

Appendix 2: The Digital First Programme – Project Updates

1. The following projects are part of the Digital First programme:

Hybrid Mail

2. Hybrid Mail is a process that lets users securely send mail from their computers to a distribution centre where it is packaged and made ready for distribution using the latest technology. Benchmarking with other organisations' improvement initiatives highlighted that the use of this method of post can realise cost reductions of between 30% - 35% in sending outgoing mail.
3. Cardiff Council sends 2.7 million mail items per year. The total actual spend for 2016/2017 was £1.7m, against a budget of £1.1m.
4. While 1.1 million items are batched and sent via the Council's internal print room, the remaining 1.6 million items are sent using a range of methods and service-specific arrangements. With such high volumes of post being sent, a corporate solution has the potential to realise significant savings for the Council.
5. A number of key benefits (both financial and non-financial) can be achieved by moving to a Hybrid Mail solution, including:
 - Reduction in the cost of sending mail
 - Improvements in the existing postal process
 - Establishing a set of principles and guidelines to enable the Council to shift away from costly, paper heavy and manual postal processes
 - Supporting the move to 'Digital by Default', by adopting tools, techniques and latest technologies, enthusing a digital culture which is customer-centric, user-led and modern
 - Reduce failure demand and therefore increase the capacity of the postal services
 - Bring the postal facilities on par with existing Digital industry standards
 - Help in reducing the volumes of printing and associated procurement costs
 - Provide information governance compliance by offering audit trail of sent documents
 - Access to detailed management information for reporting and decision making purposes
 - Increase in valuable office space, by releasing space currently occupied by printing equipment and machinery
6. An invitation to tender has now been submitted, and it is intended that the rollout of Phase 1 will commence in August 2018.
7. The rollout will initially target nine service areas where postage processes have already been mapped: Civil Parking Enforcement; Lamby Way; Benefits; Achievement & Inclusion; Planning; Electoral Service (internal); Rent Arrears; Pensions; and Rent Smart Wales.

8. Following on from Phase 1 planning and implementation, further analysis work will be taking place in areas not yet identified, to inform the roll out plan of areas in scope of Phase 2. A decommissioning of franking machines plan will be drawn up, in line with the proposed implementation plan once this has been agreed.

SharePoint

9. SharePoint has been identified and chosen as the Corporate Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) that will embed information governance into everyday working practices, by changing existing business process around how information is used, stored and made available, while ensuring Digital General Data Protection Regulations GDPR and Records Management compliance.
10. SharePoint also fosters collaboration, helps to remove siloes and improves working processes to become more efficient and leaner by using the automated and workflow functionality.
11. Eventually, all of the Council's services will have their own site, to allow data storage, joined-up working, and to spread knowledge and learning of the Council's functions. 31 sites have now been created for services across the Council, with 144 site administrators and 880 end users appropriately trained.
12. The implementation of SharePoint will offer many benefits, including:
 - Collaboration will improve across the organisation, as documents will be accessible to all members of the team within a SharePoint team environment, and give the ability for officers to work on the same document at the same time
 - Version control ensures 'one version of the truth' and previous versions can be located and restored
 - Files will be stored in a way that is easier to search, improving user functionality and making it easier for the Council to respond to FOI requests.
 - Reducing the need for attachments, therefore reducing the volume and size of email traffic
 - Documents stored within SharePoint sites will ensure the organisation is compliant with GDPR.
 - The SharePoint workflow functionality can publish Freedom of Information responses on the external internet reducing the need to reply to same subject requests
 - Service Areas' Public web pages will improve

Skype for Business

13. Skype for Business is part of our Microsoft Enterprise agreement (so the Council does not need to invest in additional user licenses), and it lets people connect with co-workers or business partners in a range of ways. Initially the list of organisations that we connect to has been restricted to Welsh public sector but the aim is to extend this to a wide range of contacts.
14. The four components of Skype (as it is commonly known) are:
 - Presence: this allows users to see when their contacts are available online, in a meeting, or busy. This has proven valuable when managing an increasingly mobile workforce.
 - Instant Messaging: This is comparable to a business version of texting. Very useful for short messages and can be extended to include multiple participants in the messages. This also helps to reduce email traffic, and the concomitant pressure on the Council's data storage.
 - Voice: Although not as widely utilised as other components due to the Council's existing widespread telephony provision, it is worth noting that it is possible for calls to be made using Skype.
 - Video: A simple way to allow users to see each other and converse using their laptops/PCs, reducing the need to travel for face-to-face meetings. Also provides an effective form of video conferencing.
15. Skype has already been rolled out in a range of areas, and usage levels are already significant: in May this year over 60,000 instant messages were sent; 450 minutes of voice calls made; and 425 minutes of video calls were made using the system.
16. The Council's licence will be upgraded in July 2018, allowing users to have voice and video calls with multiple participants. This will greatly extend the potential usage for conferencing-type calls and meetings, and will enable multiple participants from multiple organisations to collaborate easily and simply.

