



# Government Digital Services briefing

**Hon Kris Faafoi**  
**Minister for Government Digital Services**

**Title: Draft Cabinet paper on COVID-19 Technology Response Oversight Requirements**

**Date:** 14 May 2020

## Key issues

On 20 April 2020, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group noted that the Government Chief Digital Officer (GCDO) will provide a report back with an analysis of COVID-19 technology response oversight requirements from a whole of government perspective [CAB-20-MIN-0175 refers]. The attached draft Cabinet paper fulfils this requirement.

The draft Cabinet paper recommends the establishment of a new COVID-19 technology response oversight steering committee to deliver the required level of oversight and coordination across technologies deployed in support of the COVID-19 response. It is recommended that the GCDO will convene and chair this steering committee.

## Action sought

We recommend that you:

- note** the attached draft Cabinet paper fulfils the requirement to report back to Cabinet on COVID-19 Technology Response oversight requirements;
- note** the draft Cabinet paper recommends the establishment of a new COVID-19 technology response oversight steering committee as well as a group of responsible Ministers;
- note** that we are undertaking departmental consultation and are proposing to lodge this paper on 21 May 2020 for consideration by the Cabinet Government Administration and Expenditure Review Committee on 28 May 2020; and
- agree** to circulate the draft Cabinet paper to your colleagues for Ministerial, coalition and support party consultation between 18 and 20 May 2020.

## Timeframe

By Monday,  
18 May 2020

Contact for telephone discussions (if required)

Name	Position	Direct phone	After hours phone	Suggested 1 <sup>st</sup> contact
Ann-Marie Cavanagh	Deputy Chief Executive Digital Public Service	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	
Michael Woodside	Director, Policy Group	9(2)(a)	9(2)(a)	✓
Return to	Nathan Mountfort, level 9, 45 Pipitea Street			
Cohesion reference	4UAZY7VS6QRJ-168030080-544			
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## Purpose

1. This briefing seeks your approval to carry out Ministerial, coalition, and support party consultation in respect of the attached draft Cabinet paper - *Report back on COVID-19 Technology Response Oversight Requirements*.

## Background

2. On 20 April 2020, the COVID-19 Ministerial Group noted that the Government Chief Digital Officer (GDCO) will provide a report back with an analysis of COVID-19 technology response oversight requirements from a whole of government perspective [CAB-20-MIN-0175 refers]. This report back was to include a proposed oversight approach and a COVID-19 technology response plan.
3. We propose lodging a final version of the attached draft Cabinet paper on 21 May 2020 for consideration by the Cabinet Government Administration and Expenditure Review Committee on 28 May 2020.

## Comment

### ***The attached draft Cabinet paper fulfils the requirement to report back to Cabinet on COVID-19 Technology Response oversight requirements.***

4. The paper notes the significance of technology to the COVID-19 response. Areas where technology will be especially important will include providing support for health outcomes, economic recovery, social cohesion and enabling technologies (e.g. supporting readiness to respond to future challenges).
5. The paper proposes that leveraging technology to support the COVID-19 response will require enhanced oversight and coordination across government agencies. With existing governance arrangements, such as to support the digital transformation of government, not fit for purpose.
6. COVID-19 response technologies are being assessed, developed and deployed against a backdrop of significant public interest, limited domestic or international experience and, frequently, high levels of urgency.
7. While the government has limited time to implement technology solutions now, it remains as important as ever to ensure that technology solutions meet expectations and standards related to technical efficacy, privacy, information security, return on investment, transparency, accountability and other factors.
8. Key areas of oversight and coordination that are needed to ensure that COVID-19 response technology solutions meet appropriate standards and align to the government's overall response objectives are:
  - 8.1 agreed shared objectives, which will include ensuring that issues of privacy, security and digital inclusion are recognised and protected;
  - 8.2 coordinated Ministerial decision making and prioritisation;
  - 8.3 coordinated investment decisions and proposals to ensure effective use of resources, leverage opportunities for re-use, and drive inter-operability and architectural coherence;
  - 8.4 consistent reporting and monitoring;
  - 8.5 coordinated public messaging; and

8.6 coordinated engagement with overseas jurisdictions.

***The draft Cabinet paper recommends the establishment of a new COVID-19 Technology Response oversight Steering Committee to deliver the required oversight and coordination***

9. The scale of the COVID-19 technology response, and associated urgency, requires a more adaptive and focused oversight framework than the arrangements already in place for digital government.
10. The establishment of a dedicated steering committee is recommended to deliver the required level of coordination, oversight and assurance across all new and proposed technology solutions that support the COVID-19 response. It is recommended that the GCDO will convene and chair the steering committee. Other committee members are proposed to be the Government Chief Information Security Officer and senior leaders from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the New Zealand Police, the National Crisis Management Centre and Te Arawhiti.
11. The committee will not govern the development or deployment of individual technology solutions. That will continue to be the responsibility of the lead agency. Once relevant technology solutions are deployed in full, operating without issue and are not the subject of a dependency by another planned initiative, those solutions will be transferred to the oversight of an appropriate existing sector governance group.
12. The Committee would report to a group of responsible Ministers, proposed as the Minister for Government Digital Services and the Ministers of Finance, Justice, Internal Affairs and Health. When these Ministers agree, on the advice of committee members, that the steering committee is no longer required, any remaining functions of the committee will be transferred to the Digital Government Leadership Group.
13. A proposed draft Terms of Reference for the COVID-19 Technology Response Steering Committee is attached as **Appendix A** of the draft Cabinet paper.

***An initial priority for the Steering Committee will be agreement of a high level COVID-19 Technology Response plan***

14. The development of a COVID-19 Technology Response Plan will be an initial priority for the COVID-19 Technology Response Steering Committee. This plan will bring together the growing number of potential technical solutions, enabling decision-making to channel efforts into those that will be most effective.
15. An initial draft plan is attached as **Appendix B** of the draft Cabinet paper.

## Recommendations

16. We recommend that you:

- a) **note** the attached draft Cabinet paper fulfils the requirement to report back to Cabinet on COVID-19 technology response oversight requirements;
- b) **note** the draft Cabinet paper recommends the establishment of a new COVID-19 technology response oversight steering committee to deliver the required oversight and coordination for technologies deployed in support of the COVID-19 response;
- c) **agree** to the proposed approach in the draft Cabinet paper of yourself and the Ministers of Finance, Justice, Internal Affairs and Health being the responsible Ministers for the COVID-19 Technology Response Steering Committee **Yes/No**
- d) **note** we are proposing to lodge this paper on 21 May 2020 for consideration by the Cabinet Government Administration and Expenditure Review Committee on 28 May 2020;
- e) **note** we are currently undertaking Departmental consultation; and
- f) **agree** to circulate the draft Cabinet paper to your colleagues for Ministerial, coalition and support party consultation between 18 and 20 May 2020. **Yes/No**



Michael Woodside  
Director, Policy Group

Hon Kris Fafoi  
Minister for Government Digital Services

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