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22 February 2022

Thank you for your letter of 1 February, regarding my session with the Committee on 20 January 2022. I was grateful to appear before the Committee, and will respond to the questions raised in your letter.

In doing so, I am taking this opportunity to provide a more substantive update on progress on government reform. I hope this information will be welcomed.

Declaration on Government Reform

On 15 June 2021 HM Government published the Declaration on Government Reform, setting an ambitious programme to ensure we serve the whole country better. Improving real-world outcomes for the public is at the heart of this government's vision for the UK and so I am pleased to report progress in our reforms; not as ends in themselves, but as a means to deliver on the People's Priorities.

Whilst the 30 priority actions listed in the Declaration have catalysed reform across government, there remains much to do. I am clear eyed on this point. For the progress we have made, we remain in the foothills.

Your committee asked how many actions have been completed by the end of 2021. I note that we are tracking these over the financial year, and so expect more to complete shortly, but at present we have completed 6 actions:

- **Outcome Delivery Plans [Action 15]** were published for all departments in the current financial year and departments have established delivery boards including Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) to oversee performance.
- **The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO)** has been established **[Action 18]**, following recommendations made in the Digital Economy Council (DEC) report of 2020, and aims to put digital and data at the heart of how government operates to inform decision-making and improve services. I have attached an annex showing how those recommendations are being taken forward. CDDO is now working across government to agree plans, commitments and performance metrics for Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT). Feeding into this are Quarterly Business Review meetings co-chaired by CDDO and HMT, which review departmental progress against DDaT commitments and priorities. Vital to this approach is engaging departments and keeping a clear cross-government picture of DDaT priorities and challenges; a new Digital and Data Board at Permanent Secretary level has been set up to do this.
- A major expansion of **the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP)** has been delivered **[Action 21]**, with the number of projects on the GMPP having increased by 80% in the past year. Named SROs for every project are now published annually, alongside the IPA Annual Report.
- **The Government Major Contracts Portfolio (GMCP)** has been instituted **[Action 22]** with 78 contracts onboarded and the first portfolio Board meeting taking place in February 2022. A further 17 contracts will be onboarded next quarter, subject to data validation.
- **The Evaluation Task Force and No10 Delivery Unit** have been established **[Action 23]**. The former played a significant role at Spending Review, receiving a £15m commitment for an Evaluation Accelerator, and has supported HMT or lead departments on 151 HM Government programmes with a total value of £35.1bn. The latter, meanwhile, is focused on core elements of the Prime Minister's missions - levelling up, recovery and reform of public services, jobs and skills, and net zero.
- An **Extraordinary Cabinet [Action 28]** was held in June 2021 to launch the Declaration and we will ensure that the next Extraordinary Cabinet is arranged in 2022 to restate the joint leadership between Ministers and officials behind reform.

HM Government has also made substantial progress against remaining actions and I expect to be able to confirm more as complete in the coming months. Progress includes:

- **Places for Growth [Action 1]** Over 2,000 roles have already been moved outside of London with more than 15,700 committed for relocation by 2030. 15 central government departments and public bodies have announced their relocation plans, with more to follow. However, there is clearly more to do, and I will be working closely with colleagues across government to reinforce the need to relocate policy and senior-decision making roles as part of this process, as we implement the single largest effort to decentralise government out of Whitehall in our history.
- **Reforms to the Senior Civil Service** are progressing, with a new performance management process **[Action 12]** - better linked to departmental objectives as set out in Outcome Delivery Plans - in place for Permanent Secretaries, and equivalent

measures soon to be implemented across the rest of the SCS. In addition, **capability-based pay [Action 11]** for SCS1 and SCS2 cadres is on track to commence in the next financial year, with agreement to extend and develop a framework to SCS3 in place. Likewise, guidance and implementation plans for the setting of **expected assignment durations for SCS posts [Action 10]** will also commence from April.

- **A Public Bodies Reform Programme [Action 24]** has been established across HMT and Cabinet Office. It will shortly publish new guidance for reviews of public bodies, while a new Code of Good Practice for Sponsorship is currently being finalised. Departments have identified ALBs prioritised for review. It has also delivered four non-executive induction events for new public body non-executives to support their development.
- Spending Review 2021 provided funding to develop **'One Login' [Action 19]**, a new system to allow users to access government services through a single portal. It is on track to deliver a minimum viable product by 31 March 2022. Further features and services will then be added over the next 3 years.
- We have developed our **Diversity & Inclusion strategy [Action 14]**, working to the high ambition set out within the Declaration, and informed by evidence and insights from stakeholders. We will publish the strategy shortly.

The above represents meaningful progress across the breadth of the modernisation and reform programme. However, I am not complacent about the scale of the challenge that remains and progress has not been as fast in some areas:

- **The porosity agenda [Actions 2, 3 and 5]**, ensuring government attracts talent and expertise from more diverse backgrounds, must go further and is inextricably linked to realising the benefits of Places for Growth. The proportion of appointments to the Senior Civil Service from external applicants has halved over the past decade (from 42% in 2010/11 to 20% in 2019/20), and we must start to turn this around. I have asked my officials to revise the Civil Service Recruitment Framework to help address this.
- We have re-focused our activity on **interchange across UK Government and Devolved Governments [Action 4]**, putting the focus on delivering more meaningful loans and secondments. There is further work required to identify where loans and secondments could be most impactful and to operationalise the approach.
- The scale of the activity required to **publish a central record of government property [Action 26]** has been more significant than anticipated and has also encountered some delays. The central record database is in the design and build phase, and core functionality in the system will be in place ready for service assessment and private beta rollout next financial year.

I am also clear that we need to do more to realise the Declaration's ambitions around innovation in government, working seamlessly across boundaries (in government and beyond) and looking broadly at the opportunity to harness and unleash science in

government, as part of the UK's plans to become a science superpower.

We will continue to monitor and assure reforms to ensure they take root and endure, prioritise where we can have the greatest impact, and that the improved outcomes we are aiming towards are realised. With that in mind, HM Government intends to provide a further update on progress and next steps for the programme in the summer.

