Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

December 2012

DECC Digital Strategy

Contents

1. Executive Summary

The Department for Energy and Climate Change (hereafter, DECC) designs and delivers a range of policies to regulate, and create and apply market frameworks and incentives to the UK energy industry in order to achieve a thriving, globally competitive, low carbon energy economy in the UK. The Department supports consumers to cut energy waste and reduce bills by providing help to pay for and install energy efficiency measures and, in addition, provide the information they need on the options to reduce bills and make homes more energy efficient.

Digital by default is core to effective delivery against this mission. The rapid pace of technological change presents an opportunity to radically alter the way we interact with people and businesses and transform the way we develop policy and deliver services. DECC and its Arms Length Bodies (hereafter, ALBs) provide 53 transactional services to our customers, often in conjunction with commercial partners. We can deliver many of our key policies more effectively and efficiently by delivering superb digital services that our end users – from consumers to businesses – choose to use.

This strategy sets out how we will grasp those opportunities and make the commitment to digital by default a reality. We have set out five digital by default principles, developed in collaboration with the Government Digital Service (hereafter, GDS), that will guide our thinking as we evolve our policy and delivery over this and the next spending review.

DECC's Digital By Default Principles:

1. DECC supports the principle that digital government services are the default, and that these should be so straight-forward and convenient that all those who can use them choose to do so

2. However, our first priority remains our customers and the efficient delivery of our policies – in some cases this will still require interaction through other channels

3. Where customers could use our digital services but do not, we will support and encourage them to do so.

4. Where our customers are genuinely unable to use digital channels, we will ensure alternatives are available.

5. Although transactional services are the heart of this strategy, the principle of digital by default extends throughout all of our work, including policymaking and information services

Meeting these principles, and becoming digital by default, will require fundamental changes, including a step-change in the quality of our digital services and new capabilities, a new mindset and a new approach to designing and delivering policy across DECC and its partners. To this end, we propose 15 actions that complement the UK Government Digital Strategy (hereafter, UKGDS), split across four broad areas of change:

Transforming our transactional services, converting them to the digital by default standard

We will:

Action A: Design all future policies and services to be digital by default (subject to business cases), using the ESAS Remote Advisory Tool as our pilot

Action B: Re-design existing services to be digital by default (subject to business cases reviewed against the criteria listed in Exhibit 2), collaborating with ALBs and partners where necessary and using the Coal Authority's Mining Reports as our pilot

Action C: Set up a group to monitor and coordinate progress across DECC and its partners

Developing the skills and capabilities necessary to deliver our digital by default vision

We will:

Action D: Recruit a replacement to our Board-level Digital Leader and review how far it is necessary to have digital skills represented at Board level across all our network of delivery bodies

Action E: Ensure Service Managers are in place for all services with over 100,000 transactions

Action F: Conduct a skills and capabilities audit using a Digital Maturity Index (DMI) – we will use this to identify capacity building requirements across full range of capabilities from leadership through policy, service management and procurement

Ensure that the principle of digital by default extends throughout all of our work, including policymaking and information services

We will:

Action G: Develop a 'digital toolkit' for policy makers to ensure they are able to efficiently consult through digital channels

Action H: Put in place systems to monitor the application of the 'digital toolkit' for policy makers, to ensure it is used effectively and consistently, and to enable it to be iteratively improved on an ongoing basis

Action I: Complete the transition of all online information services to .GOV.UK

Collaborate with partners across government and the third sector to deliver the pan-government vision

We will:

Action J: Ensure that every digital service has an excellent offline alternative for those who really need it, and that those who could reasonably be expected to use digital, but do not currently, are encouraged and assisted in becoming digitally literate and using our digital channels

Action K: Raise awareness of digital channels and encourage channel shift, while preserving non-digital channels for those who really need them

Action L: Work with GDS and Cabinet Office to make best possible use of procurement frameworks, and attempt to develop services and commission work and projects using agile methodologies and SMEs wherever appropriate

Action M: Cooperate with GDS and other Departments in the development of common platforms to facilitate the provision of information and services. This will include adoption of shared Identity Assurance tools, and potentially the opening up of data to third parties via APIs

Action N: Work with Cabinet Office to remove legislative barriers to digital policy making

Action O: Make consistent management information available to internal teams and to GDS for all Digital by Default services

2. Introduction

2.1 Introducing the DECC Departmental Digital Strategy

This document sets out the DECC strategy for becoming a Digital by Default department in line with the UKGDS, and sets out 15 actions that DECC and its partners will take in implementing this process.

The 15 actions and the broader principles contained in this document constitute a non-binding vision for the future of DECC that covers the rest of the current Spending Review period but which will also guide the Department's plans in the next period. They describe the way DECC intends to design and deliver services and policy going forwards, given the expected benefits of Digital by Default. Subject to funding, they will be incorporated into our next business plan, which is due for publication in 2013 and will cover the period 2013-15.

These actions and principles have been discussed with, and approved by, those of our ALBs engaged in the delivery of services. However, due to the operational independence of many of DECC's ALBs, and the complexity of the processes and legal requirements involved in delivering some services, a case-by-case approach to change will be adopted for ALBs' activities.

This Departmental Digital Strategy (hereafter, DDS) should be read in conjunction with existing strategy documents and plans. In particular:

- key cross-government plans, including the UK Government Digital Strategy and the Civil Service Reform plan

- the DECC Departmental Business Plan

- the DECC Development Programme (and associated Capability Review)

- DECC's Open Data Strategy

- the business plans of our ALBs

2.2 What is covered by our "Digital by Default" strategy?

Digital by Default means Government departments providing services to citizens through digital channels, and ensuring that these digital services are so straightforward and convenient that everyone who is able to use them chooses to do so. It also requires that those people who are unable to use digital services are offered excellent alternatives so that nobody is excluded.

'Digital' in this context refers to any device with which people access the internet, including computers, smart phones and tablets, as well as new devices which may come into widespread use in the future. It also includes automated telephony services.

The actions in this strategy are mainly about transactional services, for example providing discounts or registering people for government schemes. However, the strategy also includes actions and principles to change the way DECC makes policy and communicates with people, including the way we consult on policy.

3. The Current Landscape

3.1 Introduction to DECC and its current business plan

DECC's vision is of a thriving, globally competitive, low carbon energy economy in the UK. DECC designs and delivers a range of policies to regulate, and create and apply market frameworks and incentives to the UK energy industry. We also assist the consumers of this energy by advising them on energy efficiency and helping to support and protect the fuel-poor.

Our current key policy priorities include implementing the Green Deal to help consumers and businesses reduce energy use and save money on bills and protect the fuel poor, reforming the energy market to ensure the UK has sufficient secure energy in the future, driving action on climate change in the UK and internationally, and managing the UK's energy legacy.

3.2 Introduction to our current services

DECC and its ALBs provide a wide range of information and transactional services to our customers. For example, providing information about energy efficiency to consumers and providing discounts on energy bills to the fuel-poor, registering citizens and businesses who wish to generate their own electricity, and regulating oil and gas drilling including awarding drilling licences. These services are currently delivered by DECC and its ALBs, often in conjunction with commercial partners, and are provided through a range of channels including telephone, postal, face to face and online.

DECC currently provides 53 transactional services in total[1], although significantly more than half of these are services relating to specialised processes used only by a small number of businesses and involving less than 1000 transactions each year. We provide several larger transactional services, including for consumers and businesses, often through ALBs or partners – of our 10 largest services, six are delivered by DECC's ALBs and partners[2].

3.3 Demand for digital

Most people in the UK now see the internet as being a part of everyday life. The Cabinet Office 'Digital Landscape Survey' found that 82% of people are online and 77% use the internet every day. Internet users are also increasingly willing to engage in important transactions online. The proportion of internet users who shop online grew from 74% in 2005 to 86% in 2011. 45% of internet users used online banking in 2005 but in 2011 the figure was 60%[3].

However, only 46% of internet users have used a Government transactional service online, and, of them, most have only used a limited number of services and many have only used one service. When asked why they elected to carry out transactions like shopping or banking online, 85% of internet users answered that it saves time, 62% that the site was clear and easy to use and 61% that they benefited from availability of services outside office hours. Overall it seems that citizens are willing to perform transactional services online, and do so to save time or because it is otherwise more convenient – it is likely that simpler, more efficient Government services online would be used more widely than those offered at present.

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1 http://transactionalservices.alphagov.co.uk/department/decc

2 The six largest services provided by ALBs and partners are: Energy Company Obligation (ECO) administration (Ofgem), Mining Reports (Coal Authority), Feed in Tariffs - CFR registration (Ofgem), Renewables Obligation - Output Data Submission (Ofgem), Renewables Obligation – ROC Issue (Ofgem) and Planning Applications (Coal Authority). (Note: ECO is a planned policy that will be launched in 2013)

3 Digital Landscape Survey, Cabinet Office (August 2012)

3.4 What we have done to date with digital

We have already recognised the need to evolve our transactional services offer and have set out our plans to do this in our response to the Capability Review[4]. The evolution involves transforming from a policy organisation to one managing a large, complex delivery programme. The Review and response address broad issues around organisational structure, culture and processes. We have also already recognised the importance of digital delivery to this transition – several upcoming policies have been designed with digital in mind.

Similarly, we have continued to grow our longer-standing digital services to ensure that the technology available to us is utilised as widely as possible within DECC. A good example of this is the Energy Portal which covers a wide range of regulatory transactions with industry (having started out simply to perform environmental consenting activity) and was developed from the start on open source software, using Agile development techniques and supplied by a SME.

Currently well over half of our 53 transactional services are available through digital channels, and many of those which are not are low volume services for businesses which require specialist skills or detailed interactions which do not lend themselves to a purely digital process. Many of our services which are offered online, including several of our largest services by volume, conduct all or almost all of their transactions online.

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4 Department of Energy and Climate Change Capability Action Plan, DECC (2012), see particularly p. 6 and p. 9

