

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILAUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE24 June 2021Report by ClerkNATIONAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT
DIGITAL PROGRESS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide information on the Audit Scotland report *Digital Progress in Local Government*.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that the Committee considers the report.

BACKGROUND

3. A copy of the Audit Scotland report [Digital Progress in Local Government](#), published in January 2021, has already been circulated to all Audit and Scrutiny Committee Members. Under the Committee's specialisation arrangements, the Members leading the review of this particular report are Cllr Miller and Cllr Grant. The Head of Communities, Revenues & Change has provided comments on that report and a copy of those comments is attached (see Appendix A).

RECOMMENDATION

4. It is recommended that the Committee considers the report.

Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Background Papers:-

1. Audit Scotland Report *Digital Progress in Local Government*

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External Audit Report – Digital Progress in Local Government

Comments for Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 24 June 2021

Prepared by Head of Communities, Revenues & Change

June 2021

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper aims to provide high level comments on the Council's position regarding the Audit Scotland report "Digital Progress in Local Government".

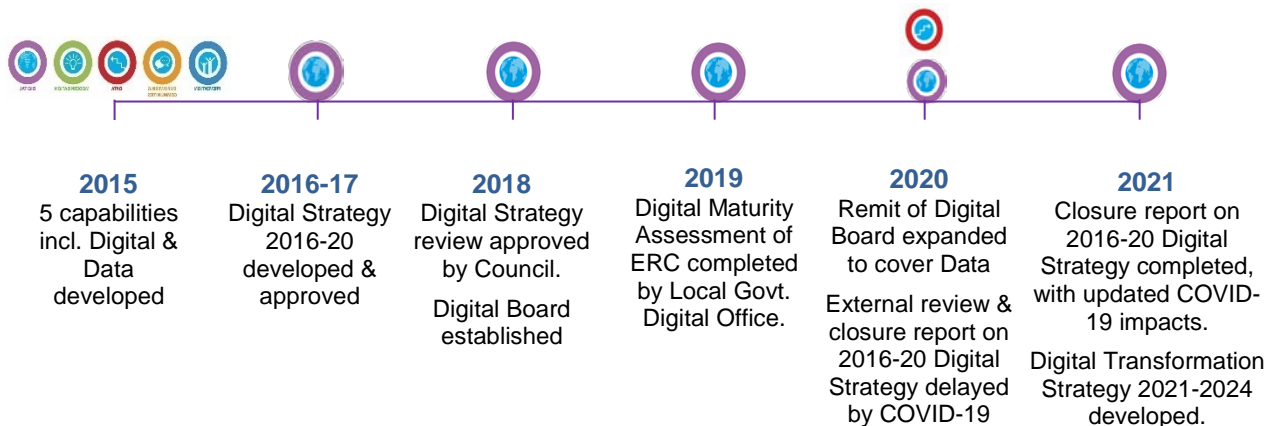
BACKGROUND

2. Audit Scotland published its 'Digital Progress in Local Government' paper in January 2021, covering the following areas:

- Progress and impact of COVID-19
- Becoming a digital council
- Citizens at the heart
- Workforce and skills
- Data and technology
- National leadership and collaboration.

3. East Renfrewshire has a longstanding commitment to digital transformation and was instrumental in the establishment of the Local Government Digital Office in 2015/16. The Council's Chief Executive is Chair of the Scottish Local Government Digital Transformation Board. The Digital Office and Board key contributors in the development of this Audit Scotland report. The Council has also been actively involved in the national digital partnership forum and key collaborative workstreams.

4. A summary timeline of East Renfrewshire Council's digital journey is given below:



REPORT

Progress

Summary Recommendation from Audit Scotland report (these will be included at the beginning of each section):

To maintain momentum, councils should assess their progress, learn lessons, and identify and address barriers and inequalities.

5. Appendix 1 contains a recent report considered by Cabinet on 3 June 2021. This provides an update on the Council’s Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) and our digital transformation agenda. The report takes a backward look at the significant achievements of our Digital Strategy for 2016-20, especially in the light of COVID-19 response, and brings forward new Digital Transformation priorities for the next three years. Digital and data remain core capabilities that the Council will use to unlock modernisation, customer service and efficiency opportunities in the months and years ahead. Our digital transformation priorities align well with the direction of Scottish Local Government, the recommendations of the Audit Scotland report and the national Digital Strategy, published earlier this year.

6. A recent meeting of the Local Government Digital Partnership considered the Audit Scotland report and the themes of the national digital strategy, with around 140 attendees from across Scottish councils attending via Teams. East Renfrewshire was asked to input to the meeting and the following graphic was produced to summarise the Council’s position on each of the report’s themes. Further detail will be given in the sections below.

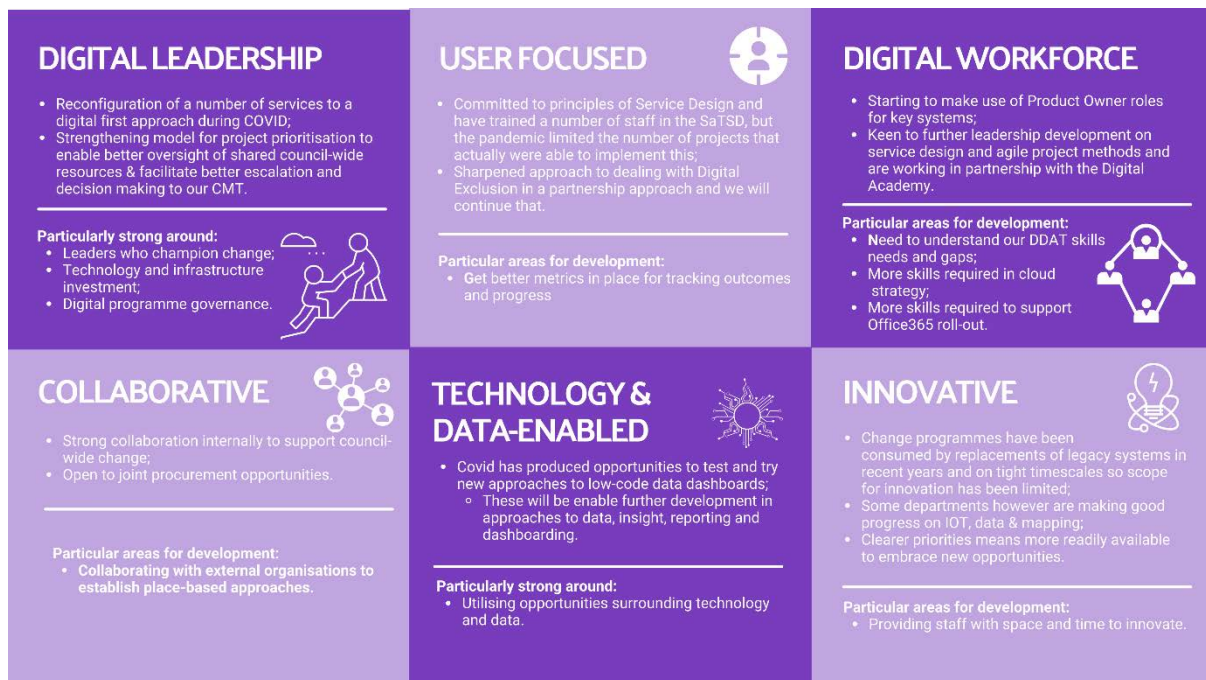


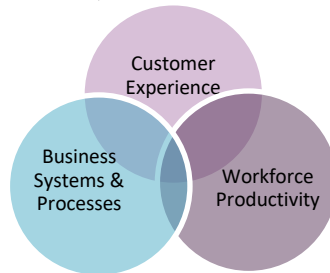
Figure 1: East Renfrewshire Council progress against each of the report’s themes

Digital Leadership

Councils should have a clear digital vision and strategy that sets out how digital transformation will deliver better outcomes for people. The strategy should be supported by plans, detailing actions, timescales and the required investment in technology, people and skills.

Councils need to improve how they monitor outcomes. This could include adopting a benefits realisation approach.

7. Earlier this year we refreshed our Digital Transformation priorities for 2021/24. There is further detail on these in Appendix 1, but these can be summarised as:



8. Each of these 3 areas has commonality in terms of: a focus on end-to-end processes; a commitment to involve users at the heart of service design; the need to focus on benefits and achieve good return on investment, whilst ensuring sound financial and data governance and information security.

9. These priority areas are underpinned by new strategies for ICT; Customer Experience and Data & Strategic Insight, which are all under development engaging closely with departments across the Council.

10. This work is overseen by the Corporate Management Team in its role as MAP Board; by the cross-cutting Core Systems and Digital & Data Boards. There are also project teams in and appropriate governance arrangements in place for each of the areas of the programme.

11. Our well-established MAP reporting arrangements mean we have good oversight of projects and progress across the wide range of areas in our programme. We have been developing the Council's approach to project prioritisation to facilitate better planning and alignment of shared resources including ICT, HR, Digital Customer Experience and project management staff. This is a challenging area as we have high ambitions and aspirations but, like others in the public sector, we have a way to go to develop the full range of Digital, Data and Technology skills that will be required of our workforce in the future and there are key challenges in balancing the need to invest in modernisation of our systems and development of skills and infrastructure whilst also making year-on year savings. The Council has also been developing its approach to benefits realisation, to enable clearer measurement of the outcomes and impacts of change.

12. A Digital Maturity Assessment of East Renfrewshire Council was undertaken by the national Local Government Digital Office in 2019. This involved face to face interviews with the CMT, Heads of Service and senior leaders, and online surveys of managers, Digital Board members and Headteachers. The report was used to inform the work of the Digital Board and the direction of our digital programme. Amongst the report's conclusions was recognition of our clear and ambitious vision; good governance; strong national networks at senior leadership level and innovation in Education and Health and Social Care. The report noted opportunities for us to review resource allocation and ensure that investment was sufficient to achieve our ambition, sharing learning more effectively and engaging wider on innovation. In addition, opportunities were highlighted in the areas of user-centred design; embedding new ways of working and measuring and supporting skills gaps. This learning has all been used to build and enhance our new programme and strategy.

