
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	26 March 2024
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	PR/17/24/LL/AM
Contact Officer:	Allan MacDonald	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Update on the Digital Modernisation Programme and Delivery of the ICT and Digital Strategies		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the work of the Council's Digital Modernisation Programme. This report notes the progress in procurement with several suppliers being engaged, procurement actions being completed, and project initiation meetings being completed.
- 1.3 It reports the progress on appointing an additional Project Officer and the further submission of requests for support from services to progress applications via the Project Board Earmarked Reserve.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the update on the work of the Digital Modernisation Programme, and the projects within it.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Committee approves the proposed upgrade to Chris21, the use of the Digital Modernisation EMR for project costs including support from another Local Authority and a temporary post to manage and support the project.
- 2.3 It is recommended that the Committee note the update on the work of the Council's ICT Service.

Louise Long
Chief Executive

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 At its meeting on 21 March 2023, the Committee noted the creation of a Digital Modernisation Project Board (DMPB), chaired by the Chief Executive, to oversee delivery of the Council's Digital Modernisation Programme. The DMPB meets bi-monthly, and includes representation from the 3 Directorates plus ICT, Legal, Finance and HR, its purpose being to provide support and challenge and ensure that momentum is maintained in the delivery of individual digital modernisation projects. The Digital Modernisation Programme is intended to comprise projects of a more tactical nature that seek to implement digital improvements aligned to specific service requirements, but also aligned to wider strategic objectives.
- 3.2 Linked to this, as part of the approval of the Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24, on 2 March 2023, it was agreed that £1M of reserves be utilised towards digital modernisation. Specifically, it was agreed that these reserves are to fund investment in digital modernisation within the Council, including increased officer capacity, to improve both internal service processes/efficiency and access to services for the public, with the use of the reserves to be as agreed by the Committee. As reported to the Committee in August 2023, this fund has been consolidated with other reserves and now totals £1.25 million.
- 3.3 In considering the projects that might be included in the Digital Modernisation Programme, relevant service areas will need to prepare business cases, supported by the ICT Team, which would then require approval from the DPMB/Corporate Management Team, and it will also be a requirement that the business cases can demonstrate the following:-
- That there is full service area support for the project, with a commitment to make suitable officer resources available;
 - That the project will support delivery of the Council's wider strategic objectives, including the Council Plan, the Council's Digital Strategy, the Council's ICT strategy and the New Ways of Working Programme;
 - That the project will improve regulatory compliance in respect of information governance;
 - That the project has a clear timescale for delivery;
 - That any anticipated efficiency savings are identified; and
 - That the project will help deliver improvements in service delivery for the benefit of citizens and other service users.

4.0 PROJECTS & PROPOSALS

Digital Modernisation Project Updates

- 4.1 There are several projects being taken forward by the Digital Modernisation Programme, and others for which business cases are being prepared.
- 4.2 Since the last update to Committee several projects have taken significant steps forward:
- The CRM (Verint) replacement programme has completed procurement, and a Project Initiation Meeting has been completed with the suppliers. It is anticipated that this will be a 6–8-month project.
 - Corporate Complaints System (WorkPro) has completed procurement action and work to progress the implementation and add additional FOI licences is scheduled.
 - HR TalentLink Contract management System is in development and is scheduled to be live in June.

- Schools Catering System Replacement (ParentPay) is on track and scheduled for roll-out following the spring holiday.
- Service desk replacement (FreshDesk) procurement is complete, and the system is in development. The online TEST site is active, currently being populated with user and asset details.
- The board approved Implementation of Victoria Forms for Council Tax and NDR and a stand-alone e-billing solution for Council Tax customers. Initial spend £37K and £3K ongoing costs.

4.3 The following proposals have been submitted for review to the Project Board:

- Communications Events online forms - Proposal for a digital solution for online forms from traders and customers
- Community Learning & Development - to track learning outcomes.
- HR & OD Business Change Resource – a post that would be responsible for the Chris21 upgrade.
- Roads & Transportation (RIMS) Proposal & Property Management System (WMS) Proposal – Service is working on proposals but limited resource is impeding development.

Progress will be reported to Committee as s proposals are developed to business case/procurement as appropriate.

Chris21 Upgrade and HR & OD Business Change Resource

4.4 In 2023 the Chief Executive commissioned an external review of the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR & OD) Service. The results of this have previously been reported to the Policy and Resources Committee, including the recommendation that modernisation of the current Payroll and & HR system (CHRIS21) is undertaken. Officers have carried out benchmarking with other local authority areas and research on what is available. It is proposed that there is an upgrade from the version of CHRIS21 currently used. This will allow ongoing updates from the service provider and additional functionality. This, in turn, will minimise manual workarounds, create more efficient working practices, improve data collection and analysis, alongside developments in management information.

4.5 Funding is sought for:

- costs of the upgrade from the service provider.
- (ii) costs of using expertise from another local authority area to support implementation, provide advice and additional technical solutions and customisation
- (iii) a temporary post to manage and support the implementation of the upgrade, associated testing, development of related training, liaison with the other local authority and creation of self-service guides.

