Digital Services

PAC FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS – IT PROCUREMENT

25/04/2025

1.	**General Questions**

1.1	**Within the IT procurement process, how do you ensure that any systems purchased integrate with existing programmes (noting that Government uses over 1000 individual pieces of software)?**

The Public Finances Manual requires budget holders to consult with the Design Authority (a Digital Services Architecture oversight group) before procuring IT solutions. The intent of the Design Authority is to provide broad oversight of IT programmes and projects in-flight and on the horizon and to align individual projects towards the Architecture Principles, with a particular focus on re-use and consolidation. Where a proposed system implementation is particularly complex or contentious, an Architecture Review Board meeting will be held, with representation from senior Digital Services technical professionals.

1.2	**What changes have been made to improve the IT procurement process over the last 12 months and what evidence do you have that this improvement is delivering benefits to government?**

A closer working relationship between Commercial Services and Digital Services has been established to support in the prioritisation of digital spend projects. A blend of specialist IT contractors and in house resources have supported key prioritised projects such as the new Office Accommodation Project, the Digital Government Platform and the Transform programme.

An industry event was hosted by Digital Services in January this year where on-island digital and technology providers were given an overview of the current Digital Services position, and an insight into some of the focus for 2025 and beyond. This event signified an important step in collaboration between Government and Industry, to improve overall ways of working and drive a more collaborative working relationship between leadership teams. Commercial Services attended and provided support at this event.

1.3	**How will the IT strategy reduce the number of systems governments is reliant upon and still deliver on the business needs of government?**

The final draft of the Digital Services IT is due for publication by the end of June, the IT Strategy will focus on fixing the basics and optimising what we have. It will be underpinned by the work on detailed strategies which will include an Application Strategy.

The IT Infrastructure Improvement Programme (IIIP) is focussed on simplifying the Digital IT estate, and this programme is in the planning stages.

1.4	**How many IT programmes that were underway in 2023 were cancelled in 2024 and at what stage of procurement/delivery were they at?**

There was only one Digital Services led IT programme underway in 2023 which was cancelled in 2024 and this was the Records Transformation Programme (RTP). RTP was paused after completion of the first part which delivered the review and destruction of redundant physical files, prior to the implementation of a digital solution. The second part

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dealt with the implementation of an electronic document management system across government and a digitisation bureau. This second part was paused during the procurement phase.

1.5 What has been done to preserve investment in cancelled IT programmes?

The Records Transformation Programme was paused after the completion of phase 1. This means that departments now continue to manage their physical records (or containment thereof) individually using the principles established by the programme. Overall, 71 million sheets were reviewed and 22.7 million sheets were destroyed or archived. 37.4 million sheets were stored. Key drivers for the management of physical records were, amongst others, moves and consolidation of space for a large number of departments. All departments moving into the new Government building achieved their outcomes of a successful move using the very limited space available for their physical records. 3.5 million sheets were cleared to enable the move to Enid Quenault.

The decision was taken for the next element of the procurement to be put on hold, until funding and resource is prioritised and available. Information gathered during the process included identification and analysis of the requirements for the solution, definition of the evaluation criteria and testing of the evaluation process. When the programme resumes, this information can be reviewed, with the tender evaluation approach verified and any adjustments made. All providers who had engaged in the process were notified and expressed interest in being engaged again, once funding was available.

1.6 What was the total value of the IT programmes that had gone into the procurement stage in 2023 that were cancelled in 2024?

The total budget for the records transformation was £4.6m, the spend against the programme up to the point of it being paused was £2.4M

1.7 What are the issues and risks integrating the many pieces of software and how will you take integration forward?

Public sector organisations must provide a wide range of services and the Government of Jersey, concurrently acting as a national, regional and local government must deliver a broader and more diverse range of capabilities than most. This, combined with the historical situation whereby separate parts of government had made their own technology buying decisions has increased the complexity still further, and there are currently over a thousand business applications in the organisation.

The Architecture team in Digital Services have the responsibility for managing the Government of Jersey's enterprise architecture. The team have created a set of architectural principles to guide them in doing this; these involve ensuring fitness for purpose whilst minimising risk and maximising both operational efficiency and value for money to the Jersey taxpayer over the long-term. The team have developed a concise set of questions which are used to score the application and provide early sight of any risks that a new application may introduce and so avoid them where possible. A key operating

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principle of enterprise architecture in the Government of Jersey is to promote re-use, and to leverage the investments already made in application platforms.

1.8   What is your approach to managing the demands and business needs of each department within government and how does this align with your plans for optimisation?

In Q3 2024 the Executive Leadership Team agreed that the to 30% of projects with a Digital Services involvement would be worked on, in a top-down fashion. This means that top priorities were delivered before any lower-level priorities.   Briefings were given to Senior Leadership Teams across the organisation and a decision was made to pause approximately 240 projects, with 102 projects baselined in 2024. Our teams worked with departments to facilitate the prioritisation process, ensuring that clearly prioritised lists were available, and every department had a minimum of the top three on their priority list planned to be worked on in 2025.

The principle of top-down delivery by department ensures that the top three projects are secured for each department first, without the need to consider cross-organisational priorities.

Resource constraints are a significant barrier due to the high level of specialist skills and expert knowledge across c950 GoJ IT systems and the enabling IT infrastructure. Current constraints with skills covering IT architecture & design, IT networking, IT Platforms, IT security and management to support run and change activities.

We continue to work together with Departments to ensure prioritisation is effective. Delivery is subject to external third-party resource usage from an approval and availability perspective. Digital Services is currently developing a 5-year workforce plan with a goal of reducing reliance where feasible on third-party organisations.

1.9   Will the Transform programme be able to integrate with other systems such as Tax, SAP and Hospital platforms?

Integrating other systems into the Transform platform is a key design deliverable to achieve the objectives of the business case and as such the platform will be architected with this objective in mind, all integration to government systems will be managed through the Government Enterprise Integration layer.

1.10   Once the objectives have been achieved for the IT strategy what is the intention to broaden this strategic work to develop a Digital Strategy for government?

Once the IT Strategy has been reviewed and approved by the ELT and Ministers the need and benefits of developing an overall Digital Strategy will be discussed with ELT and Ministers.

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2.   Cybersecurity and Risk Management

2.1   How is cybersecurity risk factored into IT procurement decisions and contract clauses?

The Minimum Enterprise Requirements (MER's) referred to in earlier answers contain a number of aspects related to Information Security. Any product or service used by the Government of Jersey is required to demonstrate compliance against the MERs and in doing so against the Information Security specific standards.

The involvement of Digital Services in each Procurement Strategy is coordinated by Commercial Services and ensures that suppliers are aware of an able to meet the MER's.

2.2   What specialist cybersecurity expertise is embedded in the procurement cycle, and at what stage do they review contract terms?

One of the deliverables of the Cyber Security Programme 1.0 was to create required clauses related to Information Security within the Government of Jersey Terms and Conditions. These clauses are regularly reviewed, and updates can be made where required.

2.3   Has the Government done any tabletop or live exercises with key digital suppliers to test incident response and business continuity?

An overall table-top walk-through style Cyber incident dry-run exercise is planned for the summer of 2025. Once this has been completed the benefits of reviewing with key elements of the Digital Supply Chain will be assessed.

We proactively engage with suppliers where there are security incidents within the supply chain to carry out lesson learned activities in partnership, or to consider adopting the outcome of lessons learned activities which have not directly impacted us.

2.4   What approaches (e.g. phased migration, parallel running) do you mandate in procurement to handle complex legacy systems without triggering major service disruptions?

The Public Finances Manual requires budget holders to consult with the Design Authority (a Digital Services Architecture oversight group) before procuring IT solutions. The intent of the Design Authority is to provide broad oversight of IT programmes and projects in-flight and on the horizon and to align individual projects towards the Architecture Principles, with a particular focus on re-use and consolidation. Where a proposed system implementation is particularly complex or contentious, an Architecture Review Board meeting will be held, with representation from senior Digital Services technical professionals. These internal controls help to mitigate risks related to complex legacy systems.

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3.   Skills, Capacity, and Career Development

3.1   What is the plan to reduce dependence on external consultants by building in-house digital procurement expertise?

There is an ambition to create a Supplier Relationship Management function within Digital Services. Commercial Services' ambition is to manage central contracts and use frameworks to support the business in managing procurement activities within departments.

The IT Strategy referred to earlier in this response will be underpinned by the work on detailed strategies which will include a sourcing strategy which will help to support this ambition.

3.2   Who will be involved in helping achieve this objective and will further investment be needed?

Digital Services will be working in partnership with Commercial Services. The level of investment which will be required is unknown at this stage.

3.3   In what areas is government working with Digital Jersey to improve skills, capacity and expertise in digital?

As detailed in the Digital Jersey Operational Plan 2025, Digital Jersey provide digital advisory support to Government departments. We will be asking Digital Jersey to review the IT Strategy when the full draft is complete. This will include a section on skills and expertise.

3.4   What are your workforce development plans? How are you collaborating with local educational institutions or offering placements to grow the government's future IT skill base?

Our 5-year workforce plan will be developed 2H 2025. It is expected to cover Early in Careers initiatives and build on the relationship already in place with Highlands College.

3.5   Are there initiatives specifically aimed at retaining skilled IT staff, given the private sector's competitive salaries?

Within this workforce plan, we are also looking to develop career pathways to formalise the already established opportunities for development withing Digital Services. We already see high numbers of progression to technical specialisms within Digital Services from our entry points within the Customer Support Teams and will look to formalise and build on this for more senior roles within our organisation.

3.6   Could the Government create rotational programmes so that commercial, digital, and policy professionals gain cross-functional skills specifically for digital procurement?

This concept will be considered as part of the 5-year workforce plan which will be developed 2H 2025.

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