



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Digital Robotic Automation Centre of Excellence

Designing a repeatable “centre of excellence” service offer for the Defra Group - starting small and smashing it later.

David.More@Defra.Gov.UK, Service Owner





Who we are

The Department is responsible for developing and implementing the government's policy on the environment, food and rural issues.

It has a large and very varied portfolio.

Its responsibilities include:

- protecting biodiversity, the countryside and the marine environment;
- supporting the growth of a sustainable green economy, including rural communities;
- British farming and food production;
- preparing for and managing risk from animal and plant diseases, floods and other environmental emergencies; and
- negotiating EU agricultural, marine and environmental policy on behalf of the UK.

Covent Garden Market Authority **Veterinary Medicines Directorate**
Dartmoor National Park Authority Marine Management Organisation
Joint Nature Conservation Committee **New Forest National Park Authority**
South Downs National Park Authority Peak District National Park Authority
Independent Agricultural Appeals Panel **Northumberland National Park Authority**
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew
Plant Varieties and Seeds Tribunal **Consumer Council for Water** Exmoor National Park Authority
National Forest Company Sea Fish Industry Authority **The Water Services Regulation Authority**
Lake District National Park Authority **Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science**
Veterinary Products Committee Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment
Drinking Water Inspectorate **Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board**
Science Advisory Council North York Moors National Park Authority
Rural Payments Agency **Animal and Plant Health Agency**
Forestry Commission UK Co-ordinating Body
Broads Authority **Environment Agency**
Natural England Defra

Our Robotic & Intelligent Process Automation journey so far

Environment Agency - Proof of Concept – Nice Ltd (2017/18)

Environment Agency - Showcase – Nice Ltd/UI Path (2018/2019)

Creation of Defra Centre of Excellence for all – UI Path (2020 -

Applying what I learned from going it alone

De-Risking Delivery

- Educating stakeholders
- Controlled Go Live – protect data, scale up to full automation whilst building confidence
- Build a network of Business Leads

Validating Pipeline

- Choosing the right processes
- Continuous revalidation of benefits
- Whole life cost vs ROI

Governance & Reporting

- Clear lines of approval & responsibility (business & our service)
- Shared decision making with the business
- Live Robot ROI dashboard

Lessons Learnt

Structure & Delivery Model

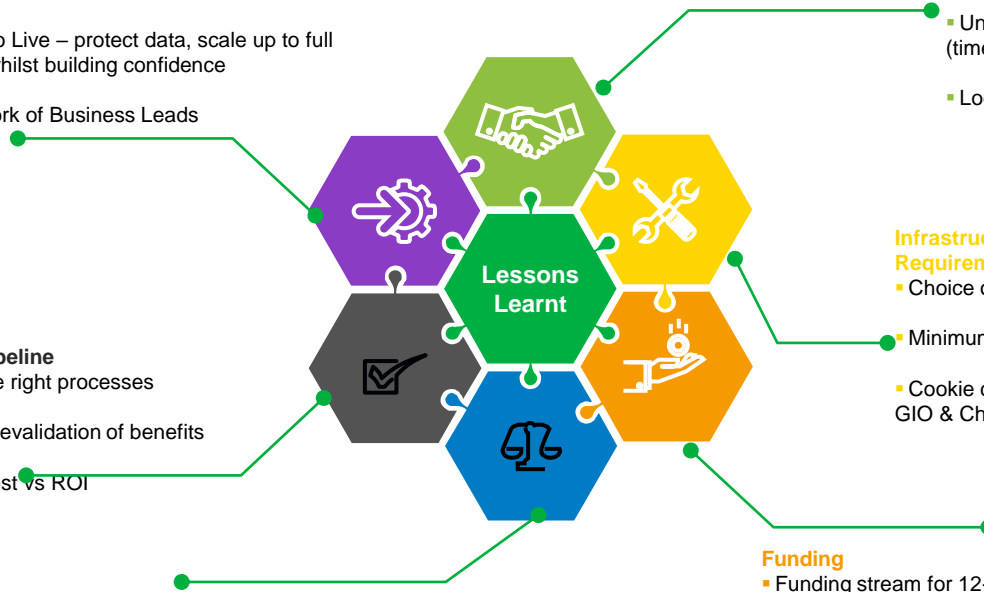
- Create a capability that is not dependant on third-party Delivery and therefore keeps total cost of ownership low
- Clear vision / service design principles
- Clear org structure
- Understand service performance (time, cost & quality)
- Location – Virtual or all under one roof

Infrastructure and Architecture Requirement

- Choice of RPA technology
- Minimum viable service
- Cookie cutter type agreements with GIO & Change

Funding

- Funding stream for 12-18 months
- Seed funding
- Loss leader funding
- Funding for expansion of capability trials



Initial Minimum Viable Service – quick wins only

IN

- **Attended automation only** – business would fall back on established ways of working if a key application changed that meant the robot process needed tweaking
- **UI Path but not every capability**
- Processes involving **desktop applications only** – no virtual machines, no cloud, no Citrix installers etc.
- Service approach negates need for Test Management / Solution Architecture roles

