[Minister says government must rediscover its 'revolutionary spirit' and up the pace on digital transformation](#)

- Government Digital Service challenged to make online services more ambitious and user-friendly
- Call for government to go 'further and faster' in bringing forward services that anticipate users needs, as seen in the private sector
- Minister announces creation of Chief Digital Information Officer post to drive transformation across government

Cabinet Office Minister, Oliver Dowden, has said the government must improve the way it uses technology, to make sure people get the best possible services online.

Speaking in front of an audience of technology experts and government officials at the Sprint 19 conference in central London, the Minister said the Government Digital Service (GDS) must go further and faster to bring forward technological advances in its services.

He said:

> I remember when GDS was created. I remember the excitement, the pace, the revolutionary spirit centred around making things better for users — and we must always challenge ourselves to continue breaking new ground.
>
> I want to know that in five years' time, my successors will still be invited around the world to talk about the work you're doing now — so the challenge is to keep moving forward.

The Minister told the audience that improved online services would free up civil servants' time and save taxpayer's money, allowing investments to be made in hospitals, schools and the police.

He also set out an ambition to drive a new wave of digital transformation, in which online services are integrated and data and digital identity are used to proactively help the public — for example by prompting those claiming childcare online to look at information for parents on support in the early years.

And he revealed that the Government is already working to integrate services, data and information around key life events — like having a baby, setting up a business, and what to do when a loved one passes away — in order to support

citizens.

During his speech at the Southbank Centre, the Minister also announced that he was creating a powerful new Chief Digital Information Officer role, to lead the government's digital transformation.

Recruited into the most senior level of the Civil Service as a Permanent Secretary, they will be responsible for delivering cross government strategies and working across different departments to drive more rapid change in how they deliver digital services.

'No deal' EU exit advice: further ports will be designated for movement of protected animals and plants

- Belfast Seaport, Dover, Eurotunnel and Holyhead will be designated to ensure there is sufficient capacity to transport protected animals and plants and their parts or derivatives
- The move will increase the number of designated ports able to process animal and plant specimens
- In the event of a no-deal Brexit, anyone wishing to move protected animal and plant specimens between the UK and the EU will need relevant CITES documents

The UK Government has confirmed that an additional four ports (Belfast Seaport, Dover, Eurotunnel and Holyhead) will be designated to handle movements of protected animals or plants to ensure there is enough capacity to transports [CITES](#) products in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

In the event of a no-deal Brexit, anyone wishing to bring a specimen of a protected species of animal or plant into the UK or export to the EU will require a CITES document. Such documents must be applied for in advance of travel and inspected and endorsed (stamped) by Border Force at a CITES-designated point of entry or exit.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between governments which aims to ensure international trade in specimens of endangered animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES agrees varying degrees of protection to species of animals and plants, whether trading or moving live specimens or their parts, from zoo animals to musical instruments to herbal remedies.

The government has published [updated guidance](#) which sets out how people who trade in, or travel with, protected animals or plants and their derivatives, will be affected when the UK leaves the EU.

International Environment Minister, Zac Goldsmith said:

> CITES plays a key role in protecting endangered species and we will continue to champion its aim after we leave the EU.
>
> While the Government is seeking a deal, we have stepped up our preparations and will be ready to leave the EU on 31 October, whatever the circumstances.
>
> Part of this is designating further ports, including Eurotunnel and Dover, so that people and businesses can still trade and move CITES specimens with minimal disruption.

More Points of Entry and Exit

Protected animal and plant specimens will need a CITES document to be moved between the UK and the EU and will only be able to travel through designated Points of Entry and Exit (PoE). The government will increase the number of PoE which will be designated for CITES specimens to 29.

Custom offices at Eurotunnel, Dover and Holyhead will be designated and special CITES arrangements have been put in place to help minimise any delays should they occur at these particular locations. Belfast Seaport will also be designated to allow CITES movements between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland over the land border and by sea. Businesses and individuals who are looking to use these routes should familiarise themselves with the arrangements and contact the port prior to moving CITES specimens and items between the UK and EU.

A full list of the locations which will be designated as CITES PoE and how to use them, including the two postal routes, can be accessed through [GOV.UK](). For all movements of CITES specimens from the UK, you will also need to check the specific requirements with the intended country of import or export on the [Global CITES website]().

Remember a permit

All CITES specimens that are currently freely moved and traded between the UK and the EU will require CITES documents. This means movement of all CITES specimens between the UK and the EU will need to follow the same processes as those currently in place for movement between the UK and non-EU countries. Applications for CITES documents permitting movement of CITES specimens into and out of the UK will be processed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

For CITES specimens that may also require plant or animal health certification, a CITES document does not replace the need for veterinary or phytosanitary inspection and certification.

Further information

- Defra, and the UK Government as a whole, is committed to protecting nature and biodiversity and will continue to champion the aims of CITES after Brexit.
- The Government will increase the number of CITES points of entry and exit (PoE) for CITES specimens from 10 to 29. The full list of locations which will be designated as CITES PoE and how to use them can be accessed here.
- The species covered by these measures are listed in Annexes A to D of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations which implement CITES. With amendments, these will become UK law (retained EU law) when we leave the EU. The [Species+ database](#) includes details of all CITES-listed species.
- Details of how to obtain CITES documents such as a permit or import/export notification in the UK are available on [GOV.UK](#), as are current details of [fees for CITES permits](#).
- CITES permits and notifications must be presented to Border Force for inspection and endorsement.

[Coalition Autonomous Systems – the future of military logistics](#)

The UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), and the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command's Ground Vehicle Systems Centre (formerly known as TARDEC), have hosted an experiment of prototype semi-autonomous logistic convoys, along with ground and aerial autonomous resupply systems at Camp Grayling Joint Manoeuvre Training Centre, Grayling, Michigan.

It's the first time these British-designed autonomous systems have been operated and demonstrated in the US and is the culmination of a three year collaboration between coalition forces and technologists which has seen the testing of a range of driverless vehicles and novel unmanned aerial systems.

[Coalition Autonomous Systems – the future of military logistics](#)

Peter Stockel, Dstl's Autonomy Innovation Lead, said:

> This has been a journey in understanding, not only how to integrate technically the different capabilities, but importantly to help the British and US Armies understand and develop the potential concepts of use, tactics and procedures together in the representative battlefield environments. We have gained hugely valuable insights into the reliability and maturity of 'state of the art' technology and how to operate these systems as a UK/US coalition. This is about two major Western partners working together to make future

battlefield operations less risky, more effective and efficient.

Delivering supplies to the front line is dangerous and often relies on manual delivery through troops moving backwards and forwards under fire. This experiment shows how unmanned systems will potentially allow the distribution of supplies directly to forward combat areas with fewer personnel at risk and to allow them to concentrate on winning the battle. During the Afghanistan conflict, UK and US troops were injured or killed while trying to deliver convoy logistic patrols. Innovative autonomous systems technologies could allow these missions to take place with fewer soldiers exposed, resulting in fewer casualties and freeing up troops to join the fight and increase the firepower.

Brigadier Darrell Amison, the [British Army](#)'s Head of Capability Combat Service Support, said:

> CAAR is a great example of successful US/UK Science and Technology and warfighter collaboration. Over three years of trials and experimentation CAAR has rapidly developed the Army's thinking around the use of autonomous capability within an information-led, integrated and technology-enabled supply chain. Exploitation into the Army's core Combat Service Support modernisation and transformation programmes is now a priority and we'll seek opportunities for collaborative capability development where it makes sense to do so.

During the Michigan experiment, a multi-vehicle fully integrated UK/US convoy was operated, with the lead vehicle in various modes, including controlled semi-autonomously through the use of designated waypoints, with the following vehicles operating only from data sent by the lead vehicles and their own sensors. Researchers used UK and US tactical resupply vehicles together in the convoy, with both sets of vehicles being equipped with the US research centre's autonomous technology. During the final end-to-end demonstration event, robotic and autonomous systems for many parts of the deployment supply chain were showcased; including operation and mission logistic planning tools, robotic and semi-autonomous load handling vehicles, semi-autonomous leader-follow logistic convoy and autonomous 'last mile' resupply capabilities.

