

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Agenda Item	<b>16</b>
Report No	RES/47/21

**Committee:** Corporate Resources

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Report Title:** Transformation Programme: Digital Transformation Project Update

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer – Transformation

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Sponsored by the Executive Chief Officer - Transformation, and supported by an officer board, the Digital Transformation Project is one of nine key priority projects within the Council's Transformation Programme. This report sets out the progress that has been made and future activity being undertaken within the yearlong project period.
- 1.2 Members are reminded that this project aims to accelerate the digital transformation of public services and the development of the Council's digital strategy.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note:
  - i. the overall progress to date including that the project status is being delivered on-time and within budget
  - ii. the project activities that are being undertaken that collectively support the ongoing development and delivery of Digital Transformation

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** At a one-off cost of £198k, this project will deliver annual cashable benefits of £254k. It will also provide robust business cases to support the Council's Digital Transformation objectives that may deliver further cashable benefits into 22/23 and beyond supporting the Council's approach to medium term financial planning. The project is currently being delivered on-time and within budget.
- 3.2 **Legal:** While there are no presenting legal implications arising from this report, Sponsors will seek legal advice and take appropriate actions as required as individual projects progress.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural):** All of the Recovery and Transformation workstreams will embed our equalities and Fairer Scotland duties. This will include undertaking impact assessments to inform proposals and decisions which will be informed by continuous engagement with partners and communities.

- 3.4 **Climate Change:** Understanding the links to the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the associated Climate Change projects included in the Transformation Programme and across the Council will be imperative. The PMO will assist both project areas to ensure that there is parity of purpose and any conflicts are understood. Digital Transformation must take cognisance of any unintended consequences of technological advances that may impact the Council's climate change agenda.
- 3.5 **Risk:** There can be several barriers to the adoption of digital technology and the project plan will impress the need for re-skilling and empowerment of employees and stakeholders to achieve high adoption of new systems, services, and technologies. Research data indicates that previous digital initiatives (non-HC) have resulted in significant costs. The lessons available will be considered and associated risk highlighted when assessing and proposing implementation of new digital transformation approaches. The project team are cognisant that in progressing this work a number of stakeholders and employees may be reluctant to switch to digital technology. The Council will embed a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy accompanying any changes necessary. Equally the digital divide and digital exclusion and means to mitigate this will be considered throughout the project and any proposed digital service delivery methods.
- 3.6 **Gaelic:** There are no specific Gaelic implications arising from this report. Opportunities to promote and enhance Gaelic will be picked up across a number of the workstreams.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The Digital Transformation Board continues to act as champions for the project and its associated aims, promoting the appropriate use of technology, encouraging adoption of digital solutions, and influencing the digital culture required from Staff, Members and customers.
- 4.2 The Digital Transformation Project Board meets regularly continually receiving monthly project progress status updates reports on the key products that are underway which support the delivery of Connected Customers, Digitisation of Records (Modern workspace) and Microsoft Navigator
- 4.3 The DT Project team are working closely with stakeholders, ECO's, Head of Services, ICT and senior managers. The team are collating a report of best Digital Transformation best practise which will contribute to the insight and content element of a Digital Strategy. The DT Project team have established good relationships and regular correspondence with External Partners such as HLH, Aberdeen City Council, Digital Office Scotland and Society for Innovation and Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM).
- 4.4 Full advantage is being taken from the appropriate alignment of the Council's and HLH's digital opportunities ensuring that the respective digital journeys complement and support each of the organisations. HLH's digital transformation priorities can be defined as customer-focused (internally and externally); creating a better digital environment; and making better use of technology in order to financially and operationally support the Charity. The Digital Transformation Team meet regularly with HLH to ensure alignment and inclusion in project activity.

- 4.5 The DT project is in the process of recruiting a Graduate Intern who will support the team and provides an employment opportunity and supporting the council's Modern Apprenticeship Scheme.

## 5. Progress Updates

### 5.1 Digital Transformation Project Highlight Report Update

Work Package or Activity Name	Status No significant progress Some Slippage On track Completed	RAG ● ● ● ●	Notes
Plan for a Digital Workforce - Staff Surveys	On track	●	<p>The first stage of the Plan to deliver a Digital Workforce was initiated through the development and issue of the Staff survey.</p> <p>The staff survey went live on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 and closed on the 21 October 2021.</p> <p>UHI are to undertake an analysis of the survey with results being shared by Highland Council as widely as possible. Engaging staff after surveys have been undertaken is recognised as important, as effective engagement is before and during a survey itself.</p> <p>This analysis will also be part of what informs the final development of the Digital Workforce plan with additional insight taken from the findings of the Digital Maturity Assessment and Digital Technology review reinforcing the interdependencies of the products within this Project.</p>
Members Survey	On track	●	A single Members Survey is being designed covering a range of matters including Digital Transformation. It is anticipated the survey will be issued during November 21.
Digital Technology Review	On track	●	<p>As part of the ongoing work to review the ICT Strategy, ICT are conducting a review of the current Line of Business applications being led by a newly appointed IT Solutions Architect (Applications and Data).</p> <p>One of the initial tasks to be undertaken is to review the current application portfolio and respective contracts by the end of this calendar year.</p>
Digital Maturity Assessment	On track	●	The Digital Maturity Assessment product is underway with Highland Council the first Scottish Council to be

