

Agenda



Delegated Decisions - Cabinet Member for Community and Resources

Date: Tuesday, 14 September 2021

To: Councillor D Mayer

Item		Wards Affected
1	<u>Annual Digital Report 2020-21</u> (Pages 3 - 34)	All Wards

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Date of Issue: 6 September 2021

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Report

Cabinet Member for Community and Resources

Part 1

Date: 14 September 2021

Subject Annual Digital Report 2020-21

Purpose To provide an assessment of the Council's digital work, identify key risks and agree the action plan for 21/22

Author Digital Services Manager/Digital Projects Managers

Ward General

Summary Technology is critically important to all organisations in effective and efficient service delivery. Newport City Council relies massively on IT systems for its effective day to day operation. This is especially the case given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the vast majority of staff working from home. In addition, the provision of digital infrastructure for the city is another important aspect of the use of technology in the day to day lives of citizens.

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements.

Proposal To endorse the Annual Digital Report 2020-21 and proposed actions.

Action by Digital Services Manager
Digital Projects Manager
Head of People and Business Change

Timetable As reported

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulation – Monitoring Officer, and Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)
- Head of Finance – Chief Financial Officer
- Head of People and Business Change
- Digital City Board

Signed

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- Provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- Highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- This is the second Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its ninth year
- Identify opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan

Financial Summary

There is no specific cost associated with the report. The Funding section of the report identifies the funding of IT/digital costs. It highlights the council's increased budget in this area to improve service provision.

Risks

The council, like other organisations, has an increased reliance on IT systems for effective and efficient service delivery and this has been highlighted further by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is crucial that the council delivers in its delivery of IT service. Further details of risks are provided in the report and those identified below represent some high level risks.

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Management and development of effective IT services following transition to SRS	H	L	Many of the actions detailed in this report are designed to mitigate this risk.	Digital Services Manager and Digital team in collaboration with SRS
Cyber security risks around confidentiality, availability and integrity of council data and systems especially given increased home working as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic	H	L	Many of the actions in this report in conjunction with the annual information risk report are designed to mitigate these risks.	Digital Services Manager, Digital Team, Information Management team in collaboration with SRS
Even greater reliance on IT systems to deliver services due to the huge impact of the Coronavirus pandemic	H	M	Specific efforts to support continued service delivery by facilities for home and remote working.	Digital Services Manager and Digital team in collaboration with SRS

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The [Digital Strategy](#), approved by Cabinet in October 2015 sets the overall direction for IT and digital solutions and a major review of this has commenced. The actions outlined in this report form part of the People and Business Change service plan from 21/22 onwards.

Options Available and considered

1. Do nothing
2. Note the annual digital report and endorse its findings.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is option 2 – note the Annual Digital Report 2020/21 and endorse its findings. This will provide an understanding of the current position in relation to digital services and give an opportunity to monitor progress on actions identified

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There will be no adverse financial impact as a result of endorsing this report. The action plan is fully funded from existing budgets which were increased by £220k in 19/20, £470k in 20/21 and a further £250k in 2021/22 as part of the Corporate Plan to support Digital Aspirations. Collaborative working under the SRS arrangement also leads to efficiencies which further support this plan.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report. Any identified risks or issues arising from the delivery of the digital services will be picked up as part of the Information Risk management arrangements and the Council's corporate risk management framework.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

As the author of the paper, the comments of the Head of People and Business Change are contained throughout.

There are no HR issues relating directly to the proposals.

The report outlines how the work takes account of the sustainable development principle under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Improving our digital infrastructure within the Council and within the city will contribute towards the Well-being Goals for Wales, most notably a Prosperous Wales and a Globally Responsible Wales.

Comments of Cabinet Member

The council's previous initiatives and investment in digital technology have proved their worth, especially since the start of the Covid pandemic. This has enabled council services to function effectively with most staff working from home and has also resulted in the acceleration of various digital developments to support the organisation.

Local issues

No specific local issues.

Scrutiny Committees

This report was presented to Scrutiny Management Committee on 9th July 2021. Scrutiny comments are as below:-

- The Committee wished to make the recommendation that FOI requests be kept up to date on the transparency page of the Council website.
- The Committee acknowledged that it would take a large forum for the design of the website to be discussed but wished to recommend that the council considers improving its web presence by making the channels on the website easier to find in order to be more functional and easily accessed, this could also free up officer time with reduced queries.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment

This report is not requesting a decision and does not reflect a policy change which would impact on staff or communities. Therefore, a formal Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) is not required. However, fairness and equality are considered in service delivery, and FEIAs are completed where relevant.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This report and its associated action plan incorporates the five ways of working as below:-

- Long term – initiatives in IT/digital need to consider the long term and follow a plan as demonstrated in the existing Digital Strategy. The planned review of the Digital Strategy will enable a review of the long term dimension of the strategy. The strategic move to the cloud is one example of this long term vision.
- Prevention – preventative measures are key to ensure the effectiveness of the service by ensuring the infrastructure and systems are fit for purpose and appropriately supported and protected. The proactive migration of systems to the cloud is designed to prevent system availability problems. IT systems can provide data to inform better decision making and preventative measures.
- Integration – IT needs to be designed as part of business processes rather than an add-on at the end. The Digital team plays an important role integrating IT into business processes in conjunction with SRS.
- Collaboration – IT delivery relies on the collaboration between the council's IT service delivery partner, the Shared Resource Service (SRS) the Digital team and all council services as well as with suppliers.
- Involvement – the council has contact with internal services, members of the public and businesses in relation to IT delivery. The review and refresh of the Digital Strategy will include wide engagement with internal and external stakeholders. More generally, the council has IT systems to engage with the public including via its web site and bus Wi-Fi

Equality Act 2010

The council is currently developing a new Digital Strategy which will drive our future work programme. This will be subject to a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment which will take into account the needs of, and impact on, people that share Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act.

Socio-economic Duty

The council is currently developing a new Digital Strategy which will drive our future work programme. This will be subject to a full Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment which will take in to account the need to mitigate and improve inequalities of outcome that arise as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

No specific consultation with children and young people is relevant as part of this report.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

No specific considerations.

Consultation

Comments from members of the council's Digital City Board will be included within the text of the report in line with their role as key strategic stakeholders.

Background Papers

[Digital Strategy](#) 2015-2020

Annual Information Risk Report 2020/21

Newport City Council's Strategic Recovery Aims in response to the Covid 19 Health Emergency

Dated: 27 August 2021

Annual Digital Report 2020/21

Created by	Mark Bleazard
Date	09/04/21
Reviewed by	Digital Services
Date	30/06/21

Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Notes / changes
V0.1	09/04/21	Mark Bleazard	Initial draft based on previous report
V0.2	26/04/21	Mark Bleazard	Early draft
V0.3	24/05/21	Mark Bleazard	Further draft
V0.4	28/06/21	Mark Bleazard	Further updates
V0.5	20/07/21	Mark Bleazard	Formal Scrutiny comments added
V0.6	16/08/21	Mark Bleazard	Cabinet member comments

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Executive Summary

Digital Strategy

- **This reports recognises the increasing importance of IT/digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic**
- Work to review the existing [Digital Strategy](#) has commenced in collaboration with key stakeholders with a view to devising a new Digital Strategy

