

Eluned Morgan MS
First Minister
Welsh Government
Cardiff

06 October 2025

Dear First Minister

I write on behalf of the Committee regarding the response we received from the Welsh Government in relation to our inquiry into Digital Local Government.

We held a one-day inquiry on Digital Local Government on 12 February 2025, taking evidence from key stakeholders. Following these sessions, the Committee identified a number of areas of concern, including an apparent accountability gap in the delivery of the Digital Strategy for Wales, and that local government priorities do not always align with national priorities. We wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government in April 2025 (Annex A). We received the response on 16 June (Annex B).

The Committee Members did not feel that the response sufficiently engaged with the matters raised in our initial letter to the Cabinet Secretary. We are writing to you because we feel there are recurring themes across portfolio areas that we feel need an over-arching approach.

One of the main concerns that the Committee identified following the evidence sessions in February was a lack of leadership and buy-in around digital at both senior management and at a political level within local government. Indeed, this was an issue also highlighted in our recent inquiry into the role of local authorities in supporting hospital discharges where we heard that the development of digital services in Wales has not been effective or fast. Witnesses highlighted a lack of data sharing across public services, and multiple failed attempts to implement IT programmes and digital solutions.

We heard, for example, of ongoing concerns as to whether the Connecting Care programme is still on-track. This long overdue replacement of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) has been characterised by a series of troubles and delays and it is matter of concern that there remain doubts about delivery of the programme in January 2026.

We share the concerns about Digital Health and Care Wales's ability to effectively deliver a number of major programmes. Such a large organisation with over a 1,000 members of staff and funding of £186 million should have enough resource to deliver digital transformation, which demonstrates the need for stronger leadership and greater accountability in this area. The evidence we took suggests that the challenges of mature digital leadership throughout our public services remains a significant barrier to progress.

Given our concerns above, it was with interest that we learnt that the Welsh Government had established a strategic AI advisory group to provide expert advice to Ministers on the adoption of AI across the public sector

in Wales, and a dedicated 'Office for AI' within the Welsh Government. It was unclear to us at the time how the function of the 'Office for AI' and the strategic AI advisory group would encompass digital in its broadest sense. The recent statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning on Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation provides some clarity on this issue.

It was with interest that we heard the announcement that the functions of the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS) will be integrated into the Welsh Government, "aligning the skills and resources" of both the CDPS and the Office for AI. However, it remains unclear to us how this move alone will help accelerate digital transformation across our public services, particularly given the evidence we heard that communication systems used in parts of the NHS continues to be poor and inconsistent, with the use of outdated technology such as fax machines and bulky paperwork still the norm.

We would therefore appreciate further details about the planned absorption of the CDPS into the Civil Service, as well as your assessment as to how this change will help drive genuine and rapid digital progress across-government portfolios and ultimately our public services.

I would be grateful if you could address the concerns raised in this letter at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



John Griffiths MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.