Microsoft Office 365

17. Office 365 refers to subscription plans that include access to Microsoft Office applications plus other productivity services that are enabled over the internet (cloud services). Office 365 includes services or products such as the traditional Microsoft Office suite of applications, Skype for Business (as described above), Exchange Online cloud hosted email, and online storage with OneDrive for Business.
18. Office 365 was initially purchased for use by Social Care colleagues to enable them to work in a more agile way when they left the Global Link building. Combined with the use of portable devices and smartphones, this has allowed staff to work remotely from anywhere there is an internet connection and work far more flexibly than was possible with the previous 'desktop' devices and fixed landlines.

19. Over 350 social workers now have this setup and Office 365 will shortly be rolled out across the rest of the organisation.
20. The final part of deployment to Social Care staff is to install email on their smartphones, and this is scheduled to complete by the end of July. Also in July, the rest of the organisation will be licenced to use Office 365 and the plan is to rollout the full range of Office 365 applications to all staff over time.
21. The Office 365 suite includes enhanced Skype capabilities, improved collaboration tools, and social media-style functionality for use within a business environment, along with a range of other improved tools.
22. The Council is currently working with Microsoft to develop a roadmap for the rollout of the full functionality of Office 365 to drive real business benefits from their usage.

The Cardiff App

23. Cardiff GOV, a mobile app that has been developed following requests from a number of service areas, will allow the Council's customers to perform quick transactional services via their smartphones. The app is not a replacement for the Council's highly-regarded website, but instead mirrors some of the transactional functions already available on the website.
24. Developing the app for smartphones has enabled the incorporation of features common to these devices in order to improve the service and experience for customers. Examples of this are the mapping-based services that can be used to improve accuracy of location-based information, and the ability to take and/or upload pictures to attach as part of a report, both of which further enhance the quality of information provided to the Council as part of any contact.
25. Cardiff GOV is being designed in tandem with updates to the website to ensure a unified experience for customers no matter which channel they decide to use. Initial services provided through the app include a range of Council Tax services such as making payments, checking balances and previous payments, or applying for single person discount amongst, other capabilities. Other services available in the first release include reporting Fly Tipping and setting Waste Collection reminders to inform users of when they need to present different types of waste for collection, which includes the facility for users to set customised reminders.
26. The first release is due for launch mid-June and the roadmap sets out a plan to iteratively release new functionality (including access to additional Council services) on a bi-monthly basis. Examples of future services for inclusion on the app are reporting highways defects, street lighting issues, applying for permits and paying fines.
27. The app is being designed in such a way that it interacts directly with back office systems to speed up processing, and benefits both customers and the service area.

Virtual Assistant – “ChatBot”

28. The Virtual Assistant project will deliver a conversational, humanised ‘ChatBot’, initially to handle enquiries about waste disposal.
29. In the modern, digital world, customers expect to be able to communicate and transact with organisations on a 24/7 basis. Using simple, accessible channels, they expect to be able to find the information that they need quickly and without trawling through content.
30. By using artificial intelligence, natural language processing, and automation, the Council will be able to provide a simple, welcoming access channel that can be reused across many platforms, for example online, via the telephone, and even through smart units like Amazon Echo, delivering customer service in the home of our citizens and service users.
31. Providing a simple, accessible route for customers to find information and complete automated transactions will encourage channel shift away from the traditional, expensive contact routes – telephone and face-to-face contact. The use of a ChatBot will enable customers to complete high-volume, low-value contacts at their convenience, allowing Council staff to focus on the more complex and sensitive enquiries that require direct human interaction. Customer and employee experience is expected to improve alongside the projected cost avoidance through re-allocation of resource.
32. Additional benefits of virtual assistant tools include: significant improvements in citizen engagement for non-native English/Welsh speakers as automatic translation is available for around 80 languages; avoidance of costs associated with sickness, leave, training and recruitment; and savings related to the use of cloud-based technologies.
33. Thorough research and a broad market-sounding exercise has been completed. The technologies involved in delivering a virtual assistant platform are relatively new and exploration of their use in the public sector has only started recently. The project team has investigated a number of approaches to delivering a broad platform to revolutionise customer contact, and has developed a greater understanding of the pros and cons of these. A detailed business case is being prepared that will demonstrate the benefits that can be achieved through the implementation of these tools, and the costs associated with the development, deployment and ongoing management of virtual assistant channels. Agreement to fund the project’s proposal will be sought in June 2018; procurement and supplier engagement will start soon after this if funding is secured.