Organisation and Governance

- **To ensure effective and efficient service delivery, the Shared Resource Service (SRS) remains critical combined with a major contribution from Digital Services and Service Areas**
- **Additional resources in the Digital team are already having a positive effect for the council**
- Governance is provided by means of a number of SRS boards attended by SRS and partners, a Delivery Group plus various internal council meetings and processes
- Groups are in place to support schools in developing a digital strategy and deliver the “EdTech” project funded by Welsh Government

Performance

- Of the four performance measures, SRS is green on one and amber on the other three as was the case in 19/20 also
- **The most significant measure is performance against Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is well over the target of 85% with 91.8% of calls resolved against SLA**
- Less significant measures around customer satisfaction, call waiting times, and resolution at first point of contact are below target as in 19/20 so these need to be investigated further with SRS

Funding

- **Shared Resource Service (SRS) is funded by partner organisations**
- **The council has a number of retained budgets** including capital programme, PC replacement budget and “retained contracts” for major systems
- Additional budget pressure allocated an additional £470k p.a. from 20/21 and this has been allocated to priority areas
- **Additional £250k p.a. allocation for 21/22 onwards to be allocated based on strategic needs**
- Schools fund their own IT provision, boosted recently by Welsh Government “EdTech” funding

Projects

- The number and size of projects identified highlights the important projects carried out and the positive impact they make to service delivery.
- The majority of current and on-going projects include a significant technology element
- **Key projects during 20/21 were Test,Trace and Protect, HR/Payroll System Development, Crematorium Live Streaming, Office 365 Teams Live Events, Committee Room AV Equipment, “EdTech” and School Network Migrations**

Core Planned

- Whilst core planned work is generally less time-consuming than projects, it is very important to ensure continued effective operation of services especially from a security perspective.
- Over the last year there have been improvements in core planned work by SRS

Reactive

- The reactive IT service is often the most recognised IT function, the IT Service Desk
- Performance for reactive incidents is provided in the Performance section of this report
- An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Compliance, Security and Audit

- Most of this work is detailed in the Annual Information Risk Report
- This is crucial work, especially in the current environment

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

- **A major project led by the SRS for the migration to a new data centre was agreed by all partners**
- A number of important systems are in the cloud, with two further systems migrated in 20/21 and a third system committed to migrating in 21/22
- As part of new system procurement, future financial system to be cloud based
- More proactive move of system to the cloud planned

Devices and Operating Systems

- The final removal of all Windows 7 devices was delayed due to supply issues with laptops but this will take place in summer 21
- Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive will be rolled out to replace current Egress system for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing
- Windows devices will be updated to have the latest version of the Office 365 client that will be updated automatically

Digital Developments

- **A successful bid made to Welsh Government as part of the Digital Democracy Fund – this will facilitate hardware in the Council Chamber and software to support “hybrid meetings”**
- The roll out of the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) has been very successful across a large number of areas of the council
- Further roll out of the hybrid mail system will also be beneficial
- There remains a need for handling paper documents and the Document Services team carries out this important function
- **Public Wi-Fi is provided in the city centre, on buses and in a number of public buildings**
- **Target public building Wi-Fi savings were not realised in 20/21. Usage and costs will be reviewed. It is likely that services will continue with more modest potential savings targeted**

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

- The first phase of this project was achieved with replication of offsite backups from tape to disk
- Business continuity/disaster recovery plans will be reviewed with SRS and revised accordingly to align with planned data centre move and cloud migrations plans need to be reviewed with SRS

CoronaVirus Impact and the ‘New Normal’

- The impact of CoronaVirus on organisations is huge. The organisation has managed very well especially as a result of previous work to facilitate home and remote working. Systems will be reviewed over the forthcoming months to ensure technology supports the organisation in the ‘new normal’

1. Background and Purpose

Technology is critically important to all organisations in effective and efficient service delivery. Newport City Council relies massively on IT systems for its effective day to day operation. Whilst the council has business continuity processes enabling it to continue to function when IT systems are unavailable, this is inevitably at the detriment of the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. Continued effective service delivery despite the vast majority of staff working from as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated the robustness of IT systems although further improvements are planned. In addition, the provision of digital infrastructure for the city is another important aspect of the use of technology in the day to day lives of citizens.

The actions outlined in this report form part of the People and Business Change service plan and further detail is incorporated in the Digital team annual business plan.

1.1. Purpose of the Report and Benefits

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the IT and digital arrangements for the council and identify where action is required to identify weaknesses and deliver improvements.

The benefits of the report are as follows:

- Provide an overview of the council's IT and digital services
- Highlight the importance of digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, the opportunities they provide and the risks of under-investment
- To compare performance with previous years with the aim of continuous improvement
- This is the second Annual Digital Report designed to complement the Annual Information Risk Report which is now in its ninth year
- Identify opportunities, address weaknesses and develop an action plan

2. Current Position

This part of the report identifies the council's current position in relation to digital services.

2.1. Digital Strategy

In 2015 the [Digital Strategy](#) was developed which highlights the importance of effective digital services. This report in various ways recognises the increasing importance of IT/digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Work to review the existing Digital Strategy has commenced in collaboration with key stakeholders with a view to devising a new Digital Strategy. This will identify the key principles of digital service delivery and priority actions.

2.2. Organisation and Governance

IT Service – Shared Resource Service (SRS)

The IT Service became a partner in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on 1/4/17 so Newport City Council has been a partner for four years. As well as Newport City Council, the SRS is made up of Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Gwent Police. There is SRS representation on the council's Digital City Board as well as other groups such as the council's Information Governance Group. As detailed further in the section below, the Digital team provides the link between the council and the SRS. This important relationship continues to develop and mature. The SRS produced a report to the SRS Strategic Board on progress over the last year, especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

SRS Governance Arrangements

The SRS continues with three boards. All documents are now available to members of all boards to improve communication and transparency. The three boards are as follows:-

Strategic Board

This purpose of this board is to set the Strategic Direction of the SRS. It provides collective challenge to the Business and Collaboration Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and identifying collaborative opportunities across all partners. It provides collective challenge to the Finance and Governance Board around alignment to the SRS Strategy and assurance to all partners. It provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Community & Resources.

Finance and Governance Board

The purpose of this board is to assure the Strategic Board that the SRS is delivering value for money, support the development of a medium term financial plan for the SRS, support the audit programme at the SRS and receive updates from audit in relation to the combined audit programme, provide collective challenge to each other around alignment to the SRS Strategy. It also provides collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of Finance.

Business and Collaboration Board

The purpose of this board is to provide collective challenge to the SRS Chief Operating Officer to drive forward the SRS strategic principles including to deliver effective ICT services from a single combined unit and operate as one SRS, to improve services to provide a solid foundation upon which partner organisations can operate, to ensure the investment in technology is focused on delivery of the corporate priorities of the partner organisations, to develop a capable, professional workforce that can meet the challenges within technology over the coming years and to provide a collaborative platform for public sector organisations to share common ground. NCC is represented on this board by the Head of People and Business Change.

These boards are improving in maturity with a strong sense of collaboration from board members although clearly partners will represent their organisations' individual needs too. All decisions made by boards need agreement by all partners. Developing a strategic, cohesive vision for all partners is challenging despite each partner's commitment to the partnership and its aims.

In addition to the three boards there is also a Delivery Group.

Delivery Group

The SRS holds four weekly Delivery Group meetings with each partner separately. At these meetings, performance data is reviewed with individual partners and work is prioritised for the next four week period. NCC is represented by its client function led by the Head of People and Business Change. The focus of these meetings is being shifted to more strategic initiatives as operational service delivery improves.

Digital Services

The Digital Services team sits in the People and Business Change Service Area. It was developed from an existing team that was restructured to reflect the new requirements of a new IT Service provision. The Digital team is complemented by the existing Information Management team to form Digital Services. As a result of increased funding detailed elsewhere in the report and, in recognition of the importance of digital to service provision, two additional posts were created and are both now filled. These have increased capacity and capability of the team and are a very positive move. This is designed to provide a more strategic and wider outlook in terms of the city as well as the council. In addition, this resource enables greater engagement and a more significant contribution to plans and strategies of council services.

The Digital team plays a key role for the council. It provides the link between the council and the SRS for IT work and developments and is designed to add value in the role. It maintains an important relationship with the SRS and undertakes a client management role on behalf of the council including performance management with the SRS. It has a strategic role for the council and accordingly is reviewing [Newport City Council's Digital Strategy](#) as detailed above. It also has an important part to play in the Digital City Board. Another part of this role is to manage a number of "retained" IT budgets including contracts for most large IT applications (financials, HR etc.), a PC replacement budget for the council and a capital programme for major infrastructure updates. The addition of new staff is also designed to contribute to an improved digital infrastructure for the city with a more proactive approach. As identified in the 'Funding' section of this report, changes have been made during this year as a result of increased funding.

The Digital team also has a more operational/tactical role. This role is around:-

- reactive incidents
- core planned work to maintain the existing IT infrastructure
- projects
- compliance including Public Services Network (PSN)

In all these areas the Digital team manages the escalation and prioritisation with the SRS as necessary, working with services on behalf of the council. It also provides general advice and guidance to the council and plays a key communications role. This role is an important one for the council and the relationship with the SRS which continues to mature. Work has improved on managing core planned work over the last year.

Service Areas

Service Areas use a number of IT systems to operate their services. These systems are largely provided and managed by the IT service. Services are responsible for the information stored in their respective systems and to maximise the benefits of technology in conjunction with Digital and the SRS. As part of additional budget allocation for IT provision a fund has been set up to pay for necessary system updates that would previously have been paid for by services directly. The review of the Digital Strategy will include a large amount of engagement with internal stakeholders to ensure that their priorities are incorporated in to future plans.

Groups

“New Normal”

The “New Normal” Board was set up to develop plans for the longer term strategy of the council as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. This is with a view to recognising benefits identified during the pandemic and incorporating this in to future plans for service delivery. This is chaired by the Head of People and Business Change

Digital City Board

This board provides the strategic direction for the Council on digital matters including development and management of the council’s Digital Strategy. The role of the board has been reviewed, its terms of reference updated and future membership considered. When necessary the role of the board is to prioritise large scale projects. The Board is chaired by the Head of People Business Change and comprises representatives from areas of the Council. This group has membership from NCC and SRS.

Digital Champions

The council has approximately 30 “Digital Champions” who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing for Office 365 as detailed below.

Schools

Schools fund their own IT provision and the majority use the in house schools service provided by the Shared Resource Service (SRS) although a number have provision from other service providers. A strategic group called the Schools IT Strategic Group with representation from schools, the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital meets regularly. The group will undertake the following roles:-

- ensure that the ICT Strategic Group is kept informed of digital developments in education, identifying new opportunities and trends
- identify and support opportunities to innovate and share best practice, particularly in the use of Hwb and assist with the provision of professional learning opportunities and development of case studies
- support the ICT Strategic Group in researching what digital technology could help and enhance provision in schools
- provide professional advice from a teaching and learning perspective on the suitability and use of digital devices in schools

This strategic group focuses on the development of the IT provision in schools and recognises the importance of this to effective teaching and learning. Welsh Government provided additional funding designed to improve the infrastructure of schools under the “EdTech” programme. This and other initiatives have been progressed with the Education service, Shared Resource Service and Digital.

2.3. Performance

Performance Information

The Shared Resource Service has a number of common performance measures across all their respective partners. As such all partners have common targets and are measured on the same basis.

Performance Measures

The SRS has a number of common Performance Indicators (PI's) agreed and monitored across all partners as part of the Service Level Agreement.

Percentage of Calls Resolved Against Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The performance for the year 20/21 as a whole is 91.8% against a target of 85.0 This compares with 19/20 performance of 93.0%. This represents very good performance for reactive calls and is significantly above target. This demonstrates that reactive calls are being responded to well and generally resolved within target. Performance is consistently good throughout the year although clearly there are variations month by month ranging from 84.6% to 96.7%.

Customer Satisfaction

The performance for the year 20/21 as a whole is 64.7% of those responding were satisfied against a target of 80% so below the target. This compares with 76% for 19/20. Questionnaires are now sent electronically to all service desk incidents so this will provide a better sample in future.

Calls Resolved at First Point of Contact

The performance for the year 20/21 as a whole is 58.8% against a target of 70.0% so performance is below target. 19/20 as a whole was 60.5%. This is a challenging target that is affected by the variety and complexity of systems supported as well as turnover over of staff as the Service desk tends to be a route to other jobs and has higher turnover as a result.

Average Call Response time

The average call response time for the year is 5 minutes 27 seconds (327 seconds) against a target of 90 seconds so calls were not answered as swiftly as the target. This compares with 5 minutes 31 seconds for 19/20. The way the service desk operates has changed to try to resolve more calls at first point of contact so the target may need to be changed to reflect this move away from logging calls to resolving them.

Of the four performance measures, SRS is green on one and amber on the other three. These measures are the same for 19/20 too. However, calls resolved against SLA is the most significant measure and this is well above the target. Performance on the other measures will be raised with SRS with a view to identifying improvements required.

2.4. Funding

As detailed in the organisation section above, spend on IT/digital is incurred in various areas. The majority of the funding is provided to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) that employs IT staff and pays for a number of contracts on behalf of the council. In line with its strategy, this year the council in collaboration with SRS, has identified a number of savings in 21/22 by rationalising and retiring IT systems equating to £90k per annum. The council also has a number of budgets that remain with the council including for major systems "retained contracts", capital programme and equipment spend. The council continues to look to rationalise systems wherever possible.

As highlighted in last year's report, the Head of People and Business Change identified previously that additional funding was required to bring the council's IT spend up to the median spend across local government IT in Wales. An additional £220,000 was allocated in 2019/20 although this was required to offset budget pressures. In 2020/21 a further £470,000 was allocated to budgets and a further £250,000 is added to budgets in 2021/22. The increased 20/21 budget was allocated as anticipated in last year's report in the following areas:-

- PC replacement budget – this has started to improve the equipment being used by staff, increasing the frequency of the laptop replacement programme which will provide future improvements due to additional annual budget
- Cloud funding – this will provide funding for migration to the cloud in terms of initial and recurring costs to supplement the existing capital programme
- Cyber security – a ransomware containment solution was procured provides increased protection and a policy management solution to educate and engage with staff will be procured in 21/22
- Innovation and development fund – this provides support for digital innovation and was used to provide touch screens for committee rooms providing the ability for meetings with attendees in the building and remotely
- Digital team resources – as highlighted in the organisation section of this report two additional posts were created to increase capacity and capability
- System updates fund – this contributed to some costs associated with important system updates and will provide this annually, removing ad hoc pressures on Service Area budgets
- Robotic Process Automation - this technology is designed to automate activities carried out by IT system users to free up time to spend on higher value tasks than data entry. Initial fact finding has taken place and a solution is expected to be procured in 21/22

Spend in these areas is expected to provide improvements in a number of areas including infrastructure, equipment for staff, resources and systems. These are expected to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery given the large part technology plays in this. This additional budget was formally allocated to specific budgets in 20/21. Additional funding of £250,000 for 21/22 onwards needs to be allocated to relevant areas to ensure this is targeted at areas of specific need.