User Focused

To better understand the needs of citizens, councils should have a citizen and community engagement plan and ensure they have sufficient staff with the skills to carry out service design.

13. Our leaders are more aware than ever of customer expectations and demand and, through a service design approach, we are introducing more self-service and cost effective channels ways to access services, designing them to the customer requirements to ensure high customer satisfaction. Putting the customer at the heart of change and design is a key cross-cutting theme of our digital priorities.

14. We have begun to embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design ([SA@SD](#)) into our project methods and trained a range of staff in this approach. Whilst the pandemic limited our ability to roll this out widely in 2020/21, there were some good examples of services using online methods to engage with customers, test new services and to co-design changes. A particular example would be the Council Tax and Benefits system implementation which made good efforts to engage customers and to test the design of the new system with its end-users prior to launch.

15. A cross-cutting Member/Officer working group met to discuss digital opportunities arising from the pandemic in December 2020, as part of the Council's approach to Renewal. The issue of digital inclusion came through strongly as a theme. There is an update on the Council's strong delivery of the Connecting Scotland programme and the East Renfrewshire Digital Inclusion Partnership in the report at Appendix 1.

Digital Workforce

Councils should conduct a staff skills survey to better understand what digital and data skills they need. Councils should have detailed workforce and skills development plans, including for leadership teams and elected members. That align with digital transformation plans.

16. Our workforce plan has recently been updated to cover the period 2021-2024. The plan reflects our vision for the future workforce and is aligned with our digital transformation plans. It is imperative that the Council has an established workforce that not only works for the challenges of today, but also focuses on the challenges of tomorrow.

17. Digital transformation is one of the demand drivers of our workforce. We recognise the importance of recruiting and retaining employees with the correct digital skills and development of these skills within our current workforce. Our plan recognises the need to review the structures of the organisation to ensure they are fit for purpose in delivering transformation and an important area will be to shift the balance of temporary funding and temporary posts into permanent, revenue-funded digital, data and technology ([DDaT](#)) roles.

18. We have begun embedding DDaT roles to support our areas of transformation and across our workforce training opportunities through development opportunities in the Scottish Approach to Service Design, Agile project methods, User Research and Microsoft 365 – these have all developed the digital ability of our workforce and there are also a number of digital training courses delivered through our corporate training calendar. In addition, we have Digital Champions in place across the organisation who continue to promote and share digital knowledge helping our staff to understand that change is everyone's business.

Collaborative

The refresh of the digital strategy for Scotland provides an opportunity for all organisations which support the delivery of digital transformation in local government to set the vision and agree shared priorities.

Councils should actively collaborate through the Digital Office and other regional partnerships.

19. East Renfrewshire Council has been a leading force in cross council and cross sector collaboration. The Chief Executive is chair of the Local Government Digital Partnership and played a key role in setting up the Digital Office which is highlighted in the AS report. She is also co-chair of the national Health and Social Care Digital Board, a cross sector Board with the NHS and Scottish Government. The Council's Head of Digital & Community Safety is chair of the National Digital Assurance Board with colleagues from across Local Government and the Head of HR & Corporate Services plays an active part on the Digital Office Delivery Board bringing her expertise of HR into discussions on digital workforce skills.

20. Well-planned and targeted collaboration, both internally and with other organisations is critical to our success and will give us opportunities to learn from other approaches without 'reinventing the wheel'.

21. Through our change programmes and close links with the Scottish Local Government Digital Office, we will continue to explore collaborative opportunities to work with other organisations to learn from their successes; fast-track our own journey and make best use of transformation resources. A good example includes the emerging national approach to Digital Planning as part of a national programme driven by the Scottish Government. Other key partners include Scotland Excel, who are working hard to join-up procurement and contractual opportunities across the public sector. A good example of this approach is the work on national Digital Telecare contracts, which will also be a significant priority in the next period as we strive to meet national timescales for the switch from analogue to digital.

22. Earlier in June 2021, Cabinet considered a paper on Digital Connectivity Transformation. This paper outlined use of the Scottish Government Capita SWAN framework to procure additional bandwidth through which Capita will work in partnership with City Fibre to provide a 'Full Fibre Network' in East Renfrewshire, with City Fibre investment of up to £27m in a full fibre network which could give 85% of homes and businesses access to a full fibre network locally (national average is 50%), providing the essential foundations for economic growth and social inclusion across the area. This builds on the March 2021 Council approval of an investment of £2.7M in the Council's wide area network to improve internet connection speeds across the Council's estate and is an excellent example of partnership working and investment to future-proof the local area for the rising demands of digital consumption.

Technology & Data-Enabled

Councils should understand their technology infrastructure and have a clear plan to address legacy systems to create better coordinated solutions. This could include common platforms and shared procurement.

Councils should work with the Digital Office and Scottish Government in developing common data standards and a data ethics approach.

23. Data is one of the Council's 5 capabilities. Our Information as an Asset (IAAA) strategy is about being a data-informed organisation that makes decisions based on evidence, analysis and

insight. The Council has a wide range of data assets including customer, finance, staff, service and asset/estates information. Our strategies, operational decisions and improvement priorities should all be based on and informed by data and high value business intelligence. Across our change programmes and by making use of digital methods, we are actively seeking to increase automation, reduce manual re-keying of data and integrate systems for a joined-up view of data. This work includes an important focus on GDPR and information governance capabilities and our projects have become more data-aware through embedding Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) as part of project governance.

24. The pandemic has illustrated the power of data in understanding our customers and communities and improving productivity, efficiency and automation. Examples include the data-informed approach to supporting our shielded residents; data dashboards that give us real-time information on isolation support calls for those who have tested positive for COVID-19; staff absence dashboards and a multifaceted dashboard that shows COVID impact live in communities, schools and geographies.

25. The Council has also led on a project involving all 8 City Deal councils, which mapped all city deal projects and investment areas (e.g. new houses, new businesses etc) for sharing with utility companies allowing them to plan for the services required and reducing project delays.

26. This year has also seen completion of a contracts register which will give managers a single view of all contracts including timeline, spend, value and procurement route.

27. Our IAAA strategy has had resourcing and skills challenges in recent years, but with renewed vigour, driven by the progress made during the pandemic, the linkages with Microsoft 365 roll-out and the criticality of data to the 3 priorities of our digital strategy, there is a new programme emerging and laying good foundations.

28. We want our staff to become more skilful in using digital technology to store, retrieve, automate, work-flow and research information. They will be able to use digital technology to support anytime, anywhere to work more efficiently. The level of data analytics capability will be much higher and staff will be able to present information in a format that enables managers across the Council to self-serve. We will have staff with knowledge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and there will be automation in the buildings we work in. This is being addressed through investment of resources in the development of the data and digital skills of staff, reviewing and understanding technology capability within the organisation and what investment is needed and development of management information tools.

29. The foundation of all of these ambitions is a secure and resilient ICT infrastructure, which is a key focus of our ICT Strategy. Cyber security is a key risk for all organisations and we regularly consider, review and enhance our approaches. The Council has 3 information security principles, which are underpinned by a holistic approach to people, processes, technology and data. Repeated training and communication are key to developing staff awareness of these critical issues. We learn lessons from data and information security incidents in other organisations and have to undergo rigorous scrutiny to achieve accreditation as part of the Government's Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation.



Innovative

Councils should have a structured approach to collaboration and innovation, with staff given space and time to learn, test new ideas and put them into practice.

30. The Council's ambitions for digital transformation and modernisation are significant. Our Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP) covers a vast array of projects, programmes and ideas. We have recognised the need to prioritise to ensure that we focus on the areas that will take us furthest on our journey. Our ideal would be to focus on customer experience, savings, and benefits, but there are also some critical, complex foundational pieces around ICT legacy system replacements, integrations and security-related projects which must also be undertaken to build the path for onward digital transformation. Resources, capacity and skills are a challenge, alongside shrinking budgets.

31. Our teams are however so ambitious for further development and innovation. Appendix 1 outlines some of the innovations undertaken within our Environment Department, working closely with the Local Government Digital Office, by way of the Internet of Things (IoT), using wireless sensory network across services to harvest data to inform service deliver and data-led decision making. This has included road temperature monitoring sensors; grit bin sensors and building temperature sensors. There are further opportunities being explored around smart street lighting, waste management and building management for property services. IoT will also be very important in future HSCP provision.

32. At current levels, the Digital Connectivity project outlined above will also bring East Renfrewshire to the top of the league table for full fibre availability amongst Scottish local authorities.

CONCLUSION

33. There has been substantial progress in recent years, and particularly across the pandemic period, in the delivery of the Council's digital strategy. Our aspirations to continue our ambitious modernisation journey remain as important as ever and the pace and scale of change across the Council and HSCP is significant.

34. Prioritisation, resource management and good governance will be key to the next stages of our digital transformation journey, with a focus on customer experience, our business systems and processes and capitalising on the use of Office 365 capabilities to enhance the productivity of our workforce. This will be especially relevant as we recover from the pandemic and move forward into a phase of renewal.

BACKGROUND REPORTS

- Update on MAP and Digital Transformation Strategy, Cabinet, 3 June 2021
- Digital Connectivity Transformation, Cabinet 3 June 2021
- National Digital Strategy for Scotland, March 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/a-changing-nation-how-scotland-will-thrive-in-a-digital-world>
- Audit Scotland report: Digital Progress in Local Government, January 2021, <https://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/digital-progress-in-local-government>
- Core Systems Implementation – Progress Report, Cabinet 3 December 2020
- Update on Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP), Cabinet 25 April 2019
- Update on Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) & Digital Strategy, Cabinet 21 June 2018 & Council 27 June 2018

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EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET3 June 2021Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveUPDATE ON MODERN, AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME (MAP) &
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress of the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) and to outline our new Digital Transformation Strategy for 2021-24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) Notes the good progress across the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) including the core systems, digital and departmental programmes.
 - b) Commends the achievements of the Digital Strategy 2016-20 (Annex 1) and notes the impact of the pandemic in accelerating key aspects of our digital delivery to enable our services to keep operating effectively over this challenging period.
 - c) Agrees the 3 priority areas of the Council's digital transformation strategy for 2021-24: customer experience; business systems and processes and workforce productivity and that these will be underpinned by a more detailed roadmap for change which will be developed on completion of project prioritisation and resourcing work.

BACKGROUNDModern, Ambitious Programme

3. The Council's Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) seeks to change the way we work, with a particular focus on developing three of our capabilities: modernising, digital and data.

4. MAP has consisted of 6 major programmes of change, each consisting of a large number of projects. There is a programme board in place for each and they are responsible for delivery at a programme level. The programmes are:

- Core Systems
- Digital & Data
- Environment change programme
- HSCP change programme
- Education change programme
- Corporate & Community Services change programme

5. Overall governance is through the Corporate Management Team (CMT) in their role as MAP Board. They are responsible for ensuring that savings and benefits for the Council are achieved and that programme dependencies and resources are well managed. MAP meetings across 2020/21 have been less frequent than usual as a result of pandemic response, although much change-related activity has been able to continue despite the restrictions.

6. Much of the corporate change capacity over the last 2 years has been focused towards complex replacements of some of our most fundamental ICT legacy systems that touch every employee and every household in East Renfrewshire. Cabinet considered a report in December 2020 that gave a more detailed update on the Core Systems programme and also noted the significant work to replace the legacy Council Tax and Benefits ICT system. The report also updated members on the Digital Customer Experience programme which, as a first stage on a long-term change journey, had successfully replaced the council's website in July 2020.

7. The Council's Digital Strategy was approved by Cabinet and Council in 2018 and was due to cover the period up to 2019/20, with the end-point extended due to COVID-19 and its impact on service capacity. The Member/Officer Renewal Group considered the impact of digital on COVID-19 response and the potential for building upon this in a renewal phase at a meeting in December 2020.

8. Work is ongoing across the Council to review projects and capacity and reprioritise in the light of COVID-19 and the pressures on budgets.

PROGRESS UPDATE – MODERN, AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME (MAP)

Digital – Pandemic Response

9. The Council's Digital Strategy was considered by both Cabinet and Council in June 2018. The overall objectives were around improving digitisation of priority processes and transactions (both internal and external) based on user design; to enhance 'channel shift' where the customer chooses to engage with us in different (and often cheaper) ways such as online; to extend our ability to offer services to the public on a 24/7 basis and to enable the delivery of efficiencies. The strategy has delivered significant progress with digital being an integral part of our operations, a key enabler across the Council and a future source of transformation and ambition.

10. A Digital Board has been meeting since October 2018 to oversee this work, although ownership of individual projects and processes sits with departments themselves. The scope of the Digital Board was widened in 2020 to include the Council's emergent data programme.

11. Annex 1 contains a summary of the wider-ranging projects undertaken as part of the Council's Digital Strategy. The 2020 pandemic acted as a catalyst for advancing our digital progress and enabled us to accelerate many projects so that we could continue to deliver services. Key COVID-19 digital impacts included:

- Reconfiguration of a number of services to a digital first or digital only approach, including digital learning for school pupils
- Increased demand for online services
- Significant increase in employees working from home, utilising technology to do so
- Increased demand for online collaboration tools, not just for cross-sector working, but also to engage with citizens
- Exacerbation of social and digital exclusion
- Need for new solutions to respond to the emergency (e.g. shielding; volunteering; isolation & support apps)

- Increased collaboration, data-sharing and analysis between partners.
12. Compared to the previous year, COVID resulted in huge increases in social media usage (127% increase in Twitter and 183% increase in Facebook reach); an 80% decrease in face to face visits to council offices, coupled with 164% increase in use of the web chat service and a 70% increase in automated telephone payments.
13. Many application processes also moved online including 99% of building warrants received online (78% in previous year); 92% of planning applications (81% previous year) and 90% of new COVID business grant applications. Online booking systems were also developed to allow the public access to much-in-demand civic amenity site slots and e-forms and dashboards were used to track progress on support for shielded residents and those asked to isolate under Test & Protect.
14. Face to face transactions also moved online, with remote death registrations introduced in March 2020 and documents able to be submitted online for the first time. In addition, Council meetings and the Education Appeals process were held online via Teams.
15. In an unprecedented shift, our Education service moved online with teachers and support staff supporting young people to participate in digital and remote learning during periods of lockdown and self-isolation. A minimum of 86% of pupils engaged with this online learning on a weekly basis in May 2020, rising to 95% in February 2021.
16. The majority of HSCP services continued to be delivered throughout the period of the pandemic, with adapted approaches. Modified service delivery, typically through greater use of digital communication, dealt with the restrictions of face to face contact. Social Workers maintained contact with families via WhatsApp, Zoom and telephone. Video calls became a common way for workers and clients to communicate and residents and families to interact. Online and telephone appointments became the norm.

Digital Inclusion

17. The Council participated in various phases of the national Connecting Scotland programme which provided people on low incomes and in target groups with access to digital devices, connectivity and support to develop their confidence and skills online. By the end of May 2021, over 2000 digital devices, many with free WIFI will have been distributed to households across East Renfrewshire over the last year. This included 623 chromebooks and 51 MIFI (mobile wifi) devices provided to pupils via the Connecting Scotland education programme and the 709 devices (376 chromebooks and 414 ipads) with free MIFI to be distributed via 28 council and partner services to households across East Renfrewshire as part of the broader Phase 1 and 2 Connecting Scotland programmes. These have targeted those at a higher clinical risk due to COVID; older people; people with disabilities and families, with low income being a key criteria. Phase 3 of the Connecting Scotland programme is likely to be launched before the summer with around 23,000 devices being available across Scotland.
18. In addition, a further 50 devices and free MIFI are currently being distributed to low income households, again identified by council services and partners and a further 700 chromebooks will be distributed shortly by the Education Department using one-off COVID-related funding allocated to the Council from the Scottish Government.
19. The voluntary sector has also provided devices and free WIFI utilising a range of COVID related funding and other resources they have access to. This includes Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire Good Causes and Barrhead Housing Association who together managed a digital inclusion fund which complemented the Connecting Scotland Programme. The Department of Work and Pensions has also been providing digital devices to job seekers through a discretionary programme.

20. There is of course potential for this shift to digital services to have exacerbated social and digital exclusion. Where required, all benefitting from the Connecting Scotland programme, have had the support of a digital champion to ensure they have been able to use the devices. The pandemic has also been a catalyst for the formation of a more formal Digital Inclusion Partnership for East Renfrewshire, with quarterly meetings across a range of partner agencies aimed at ensuring no-one is left behind by this renewed digital focus. This partnership will continue to meet and will focus on communication and support to ensure that local residents have the confidence, skills and tools to enable them to benefit from being digitally connected. The most recent Citizens Panel included a new question set on digital access and use and there will be further engagement on digital inclusion to inform the work of the partnership.

21. Work was also undertaken to support local businesses with their own transitions to a digital world, through the Digital Boost scheme, which offered consultancy, training and support to help businesses adapt and change.

Change Programmes

22. Each department continues to support council-wide programmes of change including the Office 365 rollout, further development of our information management/governance approach and the development of a data programme. The pandemic brought significant opportunities to develop our approaches in these areas including the development of dashboards, mapping and reporting tools to monitor progress and impact of the pandemic in East Renfrewshire.

Environment

23. Since the last MAP progress update in April 2019, structural and role redesigns within Neighbourhood, Property, Technical, Roads, Corporate Health & Safety and Economic Development have been completed. Housing Services have also completed the first 2 phases of their structural and role redesign, with a third phase underway, due for completion by the end of 2021.

24. The creation of the Change & Governance function has also brought together the existing Environment departmental functions of Business Intelligence, Digital, Business Support, Customer Relations and the Change Team.

25. There are a range of digital and ICT system developments and changes underway in the Department. These include:

- The deployment of in-cab telematics for the Neighbourhood Services team is complete. This has facilitated better digital communication between managers/supervisors and operational staff in relation to the day-to-day delivery of services, such as refuse collection and special uplifts, with digitisation of 6 processes to date, customer booking of slots and online tracking of jobs now available. This has removed significant manual processing and administration and improved customer service. There is further potential for route-optimisation efficiencies to be realised from the 25 bin lorries which now have these in-cab telematics.
- The replacement of the Housing ICT system, which will enable mobile/remote system access via hand-held devices for key staff and deliver a customer self-service portal.
- The Roads Service is developing its asset management system which has enabled mobile/remote access 'in the field' via hand-held devices for officers undertaking lighting tasks and processes and is now being widened for those undertaking routine maintenance duties.

- Property Services have also reviewed the capabilities of their asset management system and are developing improvement projects to make better use of current modules and consolidate property/asset-related information and data within the system.
- The Corporate Health & Safety team have implemented a new health and safety management system which improves information on audits, inspections and risk assessments and simplifies reporting action tracking.
- The Department also continues to work with the Core System team to develop interfaces between the Council's new finance/procurement system and various departmental systems. This will enable more efficient and effective purchase-to-pay processes and improve financial tracking and reporting.

26. The Roads Service and Neighbourhood Services are working with the Council's Digital Customer Experience programme to transfer existing digital customer and back office processes, including online forms, to the new customer experience platform. This has included successfully transferring the 'missed bins' and special uplifts processes.

27. A project to digitise cemetery records is also underway and includes the use of digital technologies to record condition and safety details of headstones within cemeteries

28. The department continues to work with the Digital Office and their partners around expanding opportunities for use of the Internet of Things Scotland (IoT) technology. The purpose of which is to deploy a wireless sensor network across services to harvest data to inform service delivery and data-led decision-making.

29. Roads temperature sensors were deployed to support the winter gritting programme in 2020. Further work is ongoing to explore the potential of sensors to monitor grit/salt bin capacity and vehicle grit-spread in order to achieve further efficiencies.

30. The Council have recently deployed IoT sensors within the Barrhead building due to COVID-19. The purpose of which is to monitor airflow and to regulate temperature across the building to ensure a safe working environment for staff. The deployment of IoT sensors within our Education schools estate will also help to monitor CO₂ and ventilation levels in order to gain insight from air quality data. This is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic.

31. There are further IoT opportunities being explored around smart street lighting, waste management and building management for property services.

32. Wearable technologies are also playing their part in improving compliance against health and safety standards within the Roads Service, with technologies now helping to reduce the likelihood of conditions like 'white finger' which can result from hand/arm vibration syndrome and also supporting the implementation of social distancing for frontline workers.

33. The Environment Department has also set up an internal mapping portal using the corporate Geographic Information System, ESRI, which gives all staff access to all the Council's spatial datasets. Over 100 searchable maps are available on this Portal, including Planning Applications, Land Ownership (this map has been viewed over 1600 times, removing the need for direct contact with the Council's Estates team). Historic maps, and aerial photography are included. This tool is also used for collecting and surveying Council assets and supporting community consultations. ESRI Dashboards are used, for example to give real time displays of COVID data and HR COVID Absence Data. There are also maps available to the public, including the school catchments, ward information, polling places, adopted roads, winter maintenance programme (gritted streets and grit bin location) and street lights (making fault reporting easier and more accurate).

34. The Council has also been lead on an ESRI project involving all 8 City Deal councils, which mapped all city deal projects and investment areas (e.g. new houses, new businesses etc) for sharing with utility companies allowing them to plan for the services required and reducing project delays.

Education

35. The Education Department's focus over the last 18 months has been on supporting young people and staff with learning during the pandemic. This included online and remote learning; moving to online meetings for Placing Request Appeals and new approaches to parental engagement including Parents' Evening appointments via phone rather than face to face. A new app to allow pupils to pre-order meals was also introduced across high schools at the end of 2020, reducing queues and helping pupils maintain social distancing.

36. Schools use a range of, increasingly digital, methods for keeping in touch with parents which helps minimise paper; rekeying and improves accuracy of information. Pre-pandemic the Department's digital journey included launch of the national Parent Portal which improved access to information for parents and reduced manual processes in schools. As of December 2020, 7847 parents had linked 11,855 children through the portal. This built upon the huge uptake of the Parent Pay system where parents could pay online for school meals, trips, charity donations etc rather than find cash to send into schools. The Department also makes use of the national gov.notify service to facilitate text messaging across a range of services to communicate with parents.

37. For the first time a new online application form for 3-4 year old nursery admissions was launched in January 2021 as well as a new online process launched for Primary 1 and Primary 7 document submission, reducing time for parents and school/nursery administrative staff.

38. The department is part of the national project to introduce the SEEMIS Early Years platform and are currently preparing data cleansing and migration for the new system.

39. The department was part of a pilot with Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) on the new school transport management package, which has now been rolled out to the remaining authorities. This provides families with the opportunity to book spaces depending on school timetables and gives enhanced management information, allowing easier integration with existing information sources and business processes.

Health & Social Care Partnership

40. The focus of the HSCP over the last 18 months has been to keep life and limb services operating under the pressures of the pandemic. This has involved moving to greater digital communication, replacement of face to face appointments wherever possible and finding new and innovative ways to stay in touch with vulnerable clients and families during periods of isolation, lockdown or social distancing.

41. The HSCP's Fit for the Future project was closed in August 2020. Its original savings target of £954k was delivered, with an additional savings target of £250k delivered as a full year saving in 2020/21 as referenced in the IJB Budget report 2020-21. The project delivered significant financial savings but also changed the organisational structure to strengthen the link between strategy and operations and enabled the HSCP to develop a stronger locality focus. New roles in relation to strategic planning, market facilitation and improvement capacity are now embedded in the locality structure.

42. The HSCP is now discussing post-pandemic change and transformation priorities with the IJB. This will include a focus on people who use HSCP services – reviewing client journeys; use of technology to support people to remain safely at home; service redesigns; and continuing to develop the online appointment model where appropriate. There will also be

significant work on ICT systems and processes and workforce planning including Care at Home redesigns and use to technology to support the frontline.

43. A new project to replace the existing CareFirst system with a new Case Recording solution is now in its early stages. This project represents significant undertaking for the HSCP Change Programme in terms of its size and scale.

Corporate & Community Services

44. The Corporate and Community Services (C&CS) Department has a dual role in change and transformation – firstly to lead the Council's corporate approach in terms of digital, ICT provision and strategy; our customer experience programme; the Core Systems programme; organisational development and workforce planning; development of the data programme and overall governance through the Programme Management Office; and secondly to drive transformation in the Department's own services.

45. The digital programme has continued to be dominated with the replacement of major ICT systems, driven by contracts ending or support coming to end of life. There is a significant resource requirement both within services and ICT to implement these new systems, which can be a challenge to balance with transformational projects and the ongoing stability and security needs of our network. The Council's new ICT Strategy is currently in development focusing on the themes of performance and stability; customer service and enablement of transformation.

46. The Core Systems Programme has been one of the main programmes of change in recent years with significant workload and impact for C&CS teams including HR/Payroll; ICT; Accounts Payable (formerly known as Creditors) and Accounts Receivable (formerly Debtors). The Core Systems project team is also line managed within the C&CS Department and structural and budget proposals are currently being developed for when the project team contracts end in March 2022.

47. In addition the recent replacement of the legacy Council Tax and Benefits ICT system has been resource intensive and complex in recent years. This project has been one of the first to utilise new service design and user engagement techniques, using Teams for remote testing of the new system during the pandemic. Following a COVID-related delay in 2020, the system went live in December 2020 and annual billing for Council Tax was completed for the first time in the new system in March 2021. The focus of the next year will be to stabilise the new system and refine our end to end processes for efficiencies whilst also implementing an associated customer portal.

48. The Digital Customer Experience programme launched a new user-centred council website in July 2020 with excellent customer feedback. Whilst engaging on development of a new Customer Experience Strategy for the Council, the programme is now focused on the implementation and integration of a new customer experience platform with online customer forms that meet government and data standards. The national mygov.scot account will be used to verify citizens and give a single sign-on for access to Council services, giving a consistent look and feel. The Council Tax and Benefits Citizen Access portal will be the first service to go live later this year.

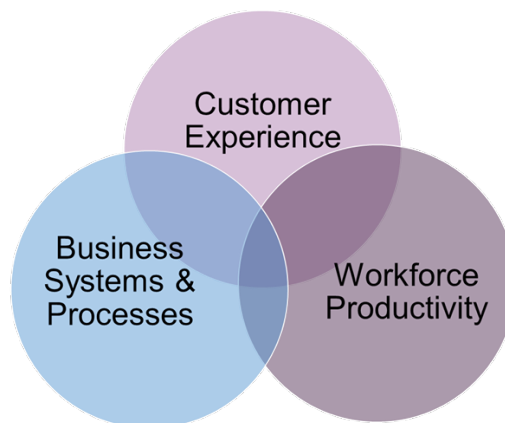
49. The Department oversees the Office 365 programme which has enabled the transition to homeworking during the pandemic, supported virtual training, employee engagement and social connection. This is now a key priority area to leverage further gains from workforce productivity as we consider what the pandemic will mean for the way we work in the future. This will involve information governance, technical and digital skills considerations.

50. From a wider skills development perspective, our Organisational Development and PMO teams have worked together with the Scottish Digital Academy to train over 100 employees in user research and the Scottish Approach to Service Design. In addition, more than 30 Digital Champions have been established across the organisation to support employees to make the most of technology. From a workforce planning perspective, there will be a focus on building the organisation's digital, data and technology (DDaT) skills.

51. In terms of the data programme, good progress is being made in information governance, data protection and information security, which are critical legal responsibilities and also an essential foundation for building future Office 365 potential. This year has demonstrated the potential of data in terms of dashboarding, mapping and reporting of the impact of the pandemic locally and helping to proactively meet the needs of vulnerable residents such as those shielding. This year has seen completion of a contracts register which will give managers a single view of all contracts including timeline, spend, value, and procurement route. There is huge potential that can be derived from consideration of data as part of all projects. Benefits will include improved customer service; improvements in performance and cost management; reduced rekeying; improved automation; early intervention and predictive modelling.

OUR FUTURE PROGRAMME

52. Our digital transformation strategy for 2021-2024 is based upon moving forward on 3 fronts. Summaries of each area are given below and there is further detail at Annex 2.



Customer Experience

53. The vision for this area is to provide a consistent, efficient customer experience, designed with the user at the heart.

54. To achieve this there will be a clear, organisation-wide Customer Experience Strategy, with the new website and customer experience platform as the foundations for improved customer experiences across the Council. There will be streamlined digital processes, including booking, scheduling and payments, designed end-to-end in an inclusive way using the Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAAtSD). New technologies will be used to improve the customer journey, based on customer preference, with support available for those who need it.

Business Systems & Processes

55. The aim in this section is to have efficient and effective business systems and processes enabled by digital technology and optimised across the Council.

56. This will build on the Core Systems programme which saw the successful implementation of new finance/procurement and HR/payroll systems. The opportunity now is to optimise the systems as the foundation for end to end process improvement across the Council, linking to other line of business systems to join up information flow, reduce duplication of effort and maximise the benefits we can get from our systems.

Workforce Productivity

57. This last theme is about increasing the productivity and effectiveness of our workforce, enabled by Office 365 capabilities.

58. The pandemic and the resulting need to work at home wherever possible, was a significant catalyst in developing the Council's use of Office 365 capabilities and, in particular the Teams environment which facilitates online meetings, video calls, shared team sites and messaging. This theme is about embedding and enhancing our use of these tools to create, communicate, collaborate, store, plan, automate, analyse and report. There are important information governance and technological considerations as part of this development and there will be further digital skills and cultural work to be undertaken to support and encourage use of the tools available and embed new ways of working.

59. Office 365 is what is known as an 'evergreen' product suite, which will be subject to constant evolution and growth worldwide. This will bring new challenges for the Council in terms of forward-planning and resourcing and for both ICT and services as they get to grips with what this new environment will mean in terms of new functionality with automatic updates and releases from the suppliers which may have impact on our network infrastructure.

How We Will Achieve This

60. Each of the 3 areas underpinning our digital transformation strategy have commonality in terms of a focus on end-to-end processes; a commitment to involve users at the heart of service design; the need to focus on benefits realisation and achieving a good return on investment as well as ensuring sound financial and data governance and ICT security at the same time as achieving fundamental change. In addition, there is an underlying need to develop the Council's workforce in terms of digital, data and technology skills.

61. Whilst challenges continue to be faced in terms of capacity versus ambition and complexity of many of these programmes of work, we are more conscious than ever of the importance of prioritising this work to achieve best use of scarce resource. We will make more use of agile project methods to provide a more incremental way to manage change based on user needs and focused on chunking projects to get value to those who use the service as quickly as possible. This will require a shift in culture, new ways of working and skills development.

62. Departments are currently engaged in a process of project prioritisation looking at what the Council needs and wants to deliver as part of its digital transformation journey over the next period. Looking at the projects in the round like this will help us assess the linkages and sequencing of projects; the scope for use of national platforms or solutions where possible; to plan resources; identify gaps or challenges and ensure a balance of delivery and benefits realisation across each of the 3 fronts of our digital transformation strategy.

63. Subject to the detail of the project prioritisation exercise and resulting resourcing discussions, it is anticipated that key MAP areas for the next 3 years will include:

- Implementation of the new ICT and Customer Experience strategies.

- Maximising the benefits from the new Finance/Procurement, HR/Payroll and Council Tax/Benefits systems, including putting in place new service structures to take control of the new systems once the Core Systems dedicated team comes to an end by March 2022.
- Significant development of our HSCP infrastructure with replacement of its case management system; the analogue to digital telecare programme and a retendering of the Care at Home platform. In terms of resources and significance this will be as fundamental a change as the Core Systems programme has been in recent years.
- Transformation of education infrastructure through the replacement of SEEMIS with two new systems: SEEMIS Schools and SEEMIS Early Years across all education establishments (and external funded providers) with the migration of approximately 20,000 pupil records and files and retraining of all school and early learning and childcare based staff.
- Developing our Digital Planning processes as part of a national programme driven by the Scottish Government.
- Shifting the profile of how we work, looking at our office buildings, our workforce cultures, the technologies we use (including Office 365) and how we can develop to be fit for the future, building on our experiences of work during the pandemic.
- Developing new approaches to data, insight, reporting and dashboarding.
- Reconfiguring the Programme Management Office (PMO) to ensure that robust programme governance, planning and benefits realisation is in place across the MAP portfolio and to assist resource planning and skills development across the Council.

IMPLICATIONS

64. It is clear that there has been significant progress in recent years, and particularly across the pandemic period, in delivery of the Council's digital strategy. Our aspirations to continue our ambitious modernisation journey remain as important as ever. Change and transformation across an organisation as diverse as a council is a complex area. The use of equality/fairness and data protection impact assessments is a routine part of projects. Budget challenges mean we have to clearly prioritise our activities and resources to ensure we deliver benefits from projects, that they contribute to future savings opportunities and that they improve the experiences of local residents and reduce bureaucracy. Learning from other's successes (and failures) will also help us transition quicker and save rework.

FINANCE & EFFICIENCY

65. Whilst significant savings have already been achieved, the very difficult financial circumstances facing councils are expected to continue for the foreseeable future so the scale of change will need to be maintained. Under the banner of our MAP programme we are implementing a range of "enabler" projects and service redesigns which will help us achieve significant savings in future years. A total of close to £11.8m (67%) of the 2018-21 agreed savings (including almost £4.4m (59%) for 2020/21) arose from efficiencies, through the Council's MAP programme or as a result of our focus on the Council's 5 capabilities.

66. Savings plans for future years will be developed by the Corporate Management Team on the basis of the Scottish and UK budgets. Each department, through its own change

programme to modernise and digitise services, contributes to the delivery of the overall MAP programme and to the Council's savings targets.

67. There is also a need to balance the pressure for savings with the need to invest in our ICT systems and development and also in reshaping the skills of our workforce in terms of digital, data and technology.

68. Departments continue to make good use of the Modernisation Fund to augment project resource and Spend to Save options also remain available.

CONSULTATION & PARTNERSHIP WORKING

69. The progress and ambitions outlined in this paper relate not only to the Council but also to the wider 'family' organisations of the HSCP and the Culture and Leisure Trust. We will continue to work together to progress the key priority areas for change and to share lessons learned and plan resources.

70. In March 2021 the national Digital Strategy for Scotland was published, having been developed jointly by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Local Government Digital Office. As we move forward with our own digital transformation priorities we will explore collaborative opportunities to work with other organisations to learn from their successes; fast-track our own journey and make best use of transformation resources. Other key partners will include Scotland Excel, who are working hard to join-up procurement and contractual opportunities across the public sector.

71. User engagement in service design, internal as well as external, is a key principle of our digital transformation journey. We will utilise the Scottish Approach to Service Design wherever possible to put users at the heart of change.

CONCLUSION

72. Today's report demonstrates the very broad range of areas being progressed and the commendable delivery and development of the Council's digital strategy in challenging circumstances.

73. The pace and scale of change across the Council and HSCP remains significant. This is driven by pressures on budgets; statutory and contractual obligations and our own ambitions for digital modernisation and improved user experience. Prioritisation, resource management and good governance will be key to the next stages of our digital transformation journey, with a focus on customer experience, our business systems and processes and capitalising on the use of Office 365 capabilities to enhance the productivity of our workforce. This will be especially relevant as we recover from the pandemic and move forward into a phase of renewal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

74. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Notes the good progress across the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) including the core systems, digital and departmental programmes.
- b) Commends the achievements of the Digital Strategy 2016-20 (Annex 1) and notes the impact of the pandemic in accelerating key aspects of our digital delivery to enable our services to keep operating effectively over this challenging period.

- c) Agrees the 3 priority areas of the Council's digital transformation strategy for 2021-24: customer experience; business systems and processes and workforce productivity and that these will be underpinned by a more detailed roadmap for change which will be developed on completion of project prioritisation and resourcing work.

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive

Report author: Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues & Change, 0141 577 3136.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Education Department Report on the Quality of Remote Learning, Education Committee 11 March 2021
- Core Systems Implementation – Progress Report, Cabinet 3 December 2020
- Annual Efficiency Statement, Cabinet 15 August 2019
- Update on Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP), 25 April 2019
- Update on Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) & Digital Strategy, Cabinet 21 June 2018 & Council 27 June 2018

East Renfrewshire Digital Strategy 2016 - 2020

Project closure report
January 2021



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2. Covid-19 impact
3. Challenges
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5. Digital services: summary
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9. Digital services: Culture and Leisure Trust
10. Digital services: Health and Social Care Partnership
11. Digital workforce: summary
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14. Supporting businesses
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Progress of the Digital Strategy

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Positioning

2016 – 2020 strategy has delivered significant progress against the ambition to become a 'Leading Digital Council'.

Integrated

Digital is integral to operations, supporting the delivery of the Modern Ambitious Programme.

Enabler

Digital is an enabler across the organisation.

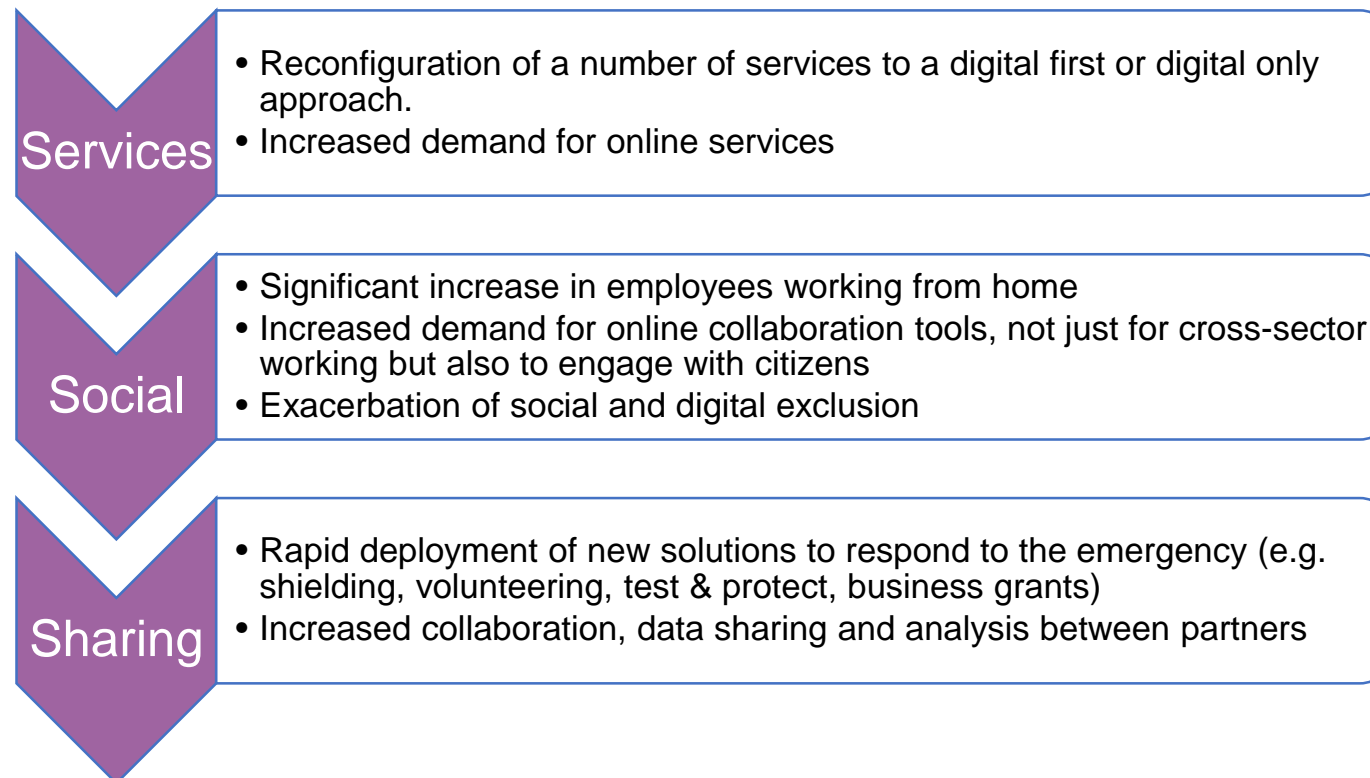
Guiding principles

A range of cross cutting transformation themes developed from the strategy will help the organisation to deliver future ambitions.



Covid-19 impact

- The Covid19 pandemic and the events surrounding it may change the way that we work and live forever
- It has been necessary to consider existing strategies and plans and their relevance to the changing world
- The expectations of our employees and our citizens are evolving rapidly and as an organisation, East Renfrewshire Council faces the challenge of adapting and supporting at a time of significant financial pressures
- During the pandemic the Council has seen rapid change in the following areas:





- Scale, scope and number of projects
- Objectively prioritising projects
- Establishing baseline data
- Defining measurable benefits
- Culturally embracing measurement of change/ benefits
- Creating a culture of outcome ownership
- IT contracts and systems unsupported
- Limited resources
- Reduced budgets
- Covid-19 pandemic



Digital Services



All services are digital by design and use data analytics

Digital Workforce



We have a digitally capable workforce with a modern working environment

Digital Citizens



Communities engage digitally with the Council



Digital Foundations

Enabling technology supports our digital outcomes



Successful outcomes - highlights

- ✓ Established a foundation to develop user centred digital services
- ✓ New Digital and Data Board established
- ✓ Core Systems programme delivered under extreme circumstances
- ✓ New website launched July 2020
- ✓ New Council Tax and Benefits system launched Dec 2020
- ✓ 100% of Building and Planning applications online and new app for officers launched
- ✓ Digitisation of six Neighbourhood Services processes
- ✓ 25 bin lorries fitted with telematics for service optimisation (65k service transactions)
- ✓ H&S digital technology deployed within the Roads Service machinery
- ✓ Digitisation of parental communication and launch of the Parent Portal (50% of pupils now linked to Parent Portal account)
- ✓ Parent Pay launched and handled £3.9m in payments, 200k transactions
- ✓ 86% of pupils engaged with online learning on a weekly basis during the first lockdown





Citizen experience

A new Customer Experience Management (CXM) platform has been purchased and the focus of the Digital Customer Experience (DCE) project has been to migrate processes from the existing Meritec and Lagan IT systems. An online form standards framework has been created to ensure that all forms are created in a standard way that aligns to the Government Digital Service (GDS) standards. The team are working with services to review all online forms against the framework and ensuring they adhere to ERC's data obligations of data minimisation and privacy by design. Essential updates to forms are being identified to allow current forms to be transferred to the Goss platform.

Citizen portal

The vision is for citizens to access all services through a single portal, providing a consistent look and feel. The Goss platform will use the national mygov.scot account to verify citizens.

The portal is currently being tested and expected to go live in March 2021 with Revenues and Benefits to be the first service to go live.

Process improvement

The pandemic saw many services moving to accept electronic versions of evidence to minimise face to face contact.

Remote Registrations were available from 26th March and the Scottish Welfare Fund accepted scanned documents via Whatsapp. It is expected that this will accelerate a move towards more digitised processes in the future.

New user centred website launched in July 2020 with fantastic user feedback.

Digital Services: Core ²⁵² Systems



Major IT System Replacement

The digital programme continues to be dominated with the replacement of major IT systems, driven by contracts ending or support coming end of life. During 2020, the Council has launched new Revs & Bens, CRM, Finance and HR & Payroll systems.

Within the next 3 years, resource will be required for future phases of the Core Systems programme, a new Housing management system and SEEMIS amongst others.

There is a significant resource requirement both within services and IT to implement these new systems, which limits the opportunity to invest time in transformational projects. Services will be encouraged to take a user centred design approach to the system replacements, providing greater benefits to both the organisation and the user.

Core Systems

The Core Systems programme has been a huge focus of the council's change capacity over the last 2 years and involved services across the Council, Trust and HSCP. The projects are highly complex, requiring financial controls and data protection compliance to be paramount. Both the Finance/Procurement and HR/Payroll systems are now live and remain in budget for the overall programme.

The delivery of two such significant projects at the same time would have been remarkable during "business as usual" but with key teams working from home and all the service pressures of COVID, this is an amazing achievement.

Early benefits are being realised from the Finance and Procurement system in terms of self service, digitisation of processes, elimination of spreadsheets and tighter financial controls.

Council Tax & Benefits System

The replacement system went live in December 2020, a slight delay due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. New ways of delivering training and engaging with users are being designed to fit with social distancing rules. The project replaces an aging IT system with one that will be more user friendly. It is expected that within phase 1, all processes will be reviewed and redesigned to remove duplication and automate where possible.

Benefits are already being felt by the service in terms of ease of reporting and access to data. A more structured approach to training will also help to improve staff confidence and capability. Customers should benefit from faster processing times, reducing the frustration which can be felt at times with waste and unnecessary processes. Further benefits will be realised in Phase 2 with the implementation of an online portal allowing customers to manage their own accounts, providing staff with time to focus on more complex issues or supporting vulnerable customers.





Digital Neighborhood services

Since the implementation of a workflow system, Neighbourhood Services have digitised 6 processes totalling 20k transactions including special uplifts.

The process previously required significant manual intervention with forms being printed, sorted, copied and then passed to the crew to collect. The outcome of each job was then written onto each form and passed back to admin support for input. Integrating with the existing CRM system and the creation of business rules has allowed the jobs to be sorted and allocated automatically. Updates direct from the in-cab devices notify back office staff on the progress of the job.

Customers are kept up to date with the progress of the job through either text or email. The digitisation has resulted in a significant reduction in admin time of more than 1 day per week. Since the pandemic, the process has been further developed to allow customers to book slots for uplifts.



Smarter bin lorries

25 bin lorries have in cab telematics which provides a foundation to implement route optimisation which may deliver significant efficiency.

A list of all the bins to be emptied is sent to operatives with information on job complete and outstanding sent back to the supervisor automatically.

Since implementation, there have been more than 65k transactions in this process alone.



Automatically safer

Wearable tech within the Roads service monitors machinery against H&S standards. When using appropriate machinery, employees wear a watch and an alarm goes off when the standards are breached.

Operatives are consequently less likely to suffer from conditions such as white finger. Centrally stored information makes it easier to access, limiting Council liability. This has been updated to support social distancing for staff in the Roads team.





New ways of working: Placing request appeal meetings

During the pandemic, it was necessary to find an alternative way to hold placing request appeal meetings. These are meetings with a number of internal and external attendees which have to be held within a specific timescale.

A new process was developed to enable these meetings to be held remotely via conference call. This has been a fairly complex process with training and support required for Elected Members, parents and panel members.

Feedback from the service is that could change the way that these hearings are delivered in the future, as this is a more efficient way of working for all parties.

Digital communications

Education make use of a variety of ways to keep in touch with parents including text, email and the use of IVR/telephone routing.

This blended approach enables schools to get messages to parents in an appropriate and timely way. Communication methods are regularly being reviewed to improve effectiveness and reduce costs.

Education are also now using the gov.notify service to facilitate text messaging across a range of services, to communicate with parents including free school meal provision during lockdown, Early Years, Admissions, School Transport and Education Maintenance Allowance.

Parent portal launched

The new Parent Portal has gone live with a large uptake in this functionality, more than 10k pupils are now linked to an active parentsportal.com account which represents more than 50% of the pupils in East Renfrewshire. This will improve access to information for parents and reduce manual processes within schools.

86% of pupils engaged with online learning on a weekly basis during the first lockdown

Digital school dinners

A new app to allow pupils to pre-order meals was introduced across all the high schools in ERC towards the end of 2020. This reduces queues and helps to maintain social distancing.





'Open More' - enabling out of hours library access

Uses technology to access Clarkston Library using swipe cards to authenticate citizens who can borrow items via kiosks.

- ✓ The system controls the lights and alarms.
- ✓ Feedback from customers is that wifi and computers are most in demand.

Smart swimming

- ✓ Learn 2 allows swimming teachers to mark up learner progression in real time.
- ✓ Can be accessed via a tablet or smartphone and information syncs at the end of the lesson
- ✓ Allows the parent to check a child's progress almost instantly
- ✓ Reduces admin time for both staff and the public.



Online booking for sports classes launched

Booking processes improved and a mobile app developed. This has all helped to drive channel shift, moving bookings which would have been made over the phone or in person to online. This activity was accelerated by the pandemic.

Box Office: digital ticketing

Customers can access Box Office via an app on their phone, which scans the bar code and provides the Trust with real time visitor numbers.



Virtual bucket list

The Virtual Reality project within Libraries is a great example of how technology can be used to enrich lives. The team secured funding to purchase VR high quality headsets and began working with groups of older people and people who have dementia. The concept was advertised as "Come and do your bucket list in your local library". The VR experience can take people on a walking tour, to places where they have never been or back to places which evoke positive memories and emotions. The apps also allow you to participate in experiences such as jumping out of airplanes or swimming with sharks. The initiative reduces social isolation and loneliness by bringing people together as a groups to share experiences.



HSCP Services

The majority of HSCP services continued to be delivered throughout the period of the pandemic, with adapted approaches. Modified service delivery dealt with the restrictions in face to face contact and group work, typically through greater use of digital communication.

Social Work contacts

Social workers maintained contact with all their families, making greater use of telephone, Zoom and WhatsApp to stay in touch.

Care placements

With significant pressure on care placements for children and young people, virtual fostering and kinship care panels were established to support arrangements.

NHS 'Near Me'

Has been used by local GPs, other practice staff and some physios to conduct appointments online. Remote access is also used in Primary Care.

Virtual Visiting

There has been work with care homes including Bonnyton House to promote contact between relatives and residents through technology including via tablet devices.

Hospital In-reach

Hospital to home teams have undertaken reviews and participated in ward meetings virtually.

Video calls

Care Homes and social work teams have made significant use of video calling to keep up communication with families. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) activity continued with young people seen via 'Attend Anywhere'. Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) also continued, with the Police, via teleconference.

Digital Workforce: Summary ²⁵⁷



2000 Council & Education staff are being supported to work remotely

Digital Academy

100 employees in total have attended training provided in User research and Scottish Approach to Service Design. 15 employees have attended Agile for Teams.

“Insufficient staff capacity and digital skills are the most significant barriers to change”

Skills audit

A digital skills survey was carried out to help to establish a baseline, identify gaps and generate ideas for future learning and training offer. Led by OD team.

Audit Scotland: Digital Progress in Local Government Jan 20201

Dedicated Role

Dedicated Digital Learning Officer to support the roll out of digital skills.

Microsoft 365

Huge uptake in use as it enabled the transition to home working during pandemic, supported virtual training, employee engagement and social connection. Staff personas have been developed and are being used to target training activities

Digital Champions

More than 30 Digital Champions have been established across the organisation and have played a key role in supporting employees during the pandemic to make the most of their technology. Recent remote training has included an overview of Teams and MS Planner with more than 100 staff attending.



Digital inclusion

The public wifi pilot implemented wifi in three buildings, Fairweather Hall which had no wifi capacity, Linn Park which allowed connectivity to an ERC sheltered housing complex and Mearns Library. Fairweather Hall is hired for community and leisure activities and over the 3 month pilot, approximately 200 unique devices connected to the wifi each month. Given that the building is only utilised during times when it is booked, figures are higher than expected and reflect the expectations of the public around availability of wifi.

Within the sheltered housing complex, as expected, adoption was slower but 12 unique devices were connecting by month 3, access in this pilot is to residents who may have been otherwise excluded from connectivity. As staff, residents and families become familiar and more aware of the service, the expectation is that use of this service may grow. Within the Mearns library, the wifi replaced existing connectivity with a poor user experience and as a result the library saw a four-fold increase in connections from an average of around 90 per month to approximately 400 per month.

Citizen engagement

The Council Tax and Benefits project has continued to engage with citizens as part of the user centred design approach using Teams for remote testing.

Customers were asked to provide feedback about what they liked or disliked or would change or improved. This has helped to design and shape the “To Be” processes and will deliver a better customer experience.

Digital Citizens: Summary

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Digital Inclusion during the pandemic has become a priority to support remote learning, help people access services and tackle loneliness.

665
devices
with
free
wifi
provided



110
devices
in
progress



623
Chromebooks
loaned via
schools



51 mifi
boxes to
enable
free wifi



Connecting Scotland

As part of the Covid19 response, the Scottish Government launched the "Connecting Scotland" initiative to provide devices, connectivity and support to those most in need within society. Local Authorities have been at the forefront of this initiative with ERC leading nationally.

Digital Inclusion Partnership

Group established in 2020 with focus on supporting the delivery of the Connecting Scotland programme. Support has been focused on low income residences and those who are vulnerable/shielding. Local partners have helped to identify clients who would benefit including those with mental health issues, elderly, disabled and care leavers.

Research

Research conducted with 41 Connecting Scotland beneficiaries and other residents and staff across the partnership.



65% using device
daily
33% once a week

Benefits

Keeping in touch
Progressing study
Take part in groups which
would normally meet face to
face



The group is currently agreeing future partnership priorities and actions. This is likely to include a **local campaign to raise awareness** of free digital access and promote going online. Further work will also be done to **build confidence and capacity of those providing digital support**



Compared to the same period last year...



316% increase in messages through Twitter
127% increase in Twitter reach



258% increase in messages through Facebook
183% increase in Facebook reach

164% increase in use of Live Chat
70% increase in automated telephone payments
38% increase in contact via social media
47% increase in email
19% increase in enquiries to Money Advice & Rights Team (MART)
12% increase in phone contact

Increase in referrals to:

- Scottish Welfare Fund
- Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER)
- foodbanks
- Connecting Scotland

Our best performing posts were on changes to:

- refuse collection
- placing requests
- mental health advice
- hub schools
- the Council's humanitarian food hub
- business support grants
- schools making facemasks for frontline workers

80% decrease in face to face visits
82% decrease in face to face cash payments



DIGITAL BOOST power up your business

- Through the Digital Boost Programme businesses can access free digital consultants, online training and a wide range of support to help their business adapt and change.
- Since the start of April 2020 Business Gateway have delivered 11 Digital Boost Webinars with 170 attendees, with topics ranging from Facebook, Video production, Hootsuite and Instagram. There will be a further 13 workshops delivered before the end of the financial year.
- We have directly supported 8 businesses with 23 days of 1-2-1 expert Digital consultancy support to develop their web presence, ecommerce, social media and digital strategy and a further 28 days support will be delivered in the coming months. Part of the 28 days will be to support the 'Shop Local' campaign, with 8 businesses who have never traded online before having the opportunity to make their business digital and sell online for Christmas.



Business Support Grants

1030 new business grants, to a value of over £10 million, have been processed in recent months. 90% of these were received online and the other 10% via email.



The Council has made huge progress towards being a data enabled organisation with the establishment of a Data & Strategic Insight team. The team's responsibility includes data governance and stewardship, modelling and dashboards. Significant progress has been made in establishing an information governance framework and ensuring that the existing policies and procedures are fit for the digital world. Examples of some of the projects they have helped to facilitate are outlined below.

Single View of Customer

During the pandemic, data matching was undertaken to cross-match the shielding list with Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN), Homecare, District Nursing, Telecare, Housing, Children and Families, Learning Disability, Community Care, Food Hub and Young Mums' client lists.

More than 150 million data matching checks were run in the first month alone, showing overlaps in households and allowing resources to be targeted where they were most needed.

This proof of concept can be used as an approach for developing a Council wide "golden record". This has the potential to reduce costs through automating processes, proactively delivering services and reducing fraud. Initial discussions are planned with the DCE programme and Education to look at initial use cases.

Dashboarding

During the pandemic, dashboards via Power BI provided real time information to managers to support service delivery.

This included the development of an online absence dashboard providing managers information on who in their teams was affected due to illness, self isolation or underlying health conditions.

The same technology was used to support the management of outbound calls for residents who had been asked to shield.

ESRI GIS

ERC has a shared an 'open to all' mapping portal (ESRI) which enables information to be used and shared across the Council, allowing instant access within a single location.

For example, the Land Ownership shared web map has been viewed over 1600 times, removing the need for direct contact with the Council's Estates team.

East Renfrewshire was lead on an ESRI project involving all 8 City Deal councils, which mapped all city deal projects and investment areas (e.g. new houses new businesses etc) for sharing with utility companies (incl. water sewerage, gas, electricity, digital providers). Previously these providers were not set up to plan for these investment projects and had no information to use – this could cause delays to projects. The new system allows them to plan for the services required and flag any resource issues at an early enough stage to allow forward-planning and jointwork.

ERC Roads have also used ESRI to map all roads and street lights in the local area. This will join up with the website system to let customers select the lighting fault they want to report using their address and the system will automatically know which light needs repair.



We need to build upon the successes of the 2016 – 2020 strategy and the lessons learned during the pandemic response.

We now need to provide a framework for supporting our people to embrace new ways of doing business, so that we deliver the best possible services to our residents.

East Renfrewshire Digital Transformation Strategy 2021 - 2024

DRAFT

March 2021



Vision for the future

Our vision is to be a modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future with all and our ultimate aim is to make people's lives better.