I am also mindful that Alex Chisholm committed to provide an update on the implementation of the review into cross-cutting functions and strengthening spending controls to ensure the government is delivering both excellence in organisational capability and value for money. Your letter also included further questions on specific aspects of the modernisation and reform programme. To address each of these points specifically:

- The Rt. Hon. Lord Maude of Horsham's report, [A Review of the cross-cutting functions and the operation of spend controls](#), is helping to inform action to drive reform across the functions, which includes a focus on developing high technical and professional credibility and expertise, and embedding a culture where services are joined up and built to meet user needs. I have annexed an update for the committee, and the public, on how Lord Maude's advice is being taken forward. Strong progress will continue to be made, overseen by Alex Chisholm, the Minister for Government Efficiencies and myself.
- Creating a **“smarter” centre of Government** means ensuring the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury and the Office of the Prime Minister work closely together on shared objectives. The above functional reforms are a central part of this, improving the clarity, quality, and speed of prioritisation and decision-making. These enhanced corporate functions will have their own targets for improved performance – including the financial savings they are expected to bring year-on-year. You will have seen that since my appointment as Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister, we have begun to make changes to both personnel and practices at the centre of government and these will continue to unfold. I am committed to ensuring that the Cabinet Office focuses on where it can add value, drive innovation, and make government more effective.
- **The work of the Government Skills And Curriculum Unit to establish a Civil Service Training Facility.** As set out in the Levelling up White Paper and as part of our work against **Action 6** of the Declaration, a new Leadership College for Government will open in April 2022, incorporating a renewed curriculum for Civil Service training. This will initially be delivered through three physical locations in the Midlands, the North East, and Yorkshire and the Humber, bringing civil servants closer to the communities they serve. This new training infrastructure will also be made available to local government executives, in particular local authority chief executives and senior officers.
- On the costs and risks of **legacy IT systems [Action 20]**, the 2020 Digital Economic Council report estimated that legacy IT costs the government £2.3bn annually to maintain. This figure was reached by analysis from Government Security in 2019. There is currently no central assessment of the total cost of

replacing all legacy IT systems cross-government; however, the CDDO is working across government to develop a consistent view of the costs and risks of legacy systems through the roll-out of a common legacy IT framework and regular discussion with departments at Quarterly Business Reviews. The Government demonstrated its strong commitment to replacing legacy IT and driving interoperability at the last Spending Review by investing £2.6bn in cyber and legacy IT, to go with £600m invested in legacy IT at the previous year's Spending Review.

- With regards to the **reviews into Civil Service governance and models of accountability [Actions 29 and 30]**, we are finalising the scope and approach to the reviews with ministers and expect to take this forward into the next phase from the spring. The reviews will aim to improve accountability and governance processes in the Civil Service, where needed, to strengthen decision-making so that decisions are taken effectively and aligned with delivering for the public. The reviews will seek to learn from other countries, organisations outside the Civil Service as well as from recent experiences in Government.

Boardman 3 and the Committee on Standards in Public Life

As the Minister for Security and Borders set out on 16 December 2021, a policy statement in response to the 'Upholding Standards in Public Life' report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the review into the development and use of supply chain finance in Government by Nigel Boardman will be published in due course. Alongside this, the Government will be providing an update to its work to reform the business appointment rules.

Invitation to Give Evidence on the Greensill Affair

My officials have been in contact with the Committee Clerk separately to address this invitation.

Training for Staff

The Prime Minister set out in his letter to Lord Geidt of 21 December his commitment to ensuring that Lord Geidt and his office are afforded the highest standards of support and attention when pursuing the work of the Independent Adviser, and that this should include access to all information considered necessary and prompt, full answers. The Prime Minister sought Lord Geidt's advice on the best means to effect that, whether by way of Instruction to Ministers, Ministerial Code or clearer legal instrument, and said that he wanted to have this put in place to Lord Geidt's satisfaction by the end of March at the latest. That work is underway and I would be happy to update the Committee at its conclusion, including to address the point made by Mr Russell-Moyle about raising awareness. In the meantime I know that all Ministers take their responsibilities under the Ministerial Code very seriously, and will have taken note of the Prime Minister's correspondence with Lord Geidt.

The Review of the UK Statistics Authority

As you know, the government has a policy of periodically reviewing Arm's Length Bodies to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

The review will focus on effective governance, future-proofed capability and public confidence in the use of statistics. Terms of Reference are being finalised, and will of course be shared with the committee at the appropriate stage.

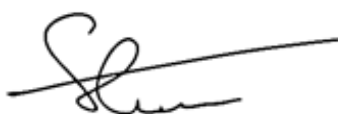
I also intend to appoint a lead reviewer to deliver a robust and independent assessment, and will keep the committee advised as necessary. I expect the review to commence alongside the appointment of the new UKSA Chair to enable the opportunity to align perspectives as relevant, and I appreciate the committee's flexibility in efficiently accommodating the pre-appointment scrutiny hearing as part of the Chair appointment process.

The Role of NEDs

Non-Executive Board Members (NEBMs) carry out an advisory role as non-statutory office holders. The role of NEBMs is set out in the Corporate Governance Code for Central Government Departments (2017). Guidance on appointments, also set out in the code, provides that NEBMs should be selected based on merit through an open and transparent process and appointed by the Secretary of State. The last Cabinet Office campaign, in May 2020, followed this guidance. The roles were advertised nationally and attracted over 160 applications. The Committee for Standards in Public Life has recommended that appointment of NEBMs should be regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Government is considering this recommendation. There are no plans to change the advisory nature of NEBMs either within the Cabinet Office or in other departments.

NEBMs are bound by the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies and Ministers are responsible and accountable to Parliament for the appointments that they make and for the activities of their departments, including those appointed to provide advice. It is of course open to select committees to call whomsoever they choose, but it is the practice and policy of successive administrations that the decision on who is best able to represent the Minister rests with the Minister concerned.

Yours Sincerely,



**Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and Chief of Staff to the Prime Minister**

ORGANISING FOR DIGITAL DELIVERY: REPORT FROM THE DIGITAL ECONOMY COUNCIL, SEPTEMBER 2020

PROGRESS UPDATE FEBRUARY 2022

Overview

In 2020, the Cabinet Office and Department for Culture, Media and Sport jointly commissioned the Digital Economy Council (DEC) to advise on how best to achieve the Government's ambition of being the world's leading digital government. The result was a report summarising the current state of the Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) function and setting out eight recommendations:

1. Build mechanisms to put the citizen at the heart of all design decisions
2. Strengthen the accountability of Departments and their Permanent Secretaries
3. Hire a Permanent Secretary level head of function
4. Re-focus and add teeth to the centre
5. Create clear investment swim lanes to address the legacy debt
6. Set up a quarterly business review process
7. Invest in developing the technical fluency of senior civil service leadership
8. Create a Government data application centre of excellence

Summary Progress Update

There has been significant change at the centre of digital government in response to the publication of the DEC report. Government is now better equipped with the leadership and operational clarity needed to make the UK one of the most digitally mature governments in the world.

At the beginning of 2021, in response to Recommendation 3 to hire a Permanent Secretary level head of function and Recommendation 4 to re-focus and add teeth to the centre, the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer announced new structures and senior leadership for DDaT. Joanna Davinson and Paul Willmott were appointed as Executive Director and Chair respectively of the newly-created Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), while Tom Read was appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Government Digital Service (GDS).

The CDDO was launched in April 2021 to lead the DDaT function and put the conditions in place for digital transformation at scale. Since launch, CDDO has been working to establish its mandate and collectively agree DDaT priorities for government. This has already yielded success; Quarterly Business Reviews (set up in direct response to DEC recommendation 6) have been established to engage departments at senior level on their DDaT challenges and priorities and a new Digital and Data Board set up to engage Permanent Secretaries in the DDaT agenda. In addition, at the 2021 Spending Review (SR21) the CDDO worked with Government Security Group (GSG) and HM Treasury to support decision making on DDaT funding, leading to increased investment in DDaT over the next 3 years focused on

addressing legacy technology and cyber risk, transforming and automating services and better use of data.

Alongside the appointment of a new CEO in GDS, the organisation has been refocused on its mission of driving digital transformation through the creation of world-class products, platforms and services that help create a simple, joined-up and personalised experience of government for everyone. In May last year, GDS released its 2024 strategy setting out how it will do this - and progress is already being made. SR21 announced funding to progress development of 'One Login', a new system that will provide one way for users to sign in, prove their identity and access central government services online. This work is on track for the public testing of feature-complete software to go live by 31 March 2022.

ANNEX A : Recommendation by Recommendation Progress Update

Rec	Description	Progress Update
1	<p>Build mechanisms to put the citizen at the heart of all design decisions</p>	<p>Both CDDO and GDS focus on a user-centred approach, and this will continue to drive activity across the organisations. Currently, GDS is bringing together services to help people solve whole problems based on their own life events, rather than government departmental structures. In October, GDS began scoping the next potential ‘whole user journey’ by mapping and connecting relevant data, insights and user research to understand current pain points experienced by users, and is now starting to plan and test improvements to a number of these journeys.</p> <p>The GDS-led One Login programme will deliver a single, ubiquitous way for users to sign on, login and prove their identity. In October, GDS successfully migrated users of the GOV.UK Account with the GDS authentication product as part of One Login and also commenced discovery work on how app technologies can improve user experience. This is all part of tailoring information and services to provide a more joined up and personalised experience for users.</p> <p>CDDO has set up a team that will work with departments to drive further improvements to the quality of services for citizens and businesses. The team is currently establishing its roadmap for work that will define what good looks like, create the conditions for departments to deliver great services, measure and assess progress, and connect the different groups and stakeholders working on service transformation in government.</p>
2	<p>Strengthen the accountability of Departments and their Permanent Secretaries</p>	<p>CDDO has established a new Digital and Data Board at Permanent Secretary level to set and drive delivery of the strategy for the digitisation of HMG. CDDO has also established forums that regularly bring together Chief Digital Officers, Chief Data Officers and Chief Technology Officers from across government with a remit to guide the development of common architectures and standards and to share best practice.</p> <p>Going forward, departmental Outcome Delivery Plans, which are signed off by Permanent Secretaries and Ministers, will contain specific commitments on digital service transformation and departments will be asked to report against a range of metrics showing how they are seizing the full potential of digital, data and technology.</p>

3	Hire a Permanent Secretary level head of function	<p>A recruitment campaign was launched for a Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) in August 2020. As part of that campaign Paul Willmott, Chief Digital Adviser at LEGO Brand Group, was identified as the outstanding candidate for the role, but was committed to his current employer. Government Chief Operating Officer Alex Chisholm and ministers recognised the need to flex the structures in order to get the right talent and as such rather than appointing a GCDO, CDDO was launched in April 2021 to lead the DDaT function across government and put the conditions in place to achieve digital transformation at scale. Paul Willmott was appointed as chair and Joanna Davinson was appointed as Executive Director at Director General level. Alex Chisholm is the Permanent Secretary responsible for the organisation.</p> <p>Early successes for the new directorate include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of the Digital and Data Board (see recommendation two) and Quarterly Business Review (QBR) process (see recommendation six) • Co-ordinating the DDaT approach to SR21 (see recommendation five)
4	Re-focus and add teeth to the centre	<p>CDDO has carried out work to strengthen the DDaT spend controls framework to ensure controls are operated rigorously in real time across all digital spend. Technology pipelines are now mandated for departments and remaining departments not currently on the pipeline are being on-boarded, while Arm's-Length Bodies (ALBs) are being onboarded across all departments with existing pipelines. This is resulting in stronger assurance of billions of pounds of spend, driving greater cost efficiency and quality of digital delivery.</p> <p>CDDO is also going through a rigorous stocktake of the assurance process to revise its 'red lines' and ensure that interventions are timely, robust and targeted against priorities.</p> <p>CDDO, working with Government Security Group (GSG) and Government Commercial Function (GCF) also co-ordinated the cross-departmental DDaT approach to SR21, which involved running an assurance process and providing advice to HMT on investment decisions. This has helped to yield increased and better focused levels of investment in DDaT.</p> <p>The creation of CDDO has enabled GDS to refocus on driving digital transformation through world-class products, platforms and services. GDS recently released its 2024 strategy and is progressing against it. The strategy focuses on:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOV.UK as the single and trusted online destination for government information and services • Joined-up services that solve whole problems and span multiple departments • A simple digital identity solution that works for everyone • Common tools and expert services • Joined-up data across departments
5	Create clear investment swim lanes to address the legacy debt	<p>The co-ordinated DDaT approach to SR21, run by CDDO in collaboration with GSG and GCF, informed investment decisions which resulted in £2.6bn being earmarked for cyber and legacy work, including the replacement of legacy IT in SR21. This paves the way for significant investment in updating systems across government.</p> <p>CDDO now has responsibility for central co-ordination of legacy IT and a Chief Technology Officer has been appointed to lead a range of work to support departments to address their legacy estates. This includes introducing consistent reporting on the costs and risks of legacy systems through the roll-out of a common legacy risk framework. Over the medium to long term, this common approach will address significant financial and security risks to HMG from legacy.</p>
6	Set up a quarterly business review process	<p>In February 2021, CDDO set up the Quarterly Business Review (QBR) process to review departments' progress against operational and strategic DDaT priorities. The QBR process is ongoing and meetings are co-chaired by CDDO Executive Director Joanna Davinson and Cat Little, Director General for Public Spending at HMT.</p>
7	Invest in developing the technical fluency of senior civil service leadership	<p>CDDO is developing and piloting a 'Digital and Data Criterion' that defines the skills and behaviours, associated with data literacy and digital orientation, required of Senior Civil Servants (SCS) across all professions (for example Commercial, HR, and Operational Delivery). This forms the foundation of our training needs analysis and development of critical learning products.</p> <p>CDDO, 10DS and the Data profession piloted a Data Masterclass for Senior Leaders in December 2020. It is designed to improve the ability of non-analysts in leadership roles to use data in order to make the best policy decisions possible. To date, we have upskilled 1,283 senior civil servants through the masterclass, with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) due to extend this to more leaders, including in devolved governments.</p>

