



Home Office

Permanent Secretary

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14 September 2021

Rt Hon. Meg Hillier MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chair,

RE: Digital Services at the Border (DSAB) Programme Project: update on Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Gateway 0 Review

I am writing to you in relation to recommendation 2 of the Forty-Eighth report of the 2019-2021 Session of the Public Accounts Committee report into the Digital Services at the Border, which was published on 12th March 2021.

During the Committee session in February 2021, an action arose to provide the Committee with an update following the IPA review of the DSAB programme that was to take place in July 2021.

The IPA review took place from 5 - 8 July 2021 and they provided a delivery confidence rating of Amber for the DSAB programme, maintaining the Amber rating from June 2020.

The review team recognised that the reset undertaken in 2019 created a coherent programme with realistic deliverables, and that since then the current senior leadership of the programme have forged a strong delivery focused relationship with DDaT. Further, the review team highlighted the following examples of good practice:

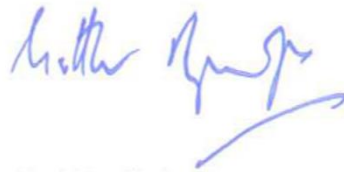
- The DSAB Programme Board – in terms of effectiveness, with appropriate attendees, and high-quality material supporting decision making.
- The culture of a one team ethos between the Programme and DDaT is regarded as exemplary resulting in a healthy tension between product and service teams that is driving successful delivery.

These conclusions echo the NAO review of DSAB which reported in December 2020, and subsequent PAC findings from 1 February 2021.

The IPA made six recommendations which have since been actioned by the DSAB programme and continue to be monitored. The IPA will be undertaking a Gate 4 review in March 2022 to assess readiness for the business to accept all changes and to begin programme closure activity.

I have included a copy of the IPA's recommendations and the programmes response in Annex A.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Rycroft', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Rycroft
Permanent Secretary

Annex A: DSAB Gate 0 Review - Action Plan for recommendations

Ref	Recommendation	Risk and Issue Identified with Evidence	Programme Response
1	The Programme Director ensures that handover documents clearly define work completed within the DSAB Programme and the status of work packages that are to be picked up by and agreed with follow on programmes / BAU Product Management functions.	The programme closes without an agreed plan and clarity on outstanding responsibilities for future work.	The programme team have established a Transition and Closure workstream to tightly manage the completion of the DSAB programme and ensure all aspects are in place. This will report to the Programme Board as a standing agenda item.
2	The SRO assures himself that arrangements put in place by DDaT are appropriate to ensure ongoing delivery at pace of the next phases of Helios development.	The technical leadership of the programme is depleted at a critical point in the development of remaining applications.	An experienced Technical Delivery Director has been appointed (Trevor Smith) to replace Natalie Jones, and he has moved quickly to appoint an experienced deputy who has the right skills for the current phase of the programme. Helios work phases are progressing while final discoveries are completing during October 2021 for the final work packages.
3	The SRO ensures that strategic stakeholders are briefed on aspects of enhanced Helios functionality that remains outstanding as at Programme Closure.	Not all functionality of Helios will be delivered as per the original strategic intention.	The Helios development and delivery plan was presented to the Strategic Stakeholders at the Programme Board on 16 th July and has been reviewed each month since. Work is being coordinated across the DSAB and Digitise programmes, and with DDaT colleagues leading the future product centric development of the Helios capability.
4	The Programme Director should review the potential for any single points of failure which may impact on achieving any of the	The risk to the programme of single points of failure.	A review of BX and Helios scope / backlog and delivery plans is completing and will be baselined at the September and October Programme Boards.

	remaining milestones of the programme.		This will include agreed handling for dependencies and mitigations for any single points of failure.
5	The programme leadership continues to manage risk closely and exercise risk mitigation on milestones and delivery.	The programme's recent successes creates the potential for over-confidence during the final nine months to April 2022.	The workstream managing the completion of the programme includes a RAID log for all the activities and milestones required for completion and closure, this will be managed closely, and escalations fed to the programme board.
6	The Programme Director, assisted by commercial and legal colleagues, should decide the approach to the upcoming discussions with Fujitsu and be very clear on the mitigation to keep to the intended timeline.	Additional costs and reputational damage to the programme and to the Home Office if the Fujitsu contract supporting the Warnings Index is not ended as intended in April 2022.	Regular planning meetings with Fujitsu have determined the programme contingency and mitigations required to help maintain the timeline. Detailed plans are being developed to progress activity on the transition from DSAB delivery to decommission and exit from the current Warnings Index contract and to capture required outputs and artefacts for the administrative closure activity for the programme.