

Shan Morgan
Permanent Secretary
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
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20 October 2017

Digitalisation in Wales

Dear Permanent Secretary,

Thank you for attending the Public Accounts Committee on 2 October to discuss the Challenges of Digitalisation and for sharing the Welsh Government Digital Action plan.

Digitalisation is an instrument for change and key to transforming public services, and the Committee believes this is an opportunity to put Wales at the forefront of future developments. The Committee were concerned that the Welsh Government appears to have taken an inward looking approach to digitalisation, which lacks the ambition needed to deliver true transformation. Much of what we heard focussed on internal systems, promoting websites and training courses, and while we recognise the value of an internal document this should only be a small part of what needs to be a comprehensive strategy for the whole public sector.

The Committee believes the key to ensuring delivery at a world class level is an outward facing strategy with clear targets and timescales to ensure all public services in Wales are maximising the opportunities of digitalisation.

The Welsh Government's insular approach gives an impression of a silo approach to delivering digitalisation.

We welcome the appointment of a Chief Digital Officer, but this role does not appear to work across all of the digitalisation projects within the Welsh



Government. We would suggest that the artificial barriers between different parts of the Welsh Government (e.g. the Chief Digital Officer and NWIS) are examined and broken down to improve and enhance delivery and form a united approach to digitalisation.

We note that the Welsh Government has recently classed itself as level 4 in the digital capability framework. The Committee had concerns about this approach of self-certification and do not think that the Welsh Government should be afraid of outside challenge on its performance in this demanding area. This is not least because it was unclear to the Committee that major steps forward had been made to increase the rating from level 2 to level 4. We believe that there would be a definite benefit to having some external verification to the rating against the digital capability framework to maximise the impact of the work on digitalisation.

As a Committee, we were very disappointed that despite the reference to an internal analysis of the skills identifying that there was a need to 'increase and grow digital capacity', this had not been recognised as a key skill for at least one of the new Director General posts. Digitalisation needs to be driven forward from the very top of the organisation, and it is, therefore, surprising that a comprehension of the digital landscape was not an explicit requirement. At this point Wales needs strong and dynamic leadership on digitalisation and it is disappointing this has not been embedded at the very top of your organisation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair

