

# Science and Technology Committee

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From Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair

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## **Digital Government Inquiry**

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee with regards to an inquiry we are undertaking into Digital Government.

In our first evidence session on Tuesday 27 November, we took evidence from a former Deputy Director of GDS, Tom Loosemore and a former Digital Architect at GDS, Dafydd Vaughan. You can view the transcript of that evidence session here: [goo.gl/LXvchS](http://goo.gl/LXvchS)

In that evidence session, Mr Loosemore stated that the culture of Whitehall departments had proved a major challenge for the success of the Government Digital Service and stated that “there has been a wilful, deliberate misdirection of the centre in supporting and challenging Departments”(Q55). He went on to say that “It is on the public record that the chief executive of the civil service wishes departmental sovereignty to be maintained. The buck stops there” (Q56).

Mr Loosemore also stated that Digital Government has lost momentum in the UK, in comparison to other countries: “My worry is that our progress and momentum are not as fast as those of other Governments. Other Governments, such as Denmark, are overtaking us and being much bolder” (Q13).

In our second evidence session we heard from Tom Smith, Managing Director of Data Science at the Office for National Statistics, who stated that the Data Advisory Board, which you chair, has a major role to play in cross-Government data work (Q148). You can view this transcript here: <https://bit.ly/2BpJguO>

In light of the evidence we have heard so far I would be grateful if you could provide me with further information on:

- how you would respond to Mr Loosemore's points set out above and the steps you are taking to ensure that collaborative work is taking place between departments and the Government Digital Service;
- whether there is a sufficient central operation driving Digital Government forward in the UK; and
- what steps the Data Advisory Board is taking to improve cross-Government data work to deliver more joined-up and efficient policy delivery.

I look forward to receiving your response. I would be grateful, if at all possible, if you could reply no later than Tuesday 8 January.

**Norman Lamb MP**

*Chair*