Exhibit 1: Map of shortlisted services and tools
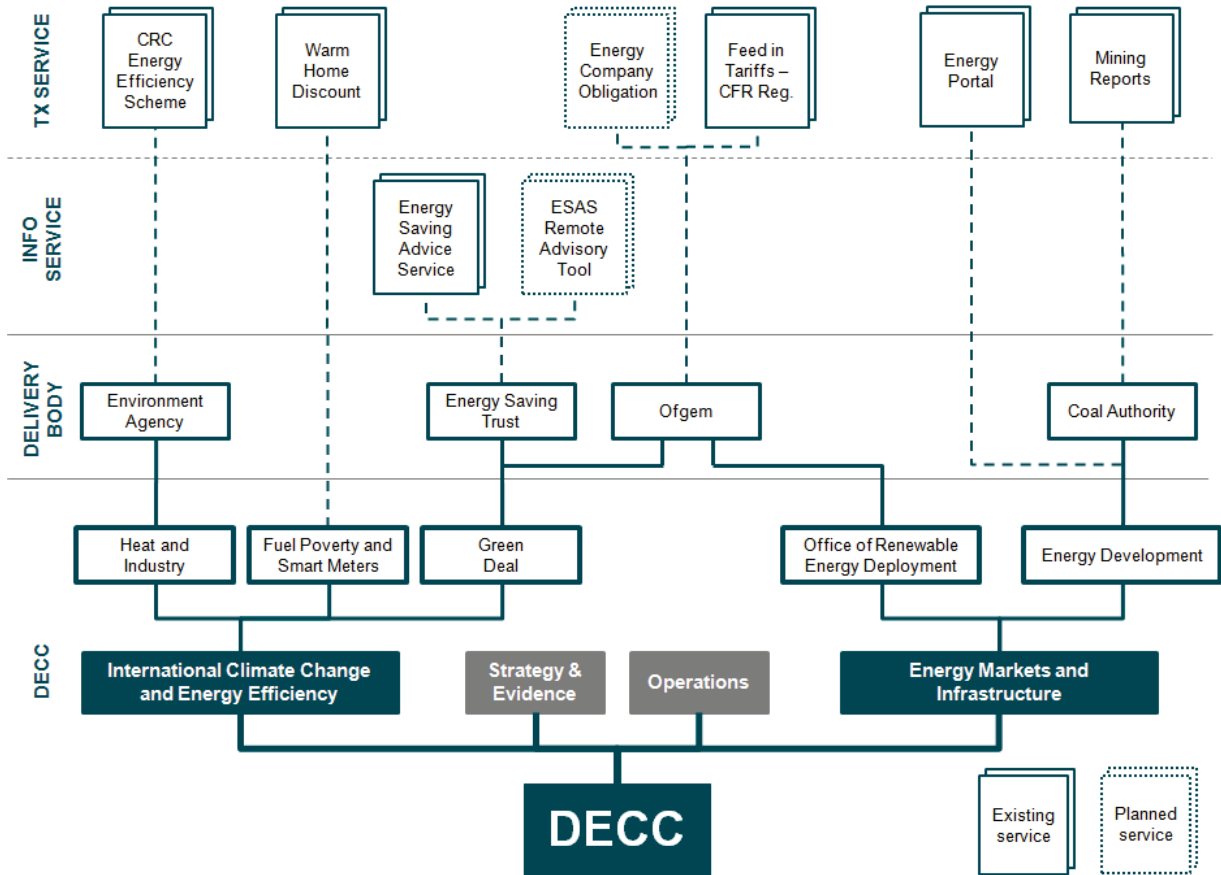
4. Our vision for a digital by default DECC

DECC is currently undergoing a transformation from being a purely 'policy' department to being a 'policy and delivery' department with the ability to manage a large and complex portfolio of delivery programmes[5]. Our vision is to design and deliver policy in an integrated way, driven by a clear, data-driven view of our customers and their needs.

Digital by default is core to this vision. The rapid pace of technological change presents an opportunity to radically alter the way we interact with people and business and transform the way we develop policy and deliver services. We can deliver many of our key policies more effectively and efficiently by delivering superb digital services that our end users – from consumers to businesses – choose to use. This strategy sets out how we will grasp those opportunities and make the commitment to digital by default a reality.

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5 Department of Energy and Climate Change Capability Action Plan, DECC (2012), p. 2

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5. Our approach

5.1 Transforming our transactional services, converting them to the digital by default standard

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Introduction to service re-design

DECC currently offers more than half of its 53 services through digital channels, and in many cases the digital channel handles all or almost all transactions. However, there is still scope for redesign of existing services either to provide digital channels for those services where there are currently none or to improve the performance of the digital channel where a digital option is currently available. In many cases redesign may not be necessary, but there may be a clear business case for incremental improvements.

Additionally, where it does not interfere with the delivering of policy objectives, new services will be designed to a digital by default standard – DECC has set out plans to develop a digital channel for several of its major services. In each case, service design will have the customer as its focus, with the ultimate objective being the development of a suite of connected tools which are built around the needs of the user. Having seen an indicative indication of its likely contents, DECC intends to comply with the Digital by Default Service Standard once it is published, although this will require approval once the contents of the standard have been finalised.

We have gone through a three step process for prioritising services for re-design and subsequently developing a plan:

1. Prioritise long list of existing services
2. Evaluation of prioritised services
3. Develop business case for re-development of prioritised services

Step 1: Prioritise long list of services

We have conducted an initial review of services in order to identify a short-list to be prioritised for redesign. The process of prioritisation took into account our ability to deliver our policy objectives, the impact on user experience and the net savings predicted, using the six Evaluation Criteria outlined in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2: Business case criteria for service redesign

Criteria	Explanation
1. Effectiveness in delivering policy aims	Some policy objectives may be difficult to fulfil when services are delivered through digital channels, or may be achieved to a greater extent using non-digital channels. For example, where customers need specific advice or reassurance around purchasing subsidised home improvements for energy efficiency, it may be preferable for some to have telephone or face-to-face contact to encourage take-up. Service redesign will not be allowed to compromise our delivery of our policy objectives
2. Size of user base	GDS estimates indicate that services with lower volumes of transaction will tend to yield smaller cost savings than those with larger volumes[6], and lower volume transactions will impact fewer customers. Such services will be de-prioritised, except in cases where the service is 'high value', and will have a significant impact on the experiences of some customers
3. Complexity of processes	Some DECC services are complex. In these cases it may not be realistic to redesign the process (for example, because multiple organisations are involved in delivery, security or personal data protection requirements or because customers will have to relearn a complex process which is currently performing adequately)
4. Levels of digital engagement	DECC's customer base includes some groups, for example the low income and vulnerable, particularly older people, whose digital engagement is low. In some instances this may mean digital channels would be unlikely to see significant uptake, leading us to de-prioritise the service compared to others
5. Future policy developments	Services which are going to be replaced or shut down under current plans, or which are considered likely to be replaced or shut down in the future will be de-prioritised in comparison to others
6. Services delivered by partners	In some cases service redesign will not be possible in the near future as a result of our relationships with our ALBs or commercial partners, due to the terms of existing contracts or the extent of their operational independence

Using these criteria we have identified an initial shortlist of six services to prioritise. The selection contains services which appear to be strong candidates for redesign based on the Evaluation Criteria. Given the cross Government strategy's focus on services with over 100,000 transactions per year, it contains all the services DECC offers which process such large volumes of transactions. However it also contains services which process smaller numbers of 'high value' transactions (i.e. transactions where re-design will have a significant impact on the experiences of some customers). These services are identified in Exhibit 3 in the following subsection.

