

**MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES FOLLOWING THE GENERAL
ELECTION 2010**

AN EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT

CONTENTS

- Introduction

- Initial analysis of the costs and benefits associated with significant machinery of government changes:
 - Office of Government Commerce and Buying Solutions
 - Directgov
 - Constitutional and Political Reform
 - Food Standards Agency

- Conclusion

ANNEX A

Further information on:

- Office of Government Commerce
- Buying Solutions
- Shareholder Executive
- Directgov
- Food Standards Agency

**CABINET OFFICE
27 JULY 2010**

INTRODUCTION

Since the General Election in May 2010, the Prime Minister has announced a small number of changes to ministerial responsibilities. This Cabinet Office paper¹ describes the consequences of these changes for departments involved and, for the significant changes, sets out an initial analysis of the costs and benefits associated with each significant change, as well as the rationale. This document reflects the commitment the Government has made to ensure that for machinery of government changes the costs are tightly managed, benefits are delivered and that any changes represent value for money.

The Government has not made dramatic changes to the structures of central government, as has been the case following previous General Elections. The main changes have been to establish the new Efficiency and Reform Group in the Cabinet Office by bringing in the Office of Government Commerce, Buying Solutions and Directgov, and the transfer of staff working on political and constitutional reform from the Ministry of Justice to Cabinet Office to support the Deputy Prime Minister in carrying out his special responsibility for this area.

The other significant change has been to the Food Standards Agency. In England, nutrition policy will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Health. Where not related to food safety, food labelling and food composition policy will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Food Standards Agency will continue to be responsible for food safety.

The most urgent task facing the country is to tackle the record debt and achieve sound finances. This requires reforms to the structure of government, including ensuring that the government has the best machinery possible to deliver efficiencies. Creating a strong centre for reform in the Cabinet Office, which can tackle waste, improve accountability, raise professionalism across government and the wider public sector and respond to the need for significant reductions in spending, has significant benefits. This is the overwhelming reason why the machinery of government changes to the Cabinet Office have been made.

There will inevitably be upfront transition costs associated with the changes, but these are small compared to the benefits that will be delivered by the changes. And, as previously announced², the Efficiency and Reform Group will have a greater role in providing corporate support to departments going through a machinery of government change and holding departments to account to help secure the intended benefits of the change.

All upfront transition costs will be absorbed in the individual departmental budgets agreed in the Spending Review.

Other minor changes

The minor changes made to other central government departments are:

- The transfer of responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003, except in relation to regulated entertainment, from the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and

¹ This Cabinet Office paper is being laid in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament, as set out in the Prime Minister's Written Ministerial Statement of 20 July 2010. It will also be available at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

² *Treasury Minute on the Thirty Third Report from the Committee of the Public Accounts Session 2009-10*

Sport to the Home Secretary. This involves the transfer of 3 people and minimal administrative resource.

- Making the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport responsible for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Ministerial responsibility was previously held by the Minister for the Olympics in the Cabinet Office. This does not involve any staff transfers as the Secretary of State will be supported by the Government Olympics Executive, which is already located in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- The Secretary of State for Education has replaced the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Children, Schools and Families has been renamed the Department for Education.

The Government Equalities Office, which is responsible for the implementation of the Equalities Act 2010, as well as the Government's overall strategy on equalities issues, will report to the Home Secretary, who is also Minister for Women and Equalities. It will remain a separate department.

Giving legislative effect to the changes

Orders under the Ministers of the Crown Act 1975 have been made in relation to political and constitutional reform, the Olympics, education and equality. Legislation to give full effect to some of the other changes will be brought forward in due course.

INITIAL ANALYSIS OF COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH SIGNIFICANT MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT CHANGES

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT COMMERCE AND BUYING SOLUTIONS

The Office of Government Commerce (OGC, an independent office of HM Treasury) and Buying Solutions (an executive agency of OGC), will transfer to the Cabinet Office.

This involves the transfer of 296.8 FTEs from OGC and 373.9 FTEs from Buying Solutions to Cabinet Office.

The Prime Minister announced on 15 June 2010 that Ministerial responsibility for the Office of Government Commerce, an independent office of Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT), and its executive agency Buying Solutions, would transfer from the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General (MCO).

Context and rationale

Bringing together the Office of Government Commerce and Buying Solutions with other functions in Cabinet Office provides a strong remit to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This is a change to the Department's traditional role as brokers across government but will enable the Cabinet Office to best act as a strong centre for reform.

