

Meeting date: 19th April 2021
Report to: Cabinet Member for Resources



Subject/report title: ICT Capital Project Update
Report from: Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive
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Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet Member for Resources on the current status of the Capital ICT Projects Programme.
- 1.2 This report also seeks permission from the Cabinet Member to allocate funds from the Capital ICT Projects Programme to a new proposed project as detailed in this report, and to approve the transfer of outstanding balances from closed projects to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 To note the current status of the Capital ICT Projects Programme.
- 2.2 To approve the following funding allocation from the Capital ICT Projects Programme:
 - a) £30,000 to cover the cost of both external consultancy and internal staffing charges to enable the Council to implement Microsoft Intune and AutoPilot cloud based Device Management services to support the Digital Programme and Smarter Ways of Working.

- 2.3 To approve the transfer of outstanding balances from the following projects to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund:
- a) £38,240 from the E-Revenues project.
 - b) £52,185 from the new web site project.
 - c) £8,000 from the CareDirector software upgrade project.
 - d) £20,000 from the Symology Direct Interface Software project.
 - e) £158 from the Wi-Fi printing for Libraries project.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Capital ICT Projects Programme for 2021-22 has a proposed budget of £1,106,867. Of this funding all but £70,260 has been committed to the projects that make up the current Capital ICT projects Programme. The remaining £70,260 is available to spend on ICT projects approved by the Cabinet Member. The proposed budget includes £226,867 of carry forwards from the final 2020-21 position which will be included within the outturn report to Full Cabinet for approval.

4. Progress on current projects

- 4.1 This section highlights progress on projects that were previously reported to the Cabinet Member for Resources in October 2020. The funds allocated to the projects, the spend to date, the predicted total spend on the project and any variance is shown in Appendix 1, Section A 'Current Projects (previously reported to members)'.
- 4.2 The **E-Revenues** project involves the provision of software to meet the requirement to further digitize the Council's Revenue and Benefits services in line with the corporate Digital Strategy. The Citizen Access Revenues software has been implemented and the final phase of the project to implement the Citizen Access Benefits module was due to go live in October 2020 but has been delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and a resulting reprioritisation of resources.
- 4.3 Since the start of the Pandemic, the Income and Awards Division has seen a sharp increase in demand for services including administering a considerable increase in the number of benefit claims as well as administering various government initiatives such as business grants and the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. This increasing demand on service provision has affected the available resource capacity in the team and as a result, its ability to implement the Citizen Access Benefits module. As a result, the Service plans to extend the contract with the existing supplier until it is in a position to look again at Citizen Access Benefits. Officers recommend for now returning the £38,240 funding back to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund. The Service may make a bid in future for funding to implement the software as and when circumstances change.
- 4.4 **New Corporate Web Site.** Officers previously reported that a new website content management system had been purchased to replace the existing Council Website with a more up to date design and improved customer experience. The new website went live as planned in December and the old web site has now been

decommissioned.

- 4.5 Officers report that there are two areas of work outstanding; to update the branding on the corporate payment site, and the branding on the foster parents' portal, to reflect the new corporate branding. Once these two outstanding areas of work are complete, there is no further spend on the project and the project will therefore complete with an underspend of £52,185 which Officers recommend returning back to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund to spend on future ICT projects approved by the Cabinet Member.
- 4.6 **CareDirector software upgrade for the Solihull Youth Offending Service.** CareDirector is the case management software used by the Solihull Youth Offending Service. A new version of the software has been issued by the supplier with additional functionality and a technology update. Officers report that the supplier was unable to successfully update the software and the Youth Offending service is now looking at their options going forward. Officers recommend returning the £8k funding back to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund to spend on future ICT projects approved by the Cabinet Member. The only spend on this project to date has been £500 on internal staffing recharges associated with the project.
- 4.7 **Oracle Cloud.** The Oracle eBusiness System (EBS) has been in use by the Council since 1999 as a major strategic system for the Council. It provides the core IT platform for finance, procurement, accounts receivable, HR, payroll, organisational development and is used by the Council, Solihull Community Housing and schools in the Borough. Officers report that this project is progressing and due to the importance of the Oracle Cloud Project, Officers will be submitting separate reports to members outlining progress in due course, with the next report going to the Resources Scrutiny Board on 6th April 2021.
- 4.8 **Symology Customer Services module and Direct Interface Software.** The software will enable the Council to send and receive street lighting and pothole customer service requests to/from the Council's Oracle Service Cloud system and Symology Insight system automatically without manual intervention, thus saving staff time and offering a more efficient, faster service for the customer.
- 4.9 Officers report that the main Symology system is being moved to the Cloud and the cloud based Interface software is significantly cheaper than installing the software on premise. As a result, the Service itself will pay for the cost of the cloud based interface software as part of the overall Symology Cloud move and Officers recommend that the £20,000 of funding therefore be returned to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund. There has been no spend on the project to date.
- 4.10 **New Civica web payment system.** This project will upgrade the corporate web payment system to make it WCAG 2.1 Level AA compliant. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG 2.1) are an internationally recognised set of recommendations for improving web accessibility for people with disabilities. Under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, the UK Government has mandated that all UK Public Sector bodies must meet the requirements of the WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard.
- 4.11 While the new corporate web site has been designed to meet the WCAG 2.1 Level AA