		<p>In addition 10DS, CDDO and the Modernisation and Reform Unit have also developed and piloted an 'Innovation masterclass' to more than 280 learners. This is now being deployed more widely across civil servants and SCS.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Create a Government data application centre of excellence</p>	<p>CDDO has taken steps to co-ordinate a central approach to data standards and to drive up quality. A Chief Data Officer has been recruited to lead the data function in CDDO and has established a cross-government Chief Data Officer (CDO) Council. The data team and CDO Council will work together to provide joined-up strategic leadership on data use and sharing across government, as set out in Mission Three of the National Data Strategy and the forthcoming fifth National Action Plan for Open Government. Priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligning and prioritising strategic multi-departmental data initiatives such as data sharing and reuse ● Monitoring performance and maturity of the data management function across government ● Promoting the data profession, capability and culture across government <p>The GDS-led One Login programme (see recommendation one) will also help realise the ambition of joined up data by delivering a singular central login and identity assurance functionality, supported by common components. This will significantly improve the quality of user experience when they need to engage with government services, and enable more effective support for citizens through key life events.</p>

Strengthening the cross-government functions

Progress update January 2022

Introduction

1. In July, the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP, announced publication of an independent report by the Rt. Hon. Lord Maude of Horsham titled, "[A Review of the cross-cutting functions and the operation of spend controls](#)".
2. Lord Maude provided advice on how to improve the cross-government functions and strengthen spending controls to ensure the government is delivering both excellence in organisational capability and value for money.
3. Lord Maude's advice is helping to inform action to sharpen the way in which the cross-government functions operate. Strong progress is being made, which is overseen by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Minister for Government Efficiencies, and Alex Chisholm, the Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service, who chairs the Functional Performance Board, which was established in February 2021.
4. This update provides information on how Lord Maude's advice is being taken forward.

Functional Reform

5. The functions support departments and civil servants working right across government to be professional, capable and efficient. The functions drive efficiencies and savings across government on which audited figures for 2020/21 will be published in March/April.
6. Strengthening the functions is critical to continuing to drive further savings which will support the government's policy agenda and priorities. Lord Maude's advice covers proposals which focus on individual functions (e.g. Project Delivery and the Infrastructure and Project Authority's mandate), and proposals which cut across multiple functions (e.g. embedding the role of functional leaders in departmental appointments to senior functional positions).
7. The functional reform agenda has the following five objectives:
 - **Leadership:** for government leaders of the functions to be among the very best that there are;
 - **Mandate:** for the centre of functions to have a strong mandate over functional activity, but with discretion on how it is exercised;

- **Capability:** for functions to have high technical and professional credibility to provide expert advice and be in a position to exercise the mandate;
- **Coordinated Delivery:** to embed a culture where services are joined up and built to meet user needs; and
- **Impact:** to measure the impact of the functions on delivering better outcomes and public services.

Function specific activities

8. This section provides a function specific overview of the implementation of Lord Maude's advice. The Cabinet Office is also developing a single, consolidated functional mandate which was commissioned by the Functional Performance Board for publication in April/May. This will incorporate advice from Lord Maude and provide greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the centres of the functions and those of departments, and will align with the published functional [standards](#).

Commercial

9. The Government Commercial Function is a cross-government network procuring £49bn of goods and services for central government departments and £250bn for the wider public sector. Lord Maude's advice homed in on the continuation of commercial reform that was already in train with a focus on increasing commercial capability.

10. Lord Maude recommended an acceleration of contract management training in departments. In response, over 11,000 civil servants have fully completed Foundation Level training on managing contracts and achieved accreditation, with a further 6,300 in training to achieve this. For more complex 'silver and gold' contracts, there are 460 staff completing in depth training via a series of modules and webinars, which is expected to conclude in 2023.

11. The function expects an additional 1700 civil servants working in government departments need training to ensure that all silver and gold contracts have an accredited Contract Manager. By accrediting Practitioner and Expert contract management staff, in the last published benefits realisation statement (March 2021) estimated savings of c.£750m have been achieved through procurement and contract improvements.

12. In the last year, Commercial made £2.6bn of savings on the government's most complex deals. This figure was calculated using internal departmental cashable savings related to commercial projects from 20/21. Government is spending more with the small and medium enterprises that are the backbone of our economy – for 2019/20 over £6bn directly and £9bn through the supply chain¹.

Further challenges being addressed

¹ [Central Government Direct and Indirect Spend with Small and Medium sized Enterprises 2019/20](#)

13. Commercial colleagues are reliant on departments identifying the silver contract managers who need to develop skills or capacity to fulfil the contract management activity required to establish and report against relevant KPIs. **Identification of staff who require training needs acceleration.**
14. A Sourcing Programme is working closely with departments to offer support and advice, and will lead on developing a Contract Management Best Practice Guide. A new KPI training product for contract managers has been designed to complement what is covered in the Contract Management Capability Programme (CMCP) that is in place to train and accredit silver contract managers. This was piloted in December 2021 and two further pilots have been arranged, following which the Commercial Function will analyse the results. An automated tool has also been introduced to help departments with the reporting process.

Digital, Data and Technology

15. In his advice, Lord Maude set out clear recommendations to tackle the current digital and data challenges faced in government such as legacy IT, technical debt and the costs of contingent labour to fill skills gaps. This supports the advice in the Organising for Digital Delivery report presented to the Digital Economy Council, published in July 2021.
16. In January 2021 the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer announced new Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) structures and leadership. With Tom Read as Chief Executive, Government Digital Service (GDS) has refocused to build platforms, products and services that help create a simple, joined-up and personalised experience of government for everyone. GDS is also about to undertake a period of reorganisation to align with its refreshed strategy and orient itself to its product and delivery expertise.
17. The Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) was launched in April 2021 with Paul Willmott appointed as chair, and Joanna Davinson as Executive Director, leading the DDaT function and putting conditions in place for transformation. The CDDO leadership is working with departments to agree shared priorities as well as to make sure that departments are meeting cross-government standards.
18. During Spending Review 2021, experts within CDDO worked with HM Treasury to provide advice on the feasibility of departmental bids with significant digital and data elements and their fit with wider strategic priorities. Advice followed a standardised assessment framework, taking into account topics such as legacy IT and automation. This specialist advice helped to ensure critical priorities are funded, for example, £2.6bn was allocated in cyber security and legacy funding, with an emphasis on improving the government's own cyber security.
19. The DDaT spend controls framework has been strengthened to make sure controls are operated rigorously in real time across all digital spend, as per Lord Maude's

advice. This is resulting in stronger assurance of billions of pounds of spend, driving greater cost efficiency and quality of digital delivery.

20. CDDO is responsible for central coordination of legacy IT, in line with Lord Maude's recommendation for this to sit with a central digital entity. A Chief Technology Officer has been appointed to lead a range of work to support departments to address their legacy estate. CDDO is introducing consistent reporting on costs and risks of legacy systems through the roll-out of a common legacy risk framework, which over the medium to long term will address significant financial and security risks to government.
21. As highlighted by Lord Maude, joined-up, reliable, trusted and high quality data continues to be a priority. We are addressing this through the work of the [Data Standards Authority](#), work to develop a cross-government data exchange, and the Office for National Statistics' work on an Integrated Data Platform. A Chief Data Officer leads work to reform data access, use, standards and capability across government. Ethics and openness are also central to CDDO's approach, through work on an Algorithmic Transparency Standard (to support government transparency about its use of algorithms in decision-making), Data Ethics Framework, and National Action Plan for Open Government.

Further challenges being addressed

22. Departments have developed and implemented individual attraction and recruitment strategies to source DDaT and cyber talent. However, these approaches are not **delivering new talent at the speed and scale required**. Too many candidates are choosing alternative employers due to the lack of a clear and consistent employee value proposition, and there is a need for a faster recruitment process. Given the competitiveness of the external labour market, and a higher than average churn rate, reform is required just to stand still.
23. Our DDaT Workforce and Capability Strategy clearly sets out our ambition to generate a recognised DDaT brand for government, supported by a consistent, slicker and faster recruitment experience for all applicants. UK Security Vetting's major investment programme to significantly modernise all aspects of the whole end-to-end vetting enterprise is a key interdependency. The strategy also sets out the need for a more consistent employee value proposition and enhanced outreach activity to strengthen the early talent pipeline into which we are working to recruit c.3,000 DDaT apprentices and graduates over the next 3 years.
24. There are significant variances across government in the **maturity of capability in relation to Application Programming Interfaces (API)**. At worst, organisations will fail to specify a requirement for an API when procuring a system from suppliers. Departments already using APIs also have different levels of maturity in the management of their API estate.

25. Since 2019 we have worked to improve the standardisation of API protocols in government, including publication of standards and guidance on GOV.UK for government and suppliers to adhere to. The Data Standards Authority manages a cross government API community and works with them and industry to understand issues and iterate guidance as best practises evolve. For example, we recently published guidance on GraphQL and are working on improving guidance on API management throughout their lifecycle including security from the offset. We are also building an assessment process for APIs to ensure monitoring and convergence in practice. However, APIs are only one part of the picture and we are taking steps to improve the underlying data, including focusing on the **adoption of data standards for converging and maturing on data quality and management** supported by a data maturity model, as well as standardising practice around legislation and data sharing governance.

Infrastructure and Projects Authority

26. The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) is the government's centre of expertise for infrastructure and major projects and leads the government-wide Project Delivery function. Lord Maude's advice in this crucial area highlighted that the IPA should have the ability to support and challenge departments to help drive substantial efficiencies in major projects.

27. The IPA published its mandate in January 2021, clearly setting out its own responsibilities and those of departments when delivering major projects. As part of its mandate, business cases are mandatory for all departmental projects, and all transformative public projects are now supported through the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP). There are now c.236 projects on the GMPP compared to 124 in September 2020 and the health of the portfolio has improved too. Of those projects on the GMPP for at least a year, 36% have improved in their Delivery Confidence Assessment².

28. Lord Maude also focused on wider Project Delivery leadership capability across government to ensure that major projects are project managed by empowered and expert project managers. Since October 2020, 29 project professionals have graduated from the Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA), and a further 258 have enrolled. These numbers have been impacted by the pandemic. The IPA is now seeing a pick up in numbers and working through a backlog of graduations from the MPLA, which should also see the number of graduates increase over the course of next year.

29. Infrastructure and digital delivery remain key areas of focus for capability development. Since the start of the MPLA programme in 2012, over 500 project professionals have graduated. A further 270 project leaders have also graduated from a Project Leadership Programme run by Cranfield since October 2020. This focus on

²[Annual Report on Major Projects 2020-21](#)

developing capability has enabled the government to deliver key projects successfully such as the Hundred Thousand Genomes Project, 30 hours free childcare, A14 road improvement, Nightingale Hospitals and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Further challenges being addressed

30. Departments are responsible for the recruitment of project delivery staff and IPA actively tracks resourcing gaps via departmental self returns. Currently, **the resourcing gap for the GMPP stands at 3200 FTE**, which has increased from the previous quarter of 2400 FTE. To support departments, the IPA is continuing to progress specialist recruitment and retention of expert practitioners. This includes:

- Recently recruiting a number of senior practitioners onto a 'master bench'. Through engagement with departments the IPA has identified critical gaps (Project Delivery and Senior Responsible Officer roles) for these individuals to be deployed into; and
- Establishing a Project Delivery Pivotal Role Allowance for retention of staff, which departments can request.