Following this change, the new Efficiency and Reform Group (ERG) has strategic and operational responsibility for the following:

1. OGC functions including procurement (centralised procurement, procurement policy, transparency, capability & skills) and projects (oversight, assurance, intervention, capability & skills) and Buying Solutions, an executive agency and trading fund, providing a national procurement service to UK public sector
2. Government IT including The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) with responsibility for Information, Communications and Technology strategy, information security and strengthening the IT profession
3. Civil Service Capability group, covering Civil Service Reform and the Human Resource (HR) profession.
4. Government Communication, including responsibility for advertising and marketing spend and increasing the transparency of government, Directgov (see below for further information), and the communications profession.

The strategic direction of the Group is overseen by the Efficiency and Reform Board, which is chaired jointly by the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

In addition, the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, have been rationalised to achieve greater

efficiency in government property. Property functions in OGC and the Shareholder Executive will therefore combine into a single unit responsible for property efficiency and will be based in the Shareholder Executive within BIS. This involves the transfer on loan of around 25 staff. The Minister for the Cabinet Office will have responsibility for setting the operational direction of the Property Unit. The Permanent Secretary for BIS will retain ultimate accounting officer and performance management responsibility for the Unit as part of the Shareholder Executive. BIS Ministers will retain an oversight of the Shareholder Executive as a whole.

Alternatives considered

The Government considered a range of alternatives:

1. Establishing a Programme Office in Cabinet Office to coordinate the functions and activities of each organisation and management unit, whilst allowing organisations and units to remain in existing structures.
2. A Delivery Unit in Cabinet Office including the programme office model, with the addition of a range of key efficiency projects.
3. A sharing of functions between Cabinet Office and the Treasury, for example moving parts of the Cabinet Office into HMT alongside OGC, such as the CIO and SIRO.

Options were considered against the following criteria

Effectiveness: how effective is the arrangement for driving efficiency and harnessing the most effective use of resources?

Fit: Is there a good institutional fit with powers and the delivery of objectives and is there a legacy of enduring capability?

Cost: Are the benefits in balance with the costs of the change both now and in the future?

Following consideration of all proposals it was felt that options 1, 2 and 3 did not deliver the institutional architecture required to provide the coherence, direction, flexibility and accountabilities required to coordinate the delivery benefits and savings on this scale.

Option 1 did not provide sufficient management integration to deliver better coordination and the reductions in duplication.

Option 2 also carried the additional risks of duplication between the Delivery Unit and those functions remaining in departments.

Option 3 would have provided a rationalisation of some functions, but left other functions in Cabinet Office and risked separating reporting lines to Accounting Officers and Ministers.

Balancing all the factors against the criteria and principles of success, the decision was made to support a fourth option - a change of ministerial responsibilities for OGC and Buying Solutions.

Overview of the benefits and costs of change

These reforms are based on the understanding that by bringing the right set of cross government functions together, benefits can be achieved where:

- there is better working between the centre of government (HMT and Cabinet Office) and Departments. In particular, the Efficiency and Reform Group is expected to lead to a clearer set of priorities for Departments in delivering efficiency and more unified system of support for Departments, ranging from advice on HR and workforce matters through to procurement and the use of ICT;
- common interests can be pursued and linked together, such as contract renegotiation involving IT and non IT procurement and joint reviews of projects that combine IT and non-IT elements;
- all aspects of central government reform can be reviewed and considered alongside one another, for example considering implications for the workforce and workforce development;
- government property and commercial arrangements can be viewed in a more coordinated and consistent way;
- duplication and cost can be reduced. For example, the rationalisation of the property functions in the new Property Unit in the Shareholder Executive reduces duplication.

To date, accommodation and IT costs have been incurred with the relocation staff and establishment of desk space for around 20 staff enabling co-location of the central ERG team. The accommodation costs amount to just under £7,000. IT costs for this team are still to be determined but are currently funded under existing OGC budget costs.

Further analysis of organisational design options is still to occur. Decisions on this may mean incurring costs associated with changes to corporate systems such as HR, IT and accommodation, as well as with legal processes, with the expectation they will be met within existing resources. Costs associated with pay harmonisation (subject to Government pay provisions), are subject to negotiations with trades unions and it is not possible accurately to assess in advance the potential scope and speed of this harmonisation and any costs.

