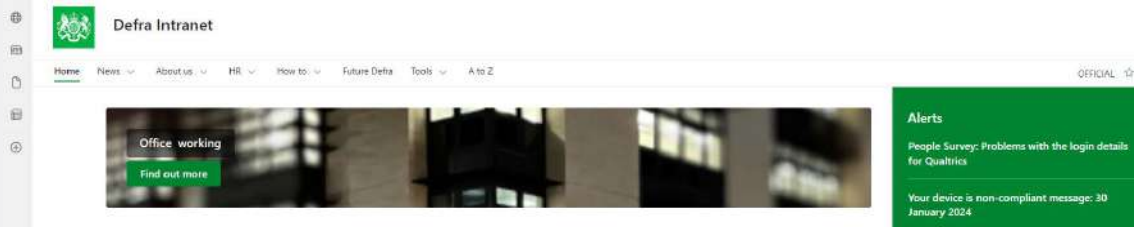


Strategic transformation at Defra Group - a journey towards harmonised and efficient operations



Background

Defra Group Corporate Services Strategy and Transformation are delivering solutions and operations designed to stabilise, optimise, and transform the corporate services which underpin and enable the department to improve and protect our environment.

The roadmap of transformation contains:



The provision of a new intranet, across Defra Group, on a single platform

This will enable each partner to control organisational brand, identity, and unique content whilst ensuring streamlined, seamless publishing of common content and improved user experience.



Delivery of a user and technical discovery for Content Cloud Including:

- An As-Is Discovery Report
- A joint discovery with Digital, Data & Technology Services (DDTS) on the delivery model
- A High-Level design approach for the end solution
- Microsoft Power Platform based solution architecture



Delivery of a user discovery for GCS Portal

Across GCS Portal MVP elements of the Employee Engagement Platform (Leavers and the Query Resolution Service)

Challenge

The Defra Group wanted to harmonise ways of working when using IT platforms and systems. Intranet optimisations emerged from migrating away from outdated 'burning platforms' where the Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) and Defra intranets were located. Additionally, Content Cloud resided on an aging version of SharePoint, nearing the end of its contract.

Within Defra's GCS Portal, diverse operational approaches existed prompting a compelling need to leverage ServiceNow workflow automation platform for enhancement. This initiative sought not just to streamline but to elevate the efficiency and cohesion of Defra Group's IT landscape.

The programme was launched to instigate strategic transformations and establish standardised workflows, harmonising processes, and policies across various facets. Recognising a gap in resource and internal expertise, Defra Group enlisted the support of Methods to navigate this complex initiative. This collaboration with Methods not only streamlined operations but also optimised resources for Defra Group's long-term success.

Solution

Methods assembled a diverse team encompassing Project Managers, Planners, Benefits Managers, Delivery Managers, Project Management Office Leads, Project Support Officers, Technical Solutions Architects, SharePoint Developers, Communications Managers, Business Analysts, User Researchers, and Business Technical Assurance. This well-rounded team was poised to conduct thorough research and deliver tailored solutions to meet the programme's unique requirements.



Providing a new intranet, across Defra Group, on a single platform

We began by conducting a comprehensive user discovery process, delving into extensive user research, and crafting a strategic service design for the Intranet. The outcome was the implementation of a new Hub and Associated site model for Defra Group Intranets. This was a new way of working with SharePoint Online that enabled Defra to have a 'federated' intranet.

This model significantly enhanced visibility, allowing seamless navigation across Defra and ALBs platforms. Now, Defra enjoys increased accessibility, empowering users to search, interact, and share news and content seamlessly between Defra and its ALBs.

In addition, we successfully introduced a standardised process for users to submit news, content, and events, fostering a harmonised approach to business processes for communication and content teams across Defra Group. After the successful migration to SharePoint Online (SPOL, managed by DDTs), Methods assumed responsibility for a pivotal project to enhance and optimise the SharePoint Intranet sites, elevating their aesthetic appeal, refining the user experience, and bolstering search functionality. Embracing a user-centric approach, our focus was on ensuring that the improvements made aligned seamlessly with the needs and preferences of our diverse user base.



Delivery of a user and technical discovery for Content Cloud

We undertook an extensive exploration through user and technical discovery. This comprehensive process yielded a robust feasibility study, accompanied by a comprehensive set of user and technical requirements handed over to DDTs for the programme's progression. In close collaboration with technical and business stakeholders across Defra and DDTs, we crafted a sophisticated High-Level design. This collaborative effort ensured that both the technological and business aspects were seamlessly integrated, laying a solid foundation for the programme's success.





