their transactional services

Defra is already providing management data for some transactions. From April 2013 we will ensure consistent reporting on the key indicators that GDS have identified, except where existing systems would need amending at significant cost.

14) Policy teams will use digital tools and techniques to engage with and consult the public

Excellent digital services start with better policy making. Defra will make more use of digital tools (including social media) to support customer insight, policy development and service delivery. These will enhance, but not replace, more traditional non-digital methods of engagement. We welcome the provision of central tools and standards by the Cabinet Office to support this.

Annex A – Definitions

- **Defra:** Throughout this document, 'Defra' means the core department and our [network of delivery bodies](#) except when otherwise specified.

- **Services:** In line with the overarching Government Digital Strategy, by 'services' we mean transactional and information services.

- **Transactional services:** Transactional services allow the exchange of data, advice, money, permission, goods and services between citizens / businesses and government.

- **Information services:** Information services cover the publishing of information to assist citizens and businesses in their engagement with government.

- **Digital:** By 'digital' we mean internet-enabled; be that desktop, laptop, tablet, mobile or indeed digital devices not yet invented. This strategy is not just about PCs and websites (though this is currently what the majority of people use to access digital services from government). The use of mobile devices is likely to have an increasing importance for Defra. But ultimately, what is important is how our customers access our services.

- **Agile:** This is a commonly-used term meaning a flexible and incremental approach to service development where working products are tested with customers at a very early stage, so that further improvements can be made based on genuine, real-world feedback.

- **'Digital by Default':** This principle is set out in the overarching Government Digital Strategy – *'digital services which are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so while those who can't are not excluded'*

- **'Assisted Digital':** This is the general term applied to the support provided to people who are not able to use digital services independently. Some people may continue to access government services face-to-face, by phone or by post. These non-digital channels will increasing rely on intermediaries and partners outside of government. The key aim will be a consistent, high-quality service for customers across both digital and non-digital channels.

Annex B – Key Defra Transactions

The Government Digital Service has compiled a full list of transactional services across government. The list of such services provided by Defra is at http://transactionalservices.alphagov.co.uk/department/defra.

Defra services with over 100,000 transactions per year are:

Agency / body	Transactional service	Category	Transactions per year
Rural Payments Agency (RPA)	Cattle Tracing System (CTS) (events)	Providing/reporting information	13,000,000
Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)	Endemic disease surveillance (animals tested)	Providing/reporting information	7,000,000
Environment Agency	Rod Licences	Requesting a licence/authorisation	1,500,000
Environment Agency	Waste Permit, Exemption & Registration applications (Integrated Regulation Programme)	Requesting a licence/authorisation	250,000
Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)	Pig Movement Reporting	Providing/reporting information	180,000
Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Online collection of sales notes	Providing/reporting information	130,000
Rural Payments Agency (RPA)	Single Payments Scheme (SPS) (claims)	Requesting benefits/grants/loans	106,000
Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA)	Pet Passports	Requesting a licence/authorisation	100,000

PB 13863