Further details on the costs and benefits will be set out in individual departmental Annual reports.

Further information on OGC, Buying Solutions and the Shareholder Executive can be found in Annex A.

DIRECTGOV

Directgov will transfer from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Cabinet Office.

This involves the transfer of 172 FTE staff to Cabinet Office.

On 20 July 2010 the Prime Minister announced that ministerial responsibility for Directgov would transfer from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General.

Context and rationale

Directgov provides the primary channel for digital communication with citizens, and acts as a cross-government digital service for all departments. Its role is to join up government information and services to citizens in a way that meets their needs and drives efficiencies. It is also responsible for the convergence and rationalisation of citizen-facing government websites. There is scope for it to play a more effective role in supporting departments in moving more public services online and in support of the transparency agenda by integrating their work with the digital teams already based in the Cabinet Office. This will enable an integrated digital team to be more effective in driving greater progress on digital public services, and should enable internal efficiencies by removing duplication between the teams.

The objectives of bringing Directgov to the centre of government are to accelerate web rationalisation and enable a step change in the way government delivers digital services and reduce costs.

Alternatives considered

The key criteria used in identifying and evaluating alternative options were:

- the effectiveness and efficiency of the work on transparency, open data, digital engagement and digital public services
- ability to accelerate web site rationalisation and achieve a step change in the way that government delivers digital services

Although DWP has significantly improved the capability and effectiveness of Directgov, it is not in a position to shape how other departments manage their online presence and associated funding.

The main alternative option considered therefore was to leave Directgov within DWP but with the Cabinet Office providing leadership and direction to its operations.

Following consideration it was felt that this option would not deliver the required re-focus, flexibility and quick response needed to achieve a step change in the way that government delivers digital services. Furthermore, this option would require Cabinet Office to provide leadership and direction to Directgov operations through existing DWP and Directgov processes and governance. In addition, it would not be possible to realise internal efficiencies by integrating Directgov with other Cabinet Office strands of work in this area.

Consequently, this option was discarded as: it will be cumbersome; will result in unclear accountability; and is very unlikely to achieve the re-focus, flexibility and quick response needed to drive the cross government work required for improving delivery of government services online.

Overview of the benefits and costs of change

The benefits of making the change are:

- Ensuring that Directgov is more effectively positioned to support the necessary cross government work based in the Cabinet Office for driving improved efficiency and moving government services online.
- Integrating Directgov with the digital teams already based in the Cabinet Office will enable internal efficiencies by removing duplication between the teams.
- The Government has announced a further drive to rationalise and close more web sites, more rapidly. With Directgov positioned at the centre and with the authority of the Cabinet Office to drive this work, the expected savings from web rationalisation can then be achieved more quickly.

In moving to the Cabinet Office, the Directgov funding will be reduced by a third over the Spending Review period, together with the funding for the digital teams based in the Cabinet Office.

Steps are being taken to minimise the cost and disruption of the change. Directgov staff will remain in their present accommodation, Hercules House, where they are already co-located with the Central Office of Information (COI), so there will be no costs associated with a physical move. The transition of payroll, terms and conditions of staff, and transition to CO IT, will be managed over a period of months to minimise disruption to business operations and impact on staff transition thereby allowing costs to be minimised. The residual transition costs will be absorbed within Directgov budget, with a small impact on this years work programme. No additional funds are therefore required. The estimated cost of £200k is the cost associated with providing network access to Hercules House. The cost currently paid to DWP for the lease of IT infrastructure (laptops, desktops, support etc) will be transferred to the Cabinet Office for the provision of Cabinet Office equivalent infrastructure.

Further details on the costs and benefits will be set out in individual departmental Annual reports.

Further information on Directgov can be found in Annex A.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL REFORM

The Elections and Democracy Division and Parliament and Constitution Division in the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Constitution Directorate has transferred to the Cabinet Office.

This involved the transfer of 78.4 staff to the new Constitution Group in Cabinet Office.

On 2 June 2010 the Prime Minister announced that responsibility for political and constitutional reform was transferring to the Cabinet Office to support the Deputy Prime Minister. The Director and Director-General responsible for this area also transferred to provide the Senior Leadership of the new Constitution Group.