As mentioned above, schools fund their own IT provision from their own budgets. This has been supplemented by Welsh Government "EdTech" funding highlighted elsewhere in this report

2.5. Projects

Test, Trace and Protect Project

This has been a key project for the council to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic with this service provided by local authorities across Wales in collaboration with key strategic partners. The project has been supported from a technology perspective by Digital Services and SRS. This includes the provision and distribution of equipment for the team, support with digital issues including out of hours support by SRS as well as the printing and sending of letters where e-mails were not possible.

HR/Payroll System Development

A strategic review undertaken identified areas for improvement in the current HR and Payroll processes.. The objectives of the project were to support the digital transformation strategy, move away from paper based HR processes and improve employee and manager engagement. This project has been very successful and has included online checkins/performance with managers and employees, chatbot facilities, improved self service facilities, manager led recruitment and online timesheets.

Crematorium and Live Streaming of Services

SRS and Digital Services worked with Gwent Crematorium to upgrade its infrastructure and systems to facilitate the recording and live streaming of funerals to enable families and friends to witness services that they were unable to attend in person due to restrictions on the number of funeral attendees during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Office 365 – E-mail and Teams and Teams Live Events

As detailed in last year's report, Microsoft Teams was rolled out in late March 2020. This has made a huge contribution to continued, effective service delivery with the vast majority of staff working from home as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. It rapidly became the primary tool for internal communication as well as an important solution for external meetings. It has been used for communicating with members of the public including for school admission appeals.

Teams Live Events was implemented for Council and Cabinet meetings in July 2020 and has been used subsequently for these meetings. This enabled the democratic process to continue despite councillors and staff working from home and has worked well. Meetings are streamed live for the public and recordings are made available to the public as previously.

Initial work has been carried out to investigate Office 365 facilities for secure e-mail and large file transfer using the Office Mail Encryption solution. This is planned to be rolled out in the early part of 21/22.

Committee Room and Meeting Room Audio Visual Equipment

Interactive screens installed in Committee Rooms and meeting rooms. These will enable Teams meetings for those in the building as well as enabling people to join remotely. Screens have camera, speaker and microphone. These will assist as part of the 'New Normal' way of working.

CRM

The council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was replaced about 2 years ago. The council implemented the Abavus MyCouncilServices solution to include a new waste module and use of hand held devices.

Capita One Digital

The project is to enable residents to access their own data regarding Council Tax and Housing Benefits via their online customer account.

“EdTech”

55 Schools infrastructure and wireless provision has been upgraded to meet the EdTech and SRS Edu standards and systems. By 30th April 2021 a total of 6,434 devices have been provided for schools made up of 4,591 Chromebooks, 967 laptops and 419 Apple devices. An additional 3,043 EdTech funded Chromebooks were also allocated to Newport in February 2021 and these will be delivered direct to schools from the supplier.

From 1st April 2021, EdTech funding is available to pay the carrier charges on 502 MiFi devices up to 31st July 2021 to support pupils who need access to connectivity and do not have a MiFi device, Welsh Government has negotiated mobile data uplifts with a number of mobile network operators (BT Mobile, EE, SMARTY, Tesco Mobile, Three, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone). To date, 149 parents who have existing contracts with these providers have applied for mobile data uplifts via the school and local authority.

School Network Migrations

A total of 42 schools were migrated off the old Newport City Council “STEP” network to the SRS “Edu” network over the period April 2020 to April 2021. This was funded by the council corporately to support schools in this migration. The migration provides a separate, dedicated schools network that enables more appropriate services to schools and their differing needs to the corporate network.

Other Projects

Financial System Replacement

The work to procure an improved, cloud based financial system for the council has commenced and is planned to go live in the financial year 22-23. This is a very large project given the complexity and importance of the corporate financial system.

Legal Case Management System

The Legal team will migrate to a new version of its case management system that will be cloud hosted and bring a number of improvements.

iShare Move to Cloud

The council's web mapping system for internal and external usage was migrated to the cloud in June 2020

Windows 7/10 upgrade - the council continues its roll out of Windows 10 and this has been the standard used for the last few years. Some Windows 7 devices still remain due to issues with laptop supplies but these will be removed shortly.

Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) System Upgrade

A major upgrade to the council's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) was carried out to provide improved facilities including the use of a web client. Some technical issues are being addressed since go live.

HWRC Bodycams

As a result of issues arising from the Coronavirus pandemic body worn cameras were implemented to record incidents when necessary.

Office Relocation Project

Initial planning for project to move staff out of certain strategic sites currently and the move to other sites.

2.6. Core Planned

As well as larger time-limited projects, there are required pieces of work that are not reactive. This may be to provide additional system features, required updates for security purposes or work as a result of organisational changes. This work is categorised as core planned work. This work needs to be incorporated in to the wider work of the IT Service. Some of this work can be quite small but it can also be more significant despite not being as large as a project. Over the last year there have been improvements in core planned work by SRS as was the plan from last year.

The most significant of this type of work is:-

- ATOS Telephony migration/upgrade - upgrade for support and maintenance reasons and to provide headset functionality
- Childview upgrade - upgrade to the Youth Justice system with important enhancements.
- Revenues and Benefit upgrade - installation of patch release
- Capita One upgrade - various regular releases with updates and improvements to education management system
- Newport Live internet upgrade - required for UCI track cycling Nations cup series
- Oracle Financials database upgrade – test upgrade with live system to follow
- MY PC Booking system - allows members of the public to book themselves a time on public access PC's in the library
- IDOX Uniform upgrade – work commenced on upgrade to maintain support version

Most of this work requires some element of downtime. The impact of this is identified with SRS, the system provider and Digital Services and agreed by an appropriate method depending on the potential impact

2.7. Reactive

Whilst there is an important process to reduce issues with technology not working properly, clearly things don't always work and therefore the IT service needs to respond to incidents that happen in a reactive way. These incidents are logged on a service desk system by the SRS service desk or self-service by users. The management of incidents is primarily managed by the SRS but the Digital team get involved to escalate and assist with higher priority incidents by exception. Clearly the Coronavirus pandemic has caused some challenges given the need for devices to be fixed for instance when a remote fix is not possible. In the main this has been facilitated by prearranged appointments with the SRS. Details of the performance in relation to reactive incidents are included in the wider performance information section above. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Occasionally major incidents occur that may result in some system down time. These incidents are managed by SRS with support from Digital Services. On these occasions SRS and Digital Services will identify lessons learned and implement any improvements as a result.

2.8. Compliance, Security and Audit

As well as core planned work, there is work to ensure compliance with requirements such as the Public Services Network (PSN). This and other work around compliance and audit needs to be scheduled and managed between the SRS and the council. There is a small, more technical security team within the SRS that complements the Information Management team in the council.

As recommended in an SRS audit and in line with good practice, SRS has tendered for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solution and a Security Operations Centre (SOC) designed to boost preventative measures to protect the council's data and systems. This proposal will be reviewed and if agreed implemented during 21/22.