In three weeks of experimentation prior to the demonstration event, smaller unmanned ground vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles developed under the UK's 'Last Mile Challenge' were tested, undertaking autonomous delivery missions to remotely deliver a variety of representative payloads including ammunition, food and medical supplies.

Major Andrew Scruggs from the [US Army](#) said:

> The collaboration is vital and has been one of truly mutual support and burden-sharing. Both nations have put their expertise and

resources together to learn and create new ideas and approaches for Army logistic operations of the future. We have been able to look at the challenges of working with how you take different systems from different nations and different companies and get them all to talk together.

[Minister's speech at Sprint 19 Conference](#)

Good morning, it's a pleasure to be back at Sprint.

They say that a week is a long time in politics, which makes a year (or 14 months to be precise) a supereon.

Since we last met, I was appointed as Minister for the Cabinet Office. This means I am in overall charge of the department, with a much broader brief. But I made it clear, from the moment I took up the job, that the digital transformation of government genuinely remains one of my top priorities.

Like any public servant, when you see good, exciting work that truly improves citizens' lives and makes government work better, and when you know that ultimately it will benefit productivity and the wealth of our country, it's hard to stop being interested.

I'm delighted to have additional support. My colleague, Simon Hart has taken over my old role as the new Minister for Implementation and will have day-to-day oversight of GDS. I know that Simon will do a fantastic job in helping me to ensure that the digital agenda continues to move forward at pace.

While preparing for today, I thought about what has happened in digital government since I spoke to you at the last Sprint. As the truly agile among you would say, I conducted a retro.

And, as any retro aficionado knows, the first question to ask is 'what went well?'

Last time I was here, I announced the first round of challenges in the Govtech Catalyst — a programme which incentivises private sector companies to help solve some of our most challenging public sector problems.

We've now launched 15 challenges: from helping to solve rural isolation with smarter local transport to developing systems to track firefighters inside buildings — and we're already considering the next phase of the programme.

Last September, I also talked about developing a new Technology Innovation Strategy.

This summer we delivered it, it sets the direction for government on the use of emerging technologies as we look to the next spending review and beyond. Alongside the Technology Innovation in Government Strategy, we published a guide to using AI in the public sector, to help decision makers in government identify the most appropriate uses for the technology.

The publication of these two documents was met with a very strong and positive response.

And these developments complement the existing, excellent work happening both at GDS and across government:

- 1,370 services in more than 370 public sector organisations using common platforms including GOV.UK Pay and GOV.UK Notify

- Over £2bn worth of savings to government to date

- 10,000 people benefitting from GDS Academy courses and the number increasing all the time

These things contribute to the delivery of outstanding digital services. These things are admired and have inspired governments the world over.

But an important question in any retro is 'what's not going so well?' or to put it another way, 'what are our challenges?'

As a world-leading digital government, people expect a great deal from us. Scrutiny is high and no one expects more from us than we expect from ourselves.

Our continued success depends on how we do things. Working in an agile way means we have to be comfortable learning from mistakes and rapidly evolving our approach to delivery. We do this by being bold, innovative and ambitious.

I remember when GDS was created. I remember the excitement, the pace, the 'revolutionary' spirit centred around making things better for users. I still see that now in the excellent work going on today, some of which I'll talk about later.

But as innovators, we must always challenge ourselves to keep on breaking new ground.

I want to know that in five years' time, my successors and yours will still be invited around the world to talk about the work you're doing now.

So the challenge is to keep moving forward.

And this morning I want to set out both the vision and how we make it a reality.

Our aim for the next stage of transformation should be a seamless, integrated digital experience.

Our offer should be tailored to all users – whether that's citizens, businesses or charities – anyone who needs to interact with government.

So that public services online are as always easy to use and as intuitive as anything in the private sector.

It should serve them in a proactive and responsive way.

The prize of achieving this vision is enormous.

We can create a better experience for users. But we can also make a profound shift in outcomes for the public, especially the most vulnerable.