The key areas of responsibility transferred to the Deputy Prime Minister were:

- Introducing fixed-term Parliaments;
- Legislating to hold a referendum on the Alternative Vote system for the House of Commons and to create fewer and more equal sized constituencies;
- Supporting people with disabilities to become MPs;
- Introducing a power for people to recall their MP;
- Developing proposals for a wholly or mainly elected second chamber;
- Speeding up implementation of individual voter registration;
- Considering the “West Lothian question”;
- Introducing a statutory register of lobbyists;
- Reforming party funding;
- Supporting all postal primaries.

The Deputy Prime Minister also has policy responsibility for the Electoral Commission and the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (although those bodies are wholly independent of Government) and will be responsible for a range of other functions relating to elections, political parties and related matters and various constitutional matters, including sponsorship functions in relation to the Parliamentary Boundary Commissions for England and Wales.

Context and rationale

The Government has committed to fundamental political reform, including a referendum on electoral reform, much greater co-operation across party lines, and changes to our political system to make it far more transparent and accountable. The Deputy Prime Minister has been given special responsibility for this policy area. The change has been made in order to support him in carrying out his Ministerial responsibilities.

Overview of the benefits and costs of change

The benefits of making the change are:

- Enabling the Deputy Prime Minister to take Ministerial responsibility for the constitutional and political reform programme and providing him and his Ministerial team with the civil service support needed in order to deliver this substantive and high-profile agenda, which includes a significant programme of legislation.

- Bringing together policy expertise in Whitehall across a range of constitutional issues, including the framework of electoral law and the conduct of elections, the constitutional settlement and devolution into the centre of Government.

Steps are being taken to minimise the cost and disruption of the change. MOJ staff will remain in their present accommodation for at least the next few months, so there will be no immediate costs associated with a physical move. The transition of payroll, terms and conditions of staff, and transition to CO IT, will be managed over a period of months to minimise disruption to business operations and impact on staff transition thereby allowing costs to be minimised. The residual transition costs will be absorbed within existing budgets.

Further details on the costs and benefits will be set out in individual departmental Annual reports.

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY (FSA)

In England, nutrition policy will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Health. Where not related to food safety, food labelling and food composition policy will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Food Standards Agency will continue to be responsible for food safety.

Around 70 policy posts will move to the Department for Health, and around 25 policy posts will move to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

The Prime Minister announced on 20 July 2010 that nutrition policy will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Health. Food labelling and food composition policy, where not related to food safety or nutrition, will become a responsibility of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The Food Standards Agency is a UK non-ministerial department and these changes relate to England only. The Food Standards Agency will remain a non ministerial department reporting to the Westminster Parliament and devolved assemblies through Health ministers.

Context and rationale

The government fully appreciates the benefit of having an independent FSA with food safety at its heart. The intended changes will support delivery of Defra's Structural Reform Plan commitment to reform British farming and encourage sustainable food production, and promote increased domestic food production, and ensure that consumers can be confident about where their food comes from. They will also directly contribute to the Secretary of State for Health's creation of a public health service and an integrated structure for public health that enables policy to be communicated and delivered in a coherent and consistent manner. This will have benefits for both the public and industry in England and will avoid duplication of resources and policy work between DH and the FSA.

The FSA retains a clearly defined function concentrating on its core remit of food safety, covering all aspects of development, implementation and delivery. This is the current focus of the remainder of the FSA staff, the majority of whom work on the frontline delivering statutory inspection and enforcement in slaughterhouses and meat cutting plants. The FSA also handles food related incidents.

Food is a matter of devolved competence. The FSA delivers its functions for the whole of the UK, on behalf of all four administrations. The Devolved Administrations have been informed about the changes.

Alternatives considered

Alternative arrangements considered by the Government included:

1. Making no changes.

It was felt by Ministers that this option would hinder the Secretary of State for Health's aim of creating an integrated structure for public health that enables policy to be communicated

and delivered in a coherent and consistent manner. Furthermore, Ministers felt that it would not give the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as much control over the delivery of DEFRA's Structural Reform Plan.

Overview of the benefits and costs of change

These changes are based on the belief on the part of Ministers that by DH taking on responsibility for nutrition policy in England, and DEFRA taking on responsibility for food labelling in England, benefits can be achieved through:

- A single nutrition policy team as part of an integrated structure for public health
- A co-ordinated Government position on nutrition resulting in clear and consistent messages for consumers and industry
- A single team in DEFRA dealing with country of origin labelling, with officials directly accountable to elected ministers leading negotiations for the UK in Europe
- Efficiency savings from reduced duplication of policy work and uncoordinated work programmes.