The Information Management team develops and publishes an Annual Information Risk Report that is reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The report for 20/21 has been drafted and will be reviewed when the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meets again following the impact of Coronavirus.

2.9. Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

A major project led by the SRS commenced in 20/21. This was a plan to move all SRS partners to a new data centre. All the respective partners formally signed off the business case for the data centre move which is a major milestone. For Newport specifically the [business case was agreed by Cabinet in October 2020](#). This means the migration to a new data centre replacing equipment the vast majority of which is currently in Newport's computer rooms. This will provide better resilience and availability including a core network with SRS partners. Some local network equipment in council buildings will still be required and plans are in place to commence this refresh that will include considerations around the "new normal". The council's capital programme was rolled forward from 20/21 to enable the procurement and provision of the necessary infrastructure in the data centre commencing in 21/22.

As detailed in last year's report and aligned to the Digital Strategy, more systems are being moved to the cloud over time. This has been made more sustainable by the additional budget for cloud services included in the funding section of this report. This enables the more proactive migration of systems to the cloud. This is demonstrated below with existing and future cloud migration plans. Council systems that are currently provided in the cloud are detailed as below:-

- E-mail is now in the cloud as part of the Office 365 project
- Telephony (a recent migration has removed the need for any on-premise hardware)
- Social Services system, WCCIS an all Wales cloud hosted system
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- iTrent HR/Payroll system is in a MHR cloud environment.
- Payment solution
- Home Care scheduling system

New cloud migrations that took place in 20/21

- Income management system migrated to the cloud.
- iShare web mapping solution migrated to the cloud
- Legal case management system – this project has commenced with planned migration in 21/22

Planned Cloud Migrations for 21/22 onwards

- The project to replace the existing Financial system will include migration to the cloud over currently estimated as October 2022
- It is proposed to use the cloud services budget to migrate systems to the cloud during 21/22 with some discussions that have already taken place

2.10. Devices and Operating Systems

Devices

The council continues to increase the percentage of laptops as part of its total number of computers used to encourage more flexible and agile working with access to information and records from a variety of locations. This has been invaluable during the Coronavirus pandemic with the vast majority of staff working from home. Laptops are now estimated to represent about 95% of all devices. As detailed last year, the intention is that desktop devices will only be issued if there is a technical reason why a laptop can't be deployed. The council expected to complete the deployment of Windows 10 to all its devices but this was not possible due to major delays receiving deliveries of laptops. This means a small number of Windows 7 devices exist and extended support was purchased for these devices. These devices will be replaced. A number of Windows 10 updates will also be required for a large number of devices

Microsoft Office 365 including Teams

The council previously migrated its e-mail solution to Microsoft Office 365. This currently means the use of Office 2016 and e-mail within the cloud. This provides improved collaborative, agile working facilities and information security. The solution uses Microsoft Multi Factor Authentication (MFA). In addition, the Microsoft Advanced Threat Protection (ATP) solution was implemented to protect against attachments and links sent in e-mails. The e-mail configuration includes the use of Transport Layer Security (TLS) to encrypt e-mail to external e-mail systems set up to the same standard which should include all local authorities and the public sector generally.

In March 2020 Microsoft Teams was rolled out. Teams provides instant messaging/chat facilities as well as video/audio conferencing facilities. These facilities have been used extensively since and enabled the organisation to hold a large number of virtual meetings and informal discussions. This has been invaluable to the organisation given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the solution is regularly updated by Microsoft with additional features and other improvements. The latest version of the Office 365 client will be rolled out to all Windows devices that will automatically updated as a result. As below, the plan is to migrate to Microsoft AlwaysOn VPN for remote access.

Devices for Members

The first Annual Digital Report highlighted the procurement of tablet devices for members. These, in combination with existing laptop devices have provided a good solution for members in carrying out their role and have been especially beneficial. Given that paper documents have not been provided as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, this is planned to continue with associated costs savings, environmental benefits, information security improvements and administrative efficiencies .

Digital Champions

The council has approximately 30 "Digital Champions" who are advocates for the use of digital technology. They provide a key contact point for services using digital technology. They were a key part of the testing for Microsoft Teams roll out and will be involved in 21/22 in the roll out of updated versions of Office 365 and associated features in 21/22.

Mobility solution

The use of a mobility solution is available to all staff who need to work from home following improvements in response to the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2019. Staff are able to work from anywhere where a wireless network is available, as if they were sat at their desk, which also reduces the requirement to carry paper documents. The solution uses Microsoft Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) as used for Office 365 access. The plan is to migrate to Microsoft AlwaysOn VPN that will be even easier to use and will be rolled out in 21/22.

Multi-Function Devices

'Follow Me' print is available to all users, who are able to access Council printers from any location. A new Multi-Function Device (printer/copier/scanner) contract was rolled out in October 2017 with increased security features together with enhanced scanning facilities to drive the move to digital. Due to the impact of the Coronavirus there has been much reduced use of these devices and consideration will be given to what is an appropriate number of devices in future given the likely changes to the number and frequency of staff attending some buildings.

Secure/Large File transfer solution

Egress Switch is rolled out to all users. This enables the secure transfer of e-mails and associated documents to organisations and individuals without secure e-mail facilities. The solution provides the ability to restrict access to specific documents and audit access to the information provided. It also allows large files to be safely shared via email. In line with the implementation of Egress Switch generally, the council will remove personal network storage for staff wherever possible. The plan is to replace Egress functionality with that provided within Office 365 solutions including Office Message Encryption. It is expected that the roll out of these solutions will take place from June 2021.

Xerox Mail "hybrid mail"

Further services have been set up to use the "hybrid mail" system to streamline the production of paper and electronic outputs. This enables documents to be sent to production printers in the print room and then processed through the mail room folder/insert machine. This improves security by ensuring that print outputs are split in to envelopes automatically in the folder/insert machine. The system's use continues to increase including recently Planning consultation letters that has saved time and money and streamlined the consultation letter process.

Wireless Staff Access

Wireless Access points are provided in many council buildings. This includes appropriate security controls in place. Major updates planned for 20/21 are now planned for 21/22 due to the impact of Coronavirus.

Wireless Public Access

Wireless public access is provided in select council locations and this is protected using appropriate security measures where users can create logins for a limited period. Public Wi-Fi is also now available as part of the 'Digital Newport' work in the city centre (Newport City Connect), over 50 public buildings and on public transport (Newport Community Cloud). Friendly Wi-Fi accreditation has been achieved for this set up. Gov Wi-Fi is available in various public buildings too. A budget saving proposal for 20/21 meant that this provision was being reviewed in efforts to save money but this review was deferred due to the impact of the Coronavirus and the impact of any removal of any public Wi-Fi services at any sites. This will be reviewed in 21/22 accordingly.

Physical Security

Major buildings (Civic Centre and Information Station) are limited to staff with physical access tokens and alarmed outside of opening hours. As detailed in the physical access policy:

- IT facilities must be located in secure areas protected from unauthorised access
- Any visitors to IT secure areas must be signed in and accompanied at all times
- Computer rooms are subject to additional security measures to protect them from unauthorised access, damage and interference
- Plans are in place to upgrade the system used for door access in the Civic Centre

The policy and Building Access policy also require staff to display identity badges at all times.