requirement, the current Civica web payment application (eStore), which processes the majority of payments made via the corporate web site, has not. The supplier (Civica) has written a new version of the software (eStore V2) which is compliant with the standard and which also features a number of functionality improvements. Upgrading the Civica eStore web payment system to version 2 will ensure that the Council meets the WCAG 2.1 regulations as mandated by the UK Government.

- 4.12 Officers report that the system has been tested and is working and they anticipate agreeing go live dates shortly following discussions with the supplier.
- 4.13 **Customer Wi-Fi Printing.** Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Library service were receiving an increasing number of requests from customers for print services within the Council's libraries. The Service is now undertaking a pilot of Wi-Fi printing, which will enable customers to print out content from their personal device to a library printer, to assess both the demand and feasibility of such a solution.
- 4.14 Officers report that the solution is now installed and is currently being tested at three pilot libraries. Following testing, Officers anticipate making the solution available for use by customers once the libraries re-open.

5. Proposed Investment Decisions (April 2021)

- 5.1 Officers recommend supporting the following new request with funding provided from the Capital ICT Projects Programme. The proposed funding to be allocated is also listed in Appendix 1, Section B 'Investment Decisions recommended by Officers (April 2021)'.
- 5.2 Officers recommend a funding allocation of £30,000 be made available to support a project to implement **Microsoft InTune and AutoPilot**. This project supports the Digital Programme and Smarter Ways of Working.
- 5.3 Microsoft Intune is a cloud-based service that will enable Officers to securely manage the Council's mobile phones and PC/Laptop estates. The cloud based nature of the software supports Smarter Ways of Working and increases resilience by making the Council less reliant on its fixed Data Centre. Microsoft AutoPilot is a cloud based service that will enable Officers to set up and preconfigure laptops more easily and quickly leading to faster deployment. Both products fit with the corporate strategy to move to Microsoft Office 365 and are available for no additional charge under the Council's existing Microsoft licensing agreement. They will enable savings by allowing existing legacy management software to be discontinued. The funding requirement of £30,000 is required to provide expert consultancy to support Officers in implementing the software and to cover the costs of internal staff officer time.
- 5.4 Subject to the Cabinet Member's approval of the proposed investment decision outlined in this section of the report, and subject to the Cabinet Member's approval of the transfer of outstanding balances to the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund, highlighted in 2.3 above, there will be £158,843 remaining in the Capital Programme ICT Projects Fund to spend on future ICT projects approved by the Cabinet Member.
- 5.5 Officers are considering further project proposals around the Digital Programme and Smarter Ways of Working and intend to bring papers outlining their recommendations to a future cabinet meeting.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
Economy: 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing.	Not Applicable
Environment: 4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions.	Not Applicable
People and Communities: 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs.	Not Applicable

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 This report has not been considered by scrutiny.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 As set out in the report.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 There are no Legal implications that need to be highlighted.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 There are no risk implications that need to be highlighted.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 As the statutory equality duty is ongoing, all projects in the programme will be reviewed to ensure that we have captured any equality considerations that may have arisen since their initiation and/or implementation.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix 1: Progress and spend on the Capital ICT Projects Programme.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None