Step 2: Evaluation of prioritised services

Having identified services for prioritisation, we worked in collaboration with teams across the DECC network to evaluate these prioritised services in more detail, focussing on assessing the quality of the service and the potential benefits that could be realised through re-design.

6 Digital Efficiency Report, Government Digital Service (2012) p. 10

The findings of these evaluations are summarised in Exhibit 3 and detailed in Exhibit 9 in the Appendix. Based on this research we have identified two services which we intend to prioritise and use as exemplars for the redesign of our services to meet the digital by default standard:

- Mining Reports

- Energy Saving Advice Service (ESAS)

Exhibit 3: Summary of evaluation of shortlisted services

Service	Provider	Total transactions per year	Online transactions	% digital	Meets DbD standard[7]	Plans to develop	
Mining Reports	Coal Authority	245,000	240,100	98%	🟩	In talks with GDS regarding plans to collaborate with Land Registry to develop one-stop transactional service for solicitors	} Prioritised for redesign
ESAS[8]	DECC	300,000	-	5%	🟥	Digital version of phone service in development	
CRC[9]	Environment Agency	10,000	10,000	100%	🟩	Slate for incremental improvement of service agreed	
Energy Portal	DECC	13,400	11,300	84%	🟨	Continuous improvements underway to develop existing services and add new services	
Feed in tariffs – CFR registration	Ofgem	129,000[10]	129,000	100%	🟩	No current plans for development of service	
Warm Home Discount Scheme[11]	DECC	1,100,000	990,000	90%	🟨	Currently no plans for development, although improvements to database are reducing volume of manual transactions	

[7] To meet the Digital by Default service standard, a service must carry out all or almost all of its transactions online, and offer customers a uniform and connected end-to-end process e.g. while the Energy Portal is an example of early adoption of digital service delivery, and provides its digital services successfully, in some instances customers are required to re-enter data, and some services are delivered offline, resulting in an amber rating despite the high proportion of digital transactions overall

[8] Transaction volume is an estimate based on data from GDS. The RED scoring relates only to the absence of any on-line holistic energy efficiency advice service bespoke to the individual.

[9] Transaction volumes and type are estimates based on discussions with the DECC team

[10] Transaction volumes have varied widely from month to month throughout the life of the service, partly due to changes in tariff levels causing peaks in demand. The figure of 129,000 represents transactions completed in 2011. However, 183,000 transactions have already been completed in 2012 (year to date), and it is uncertain how demand will evolve. For detailed statistics on transaction volumes see http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/energy_stats/source/electricity/electricity.aspx

[11] Warm Home Discount Scheme is not expected to digitise further, due to the level of digital engagement of its customer base (vulnerable older people) and the complexity of the processes involved (data matching with DWP), however it will be included in DECC's audit of services

Step 3: Develop business case for re-development of prioritised services

DECC and its ALBs already have plans to develop the Mining Reports and ESAS services subject to a convincing business case. Both of these services have the potential to act as pilots for the Digital by Default method, and in both cases re-design could have a significant positive impact on customer experiences.

The Coal Authority, one of DECC's ALBs, currently provides information about the location and impact of existing and abandoned mines and mineshafts, particularly regarding their impact on property. While the existing service is almost entirely digital, there is an opportunity to collaborate with the Land Registry and Local Authorities to provide a better service to conveyancers and private sector one-stop-shops who access property search and other conveyancing information on their behalf (a significant proportion of the customer base). This would happen through a portal which would provide information from all three sources via a single tool, as outlined in Exhibit 4:

Exhibit 4:   Summary of plans to develop Mining Reports

Description of service	• Current service provides information about the impact of mining in the form of CON29M reports purchased individually and downloaded with immediate access • Proposed new service would target conveyancers, allowing them to access information from the Coal Authority through electronic channels developed in collaboration with Land Registry
Core service data	• Currently 245,000 Mining Reports are accessed annually, 98% through digital channels • Users, overall, are positive about the service, with 59% ranking it 'excellent' and only 1% 'poor'
High-level business case	• A significant portion of the user base will benefit from a simpler and more efficient service that provides all information from one source
High level implementation plan	• Currently in early discussions with Land Registry to cooperate around their proposals for Local Authority information • Implementation is dependent on Land Registry and stakeholder group agreement – no fixed dates available currently
Organisational changes	• Development of electronic channels will deepen cooperation between Coal Authority and Land Registry • Design and management will consolidate existing digital service development skills within the department, and potentially provide valuable experience of agile development methods

The second service prioritised for redesign is the ESAS call centre which currently provides advice to customers regarding subsidised home improvements and suppliers who can provide these improvements. DECC is very conscious of the necessity of an offline channel given that some customers are vulnerable pensioners or are otherwise unlikely to be digitally engaged. Given the role of the centre in providing reassurance and detailed advice to consumers around potentially expensive transactions, it may also be the case that policy will be best delivered by telephone in some instances. That said, a digital option could be more straightforward for those able to use it, and demand for the ESAS service is expected to increase as new policies (e.g. Green Deal) are introduced. Consequently DECC has plans to develop an online tool to offer a similar service to the ESAS call centre, to act as a supplement in supporting a number of policies. These plans are detailed in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5: Summary of plans to develop ESAS

Description of service	• ESAS call centre provides customers with information about DECC policy (e.g. regarding home improvements for energy efficiency, providers of these improvements and potential subsidies) • Will facilitate delivery of Green Deal from 2013 • Remote Advisory Tool will 'take ESAS online', with customers able to receive advice online rather than by phone. In some cases the Remote Advisory Tool will signpost people to ESAS
Core service data	• ESAS call centre currently receives 15,000 – 20,000 calls per month, expected to increase to 300,000 per year after Green Deal is introduced • Potential to move most contacts to Remote Advisory Tool, although some customers will not be digitally engaged
High-level business case	• Complete business case to be developed • Potential cost savings realised • Reduce customer waiting time and simplify process
High level implementation plan	• Currently awaiting specification • Project awaiting confirmation based on detailed business case, to be developed once specification is agreed
Organisational changes	• ESAS Remote Advisory Tool used as an exemplar for future service design, identifying and developing required skills and capabilities e.g. Building experience with agile development methodologies • Existing ESAS tool to eventually become an example of Assisted Digital channel

5.2 Developing the skills and capabilities necessary to deliver our digital by default vision

Action D: Recruit a replacement to our Board-level Digital Leader and review how far it is necessary to have digital skills represented at Board level across all our network of delivery bodies

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Skills and capabilities – current position

The move to digital by default will require us to develop new skills and capabilities and also a significant change in culture and mind-set. The Civil Service Reform Plan recognised this requirement, highlighting gaps in digital capability and skills across government departments, and challenging government to embed these capabilities in organisational DNA, from leadership (Departmental Boards, Digital Leaders) to operations.

An initial evaluation of DECC and its partners against a Digital Maturity Index developed in partnership with GDS suggests that although DECC and its partners have made significant progress in developing expert teams in key parts of the DECC network – e.g. at the Coal Authority and in the Energy Portal team at DECC – there is still a long way to go to embed this expertise across the organisation (see Exhibit 6).

In particular, there can be disconnects between policy and service design. Delivery contracts and services are sometimes set up before areas of duplication and confusion in service design and delivery have been identified and addressed. Stakeholders identified a number of issues in the organisation that contribute to this problem:

- No product or service managers at head office and/or in ALBs with ownership for the key lines of service (although there is currently an initiative to set up a 'customer champions group')
- Lack of a process or system for "filtering" products / services at design level to identify opportunities to improve efficiency in delivery and avoid areas of confusion / duplication
- Procurement systems which tend to favour large contracts with a selection of major IT providers, and which are difficult to subsequently develop or integrate with one another
- This DECC digital strategy sets out a vision and plan for addressing these capability issues over the next business plan period, progressing from here to the point at which we have a clear view of our requirements and a clear plan.

Exhibit 6: Digital Maturity Index – DECC Rating

Capability	DMI Rating	Commentary
Leadership	3	Board level digital leader in place but leaving organisation in Dec 2012 – plan in place to recruit replacement COO who can take on Digital Leader remit
Policy	3	Pockets of best practice in open policy design but need to ensure these are captured and rolled out across all policy development
Service design and management	2	Examples of high quality service development in-house – for example, in Coal Authority and Energy Portal teams. Next step is to ensure that this expertise is embedded across DECC and partners. In particular, there can be a disconnect between policy and service design, with new services often designed without taking a 360 degree view of the user and other services relating to them. Factors contributing to this include: • Complex network of delivery partners • Lack of product or service managers at head office and/or in ALBs with ownership for the key lines of service • Lack of a system for "filtering" products / services at design level to identify opportunities to improve efficiency in delivery and avoid areas of confusion / duplication? As a result, delivery contracts set up without areas of duplication and confusion in service design and delivery being identified and addressed
Procurement	2-3	Procurement systems which tend to favour large contracts with major IT providers, and which are difficult to subsequently develop or integrate with one another; some use of SMEs for internal and smaller projects

Action D: "Enhance departmental digital leadership"

DECC's Board-level Digital Leader is leaving the organisation as of December 2012. We will recruit a replacement as a matter of priority. Annex 5 of the UKGDS sets out the high level role and responsibilities of the Digital Leader and how these relate to the other Board roles.

In addition we will review how far it is necessary to have digital skills represented at Board level across all our network of delivery bodies. In some cases this role will be played by existing senior management – for example, digital service delivery is written into the statute of the Coal Authority, and the role of Digital Leader is played by the CEO, Philip Lawrence.

Action E: Appoint Service Managers to all services with over 100k transactions

DECC fully supports the GDS principle of digital services being overseen by dedicated and suitably-skilled 'Service Managers'. We will aim to have such individuals in place for all re-designed high volume transactional services after April 2013 and for all existing services with over 100,000 transactions by April 2015.[12]

We will work with GDS and our teams to scope the role of service manager and how these vary across our network of organisations, identifying commonalities and aspects of the role that vary according to delivery model (e.g. services delivered by DECC or an ALB compared to contract management of third party delivery partner). Importantly, some of our existing teams already have team members playing similar roles (for example, The Head of Mining Information in the Mining Information Team at the Coal Authority)

Action F: Conduct skills and capabilities audit – identify new capabilities required in house

Delivering our digital by default vision will involve organisational change at all levels across DECC and its partners. It will require us to introduce new capabilities, new roles, but also new processes and systems. It will also require broader changes in culture and mindset.

Importantly, we recognise that there is a long way to go both to fully understand our requirements and also to identify the most cost-efficient ways of meeting these requirements. In a time of austerity this will involve drawing on and developing existing internal expertise, and working with an extensive network of partners both within and outside government.

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12 Subject to budget. In many cases we envisage the service manager role will involve an evolution of existing roles in the business – for example, refining the roles of existing service managers

Exhibit 7: Key skills and roles to be included in capabilities review

As a result, the next key step – once we have our replacement Digital Leader in place – will be to undertake a skills and capabilities audit designed to answer the following three questions:

- What appropriate resources are already in existence across DECC and its ALBs? How can we make the most of what we already have?
- What new capabilities are we seeking to build, and where might they sit in our organisation?
- What can we learn from other organisations about the challenges associated with building 'digital by default' culture and capabilities?