Mobile Phones

The council has a large number of mobile phones issued to staff. The vast majority are now smart phones with e-mail, internet access etc. For those that just need calls and texts, basic phones are provided as they are much cheaper. All phones are managed using a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution to limit access and the ability to wipe phones remotely if required. The existing mobile phone contract continues due to the impact of Coronavirus and will be reviewed in 21/22 to ensure it is fit for purpose and offers value for money.

Tablets

A relatively small number of tablets are in use across the organisation for specific purposes including tablets for members. These devices are managed using the same Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution as for mobile phones.

2.11. Digital Developments

Digital Democracy

A successful bid was made by the Governance Team and Digital to a Welsh Government Digital Democracy Fund. The bid includes the replacement of equipment and software in the Council Chamber to improve the facility. Crucially this enables the use of “hybrid meetings” where some people attend in person and some people can attend remotely. This is in part to fulfil the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This is good news and provides welcome funding to support digital democracy.

Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)

Much of the information held by the council would conventionally be stored as paper copies, on network file shares or within teams and service areas. The use of an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) provides the council with a modern, efficient, electronic system for managing documents, improving the way information and documents are used and the flow of information around the council.

EDMS has a number of benefits including security, access to information and records management by storing all service related documents securely in one place. EDMS is key to ensuring appropriate retention periods of documents stored in the system.

Since the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic, a number of departments across the Council have expressed an interest in using the EDMS solution, due the many benefits it brings including the ability to support agile working.

Despite challenges faced due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, 20/21 was a successful year for new implementations across the Council. Gwent Music Service, Communities for Work, and Private Sector Housing were implemented and are now live. In addition to this, over the past year two system upgrades have been achieved. One of which being a major upgrade, which involved training over 300 staff remotely and providing guidance to over 1000 users.

Looking ahead to 2021/22, Street Naming & Numbering, Flying Start, Strategic Housing, and Public Protection are in progress and expected to be delivered in the coming months. A new module called Email Connect is also expected to be deployed across file systems. This new module will create further efficiencies for departments, which aims to cut down document processing times.

Document Services

Whilst the intention of the organisation is to use digital methods wherever possible, there is clearly a need for handling paper documents and the Document Services team carries out this important function. The team manages mail, print, scanning and paper document storage.

Mail and other items are received by the council from Royal Mail and various couriers/suppliers. Out-going mail is prepared by Document Services and collected via Royal Mail daily. The council has a central print room with digital equipment for printing internal documents, leaflets etc. The contract for the print room equipment will be reviewed and future options considered. Where necessary Document Services commissions external printers for specific jobs. Document Services carries out central scanning for a large number of services using the EDMS system detailed above.

The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of all this work to support the wider organisation with mail, print and scanning. In addition to the central print facilities the council has a fleet of multi-function devices (MFD's) across sites that provide printing, copying and scanning facilities. Print volumes generally are reducing over time and scanning is increasing in a move to more digital ways of working. MFD print volumes have been down as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The exiting MFD contract was extended for a year to enable a review in relation to future needs given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. This contract will be reviewed this year with consideration of a future contact.

The council also has a hybrid mail solution that is designed to simplify and streamline the processes for out-going mail including the ability to send more information electronically. The proportion of documents going through this system continues to increase that in turns reduces the amount of franking carried out. Mail costs via the hybrid mail solution are cheaper than the equivalent franked mail costs which is one of the main drivers for the roll out of this system. This is quite a time-consuming process to roll out as this needs processes for document creation of documents to be reviewed and reengineered. It has been agreed that the EDMS Project Manager will lead on this to provide greater resource and impetus and this work is very complementary to the work on the EDMS solution.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology is designed to automate repetitive tasks to reduce data entry and streamline routine tasks. It can also be used for data migration and other tasks. RPA has been identified as a technology that can improve the council's effectiveness and efficiency and budget has been allocated to facilitate its use. Initial opportunities for the use of RPA are being considered with the likely option of commencing a pilot for RPA

Public Building Wi-Fi

Originally "Super Connected Cities" funding was provided which enabled a service called "Newport Community Connect", a free public Wi-Fi service in over 50 public buildings in the city. Council funding was then identified to maintain service provision. A savings proposal to reduce and remove services with little usage was agreed for 2020/2021 but this will be reviewed in light of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Whilst a number of changes were made to the service to make some savings, these were less than originally planned as a result of the potential impact with the uncertainties due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

As community centres open from 17th May 21 we will be able to anticipate usage of these centres post lockdown, 2020 has been a year of long and short-term lockdowns, so a true reflection of usage cannot be measured. A quarter's usage post lockdown and engagement with engagement with these centres and community groups that use these centres will give us more insight into accurate usage.

City Centre Wi-Fi

The City Centre Wi-Fi is provided as a concession with a company and this serves the area around the city centre only.

Bus Wi-Fi

Similar to the public building Wi-Fi, the council had funding from Super Connected Cities that provided free Wi-Fi on Newport buses. Council funding was then identified to maintain service provision in conjunction with Newport Transport. This service has always been well used and the council uses it as a way to engage with the public with short online surveys.

LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) pilot

In conjunction with a supplier, the council has been piloting a LoRaWAN network. This is effectively an Internet of Things (IoT) network that includes trialling sensors connected to the network for various purposes. As this is at a pilot stage, there have been some issues with the underlying sensors and more work is required to evaluate future benefits and potential expansion of the network. A specific project has been identified to test the technology further with improved sensors designed specifically for a LoRaWAN network and this will take place in the summer of 2021.

Mobile Networks and 5G

5G networks are starting to be rolled out by mobile operators across the UK but, at the time of writing this report, Newport is not included in any current plans for 5G. Whilst there may be some planning considerations when mobile operators want to change their infrastructure, the council has no real influence on the roll out of such networks or general mobile networks. 5G is significantly faster than existing 4G networks and therefore provides benefits to consumers for streaming high quality video and other tasks that need increased bandwidth.

2.12. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

There is an ever-increasing reliance on digital technology to support business activities and it is therefore important to maximise the availability of systems. Increased resilience was a factor in the decision to join the Shared Resource Service (SRS) and this is expected to be improved by the planned data centre move.

As a result of previous guidance from Audit Wales, the council is part way through a new hardware was set up with the migration of backups of key systems from tape to disk. Previous plans to provide access to systems should both server rooms at the Civic Centre not be available are being reviewed in light of the improved resilience from a move to the new SRS data centre and the existing and planned migration of systems to the cloud.

A quicker and more proactive move of systems to the cloud will take place in 21/22 that is designed to provide greater availability and better business continuity/disaster recovery.

A number of staff took part in a simulated cyber exercise set up by the Local Resilience Forum and included a variety of stakeholders. This was very useful to all concerned.

2.13. CoronaVirus Impact and 'New Normal'

A number of areas of this report mention the impact of the CoronaVirus pandemic which had the most significant effect on organisations from "lockdown" which commenced on 23rd March 2020. There has been a huge impact on the organisation since then in common with nationally/internationally. As detailed in last year's report Coronavirus health emergency has posed significant and unprecedented challenge to the way we deliver our services and our way of life. Since March 2020, the Council's focus has been to preserve life, minimise the spread of the virus and support our communities and the vulnerable.