We are working across East Renfrewshire to achieve best Outcomes for



EARLY YEARS AND VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE



LEARNING, LIFE AND WORK



ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY



SAFE, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES



OLDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH LONG-TERM CONDITIONS

We will achieve this by excelling in our Five Capabilities



PREVENTION



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES



DATA



MODERNISATION



DIGITAL

And along this journey, in everything we do, we must live our Values



Ambition



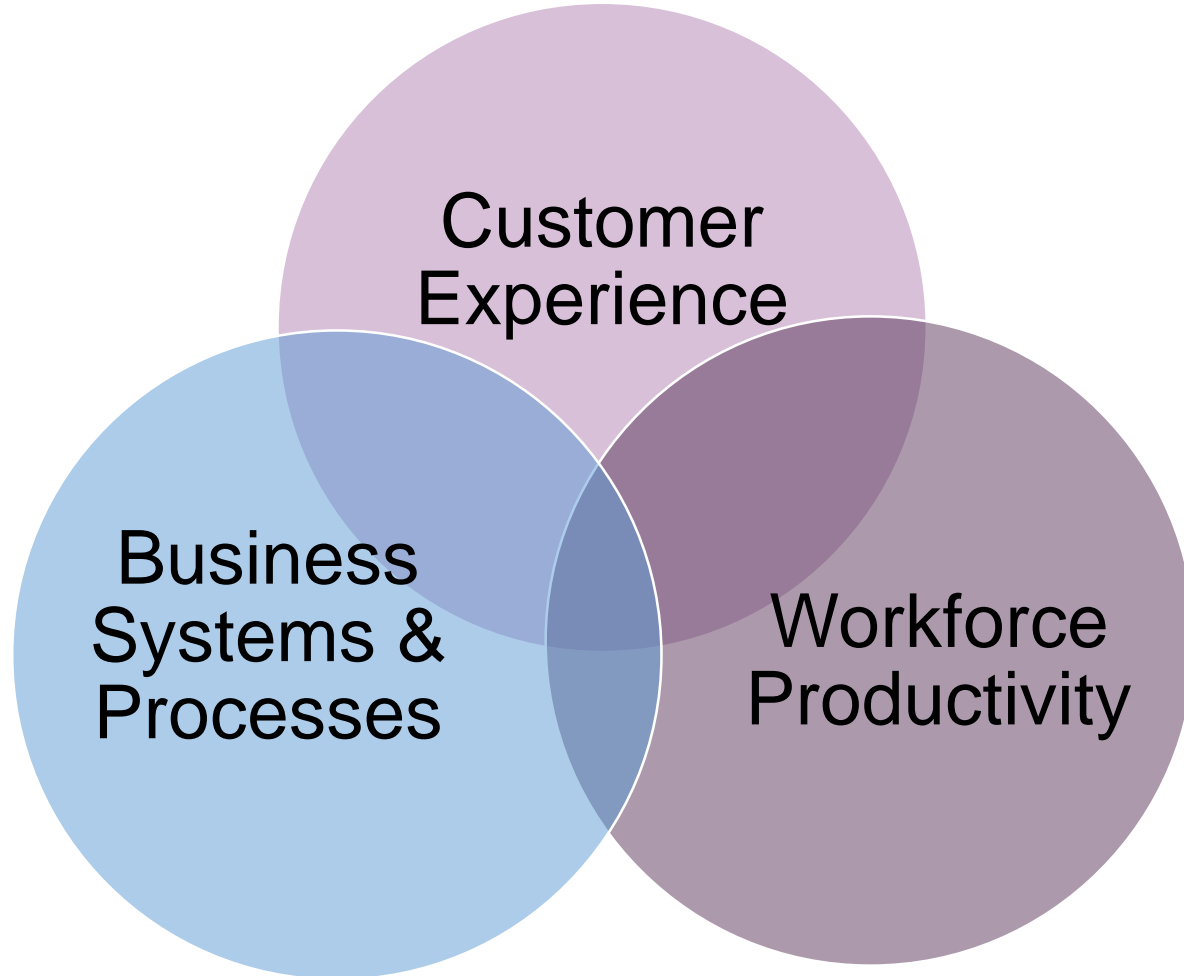
Kindness



Trust

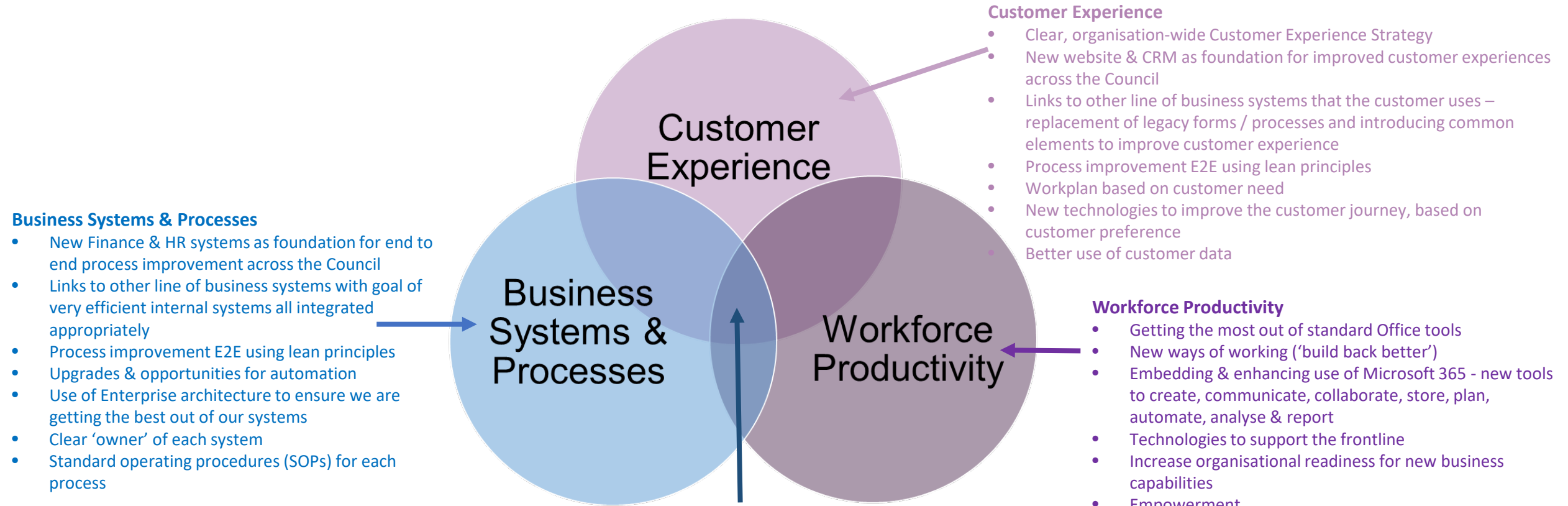
Our Digital Transformation Strategy 2021-24 is based on moving forward on 3 fronts:

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These 3 areas can be further explained:

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All 3 areas are underpinned by common methods, standards and skills

- Focus on benefits realisation, effort vs value
- Use of Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAAtSD)
- Use of national platforms/solutions where possible
- Focus on Agile project methods wherever suitable
- Small number of projects, with backlog prioritised regularly by leaders
- Organisation-wide ICT Strategy and focus on ICT security and stability
- Strategic analysis & insight
- Digital, Data & Technology (DDaT) skills
- Improved project communications & transferable lessons learned

Theme: Customer Experience

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Vision: to provide a consistent, efficient customer experience designed with the user at the heart.



Well designed, customer focused, end-to-end digital processes.



Streamlined digital processes including booking, scheduling and payments.



Customer insight at the core of any action.



Provide timely and honest information and regular updates on progress.



Customer at the heart



Design processes in an inclusive way, providing support for those who need it.



One council approach



Embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design

Future activity: Customer Experience

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Key areas of future activity have emerged from the legacy of the Digital Strategy 2016 – 2020. These significant pieces of work will need to be supported using the new transformation themes approach.

Digital Customer Experience Platform

With significant work completed on the foundation elements of the new customer platform, the programme should see delivery accelerated. New processes will be delivered for complaints and waste early in 2021 with the customer portal being available for customers from the summer. New functionality for bookings and appointments will significantly improve the customer experience by enabling full end to end online service delivery.

Analogue to Digital Telecare

ERC provide Telecare alarm services to 3000 vulnerable residents. The entire system is based on analogue phone lines which are due to be switched off nationally by 2025.

Over the next year, the project will be managing the tender process with the aim being to appoint a supplier by Spring 2021.

Connected systems

There are significant opportunities for transformation and savings through automation and the Internet of Things (IoT), offering automatic updates, remote monitoring and dynamic control.

Council Tax and Benefits

Access to the service through a fully integrated customer portal will deliver significant benefits to both the customer and the organisation, reducing processing times, increasing accuracy and delivering an improved customer experience.

Contact Centre Technology

New technology which provides a seamless multi channel contact centre will be explored. This will enable the contact centre advisers to move between different types of contact easily and will integrate with the Council's new Customer Experience Platform.

A fit for purpose, modern contact centre system will support the delivery of channel shift and provide detailed data for analysis to inform future decision making.

This would provide the opportunity to explore the possibilities of using chatbots, live chat, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and voice recognition.

Theme: Workforce Productivity ²⁷⁰



Vision: Increasing the productivity and effectiveness of our workforce enabled by Office365 capabilities.



Identify opportunities for digitisation or automation.



Reduce duplication of effort.



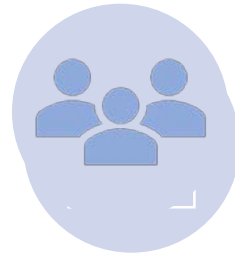
Guidance, training and support to make the most of technology.



New ways of working are essential.



Optimise the use of existing tools, maximise investment.



Align workforce and skill development plans with digital transformation plans

Future Activity: Workforce Productivity



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M365 project revised brief, to include Covid-19 impact and lessons learned:

MS Teams 6 Month Usage Figures

8.5k Team Chats



49k private chat message



33k Teams Meetings



50k Teams Calls

Collaboration & Communication

The suite of tools will help to improve collaboration between teams but also within the HSCP and between Corporate and Schools in Education.

Internal communication will be improved through utilising a range of applications which can support behaviour and culture change through transformation the way that we communicate.

Productivity

With reducing budget and increasing demand, there is a requirement to deliver more with less. Maximising the benefit of the investment already made in O365 will help to drive efficiencies. Processes will be redesigned to deliver improved business outcomes and continuous improvement will be embedded in the culture of the organisation.

Information Governance

Promoting transparency and information quality assurance to help deliver on operational efficiencies and provide right first time responses to access request in a timely manner in line with legislative timescales.

Establishing an information and records management framework that supports the Council's electronic document journey within M365 to ensure that data is stored in a compliant and secure way aiming to deliver a solution which has privacy by design at the core.



1000 M365 licences in use, 400% increase

ERC are fully engaged and collaborating with the Digital Office on M365.

Theme: Business Systems & Processes ²⁷²



Vision: Efficient and effective business systems and processes enabled by digital technology and optimised across our organisation.



Robust and consistent processes



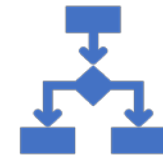
Join up information flow between systems



A process for identifying, monitoring and realising benefits is required.



Maximise the use of existing and future technology to deliver benefits.



Identifying duplication of effort and opportunity for any quick wins.

Future activity: Business Systems & Processes – Core Systems

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The ongoing delivery of the Core Systems programme will continue to play a major role in change across the Council requiring significant investment in time and money. Resource systems and processes will be optimised across the Council.

HR & Payroll

Additional functionality will be delivered including timesheets, leave, performance management and recruitment and workflow. This will increase self service and automation, reducing resource requirements and cost of delivery.

Finance

Planning for future phases is currently underway reviewing costs, resources and potential benefits to agree the best way forward. The system is currently settling in. The focus of next year is to monitor the benefits.

Process reviews will be prioritised based on effort and value



IT Systems Replacement

Replacement of major IT systems (contracts or support ending):

- New Housing management system
- SEEMIS
- HSCP will be replacing the Social Care system, CareFirst
- Culture and Leisure Trust implementing a new Library management system

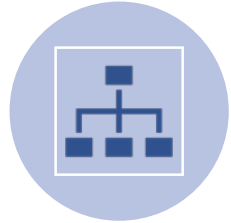
Maximising the benefits

With such a huge investment in the core systems programme, it is essential that benefits are optimised through reviewing processes using lean principles, reducing waste and automating where possible.

How we will enable the change



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Clear organisation strategy is required and projects prioritised based on outcomes.



Projects should be resourced effectively and not expected to be absorbed as part of day job.



Embed use of Scottish Approach to Service Design and Agile



Support the adoption of a project prioritisation model to help manage number or projects and focus resource for maximum benefit.



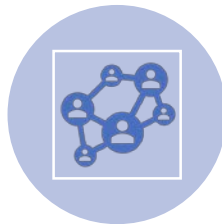
Involve employees with developing and driving change



Focus on benefits realisation, value v effort



Drive change with feedback and insight gathered from employees, customers and sector



Collaborate internally and externally through Digital Office and other partnerships