			<p>undertaking this particular assessment.</p> <p>The DT Project Team are working closely with Digital Office Scotland who will facilitate the assessment.</p> <p>The Digital Office Scotland will engage via 1:1 with various senior managers / post holders complemented with a series of staff focus groups across Highland Council and HLH.</p> <p>The intentions are for the production of an Assessment report and Action Plan ready for implementation during 2022.</p> <p>As part of this product, the Digital Office and the DT project team will also work collectively to create a self-assessment toolkit for THC to monitor their digital maturity progress.</p>
Digital Strategy	On track	●	<p>The team have researched best practice for Digital Strategy across Scottish Councils gathering information on various approaches when aligning data and digital strategies.</p> <p>The Digital Strategy work will begin in earnest in January 2022 and the various insights, learning etc. being gathered during the project thus far will helpfully inform this work.</p> <p>The Digital Maturity Assessment and Digital Workforce Plan products will form part of the Digital Strategy which will in turn provide basis for both THC's Digital and Data Strategies. Another example of reinforcing the interdependencies of the products within this Project.</p>
Data Strategy	On track	●	<p>The Digital Transformation project team are working on a programme to gather best practice and research on what should be considered as part of a Data Strategy. The Digital Transformation Project Team are working closely with Performance &amp; Governance to ensure a sustainable Data Strategy safeguarding the organisation now and in the future. The Data Strategy will sit within the overall Digital Strategy helping to shape a robust framework and roadmap for Digital Transformation.</p>

			The Data Strategy work will begin in earnest in January 2022.
Internal Stakeholders engagement	Ongoing	●	<p>The Stakeholder Engagement plan is progressing well. The team have met with over 50 stakeholders with meetings. Meetings are 1:1s, Service Management Team meetings etc.</p> <p>The Digital Transformation Project Team are currently collating Best Practice Case Studies from across THC demonstrating good Digital Transformation work undertaken to date.</p> <p>The Digital Maturity Assessment programme will also provide the DT team with the opportunity to gather further insight and continue to connect with stakeholders.</p>
External Stakeholders Engagement	Ongoing	●	A proactive approach continues to be followed including regular contact with HLH, with other Councils such as Aberdeen City Council, Digital Office Scotland and Society for Innovation and Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM).
Established working group with ICT team and DT	Ongoing	●	<p>A weekly working group has been established and commenced in October 21.</p> <p>The purpose of the working group is to ensure consistent communications, collaboration and consistency across the work being undertaken by DT team and ICT.</p>
Microsoft	On track	●	<p>The Digital Transformation Project Team have been working closely with Microsoft to help drive forward Digital Transformation, as a key driver in increasing efficiency and productivity. An objective of this activity is to also identify how THC can maximise the utilisation of the current systems the Highland Council hold licenses for.</p> <p>The ECO Health &amp; Social Care, Service staff and the Transformation Service are working closely with Microsoft to better understand the challenges faced by the service and the ICT systems currently being used. This includes a series of sessions and workshops with key members of Children's Services. This will help identify short, medium and long-term digital solutions to help support the work undertaken by Children's</p>

			Services including building robust business cases for digital solutions.
Connected Customers	On track	●	Key development is for Council Tax bills to be available via online from April 2022.

5.2 Positive progress is being made and progress reports to this Committee will continue to be presented to Members over the forthcoming reporting periods.

## 6. Other Project Activities

6.1 The Digital Transformation Project is moving forward at pace. As we build momentum, the interdependencies across each product is becoming more evident.

6.2 As further insight is gathered and the team develop each product, information is collated that is also relevant to other areas of the project. Every element developed will contribute and help build and define the Digital Strategy. Every element developed will also define the scope for future delivery models as Digital Transformation continues to evolve at The Highland Council. Across both private and public sector organisations Digital Transformation should be approached as an integral, business as usual culture; digital by default. This is important to reflect the ever-changing environments in which we work such as culture, customer needs and advancements in technology.

### 6.3 Digital Transformation Business Case Development in 2022

The work completed by the Digital Transformation Project Team throughout the agreed products will inform Digital requirements and help to shape robust Business Cases for Digital Transformation through 2022 and beyond. The Digital Transformation Project Teams working relationships with Microsoft, ICT & Health & Social Care, as well as the work undertaken with Stakeholders will guide the development of business cases. Working collaboratively the Digital Transformation Project Team will support the development of robust Business Cases with solutions that could support improvements in service delivery including access and support the delivery of cashable benefits.

### 6.4 Delivering Digital Transformation

The DT Project Team will utilise insight from specialist organisations such as the Digital Office, Audit Scotland, Society for Innovation and Technology and Modernisation (SOCITM) and other Councils to help guide and inform the development of an effective and sustainable service delivery model for Digital Transformation moving forward. This also compliments the Council's ambitious Project Dochas which is also reported in today's agenda.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Transformation

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