This totals £124,796, which is being sought from the Digital Modernisation Fund. The recurring additional maintenance fee of £7172 will be contained within the Directorate budget.

4.6 The aim is to have the system implemented and operational by October 2024.

- 4.7 The Digital Project Officer post is currently being advertised, this post will work with Digital Project Team Leader to develop the business cases and implement agreed projects. The Post is a two-year temporary post.

Updates on Delivery of the Council's ICT and Digital Strategies

- 4.8 The ICT Service leads on delivery of the Council's ICT and Digital Strategies. As the Committee will be aware, these strategies aim to increase and promote the range of digital services available to employees and customers and to exploit the opportunities digital services can achieve by:
- Improving user experience and interaction with Council Services.
 - Reducing cost to deliver services via channel shift opportunities; and
 - Improving efficiencies and productivity of services.
- 4.9 The ICT Team has been taking forward a number of initiatives in implementation of these strategies:
- The next phase of Microsoft 365 development will focus on collaboration and developing apps and tools from the wide range available within the Microsoft 365 environment, overseen by the Microsoft 365 Development Sub-Group.
 - A new self-service password reset function is being rolled out, through Microsoft 365, to enable Council/HSCP staff to reset their Microsoft 365 passwords from any internet connected device at any time of day. This will allow accessibility "anytime anywhere" and enable staff to reset their own passwords outside of the service desk's standard opening hours, which will in turn reduce workload for the service desk and support those staff that work on a remote/hybrid basis under the Council's revised Flexible Working Policy.
 - Decommissioning of a large section of the Data Centre is nearing completion.
 - The PC refresh programme continues to focus on the School Estate, a full hardware refresh having been completed for the Corporate Estate in 2021/22. In FY 23/24 there will have been 1700 devices replaced in the school estate. The final tranche of just under 300 replacement devices in the Primary Estate is under way.
 - Replacement of the current schools Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) network pilot has successfully concluded across the full school estate
 - A number of improvements to the Council's cyber security arrangements, have been implemented, with additional actions in progress.
 - The current Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) contract is concluding and the contract for SWAN2 has been awarded. ICT have evaluated the new contract with a view to continuing as members of this group, and contract negotiations are nearing conclusion with the sites and connectivity required being agreed.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial	X	
Legal/Risk	X	
Human Resources	X	
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
DM EMR	ODHR	2024/25	£125k £37k £5k		Chris21 Upgrade
	Finance	2023/24	£37k		Council Tax/NDR Victoria Forms
	ICT	2023/24	£5k		Freshdesk Implementation

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
ODHR	Computer Maintenance	-2024	£7k	-	To be contained within current Service budgets-
Finance	Computer Maintenance	2024	£2.5k		To be contained within current service budgets
ICT	Computer Maintenance	2024	£14k		To be contained within current service budgets.

As part of the 2024/26 Budget strategy the Council approved a savings workstream relating to Digital Modernisation . The savings target is £100,000 phased £20,000 2024/25 and £80,000 2025/26. Progress against these targets will be monitored via the DPMB and reported to Committee where appropriate

5.3 Legal/Risk

The adoption of new digital ways of working, such as referred to in this report, will help the Council ensure compliance with its regulatory duties, in particular around information governance and records management and help mitigate the risk to operational delivery that is posed by some current working practices. There are, naturally, risks associated with the adoption of new systems. These risks would need reviewed, and suitable mitigations put in place. However, the Council also needs to consider the risks of not progressing such initiatives, including with information governance compliance and Council service delivery but also staff retention. The DMPB has a risk register which is reviewed at every meeting.

5.4 Human Resources

The development and implementation of modernisation and digitalisation will help the Council maximise the potential of its staffing capacity. To facilitate this, there is a need to increase understanding and awareness of these opportunities and thereafter ensure that appropriate resources are available to allow these opportunities to be grasped. The funding and governance approved for the Digital Modernisation Programme will help address this.

5.5 Strategic

Increasing investment in the development and roll out of modernisation and digitalisation projects will support a number of key strategic and policy directions of the Council. This includes supporting delivery of the Council's Digital Strategy (2021 – 2024), which recognises the need to increase and promote the range of digital services available to employees and customers, and to exploit the opportunities that digital services can achieve by (i) improving user experience and interaction with Council services; (ii) reducing cost to deliver services via channel shift opportunities; and (iii) improving efficiencies and productivity of services. In addition, the Digital Modernisation Programme will help support delivery of the Council Plan (2023-28), and in particular Theme 3 (Performance), by helping the Council achieve the provision of high quality and innovative services, giving value for money.

5.6 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Although a DPIA was not required for this report, adoption of certain digital solutions will assist the Council in ensuring it is meeting its obligations around the storage and use of personal data. A DPIA would also be required prior to adoption of certain solutions, to ensure that any personal data was suitably protected, such as employee records.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team and the DMPB have been consulted on this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.