Property

31. The Office of Government Property (OGP), which houses the Property Function, provides leadership across the property functions in all government departments, to drive collaboration and transformative management of the c.£515bn public estate.

32. Lord Maude advised that the Property function should undertake an assessment and accreditation process for property professionals across government. The Government School of Property was launched in the first week of September, aimed at providing learning across government to support the accreditation mandate. Work is underway with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management to develop an accreditation offer for existing civil servants, and there are over 300 Property Apprentices enrolled on professional property qualification routes.

33. Lord Maude also recommended that the Property function should work with the Commercial function to operate the facilities management spend controls, and build oversight of all government facilities management. The Property function, working jointly with the Commercial function, launched a revised facilities management control in September 2021. By utilising a continuous pipeline of data on estates, the new control is building joint oversight of all government facilities management contracts. Cases under the new threshold of £500,000 are required to be notified to the control via FM contract pipelines.

34. Between 2010-2020, as reported in the most recent State of the Estate report, the Property function reduced the cost of the central government estate by £1.5bn, through more efficient operations supported by the application of spend controls.

Further challenges being addressed

35. The Lord Maude report identified that only 10% of the Government's Office Portfolio had been onboarded at the time of his review. GPA has now onboarded 34% of the portfolio (0.85 million m2) and, having achieved critical mass, is now consolidating progress to date with a focus on improving customer service and building professional capabilities.

Civil Service Human Resources

36. Civil Service Human Resources (CSHR) leads on all people-related matters, driving improvement in a number of areas, such as attraction and retention, diversity and inclusion, development of career pathways, reward and leadership. The function supports departments, professions and other functions to build a modern, effective civil service by building skills and capability across government.

37. With Lord Maude's focus on raising capability within the civil service in mind, CSHR's new Government Skills & Curriculum Unit established a cross-government 'Design Authority' in 2021 to assure and govern standards and expectations for skills, knowledge and networks. It has delivered a range of curriculum products including a universal induction pilot, a Ministerial induction offer, and a series of masterclasses. The Senior Civil Servant Data Masterclass equips senior leaders with the essentials of working with complex data.

38. CSHR has a full assessment and accreditation programme in place, with HR professionals required to have a Chartered Institute for Personal Development qualification. CSHR is also testing HR Directors on the use of HR technical skills as an alternative route to assessment and accreditation.

Further challenges being addressed

39. Whilst the central learning offer provided via Learning Frameworks through the Government Campus and Curriculum continues to be strengthened, departments, professions and functions continue to invest in training outside of these mechanisms. This **reduces central oversight for this spend** due to mixed definitions and reporting mechanisms of training spend. As part of the government reform commitment to create a campus and curriculum for government skills, we are continuing to work with departments to identify both current skills gaps and spend on training through a set of data sprints between now and Spring. We also continue to analyse central spend data quarterly through existing Learning Frameworks, which is **helping to continue to shape the supply and demand of training across the civil service**.

Counter Fraud, Error, Debt and Grants

40. The Counter Fraud, Debt and Grants functions help reduce government losses from fraud and error across government spending, recover unpaid government debt whilst improving fairness, and improve the efficient use of the annual £118bn in grant expenditure. Collectively, Lord Maude recommended that these functions should be strengthened to embed the efficiencies the functions are achieving in the prevention of financial loss.

Government Counter Fraud Function

41. Lord Maude recommended that an Inspector General should be appointed to oversee counter fraud measures across government entities. In response, the government is exploring proposals for either an Inspector General for the UK Public Sector, or alternative options.

42. Lord Maude's advice focused on strengthening the mandate of the Counter Fraud Function. Since the introduction of the Counter Fraud Functional Standard, there has been a 35% increase in departments meeting the Standard, an increase in the detected level of fraud by 243% and an increase in prevented fraud by 800%.

Further challenges being addressed

43. There is variation in capability in managing counter fraud across government. Investment has been focused in areas of known high loss. In other areas **the function does not have capability, nor the legal powers, to tackle increased levels of fraud**, especially as these have increased as organisations have become major distributors of public money through the Covid-19 schemes and economic stimulus packages. The performance of public bodies in finding and combating fraud and error is unclear, with not all having metrics with a financial impact and very few reporting on their counter fraud performance in their annual report. This contrasts with the direction of travel for Public Interest Entities in 'Restoring Trust in Audit and Corporate Governance'.

44. The Function is working with departments to ensure each has a head of fraud who is trained and part of the Counter Fraud Profession, though take up will be at departments' discretion. The Counter Fraud Function is also driving efficiency by **looking to pool resources and level up powers, capability and capacity** where there is appetite. On the performance of public bodies, the Function is reinvigorating efforts to make finding and dealing with fraud clear and transparent, and then reviewed by Audit and Risk Committees, senior officials and Ministers.

Government Debt Management Function

45. Lord Maude's recommendations for government departments to provide the Debt function with data on uncollected debt has given the function an opportunity to review the government's collective aged debt position. The data analysis found that whilst the aged debt balance has increased, primarily due to the pandemic, most aged debt

remains under control. Additionally the review has brought an increased focus on the expectation to manage aged debt in a timely manner.

46. The Debt function has also focused on its internal capability and, through its Debt Centre of Excellence and Debt Profession Career Framework, will ensure access to expert advice and the enhancement of debt management skills across government. Increasing debt capability is key, as debt owed to the government from UK entities has risen from £28.8bn to c.£64.8bn, with Covid-19 having created debt in departments that had little historic need for debt management capability.

Government Grants Management Function

47. Lord Maude recommended that the Grants function should ensure that the processes for awarding grants across government is fit for purpose. Following this advice, the function introduced a grants pipeline control and an oversight regime in April 2021.
48. The control has already provided early visibility of over £60bn in grant spend and is driving improved grant making maturity in departments and compliance with the Grant Functional standard. It has also enabled the Grants Management Function to target expert challenge and support to the most complex and high risk grant schemes via the multidisciplinary Complex Grants Advice Panel and Expert Grant Services.