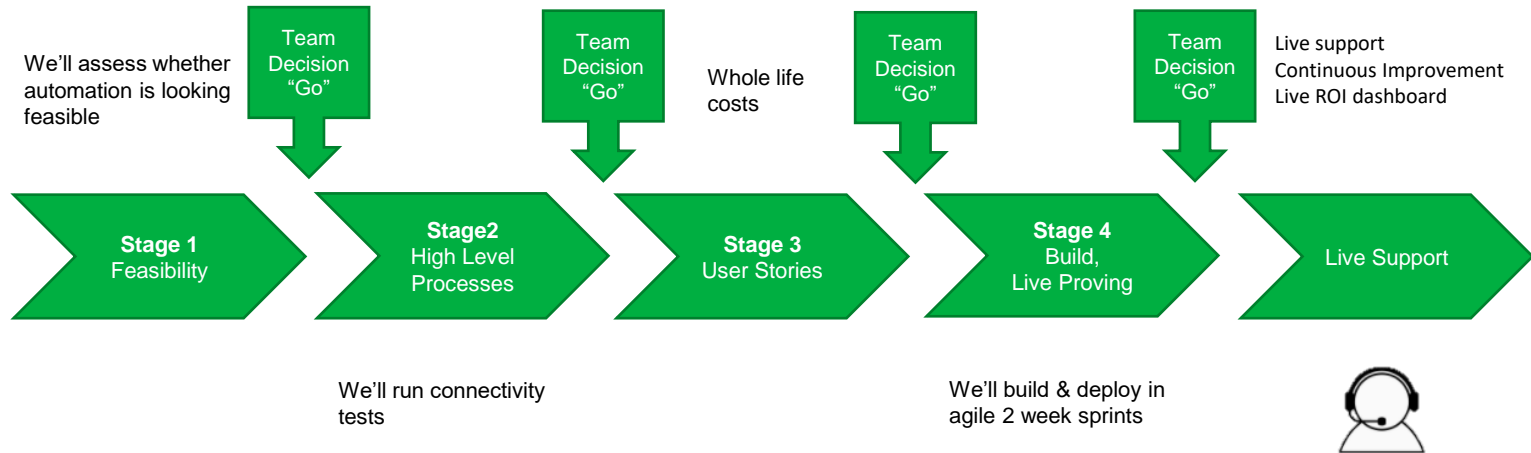
OUT

- Unattended and the need to provide 24/7 support
- If a proposal is deemed complex requiring a CI Project or non standard service resources / non standard CoE service capabilities then a traditional “Project” must be initiated to deliver this and provide for us.

Our CoE service design principles

1. We build Partnerships with Defra Family Business owners. Our Service will not feel like a customer/supplier relationship.
2. Our Partners must have a sponsor, empowered business lead and a budget before they submit a proposal.
3. Our service will help our Partners understand the feasibility of their proposal and whole life costs.
4. We will recharge our costs, only where we can take a proposal beyond stage 2.
5. We will work with our Partners in an agile way to enable a fast return on investment.
6. We support our Partners in owning the necessary business change management and subsequent realisation of benefits.
7. We will ensure our service processes, activities and costs are transparent.
8. Automation proposals deemed higher risk or higher complexity will require our Partners to initiate a “project” to resolve wider barriers or blockers.
- 9. We don't assume our partners can tell us everything we need the first time.**
- 10. We recognise the importance our Partners place on managing data quality and accuracy, so our build approach is low risk, deploying our solutions in high supervision mode until validated by our Partners.**
11. We build our partners knowledge and understanding they require for ownership of successful automations.