E-Signatures

34. The E-Signatures project has been established to explore and, if feasible, implement the use of electronic and digital signatures, initially in Procurement,

Legal and HR, with a view to extending through the authority and its interactions with suppliers.

35. The aim will be to reduce costs from paper and printing use, reduce officer time in administering documents, enhance security and archiving, improve retention management and simplify GDPR compliance. It will also align the authority with the increasing expectations of customers - both corporate and citizen - to transact electronically as fully as possible.
36. The project team identified initial processes, and are currently mapping in detail. Parallel to this, the team are undertaking market sounding to ensure a robust understanding of the available solutions, their components, and to inform detailed requirements.

Fleet Management IT System

37. The Council's Central Transport Service (CTS) has procured and is now implementing a specialist Fleet Management IT system.
38. The project consists of two phases:
 - Phase 1: to implement the core Tranman Fleet Management System for use by the Centralised Transport Service
 - Phase 2: the rollout of a Service Area Manager portal enabling managers to access and view data about their fleet vehicles, which will improve compliance for service and MOT scheduling; the implementation of a replacement Spot Hire portal giving CTS greater control and visibility of spot hires (short term hires) made across the Council
39. The key benefits of the project are:
 - Improved cost control
 - Improved utilisation of resources
 - Improvement in compliance with relevant transport regulations
 - The costs of vehicles/plant etc. being more transparent
 - Improved reporting to service-area budget holders
 - The CTS workshop will be run more efficiently through the electronic scheduling of jobs resulting in additional capacity to deal with more work
 - Improvements in the procurement and tracking of parts with only parts that are required being ordered
 - Provision of the essential infrastructure to facilitate commercial growth
 - Improved management information
 - Reduced paper usage
 - A solid platform and essential infrastructure for growing external income which is a key objective for CTS

40. Phase 1 is complete, and the portals for Phase 2 are installed and are awaiting User Acceptance Testing by the CTS team. Once a successful round of testing is complete the portals will be ready for release to the organisation. Project Closure is scheduled for June 2018.

Waste Improvements Projects

41. Two key areas of the Council's waste services have initially been identified for improvement through the use of new technology:
- The replacement of the WRMS Waste Management back office system, which is no longer supported by the supplier. The replacement system would include enhanced functionality.
 - Implementation of in-cab technology that will interact with the replacement Waste Management system. As part of this implementation mobile in-cab technology would enable crews to receive jobs and provide real-time feedback on completed work.
42. Following an open tender procurement process a market leading system – 'Collective' – was procured from Bartec. The implementation of this technology will take place over two phases:
- **Phase 1:** the implementation of the replacement back-office system, including migration of data from the de-commissioned WRMS system and rollout of in-cab technology to Domestic Waste Collections crews; the rollout of Webview – a real-time read only browser based portal to Customer Services (C2C)
 - **Phase 2** – Automation of jobs for Waste Teams in Collective and the integration of Collective to internal Customer Services (C2C) system. This will work will allow Waste Services to be added to the Cardiff App in a later phase.
43. The key benefits of the project are:
- The ability to do more with existing resource levels in a fast growing city through better round management
 - Removal of paper workpacks
 - Better communication and feedback between back office teams and domestic waste collection crews
 - Improved customer experience when contacting the Council as C2C agents will have access to live data during collection rounds
 - Automation of waste services
 - Facilitating future developments to digitise the service so that Waste services may become available via the app and online
44. Phase one of the project is live with the replacement back office implemented in December 2017 and rollout to crews of in-cab devices completed by 31st January 2018. Phase 2 automations and integrations are in development with a planned rollout of July 2018.

