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Ysgrifennydd Parhaol  
Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay AM  
Public Accounts Committee Chair  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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17 November 2017

Dear Mr Ramsay,

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2017 following the Public Accounts Committee session on 02 October 2017 on the challenges of digitalisation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the Welsh Government's Digital Action Plan 2017-2020 with the Committee; I'm glad the Committee recognises its value. As you note in your letter, the Digital Action Plan is an internal document. It is designed to support the improvement of the organisation's internal systems and staff digital capability, and in turn, to improve how we deliver the services the Welsh Government provides to external customers such as farmers, businesses, care home providers, child minders, and more. I am confident that coupled with my 'Future-proofing' initiative - which is looking closely at the skills and ways of working the Welsh Government Civil Service will need to operate successfully in the future - the Action Plan will help us to further embed a digital mindset amongst staff and improve digital service delivery.

I am sorry that the Committee felt I was not able to respond to its broader questions on the Welsh Government's digital policy. In the Government's national strategy, *Prosperity for All*, digital service delivery; skills and literacy; infrastructure; and the Welsh Government's global digital presence are discussed across the strategy's four key themes.



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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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

The Welsh Government's digital policy is of course a matter for Julie James, Leader of the House and Chief Whip. As the Committee will be aware, Julie James' portfolio now includes: digital infrastructure, including broadband and mobile; digital service transformation for the Welsh public sector; and digital inclusion. I have discussed this response with the Minister and she has confirmed that she would be happy to appear before the appropriate Assembly Committee for a session on digital.

On the Welsh Government's self- assessment of its digital capability, I would like to reassure the Committee that external assessments of our performance, such as a number of different awards at the Wales and UK levels, were used as evidence in our most recent self-assessment exercise. Evidence of increased take up of the services we provide was also used. However I completely accept the Committee's point about the value of external verification and have asked colleagues to consider how this could be incorporated further in the future.

I would not wish the Committee to be in any doubt that I regard this as a vital area, and a challenging one as well. I think that we have taken some excellent steps in the Welsh Government and we are making good progress but we recognise of course that there is still room for us to improve, to learn and to move on to higher levels of achievement. I will continue to take a close personal interest in this work going forward

I want to thank the Committee for its interest in how digital will be addressed in the recent recruitment process for the two Director General posts. Innovative, effective, value for money policy making and the delivery of excellent public services for the people of Wales are core requirements for both of these roles. Digital skills were not referenced specifically in the job descriptions, not because I regarded them as of lesser importance, but simply because digital is an immediate and important component of the delivery of excellent public services and cannot be separated from delivery. At this level of responsibility in the Welsh Government what I have been looking for is candidates who have a sound awareness of the importance of digital, and the role it plays in delivery of services, and the innovation and flexibility to see and to encourage opportunities to use digital to its maximum effect. At the time of writing, the interviews for both posts have been completed and I expect to be making an announcement shortly. I was very pleased to have had an excellent field for these posts and I know that awareness of, and enthusiasm for, digital issues and opportunities will be among a wide range of approaches, skills and knowledge which the successful candidates will bring to bear in these critical roles.

I hope that the Committee has found this update useful. I would be happy to provide the Committee with further updates if required.

Yours,  
Shan Morgan

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