In moving towards the recovery of Council services, enable operation under a 'new normal' and to maintain focus on the Council's Corporate Plan 2017-22, new Strategic Aims were approved by Cabinet. The Strategic Recovery Aims have been drafted in reflection of the work undertaken by the Council in response to the crisis while also considering the Council's long-term aim to '*build a better Newport*' and supporting the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. The Strategic Aims and supporting actions in that report set out the Council's focus and prioritisation of its work as Newport and Wales eases out of the lockdown and back into a 'new normal'.

It is clear as a result of CoronaVirus pandemic that digital technology has even greater importance than before, evidenced by the council's implementation of massively increased home working. This places even greater emphasis on the availability and performance of IT systems in this new environment. It also means greater information governance challenges from increased home working. In the wider perspective of the city, the council recognises the potential for digital exclusion in these particularly challenging times. This was recognised in the council's community impact assessment for CoronaVirus with the need to address this this challenge.

As detailed elsewhere in this report, a New Normal Project Board is looking at issues arising from the Coronavirus impact and how the organisation operates in future. A 'New Normal' report was initially considered by Scrutiny Management Committee in February and April 2021. A report will go to Cabinet in July asking for approval to move to the next, more detailed phase.

3. Conclusions

Digital Strategy

This report in various ways recognises the increasing importance of IT/digital services to the organisation especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Work to review the existing Digital Strategy has commenced in collaboration with key stakeholders with a view to devising a new Digital Strategy. This will identify the key principles of digital service delivery and priority actions and is a key strategy linked to the council's corporate plan.

Organisation and Governance

The report highlights the key importance of the Shared Resource Service, the council's Digital team and Service Areas in improving IT provision and the associated impact on wider service delivery. The SRS is becoming more mature in partnership with the Digital team, Service Areas and the other partners. A number of Boards and groups exist that provide governance around service delivery and these are maturing. **Additional resources in the Digital team are already having a positive effect for the council** the importance of IT in schools is also recognised and this is being developed by a strategic group. This is complemented by Welsh Government funding of its "Edtech" programme across Wales and the implementation of this in Newport has been successfully delivered to date in partnership between SRS, Education, schools and the Digital team.

Performance

For 20/21 and 19/20, of the four performance measures SRS is green on one and amber on the other three. Whilst calls resolved against SLA is the most significant measure and this was well above the target for both years, the other measures need to be reviewed further and appropriate actions taken by SRS and the Digital team. This may include changes to targets around call times to reflect the drive to resolve issues rather than just log calls. Promotion of more self-service is likely to be one of the actions required but others will be considered

Funding

This report details the funding for IT services and explains that Shared Resource Service (SRS) funding is provided by partner organisations. Whilst funding is allocated primarily to the Shared Resource Service, the Digital team also manages a number of significant retained budgets. The importance of technology has been recognised and the additional funding in 20/21 has been allocated to specific budgets for specific purposes. Additional resources in the Digital team have made a positive contribution already. The additional funding is a very positive commitment by the council especially in the current challenging financial environment supplemented by an additional £250k in 21/22. This will be allocated to appropriate budgets following a review of the most strategic needs.

Projects

The number and size of projects identified in the section above highlights the important projects carried out and the positive impact they make to service delivery. Nearly all projects include a significant technology part and key projects during 20/21 were Test, Trace and Protect, HR/Payroll System Development, Crematorium Live Streaming, Office 365 Teams Live Events, Committee Room AV Equipment, "EdTech" and School Network Migrations.

Core Planned

Whilst core planned work is generally less time-consuming than projects, it is very important to ensure continued effective operation of services especially from a security perspective. As usual, a number of important updates were made to various systems including telephony, education system and the Revenues and Benefits system. Over the last year there have been improvements in core planned work by SRS

Compliance, Security and Audit

The majority of this work is detailed in the Annual Information Risk Report so this report makes little mention but this is crucial work especially in the current environment. The Information Management team, Digital team and the SRS work collectively to progress this work to keep systems and information secure. Consideration will be given to an SRS partner procurement for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and a Security Operations Centre (SOC)

Reactive

The reactive IT service is often the most recognised IT function given that IT systems don't work all the time and a reactive service desk is required to respond to these incidents. This service is provided by the SRS. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted. Where major incidents happen these need to be managed by SRS and Digital Services with the identification of appropriate lessons learned and improvements made.

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud

A business case was agreed by all SRS partners for a data centre move to include core shared infrastructure and this is being progressed by SRS. This will also include local networking equipment that is being procured. A number of important systems are now in the cloud with two further systems migrated during 20/21 and a third committed to. This strategy will continue with the move to more of a revenue funding model and the more proactive migration of key systems to the cloud.

Devices and Operating Systems

The organisation is in a good position in relation to the use of Windows 10. A small number of Windows 7 devices remain due to supply issues with new laptops. The intention is to remove all Windows 7 laptops by August 2021. A number of Windows 10 updates will need to take place. Windows devices will be updated to have the latest version of Office 365 that will provide new features and security improvements that will also be updated automatically. Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive solutions will be rolled out for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing. The existing mobile phone contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution procured.

Digital Developments

Digital Democracy – a successful bid to Welsh Government will result in enhanced hardware and software to facilitate “hybrid meetings” as part of the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

EDMS - Gwent Music Service, Communities for Work, and Private Sector Housing were implemented and are now live on EDMS in addition to the large number of previous services using. A major upgrade to the system was carried out using a web client that simplifies deployment and provides greater agility. A new module called E-mail Connect will be implemented in 21/22.

Document Services is an important enabler for mail, print and paper document storage with an increasing move to scanning documents in to the EDMS system. This has assisted with the organisation's operation due to Coronavirus pandemic. Further work is required in the roll out of the hybrid mail system to improve mail and print processes and this will now be led by the EDMs Project Manager to increase the resource to support this roll out.

Public Wi-Fi is provided in the city centre, on buses and in a number of public buildings. The projected public building Wi-Fi savings were not realised in 20/21 and usage and costs will be reviewed. Given the impact of Coronavirus pandemic and challenges over digital inclusion it is likely that services will continue with more modest potential savings targeted.

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery

The first phase of this project was achieved with replication of offsite backups from tape to disk. Previous plans to provide access to systems should both server rooms at the Civic Centre not be available are being reviewed in light of the improved resilience from a move to the new SRS data centre and the existing and planned migration of systems to the cloud.

CoronaVirus Impact and 'New Normal'

This has had a major impact on Newport City Council along with all other organisations. It has accelerated a number of initiatives whilst placing greater emphasis on IT systems and information governance challenges. A 'New Normal' report was initially considered by Scrutiny Management Committee in February 2021. A report will go to Cabinet in July asking for approval to move to the next, more detailed phase. Much of the technology required for the new normal is already in place but future infrastructure plans will be tailored to the requirements of the new normal. The council maintains a strong commitment to digital as demonstrated by its increased funding together with the activities detailed within this report many of which facilitate a 'New Normal' way of working.

4. Action Plan

Digital Strategy

It is recognised that the council's existing Digital Strategy needs to be reviewed and updated accordingly and this is to be completed by March 22. This involves a lot of work, especially engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

Organisation and Governance - the relationship between the council and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) continues to mature but the aim is to improve this further still and the Digital team especially has a key role in this. The council will work with SRS on the deliverables of the new Digital Strategy. The Digital team also has an on-going role to engage with other services and contribute to their respective plans and strategies.

Performance - this is generally very good in terms of calls resolved against SLA. Three other measures are amber and improvements will be followed up on in these areas with SRS and Digital. The Digital team will work with SRS to review and address the measures from SRS where performance is below target.