Further challenges being addressed

49. Grants represent a significant part of spend across government and covers many areas, from funding schools to commissioning non-commercial services. Unlike other functions, **there is no single identifiable community of people who deal with grants**. This has made it more difficult to raise capability and capacity and build services and products across departments.
50. The function has made significant progress in the last two years by providing specific products, such as Spotlight (an automated due-diligence tool which highlights areas of risks to inform grant-making decisions), but it will need commitment from Arm's-Length Bodies and Local Government to work well. The Grants Management function has controls and governance structures for oversight of grants most at risk, and this is getting 97% approval ratings, but many departments and Arm's-Length Bodies are not engaging meaningfully enough with the Grants Management function.

Government Business Services

51. Government Business Services (GBS) provides leadership, systems, and operational delivery for central government, comprising the interconnected back office areas of Shared Services, the Government Recruitment Service, Pensions Delivery, and associated platforms. It aims to make the civil service more efficient and effective by the streamlining of processes and systems.

52. Lord Maude recommended that all 'back-office' services be onboarded into a maximum of five centres by the end of 2022. The Independent Shared Services Centre 2, established as part of the 2012 strategy, is forecast to deliver £282m in benefits. Since publication of the 2021 Shared Services Strategy, central departments have mobilised into five clusters with work underway to establish the shared service centres. There are currently three active centres (Defence, Overseas, and Delivery), and two centres (Policy and HMRC-led) being established at pace. GBS currently estimates that by creating five shared service centres, the government can save a further £60m out of a budget of £533m.
53. GBS is working with HMT to secure funds in this Spending Review for clusters to deliver their moves to modernised software services (Enterprise Resource Planning) and the benefits they will bring. Business cases to deliver this cross government transformation are currently being developed, subject to funding. GBS has launched initial data standards to enable a more interoperable Civil Service. Crown Commercial Services (CCS) have created three frameworks to procure new services, leveraging the power of government to drive value for money. GBS is improving processes, including launching the Joiners Movers Leavers improvement programme, and is also leading benchmarking across the civil service and externally to improve quality and performance of core services.
54. Lord Maude's advice also considered the establishment of a licence to operate model, with every civil servant holding a 'skills passport' to record their skills, training and specialisms. CSHR, the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit, and GBS are working together to build data on the skills and capabilities of the entire civil service workforce by 2022, with further work on developing a 'skills passport' to be considered.

Further challenges being addressed

55. GBS is working with departments to finalise plans for the creation of five shared service centres, with a focus on refining cost estimates, maximising the benefits and ensuring alignment to the strategy. Clusters will then aim to develop outline business cases in the coming months. Clusters are at different stages in the implementation of shared service centres and a move to cloud based platforms. GBS is supporting and encouraging them all to move at pace towards full implementation as soon as is practicable although this may span more than one spending review period.

Security

56. The Government Security Function (GSF) is responsible for understanding and managing government risks and threats to provide protective security to over 450,000 civil servants. The GSF was established in 2018 and is therefore one of the youngest government functions. Recognising this, Lord Maude's advice homed in on the function developing its central capability and that of departments.

57. The GSF has developed its first career framework, setting out the standards for skills across nine cyber job families in tandem with a comprehensive learning curriculum to build these specific skills across government. The [Government Cyber Security Strategy](#), published in January 2022, is being developed across six strategic pillars:

- a. Managing cyber security risks;
- b. Protecting against cyber attacks;
- c. Detecting cyber security events;
- d. Minimising the impact of cyber security incidents;
- e. Equipping government with appropriate cyber security skills and knowledge; and
- f. Transforming government cyber security culture.

58. Building on a strong foundation of cyber security driven by individual government organisations responsible for their risks, government will defend as 'one', seamlessly sharing cyber security data and tackling problems at scale and pace.

Further challenges being addressed

59. Vetting is a key enabling service of government security, and provides assurance to individuals working in sensitive roles. We are **working to improve this necessary assurance activity and significantly reduce the end to end timescales** to streamline the time to hire. The UK Security Vetting (UKSV) launched a major investment programme in October 2020 to significantly modernise all aspects of end-to-end vetting enterprise to speed up, standardise and improve this necessary assurance activity, meeting the imperative for faster recruitment and transfers into sensitive roles. UKSV is focused on three key priority areas to deliver the vetting modernisation programme:

- **Delivery** - this is focused on streamlining Business As Usual (BAU) processes and improving delivery performance, making the current UKSV more flexible and able to deliver on demand;
- **Digital, Data and Technology** - this is focused on building the best platform for the UKSV to make it a more effective data-driven organisation;
- **Policy** - this is focused on delivering new vetting levels.

60. The programme delivered a more streamlined transfer process in November 2020, reducing the time taken for individuals already holding security clearance to move between departments. The vetting modernisation changes will provide early benefits, on which the delivery of new vetting levels and underpinning technology will subsequently build.

Communications

61. The Government Communication Service (GCS) brings together specialist expertise from across government, setting the highest standards of professional practice for government communicators. Lord Maude's advice emphasised the need for government communications to be clear and co-ordinated to best serve the public.

62. In the Government Communication Plan 2021/22, published in March 2021, the GCS established seven priority areas for all government communications in the year ahead. By unifying campaigns under these themes, the GCS is ensuring the government speaks to citizens with 'one voice' across organisational boundaries.
63. GCS continues to coordinate the government's communications on key, cross-cutting issues. The campaigns for COVID-19 and the UK's transition out of the EU have operated from the heart of government, leveraging expertise and support from across departments and ALBs to help protect, inform and support the public. In line with Lord Maude's recommendation, the HQ for the 'GREAT' Britain and Northern Ireland campaign, which promotes the UK's attributes and assets internationally, was also transferred from the Department of International Trade to the Cabinet Office in April 2021.
64. The Reshaping GCS transformation programme will drive further improvement in these areas, including a future-focused centre with a stronger and more standardised use of data. The new Chief Executive of Government Communications is a Director General level appointment, in line with Lord Maude's recommendation, and will oversee the future of the service, together with a team of Executive Directors.
65. Lord Maude recommended the introduction of an assessment and accreditation programme. The GCS Curriculum, launched in April 2021, sets out clear standards for government communicators by grade, learning level and discipline. It includes a requirement to complete a Personal Development Plan, and to achieve 30 Continuing Professional Development points each year, plus mandatory training. GCS continues to work with the Government Curriculum and Skills Unit to ensure our offer develops in line with the overall Civil Service provision.
66. In line with Lord Maude's recommendation around recruitment and retention of communication professionals in government, GCS is developing a new People Strategy, setting out how to attract, recruit, develop and retain communication specialists.
67. The advertising, marketing and communications spending control has been strengthened, in line with Lord Maude's recommendation. While taking a proportionate approach, Arm's-Length Bodies as well as central government departments are now within scope of the control.