We commit to undertaking this audit within 12 months of the publication of this report. The audit will review our requirement for digital skills – with the aim of including this capability in our planning for the next spending review period – and as part of it we will consider the best location and management of digital expertise across the core department and delivery bodies. We will consider partnering with any GDS-led shared digital service across government.

5.3 Ensure that the principle of digital by default extends throughout all of our work, including policymaking and information services

Action G: Develop a 'digital toolkit' for policy makers to ensure they are able to efficiently consult through digital channels

Action H: Put in place systems to monitor the application of the 'digital toolkit' for policy makers, to ensure it is used effectively and consistently, and to enable it to be iteratively improved on an ongoing basis

Action I: Complete the transition of all online information services to GOV.UK

Services, both transactional and informational, are the focus of the Digital by Default initiative; however, the Civil Service Reform Plan also states that '*Open Policy making will become the default*'. DECC endorses the view expressed in the CGDS, that digital will be a key enabler of Open Policy making, and that policy making, including consultation, is relevant to Digital by Default.

Digital channels have already been demonstrated to be an effective way of consulting citizens during the policy making process. DECC's ongoing '2050' project allows citizens to contribute their views regarding the energy mix the UK should adopt in meeting its target of reducing CO_2 emissions by 80% by 2050 through a variety of channels, including a range of digital channels. As well as activity on the DECC website and social media, My 2050, a game which allows users to learn about the tradeoffs involved in reducing emissions and select their preferred approach to reaching targets, has been developed. The game has so far been played 40,000 times and currently has almost 2,400 Facebook 'likes'.

That said, experiences have been variable, and some similar processes have garnered significantly fewer responses. So far, DECC has actively sought to open up consultation through digital channels, and has used a variety of tools in doing so (for example, the DECC Blog and webchats for Q&A, use of Twitter, Facebook and Youtube channel to drive web traffic, use of an eConsultation system, as well as features targeted at specific policies like My 2050). However, DECC believes Open Policy making will be more successful if it is embedded in the policy making process, with teams consistently provided with the necessary tools and the performance of those tools monitored.

Cabinet Office has advised that it will develop tools for policy makers to use, however DECC will synthesise these tools to develop a specialised 'toolkit' to be used internally on a consistent basis. The starting point for this toolkit will rely on existing social media. Anthony Zacharzewski of DemSoc has noted that it is not realistic to expect everyone to visit 'official government spaces' to contribute their views[13]. The policy making toolkit will therefore include tools and advice on how policy makers can best monitor existing conversations on social media (for example, by examining trending topics on Twitter, or using more advanced data services to gain deeper insights) and engage proactively in the debate (for example, through effectively run and publicised Facebook pages). More focussed conversations will require an official forum for detailed debate and other activities (for example, online surveys) to which internet users can be directed. DECC will work with Cabinet Office to make best use of the tools provided and develop its own tools to fill any gaps which may be apparent.

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13 'Open policy and engagement notes', GDS internal document

DECC will also ensure that the use of this toolkit is embedded in the policy making process so that Open Policy making becomes routine, and develop systems for ensuring that the performance of tools is monitored and feedback from policy teams sought so that improvements can be made on an ongoing basis. In some cases Open Policy making may not be appropriate – while exceptions will be made in these instances, the tools of Open Policy making will still be utilised to ensure engagement with stakeholders is as great as possible.

DECC will ensure this approach is in place by the end of 2013.

Action I: Complete the transition of all online information services to GOV.UK

DECC's eCommunications team is currently engaged in transferring its online information services from their current locations (which are varied and include direct.gov and decc.gov.uk) to the GOV.UK domain. DECC recognises that this will make it easier to find the information we make available efficiently. This process will be completed by March 2013.

DECC's ALBs will also transfer their information services to GOV.UK. DECC is assisting in coordinating this process, which will be completed by March 2014.

In some cases, for example where organisations need to maintain their own brand in order to effectively deliver against their responsibilities and objectives, DECC or its ALBs will maintain their websites and continue publishing information to them, however this will be the exception.[14]

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14 Current exemptions: NDA, Committee on Climate Change, Ofgem, Civil Nuclear Police Authority. Exemptions based on branding issues are yet to be determined

5.4 Collaborate with partners across government and the third sector to deliver the pan-government vision

Action J: Ensure that every digital service has an excellent offline alternative for those who really need it, and that those who could reasonably be expected to use digital, but do not currently, are encouraged and assisted in becoming digitally literate and using our digital channels

DECC recognises that 18% of adults have never or rarely been online, and that Digital by Default must not affect the ability of these people to make full use of the services and benefits available to them. DECC's policy objectives mean DECC has a diverse customer base, including individuals from all backgrounds and companies of a range of sizes. DECC recognises that these groups will not be equally able to engage in transactions online, and that digital penetration will be very low in some of these groups, with some groups experiencing particular difficulties accessing digital services. For example, those in fuel poverty, particularly older people, whom DECC serves through the Warm Home Discount scheme, may not be able to access, or be comfortable accessing, the internet.

When designing new services, or redesigning existing services, DECC will consider the needs of those who are unable to access the internet, or find it difficult to do so. DECC will ensure that, where necessary, two types of Assisted Digital support are available:

- **Support for those who could use the digital channel:** this support will enable the customer to access the service, but will also encourage them to use the digital channel and aim to develop their digital skills, by guiding them through the online process step-by step.
- **Support for those who will never use digital channels:** this support will be delivered over the phone or face to face, often by our partner organisations, for example by energy companies or the Citizens Advice Bureau. In these cases the customer will not access the digital channel, however the staff member assisting them will use the same interface as used by customers online

DECC also recognises that some services, including those used exclusively by large companies (e.g. CRC), will not require an Assisted Digital option, since DECC can reasonably assume that support is available on the customer side. In these instances DECC will consider switching completely to digital channels where it has not already.