We can secure huge savings for the taxpayer, allowing us to invest in the schools, hospitals and police that they want us to prioritise.

And we can free up time and develop skills across Whitehall, so that the brilliant people in GDS and other departments can get on with tackling the really big problems.

So, how do we get there?

Well, over the past few months, GDS has been speaking to colleagues in order to get a much deeper sense of what's blocking transformation and what needs to change.

They've identified five pillars which should underpin our approach to this next stage of transformation: data, digital identity, security, legacy technology and user experience.

But I want to focus on how these pillars can work together to produce smarter, integrated services for users and take forward the next stage of digital transformation.

In 2012, GOV.UK was launched and since then it has replaced nearly 2,000 domains and subdomains with a single platform so that users would not need to understand government structures in order to interact with it. This represented a watershed moment in how the government interacts with citizens and the GOV.UK model, and codebase, has been copied by Australia and Canada amongst others.

Users deserve to have a seamless, tailored experience and joining-up the random datasets we have is the next step in this transformative journey.

To most people GOV.UK is one government website and they should only need to tell government once; not multiple times, in different places. It's frustrating for users, it wastes their time, and it wastes government resources. In Estonia there is 99% automation of self-assessment returns – so we know this can be done.

Over the next year, we want to bring together the different parts of government involved in delivering services – embedding a digital culture within policy teams across government to bring services, data and information into one seamless user journey – starting with key life events like having a baby, setting up a business, and what to do when a loved one passes away.

This doesn't just make things better for our users, it enables government to deliver smarter public services by getting things right from the start.

Doing this requires us to bring together data that already exists – into one place, so that trends can be properly analysed to improve things for users. But up until now, analytics for GOV.UK been fragmented, which has made this impossible.

We're now fixing this siloed approach to data once and for all so that we can get better insights into how people are interacting with government online.

But let's be clear. It is absolutely not about gathering people's personal data for political purposes.

And though the demands of EU Exit has been a catalyst for this work, because we need to ensure people and businesses can use GOV.UK to prepare for life outside of the EU as effectively as possible, this is something we've been planning to do for some time.

This is simply about having a consistent view of anonymous performance data, so that we can understand the big picture.

Bringing together a consolidated view of anonymised user activity on GOV.UK will help us to identify problems, spot correlations and come up with solutions that make it quicker, easier and more intuitive for our users to interact with government.

This continual feedback to allow improvement is how the best websites operate, and how a modern government should operate too.

If we are more joined up, if we better understand how the population interacts with the government online, we can improve the service we offer.

Take the travel app Citymapper. You give it information about where you are and where you want to go and it can remember your daily commute to the extent that every morning it will anticipate your needs by giving you train times without you even needing to ask.

Applied in government, this might mean that people who search GOV.UK for childcare support are also pointed towards information on early years designed to help parents.

My job is to make the case for that, to ensure we get that seamless transformation and we learn from that data and innovate.

If we want people to have an online experience that is at once secure and frictionless – then getting digital identity right is also crucial.

For those that choose to engage with it — which will always be their choice — digital identity allows us to take digital transformation of public services even further.

With a single digital identity, which can be created, used and reused across the public and private sectors, users won't have to constantly prove who they are. They won't have to continually re-assert information, or share any more information than they absolutely have to.

There are huge advantages.

You could, in theory — and subject to regulation — use the same digital identity to access your bank account or find out about your pension contributions.

You could use your digital identity to travel, to easily prove your eligibility to access services, perhaps share your records from one part of government with another, like using your council tax payments to prove your place of residence.

We're already familiar with how authentication works with private sector services. When you login to your Netflix account, each of you will be offered different content to me because we all have different tastes.

For those that choose to create one, a digital identity, built on a consent based model, would allow the government to offer people even greater personalisation, based on a secure understanding of their interests. So, in future, this means we could prompt people claiming certain benefits with a digital identity to access support services which they might not otherwise have been aware of, or remind parents of the school term dates in their local area.

A single digital identity means a smooth user experience for citizens.