High level service design

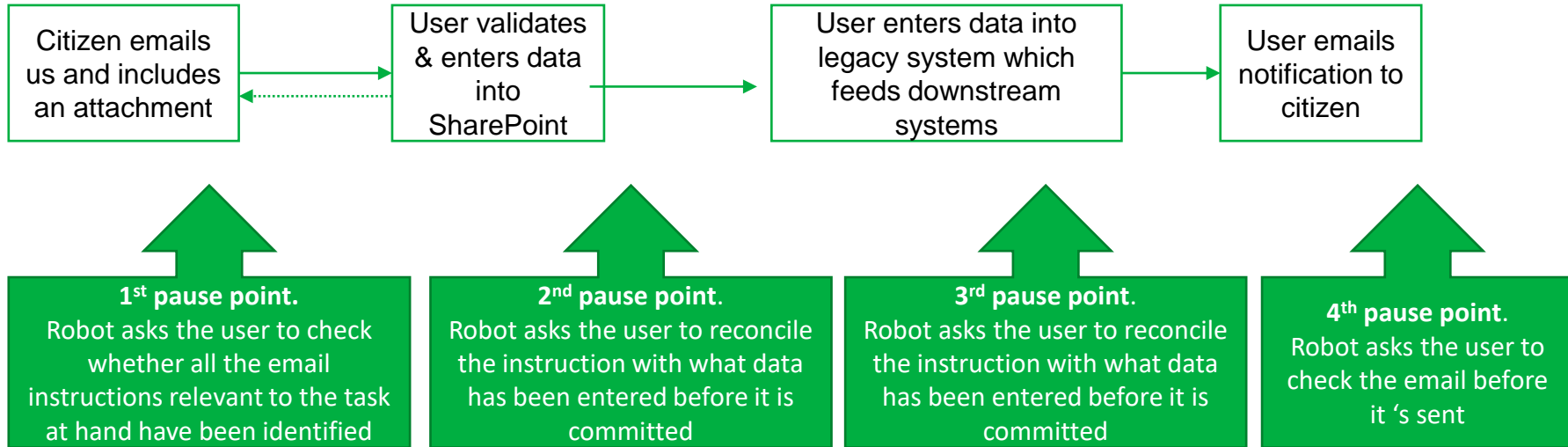


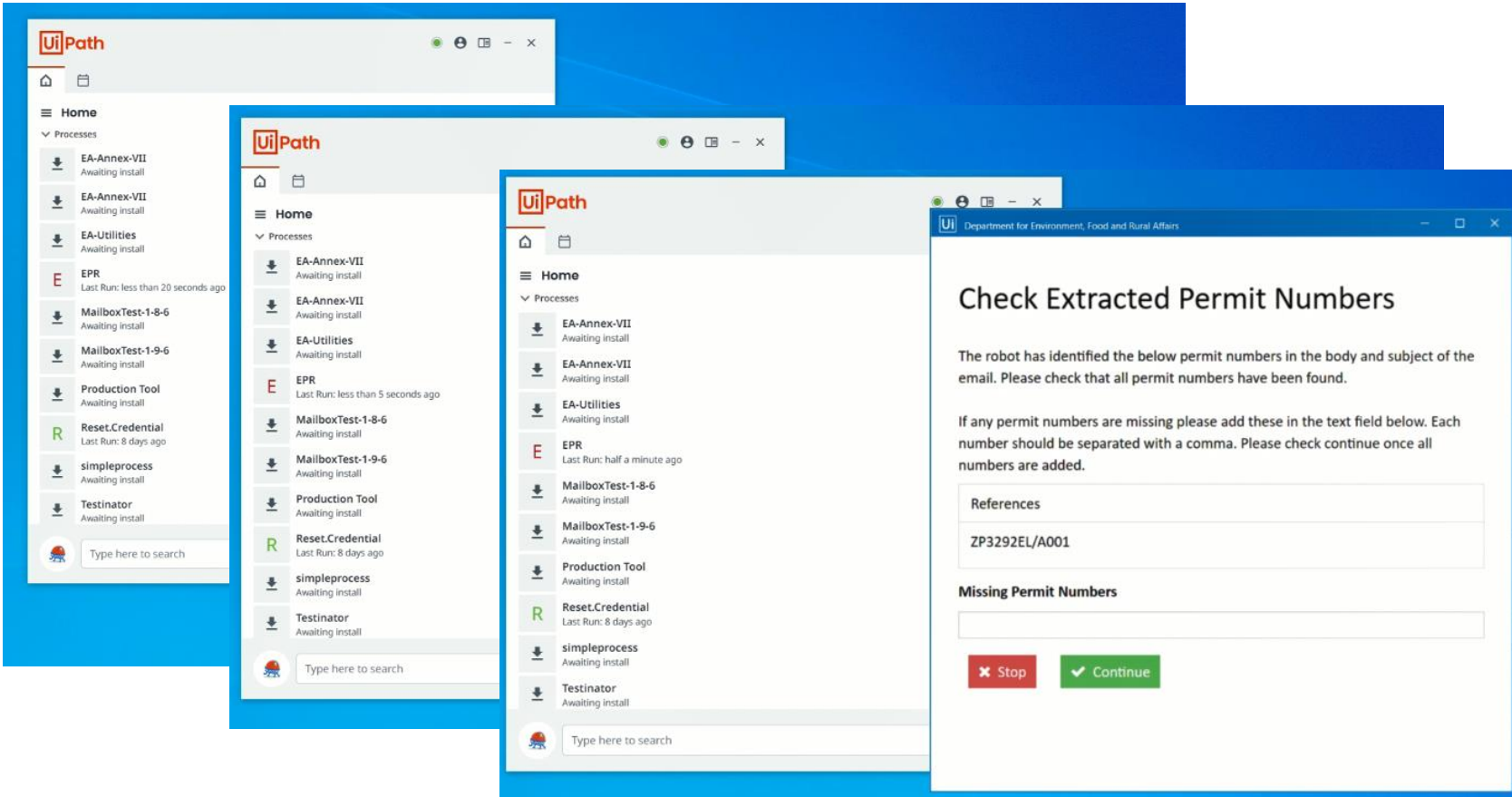
Focussing on 2 key principles that led to our low risk delivery method (in stage 4)

9. We don't assume our partners can tell us everything we need the first time.

10. We recognise the importance our Partners place on managing data quality and accuracy, so our build approach is low risk, deploying our solutions in high supervision mode until validated by our Partners.

Hypothetical back office process





Takeaway

- Start small and look for the quick wins that will build confidence/trust
- Repeatable service design =
cookie cutter agreements =
avoid traditional project lifecycle
- You can do it with out expensive 3rd parties & you can design out traditional roles.