Delivery of a user discovery

For GCS Portal (Leavers and Query Resolution service) we conducted a user discovery initiative. This involved a meticulous examination of user needs, pain points, and the intricate user journeys within the existing processes. Additionally, a critical component of our exploration focused on assessing the capabilities of ServiceNow, ensuring alignment with Defra Group's unique requirements. This user-centric approach not only identified key areas for improvement but also paved the way for a tailored and effective integration of ServiceNow to elevate Defra Group's operational capabilities.

Project Inputs

Project Outputs

 105 Workshop Attendees	 17 Interviews	 Matured MPP Trestle PMO capabilities	 Technical High-Level Design Completed for Content Cloud
 588 Completed Surveys	 496 User Requirements Captured	 Optimised Intranet Delivered to 26k Users Across Defra Group	 Capabilities of ServiceNow Assessed and Aligned with Defra Group's Requirements

Outcomes

The project was considered a major success. All discovery reports were well received with high levels of user/stakeholder engagement. The optimisation of the intranet has consistently garnered positive feedback, with users expressing positive feedback on the improved look and feel. The harmonised solution played a pivotal role in aligning all organisations involved.

The programme's success can be attributed to the comprehensive and practical user-centric design approach for the Intranet. Stakeholders actively participated in every phase of the process, from discovery and design to delivery. The thorough exploration of HR automation and Content Cloud during the discovery phase has positioned Defra effectively, paving the way for the seamless integration of findings and recommendations into the delivery of these solutions.

Overarching benefits achieved:

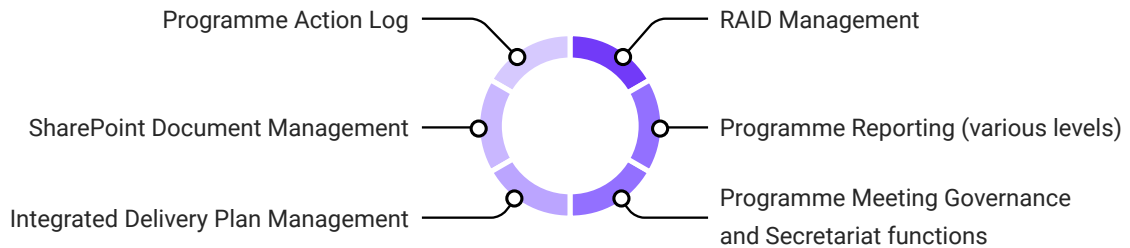
- Significant time savings
- Enhanced effectiveness of Intranet utilisation
- Improved search functionality for the Intranet
- Improved employee experience
- Harmonised Intranets across Defra Group
- Reduced data security risks across the Defra Group
- Unified Defra Group Platforms in preparation for the Synergy Programme
- Transitioned from manual processes in Internal Comms and Content teams to automated workflows
- Increased capacity and capability of the MPP team

Users praised the enhanced aesthetics and functionality of the harmonised solution, aligning all organisations effectively

What was Methods' added value?

- Supported the establishment of a governance model for Intranet management.
- Identified and addressed gaps in service support, aligning services with support agreements through collaboration with DDTS.
- Conducted a ServiceNow capability analysis for the HR Automation steering group based on user requirements.
- Facilitated knowledge transfer to transition PMO ownership and responsibilities back to the MPP team, conducting regular 1-2-1 training to ensure the MPP team was proficient in running the PMO function independently.

This included:



Next steps?

Methods' Service Delivery Team has concluded its involvement in the Trestle programme after the successful completion of all deliverables. Major Programmes and Platforms (MPP) is now advancing the programme, and DDTS has assumed responsibility for delivering Content Cloud. As of now, MPP is leading the delivery independently, following a beneficial knowledge transfer on programme management and PMO functions by Methods.



Client quotes



Methods have delivered a comprehensive, detailed, and valuable handover service to the MPP team, meeting with colleagues regularly to take them through the programme documentation, ensure knowledge transfer, and answer all queries, allowing MPP team to effectively plan for delivering the Trestle Programme following Methods exit.

Conor Coughlin, Acting SRO



Thank you for your time and dedication, it has been great working with an awesome team!

Carl Beckles, Head of Delivery & Sponsorship

Office locations:

London | Birmingham | Bristol | Cardiff | Edinburgh | Manchester | Sheffield