All three Departments are at an early stage in establishing detailed costings of the changes. They will be guided by Cabinet Office Best Practice Guidance that states that the resources transferred should be sufficient to support the functions transferred and that transition costs will be met from existing budgets.

Unions will be consulted as part of usual HR processes. Costs associated with pay harmonisation (subject to Government pay provisions), are subject to negotiations with trades unions and it is not possible to assess in advance the potential scope and speed of this harmonisation and any costs.

Programme management arrangements have been set up to ensure the change is managed efficiently, and a team has been established from FSA, DEFRA, and DH to manage the transition, covering the governance HR, Finance, Accommodation, and Communications workstreams.

Further details on the costs and benefits will be set out in individual departmental Annual reports.

Further information on the FSA can be found at annex A.

CONCLUSION

This document sets out an initial analysis of costs and benefits associated with each significant change, as well as the rationale for the change. As set out in the Government's Response to the Public Accounts Committee's report on *Reorganising Central Government*³, each department undergoing a Machinery of Government change is expected to report to Parliament, at an appropriate stage, on the achievement of the costs and benefits, identified as part of the change. In addition the department undergoing a Machinery of Government change will be expected to carry out an evaluation⁴.

³ *Treasury Minute on the Thirty Third Report from the Committee of the Public Accounts Session 2009-10*

⁴ The evaluations will be for internal use only and will not be published unless the Department considers it appropriate.

ANNEX A

Further Information about the Office of Government Commerce

The Office of Government Commerce (OGC) was established in 2000 to help Government deliver best value from its spending. It works with central Government departments and other public sector organisations to ensure greater value for money and to drive forward the improvement of central Government capability in procurement, project and programme management, and estates management through the development of people skills, processes and tools.

OGC also provides policy standards and guidance on best practice in procurement, projects and estate management, and monitors and challenges Departments' performance against these standards, grounded in an evidence base of information and assurance. It has a further role to promote and to fosters collaborative procurement across the public sector and to provide innovative ways to develop Government's commercial and procurement capability, including leadership of the Government Procurement Service.

OGC has 296.1 full time equivalent (FTE) staff who are based in Norwich, London and Leeds. Net Administration cost expenditure in 2009/2010 was £24.4 million (unaudited) which includes gross expenditure of £33.2 million and £8.8 million income.

The OGC works with central Government departments and other public sector organisations to ensure the achievement of six key goals:

- Delivery of value for money from third party spend;
- Delivery of projects to time, quality and cost, realising benefits;
- Getting the best from the Government's £30bn estate;
- Improving the sustainability of the Government estate and operations, including reducing carbon emissions by 12.5% by 2010-11, through stronger performance management and guidance;
- Helping achieve delivery of further Government policy goals, including innovation, equality, and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- And driving forward the improvement of central Government capability in procurement, project and programme management, and estates management through the development of people skills, processes and tools.

Further Information about Buying Solutions

Buying Solutions is the national procurement partner for UK public services. It was established in 2001 as a result of the Gershon Report, through a merger of the procurement functions of the Buying Agency and CCTA.

Buying Solutions is an Executive Agency of the Office of Government Commerce and has Trading Fund status.

The primary role of Buying Solutions is to maximise the value for money obtained by Government departments and other public bodies through the procurement and supply of goods and services. Buying Solutions is a Trading Fund which is run on commercial lines, with responsibility for generating income to cover its costs and make a return to its parent department.

At the date of transfer, Buying Solutions had 373.9 FTEs, based in Liverpool and Norwich. Buying Solutions operating costs for 2009/10 were £37.8m. Their business model means they are funded by the private sector to deliver savings for the public sector. They run on a commercial basis and over the last five years have paid HMT over £8million in ROCE dividends.

Buying Solutions is the largest of over 40 Central Purchasing Bodies (CPB) in the wider public sector. Whilst OGC sets procurement policy and best practice to help the UK public sector to achieve value from its spending; Buying Solutions delivers procurement solutions for nationally sourced commodity goods and services to customers in both central civil government and the wider public sector.

It however has no formal 'mandate' and therefore has to 'earn' its customers. It is the only CPB with a legal remit to trade across the whole of UK public service.

It facilitates the buying process in the marketplace, providing access to over 500,000 products and services through more than 600 suppliers. It has a diverse customer base spanning central government departments, NHS Trusts, local councils and schools.