As a user of services, you benefit from the feeling that the government is supporting you, not standing in your way. You also have greater control over how your data is used. You also get the benefit of course, of opting out if you choose.

A successful digital identity ecosystem relies on robust standards. These need to be interoperable and sufficient to protect and assist citizens.

GDS, the Cabinet Office and DCMS have been busy over the summer, engaging with citizens, the private sector, civil society and local authorities to understand the future model of digital identity in the UK.

We invited people to put their views on digital identity and the market. The call for evidence closed on Sunday and we will publish the government's response to that later this autumn.

I announced the creation of a Digital Identity Unit, which we intend to launch formally later this year.

Its job is to help deliver interoperable standards, specifications and schemes for digital identity. The building blocks of a thriving digital identity market. If we can get them right, then we unleash the huge potential this has for both the public and private sector.

So, what's next?

Well I have two bits of news to both challenge and support you:

Firstly, to add some extra impetus to your work, I can announce that the

OECD has asked us to host the E-Leaders event in 2020. This is a huge honour and a great chance to demonstrate our excellence on the world stage.

The event will take place in Autumn 2020 and will create a fantastic opportunity for experts in the UK Government to meet with international experts, academics and senior digital leaders from across the world.

So I want you to think about where we can be in a year's time. When we host our friends from around the world – some of whom I understand are in the audience today. What we can show off to them and how we can demonstrate to them that the UK is still a world leader in digital government?

Secondly, to help you achieve this, I also want to bolster the leadership of GDS and ensure you have the support you need to go and make great things happen across government.

So, for those of you who haven't seen the job advert – I've decided to create a powerful new role: a Government Chief Digital Information Officer (GCDIO).

This will be a role at permanent secretary level – the first time, I believe, someone at permanent secretary level has been appointed to lead a function. That's a signal of how important we think effective, integrated online government is.

Their job will be to ensure that we deliver cross-government strategies for transformation, data, cyber security, and innovation. They will design and implement standards which improve delivery outcomes, reduce risk and enable value for money in departments. Crucially, they will ensure that we are equipping Government departments with the skills needed to reform, develop and thrive.

We're looking for someone world class, with the skills and experience to up the pace of transformation and be your champion within Whitehall.

The job is live, the hunt is underway and I look forward to updating you on the successful candidate very soon.

So what have we learnt from this year to take with us into the next one?

Innovation is the way forward: in mindset and in implementation of emerging technologies. I want everyone in this room, everyone in government to be more open to risk, to experimentation. These things are fundamental to successful

innovation. I encourage you to find out more from the GovTech team this afternoon.

The vision I've set out is ambitious but achievable.

If we get it right over the next few years, we will achieve great things. For users both inside and out of government, and those in the private and public sector, which will in turn, help our wider economy.

The challenges I've outlined are big, tough and fundamental. They're the challenges that I believe everyone in this room came into government to tackle.

I'm looking forward to hearing about the work that is happening right now to deliver this government of the future.

So I'd like to end by recognising the great progress you've already made, thank you for your commitment to making things better, and most of all, to urge you to be bold and ambitious in the months and years ahead.

[Abergelli Power Project granted development consent](#)

Today, Thursday 19 September 2019, the application for the Abergelli Power Project in Wales has been given development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Development consent has been granted to construct a gas-fired peaking plant and connection infrastructure with a generating capacity of up to 299 MW. It is located north of Swansea (north of M4, Junction 46), approximately 1 km south-east of Felindre, 750 m south-west of Llwyncelyn and 1.5 km north of Llangyfelach, in the City and County of Swansea.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by Abergelli Power Ltd on the 25 May 2018 and accepted for examination on 21 June 2018. Following an Examination during which the public, statutory consultees and interested parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 10 July 2019.

The Planning Inspectorate is committed to giving local communities the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in the 6 month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views before making their recommendation.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate has again demonstrated its ability to examine Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008."

"This provides developers and investors with the confidence to build and improve the infrastructure this country needs to secure future economic growth."

The decision announced today supports the recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate. It is the 77th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project to be examined and decided and brings the total of energy projects to fifty one.

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

ENDS

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate, [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.