Further challenges being addressed

68. **The GCS has grown considerably in size during the course of Brexit and Covid-19**, with Arm's-Length Bodies making up approximately 70% of GCS FTE communications activities. Whether funded by the taxpayer or the private sector we have a duty to look continuously at how we can deliver better value for money.

69. We increasingly need people with deep and specialist expertise and that also means a re-evaluation of our approach to learning and development, career progression and professional accreditation. **As we move from the necessary increase in headcount caused by Brexit and Covid-19 into business as usual, it is the right time to review headcount levels and reinforce professional development.** Any reductions across GCS will need to be achievable and sustainable, and led by departments who control staffing decisions.
70. GCS will also be looking to increase use of digital channels and data analysis to optimise communications spend and impact.

Legal

71. To continue to drive efficiencies in expert legal advice across government, Lord Maude recommended that the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office legal team become a part of the Government Legal Department (GLD). Rather than folding this department into the GLD, ways to collaborate further on legal and functional issues are being explored between GLD and the department to build strong professional and supportive relations.

Finance

72. Lord Maude's advice on the Government Finance Function (GFF) recommended that the head of finance should have involvement in the appointment and appraisal of government finance directors across government. He also advised that the GFF should set in train an assessment and accreditation programme for financial management personnel.
73. To support Finance professionals across government, the GFF launched its Finance Career Framework in May 2021 which sets out clear expectations on qualification for finance professionals in post, particularly for those at Senior Civil Servant 1 and Grade 6 levels where it is expected that post holders hold a professional qualification. The Head of the GFF expects to be involved in the appointment of government Finance Directors as required by HM Treasury and as part of the functional standards departments are expected to adhere to. Departments have been reminded of this through departmental Director General letters that clarify the role of the GFF, the processes that should be followed and their obligations to engage.

Further challenges being addressed

74. There is a need for further join-up between Finance, Commercial and Policy to ensure early policy ideas are properly scrutinised to deliver operational and value for money outcomes, with Senior Civil Servants being key to embedding this culture.
75. Effective risk management must be an integral part of informed decision-making, from policy or project inception through implementation to the everyday delivery of public services, as well as being fundamental to effective preparations for, and responses to,

crises. To deliver this, a new risk management profession is being established within the Treasury to take forward three commitments to improve risk management in government: 1. Strengthen leadership and enhance credibility; 2. Collaborate across boundaries; 3. Enhance capabilities and drive professionalism.

Government Internal Audit Agency

76. Lord Maude highlighted the importance of a central audit function to provide assurance and support to departments. He recommended that by the end of 2023 the three remaining departments using their own audit services should be onboarded into the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA).

77. The GIAA and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office, HM Revenue and Customs and the Ministry of Defence are working closely together to jointly deliver this recommendation with 'in principle' agreement from Permanent Secretaries for their respective Internal Audit teams to join the GIAA between October 2022 to October 2023.

Analysis

78. Lord Maude recommended that the Analysis function should conduct a comprehensive audit of the analytical capability of policy professionals across government.

79. The project commenced in July 2021 and will run until the end of the financial year. It will produce a comprehensive report that provides a view on analytical capability amongst policy professionals based on a cross-government skills assessment, and will set out recommendations to drive enhanced analytical skills. The audit report will inform a wider definition of what level of analytical capability the function expects from all civil servants, further informing core curriculum development. Ultimately the desired outcome is for analysis, evidence, and research to be better integrated into all policy making to drive better decisions in government.

Spending Controls

80. Lord Maude made a number of recommendations to inform the thinking about reform of Cabinet Office spending controls. The Cabinet Office has a dedicated team that works closely with Ministers to drive change and reform.

81. As part of this reform, the Cabinet Office has published guidance setting out the requirement that approval must be in place before procurement or equivalent activity commences and before spending is committed. This allows experts to improve the quality of spending plans.

82. The Cabinet Office has also been working with a number of organisations that were previously exempted from spending controls to apply the presumption that there should be no exemptions at all. Some organisations are concerned about the removal of exemptions as they believe spending controls will adversely affect their

responsiveness and ability to carry out time-critical activities, or on the basis that they need to be independent of government decision making. The Cabinet Office controls team is working with a number of organisations to ensure controls are implemented in a proportionate way and linked to needs and performance, prioritising those with the highest spend e.g. NHS. These organisations, which spend more than £120bn per year in total, are now complying with the controls, or arrangements are being made to introduce them.

83. Mandatory pipelines are now in place for the commercial, digital and technology, and property controls. These improve the planning of spend across central government, and enable experts in the functions to identify ways to improve value for money achieved before organisations commit to spend money.
84. The government's use of, and reliance on, consultancy and other forms of temporary labour is too high. Spending controls for consultancy and professional services have been developed and implemented at thresholds recommended by Lord Maude. The Government Consulting Hub has also been established to help reduce the amount that the government spends on consultancy, maximise value where consultants are really needed and upskill civil servants to deliver consultancy-type work. The Hub will establish new approaches to knowledge generation and sharing, deliver training in partnership with the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit, and operate alongside new, stronger spending controls.
85. In addition, the external recruitment control has been refocused on controlling contingent labour where this does not represent long-term value (e.g. due to higher costs or the loss of civil service capability). These controls will make sure that the civil service makes the best use of its own people and only brings in outside sources of labour, advice and consultancy where absolutely necessary.
86. Online processes have been implemented for spending to be referred to the Cabinet Office under several of the spending controls. The Cabinet Office is continuing to develop solutions for the suite of controls, to standardise the process and deliver further efficiencies, saving time and resources across central government.
87. The CO Commercial Control applies to most government procurements with a value exceeding £10m. The team has directly assured 476 procurements in the past year with a combined contract value of £134bn, and through improvements to the way the control is operated, the average time taken by the team to review and clear each case has reduced from 17 days (a year ago) to 8 days during that period (5 days for Covid cases that were not exempted).
88. Thresholds have been implemented to bring more digital and IT spending into the scope of the controls. The implementation of pipelines also means that the Cabinet Office has gone further than this recommendation for many organisations, looking at all expenditure in the round to improve the quality of strategic advice provided.