Further information about Shareholder Executive

The Shareholder Executive was created in September 2003 to improve government's performance as a shareholder in government-owned businesses and to provide a source of corporate finance expertise within government.

Its remit covers 28 businesses, from large well known companies such as the Royal Mail to smaller trading funds like the UK Hydrographic Office. Its role is to be a proactive, intelligent shareholder, working with government departments and management teams to help government-owned businesses perform better. In recent times, it has been working to establish a Property Unit to provide a central source of property advice across the public sector identifying surplus assets and acting as a source of expertise and support on complex land and property transactions.

The organisation also has a role in providing advice to Ministers and officials on a range of shareholder issues including objectives, governance, strategy, performance monitoring, board appointments and remuneration.

It also has a wider role as a corporate finance resource within Government. This is applied beyond the portfolio of government-owned businesses. This includes the appraisal and negotiation of financial assistance to companies in the UK and provision of financial, analytical and negotiation support to Ministers and Departments in their dealings with companies. For example providing corporate finance advice on major initiatives to a range of departmental clients across government in the following areas: Financial interventions; Launch Investment; Rescue and Restructuring Aid; Grant for Business Investment; and Commercial advice on key third party relationships.

Further Information about Directgov

Directgov is:

“A digital service, shaped and driven by the public, to access government services they need, wherever and whenever they want ...
... enabling government to provide better services, cost effectively to more people”

Directgov works collaboratively across government on its three key objectives:

- to make accessing government services easier for users
- to drive cost efficiencies and help save government money
- to open up government to the public

Directgov was launched in April 2004 as the citizen-focused destination for government information and services, replacing UK Online. It was the first operational cross-government programme, involving all departments and their agencies offering them a medium to engage online with their target audiences. It consists of franchises across a range of topics and audiences bringing together information in ways that make sense for the citizen.

Directgov has 172 FTE staff and a budget of £28.4m for Financial Year 2010/2011.

Directgov aims to bring together online government services all in one place, whilst at the same time cutting down the number of websites.

Directgov is now Government's digital channel for communicating with the public on government services and information. Departmental content can now be found on Directgov, enabling 100s of websites to be rationalised. This programme of 'web convergence' is ongoing and should complete by March 2011. 192 websites have been converged to date which leads to efficiency savings for government.

Directgov's ongoing role is to enable government to:

- Reduce the deficit
- Encourage individual and social responsibility, through provision and sharing of information and services in an open and transparent way
- Enhance the role of social enterprises, charities and co-operatives in public services

Directgov is and will be doing more to support departments achieve channel shift and enable significant savings to the provision of cost-effective digital services that the public recognise and want to use. This leads to better use of front-line resources reserving them for those with the most need.

Directgov will work increasingly with partners and their channels (for example private sector websites), and through intermediaries, such as the voluntary sector, to make Directgov's information and services available to the widest possible audience who may not necessarily be online. Through this Directgov will enable social enterprises to take a bigger role in the development and delivery of public services.

Directgov, working with departments and the private sector, will use its digital expertise to provide advice and guidance on how best to use information and interactive services to engage customers, for example Directgov has a small and developing function that helps departments in the design of services that are useful and usable for customers thus improving take up of services. Directgov's resilient infrastructure means we can publish official information online via Directgov to a huge audience, whilst the underlying data is published on data.gov.uk

Further information about the FSA

The FSA is a non-ministerial government department. It is a UK wide body accountable to Parliament through Department of Health Ministers and to the Devolved Administrations through the devolved Health Ministries.

It became operational in April 2000 under the Food Standards Act 1999 with the statutory mandate of protecting public health from risks associated with food and otherwise protecting the interests of consumers in relation to food. It meets this objective through a range of statutory duties and other functions, including that of developing, or assisting the development of, relevant policy.

The Food Standards Agency regulates the food industry and is separate from food industry sponsorship. Strategy and policy are determined by the Board and all policy decisions are made in public. The Agency can publish its advice to Ministers.

The Food Standards Agency principles are:

- putting the consumer first
- openness and independence
- science and evidence based.

The Agency performs risk assessment, risk management and risk communication functions in relation to food, for example during food incidents, and bases policy and regulatory decisions on science and evidence. The majority of Food Standards Agency staff work on the frontline delivering statutory inspection and enforcement in slaughterhouses and meat cutting plants.