Action K: Raise awareness of digital channels and encourage channel shift, while preserving non-digital channels for those who really need them

While we recognise that non-digital channels will remain essential in many cases, particularly given the level of digital engagement within some of our customer groups, we will work to raise awareness of digital options and encourage the use of them by those who are able.

In some cases digital may become the only option, for example where services are used only by large businesses, and customers can reasonably be assumed to have internet access. In most cases digital will be signposted where possible (for example, on recorded messages while in a telephone queue to a contact centre) and customers who prefer non-digital channels will be assisted in using digital where possible. Where services are paid for, savings enabled by digital channels could be passed on to customers to encourage channel shift.

Action L: Work with GDS and Cabinet Office to make best possible use of procurement frameworks, and attempt to develop services and commission work and projects using agile methodologies and SMEs wherever appropriate

DECC will liaise with GDS to ensure it engages fully with new procurement frameworks as they are developed, and will use them as far as possible and as required. In some cases it may be appropriate to change the way we design projects in order to use SMEs more regularly, although agile development methodologies used to re-design or develop Digital by Default services may require this regardless.

Action M: Cooperate with GDS and other Departments in the development of common platforms to facilitate the provision of information and services. This will include adoption of shared Identity Assurance tools, and potentially the opening up of data to third parties via APIs

The benefits, in terms of cost and efficiency, of using common shared platforms across departments to deliver services are clear to us. We have benefitted from, for example, the provision of Government Gateway. However, the current platforms are in many cases not entirely fit for purpose. For example, Government Gateway is not fully compatible with Apple systems, in our experience, and this has caused issues in delivering our CRC scheme in the past. Several service managers across the DECC network have confirmed that the current ID Assurance platform is inadequate in some respects, and we are keen to work with GDS and other Departments to develop an alternative. This is just one example of an area where benefits could be gained from the development of new platforms. We will also work with GDS and other Departments to identify other areas where improvements could be made.

We also recognise the potential benefits of sharing data through APIs. HMRC have demonstrated that opening processes and data up to third parties can dramatically improve the delivery of services, and some of our teams and ALBs, for example the Coal Authority, have made non-sensitive databases available, leading to improved services. Where we have non-sensitive data available, we will explore the business case for making it available to third parties, and the technical case for creating an API.

Action N: Work with Cabinet Office to remove legislative barriers to digital policy making

In some cases legislation has assisted the development of digital systems, for example around Warm Home Discount (hereafter WHD), where a specific piece of legislation allows the gathering of energy consumers' data proactively and thus the automation of the process for the vast majority of customers. In some cases, however, there are legislative requirements in place regarding transactions which make using Digital by Default methods difficult or impossible. These might include a requirement that a hard copy of a document be provided, or that a 'wet' signature be gathered. In some cases it may be mentioned in legislation that a service or type of information must be provided through a particular channel.

DECC recognises the importance of, for example, keeping data secure or verifying identity carefully in certain circumstances. Our activities include various areas where this is relevant, for example holding customers personal details when administering subsidies, or verifying the identity of an individual at a company applying for drilling licences. That said, the benefits of being able to be flexible with data are clear, for example in our processes for administering WHD. We are keen to minimise all unnecessary legislative obstructions to the application of Digital by Default. We will work

with Cabinet Office and assist in assessing whether obstructive legislation is necessary and addressing any issues.

When drafting new legislation, policy makers will work with digital service delivery as a consideration from the outset, in order to minimise incidents of unnecessary obstructive legislation in the future.

Action O: Make consistent management information available to internal teams and to GDS for all Digital by Default services

GDS has yet to finalise and publish the set of management information it will request from Departments regarding their digital services. So far GDS has requested, and DECC will provide for each service:

- Cost per transaction
- User satisfaction
- Transaction completion rates
- Take-up levels

This data will be and available to GDS and internal teams, as part of our effort to continuously improve our services.

6. Implementation plan

This implementation plan sets out a high level roadmap for the delivery of our Digital by Default strategy, along with the key challenges and dependencies we must mitigate against during the course of delivering it.

We have focused on the work-streams we must deliver against over the next 12-24 months in order to have the appropriate management and leadership and capabilities in place to deliver our vision, and in order to have our digital by default plan fully costed and integrated into our departmental business plan. These work-streams and milestones are set out in Exhibit 8 below.