Funding - the need for additional funding for IT/digital was identified and the additional funding for 21/22 will be allocated based on strategic needs with plans developed.

Projects - there will be a number of important projects in 21/22. This will include facilitating hybrid council meetings, the procurement of a new financial system, further roll out of Office 365 and various other facilities to support the 'New Normal'.

Core Planned - core planned work is required to ensure systems are kept up to date. A number took place in 20/21 and will be required in 21/22 and future years.

Compliance, Security and Audit

Consideration will be given to an SRS partner procurement for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and a Security Operations Centre (SOC)

Reactive - incidents are logged on a service desk system by the SRS service desk or self-service by users. SRS and Digital will continue to manage and escalate incidents as necessary based on priorities. An initiative to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone will be promoted.

Infrastructure, Capital Programme and Cloud – SRS will progress the data centre move with partners together with the council's local network infrastructure refresh. The council plans to migrate to a cloud based financial system as part of a procurement process for a new financial system. The council will also proactively move more system to the cloud.

Devices and Operating Systems – the last Windows 7 devices will be replaced by Windows 10 devices. Windows devices will be updated to have the latest version of Office 365. Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive solutions will be rolled out of solutions for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing. The Microsoft AlwaysOn VPN solution will be rolled out as the remote access solution replacing the current solution that will result in costs savings. The existing mobile phone contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution procured.

Digital Developments

Digital Democracy – the implementation of hardware in the Council Chamber and software to support "hybrid meetings" will be installed and set up.

EDMS – further roll out across services is planned, including the roll out of the E-Mail Connect module.

Public building Wi-Fi usage and costs will be reviewed. Given the impact of Coronavirus pandemic and challenges over digital inclusion it is likely that services will continue with more modest potential savings targeted.

Further roll out of the hybrid mail system will also be beneficial and will now be led by the EDMS Project Manager. The contracts for the central print room and the Multi Function Device (MFD) contracts will be reviewed. The public Wi-Fi service will be reviewed to balance savings targets with its potential contribution to digital inclusion as part of the Digital Strategy review. Initial opportunities for the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) will be considered. Use of the LoRaWAN network will be reviewed and further roll out considered.

Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery - business continuity/disaster recovery plans will be reviewed with SRS and revise accordingly to align with planned data centre move and cloud migrations plans need to be reviewed with SRS.

CoronaVirus Impact and ‘New Normal’

The impact of CoronaVirus is huge on organisations and the reliance on and use of technology is reviewed to ensure technology supports the organisation in future in the “new normal”.

4.1. Risk Management

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
Digital Strategy is not up to date/relevant	M	L	Review and update Digital Strategy with stakeholders	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager with internal and external stakeholders in partnership with SRS
Funding of service is not sufficient to meet the organisation's demands and aspirations, especially given the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic	M	L	Additional funding identified and to be allocated to areas of need	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with Head of PBC / SRS management
Delivery of IT Service by Shared Resource Service (SRS) provides less control	M	M	Develop relationship with the SRS further and contribute to its strategic direction and governance. Develop client side role to provide strategic input and performance monitoring. Continue to contribute to the delivery of projects, core planned and reactive work	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with Head of PBC / SRS management
Critical IT systems are not available to services	H	L	Continue to review and refine priorities for critical IT systems. Plan for data centre migration. Make a more proactive move of systems to the cloud to provide improved availability and resilience	Digital Services Manager and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with SRS and services
Appropriate devices and operating systems are not available	M	L	Windows 10 on almost all devices now. Consider the most appropriate devices as part of the Digital Strategy review and refresh	Digital Services Manager (DSM) and Digital Projects Manager in conjunction with in conjunction with SRS

4.2. Action Plan

Action	Deadline
Digital Strategy	
Review - existing Digital Strategy to be reviewed and updated following internal and external stakeholder engagement	Mar 22
Organisation and Governance	
SRS Boards - represent Council at Shared Resource Service (SRS) Board meetings	On-going
Relationship management - continue to develop relationship between Council and SRS especially in relation to the planned deliverables in the revised Digital Strategy.	On-going
“EdTech” project - work with Education service and SRS in delivery of Welsh Government “Edtech” funding for 21/22 mainly around audio visual equipment	Mar 22
Education/schools support – support Education service, schools and SRS in development of digital strategy for schools in Newport	On-going
Digital team engagement with services and contribution to other plans and strategies throughout the organisation	On-going
Performance	
Monitor and manage performance between SRS and Digital team	On-going
Review and monitor performance on the measures that have not met target	Sep 21
Funding	
Additional funding - identify areas for allocation of additional funding for 21/22 and develop specific plans for this	Aug 21
Projects	
Management/support – Management/support of projects in conjunction with SRS and Service Areas	On-going
Core Planned	
Core planned work - management of core planned work in conjunction with SRS and Service Areas	On-going
Compliance, Security and Audit	
Consideration will be given to an SRS partner procurement for a Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) system and a Security Operations Centre (SOC)	Jul 21
Reactive	
Work with SRS and Digital to escalate as necessary	On-going
Digital team and SRS to promote self-service logging of incidents rather than by telephone	Sep 21
Infrastructure and Capital programme	
Data centre move and capital programme - work with SRS on this project to improve resilience	On-going
Cloud services – proactively look to migrate systems to the cloud as with cloud the preferred option when practical	On-going
Cloud services - new financial system to be cloud based expected to migrate within the next 18 months.	
Devices and Operating Systems	
Windows 7/10 - replace/upgrade final Windows 7 devices to Windows 10	Aug 21
Windows 10 – a large number of upgrades of existing Windows 10 version required	Aug 21
Microsoft Office Message Encryption and OneDrive - roll out of solutions for secure messaging and large/secure file sharing	Jun 21
Office 365 - Windows devices will be updated to have the latest version that will be updated automatically	Sep 21
Microsoft AlwaysOn VPN solution – roll out of solution	Oct 21

Mobile Phones - the existing mobile phone contract needs to be reviewed and a suitable solution procured.	Sep 21
Laptops – laptops are to be the preferred replacement devices unless there is a strong and specific reason to have a desktop device	On-going
Digital Developments	
Digital Democracy – the implementation of hardware in the Council Chamber and software to support “hybrid meetings” will be installed and set up.	Oct 21
Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) - continue roll out of (EDMS) through organisation	On-going
Implementation of E-mail Connect module	Sep 21
Document Services - continued management of mail, print, scanning and paper file storage	On-going
Hybrid Mail Solution – roll out across further areas of hybrid mail solution to streamline process for mail	On-going
Multi-Function Devices – further review of existing Multi-Function Device contract and future plans in the light of “new normal”	Oct 21
Print Room Equipment contract – review of existing contract and future needs	Aug 21
Robotic Process Automation (RPA) - Initial opportunities for the use of RPA considered with a likely pilot	Sep 21
Public Buildings Wi-Fi - further review of options for public buildings Wi-Fi provision given savings target and impact of Coronavirus	Oct 21
LoRaWAN network - consider extension and future roll out as appropriate	On-going
Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery	
Plans - review business continuity/disaster recovery plans with SRS and revise accordingly to align with planned data centre move and cloud migrations	Oct 21
CoronaVirus Impact	
Review IT provision and implement changes required as a result of CoronaVirus and the “new normal”	On-going

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