Exhibit 8: Key work-streams and milestones
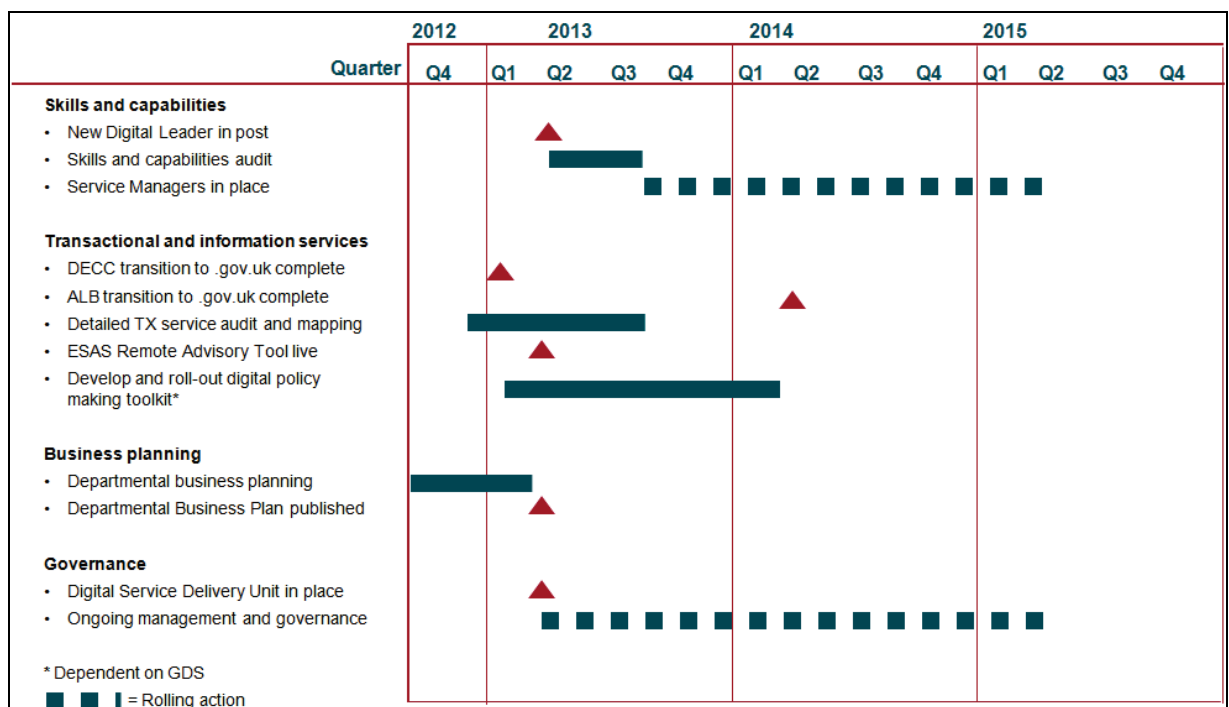
We have identified a number of key risks, challenges and dependencies that we must mitigate against in order to fulfil our 'Digital by Default' vision:

Cross-Government dependencies

The effective delivery of our plan is dependent on a number of external factors, including:

- Effective on-going roll-out of .GOV platform to incorporate our ALBs' information services
- ID Assurance – development of an effective shared technical platform for ID assurance to replace the Government Gateway, led out of GDS and DWP
- Data sharing – organisational and legal barriers to sharing data and information across central government bodies and beyond (for example, with DWP, with whom we share many key audiences and batch data sets during the course of implementing WHD and other key policies)
- Procurement – development of a flexible set of frameworks and processes that enable DECC and its partners to procure specialist SME partners to develop and support digital services

- Legal obligations – where maintenance of non-digital methods of interaction may be mandated by law, or there are requirements for 'hard copy' signatures

Internal (to department and its ALBs)

- Service redesign may not always be possible in short term as a result of the complex network of relationships with our ALBs or commercial partners, their operational independence and the terms of existing contracts
- Budgets and financial systems – significant proportion of our plans are not included in the current funding arrangements and are therefore subject to approval in next business planning process

External (to UK government)

- EU regulations
- Access to technology amongst audiences – involving a combination of poor broadband coverage in some locations and the expense of purchasing technology
- Digital skills and capabilities – DECC's customer base includes low income and vulnerable segments, such as older people, whose digital engagement is low. In some instances this may mean digital channels would be unlikely to see significant uptake, leading us to de-prioritise the service compared to others

Appendix

Exhibit 9:   Detailed evaluation of shortlisted services

Service	Provider	Transactions[15]						RAG Assessments[16]		
		Total per year	Online	Phone	Post	Face to face	% digital	Fit for business purpose	Digital by default	Case for redesign
Mining Reports	Coal Authority	245,000	240,100	~1,500	~1,500	0%	98%	🟨	🟩	🟩
Energy Saving Advice Service	DECC	300,000	-	300,000	-	-	5%	🟨	🟥	🟩
CRC	Environment Agency	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	100%	🟩	🟩	🟨
Energy Portal	DECC	13,400	11,300	-	2,073	-	84%	🟩	🟨	🟨
Feed in tariffs – CFR registration[17]	Ofgem	129,000	129,000	-	-	-	100%	🟨	🟩	🟨
Warm Home Discount Scheme[18]	DECC	1,100,000	990,000	-	110,000	-	90%	🟩	🟨	🟥

[15] Transaction volumes for ESAS and CRC are estimates based on discussions with DECC teams and data from GDS

[16] To be fit for business purpose a service must deliver against its objectives without any substantial areas for improvement being identified. To meet the Digital by Default service standard, a service must carry out all or almost all of its transactions online, and offer customers a uniform and connected end-to-end process. The case for redesign is determined using the criteria identified in Exhibit 2. The red rating for ESAS relates only to the absence of any on-line holistic energy efficiency advice service bespoke to the individual.

[17] Transaction volumes have varied widely from month to month throughout the life of the service, partly due to changes in tariff levels causing peaks in demand. The figure of 129,000 represents transactions completed in 2011. However, 183,000 transactions have already been completed in 2012 (year to date), and it is uncertain how demand will evolve. For detailed statistics on transaction volumes see http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/energy_stats/source/electricity/electricity.aspx

[18] Warm Home Discount Scheme is not expected to digitise further, due to the level of digital engagement of its customer base (vulnerable older people) and the complexity of the processes involved (data matching with DWP), however it will be included in DECC's audit of services

Exhibit 10: Prioritisation of shortlist of services

Service name	1. Effectiveness in delivering policy aims	2. Size of user base	3. Complexity of processes	4. Levels of digital engagement	5. Future policy developments	6. Services delivered by partners	Priority
1. Mining reports	H	H	M	H	🟩	🟧	H
2. ESAS	H	M	L	M	🟩	🟩	H
3. CRC	H	L	M	H	🟩	🟩	M
4. Energy Portal	M	L	H	H	🟩	🟩	M
5. Feed in tariffs	M	H	H	M	🟧	🟥	M
6. WHD	H	H	H	L	🟩	🟩	L

Prioritise