

# Cheshire East Council

## Cheshire West and Chester Council

### Shared Services Joint Committee

---

**Date of Meeting:** 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Report Title:** The Future Model for ICT: Mobilisation Update

**Senior Officer:** Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services,  
Cheshire East Council.

Laurence Ainsworth, Director of Public Service Reform, Cheshire  
West and Chester Council.

---

#### **1 Report Summary**

1.1 This report provides a summary of the progress to date on the Hybrid ICT programme following decisions to proceed with a new service model.

#### **2 Recommendations**

2.1 That the Shared Services Joint Committee note the latest update on the Hybrid ICT Programme.

#### **3 Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 The Shared Service Joint Committee have agreed to receive regular updates on the progress of the programme to provide transparent oversight and accountability.

#### **4 Background**

4.1 Following comprehensive joint work by both organisations, on 26th January 2023 Shared Services Joint Committee recommended that their constituent councils proceed with a hybrid model for ICT. This involves retaining a shared network and data centre and a separation of other ICT functions that are currently shared.

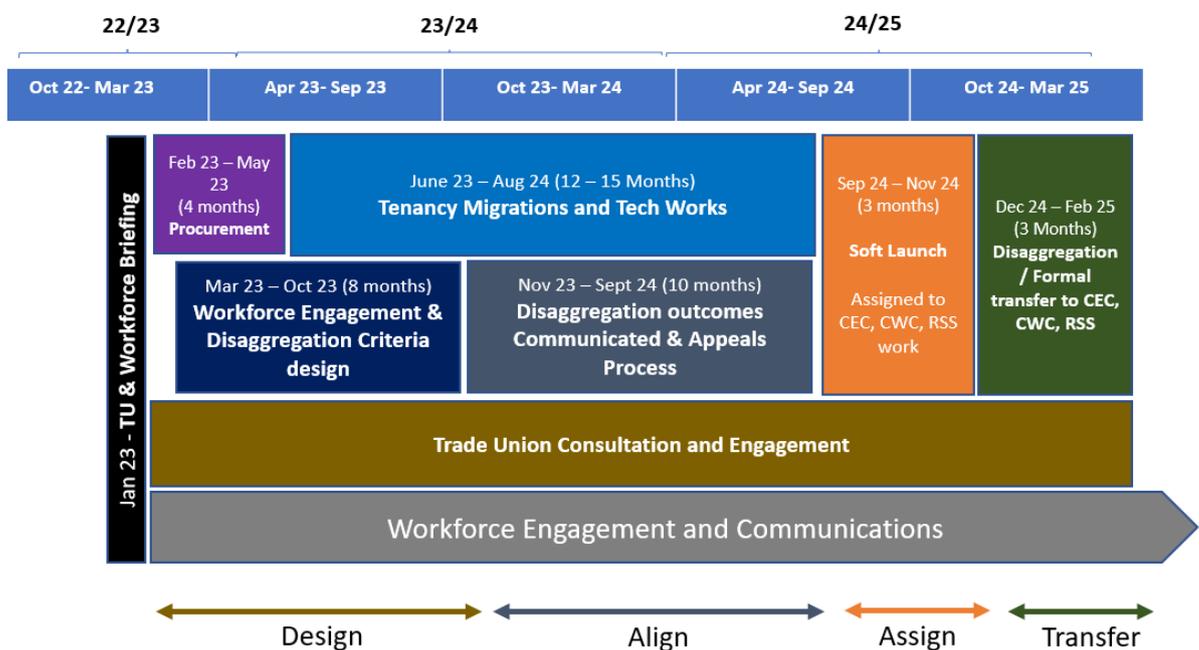
4.2 The recommendation to move to a new model for ICT Services was agreed at Cheshire East Councils Corporate Policy Committee on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2023, and Cheshire West and Chester Cabinet on February 8<sup>th</sup> 2023.

4.3 It was agreed that the Shared Service Joint Committee will play a key role in providing oversight throughout the programme over the next two years and that a joint scrutiny task group should also be established.

## 5 Progress update

5.1 Following the update at the Shared Services Joint Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023, which provided an outline of the approach and key stages the Councils are taking to mobilisation and a target date of mobilisation to be completed by June.

5.2 The key stages of the programme are outlined below:



5.3 A number of key activities have been taken forward and the plan is broadly on track at this stage:

### Transformation Partner

5.4 A procurement process has taken place to secure a transformation partner to support the delivery of the programme. Castlerigg Consultancy Ltd. were appointed to act as the programme director and commenced activity on the programme in early May.

5.5 A phase of understanding, assurance and confirmation of the baseline, benefits and approach has been undertaken with Castlerigg through a series of stakeholder meetings & workshops. In addition analysis of data has taken place

and workstreams mobilised across the across the key themes of workforce, finance, technology & design.

- 5.6 A review of Best4Business lessons learned has been undertaken by the programme team and has been used to inform the programme approach.
- 5.7 A programme definition document which outlines in detail the key activities, stages, risks, approach, costs and controls is being developed for programme board on June 26<sup>th</sup> 2023. This will be in line with the agreed stages and programme budget for the programme but will provide further clarity on a design phase.

### **Resources**

- 5.8 Dedicated programme resources for both Human Resources and Finance have been recruited and are in place actively working as leads on the programme.
- 5.9 Wider council resources such as client finance, communications, procurement, audit and technical leads in ICT have been engaged and aligned to programme activities.

### **Workforce & Trade Unions**

- 5.10 The ICT workforce within ICT Shared Services and both Councils have been regularly engaged. The established Questions and Answer sessions have continued and are regularly scheduled to ensure that there are opportunities across the workforce seek an clarifications that are needed.
- 5.11 A dedicated teams site is in place and is used to share all frequently asked questions, conduct engagement and use tools such as 'polls' to help the workforce to shape aspects of the programme. A current poll is live to name the programme.
- 5.12 Trade unions have also been updated on mobilisation in April and are invited to all engagement sessions with the workforce. Further engagement and consultation are planned with Trade Unions at key points throughout the programme.

### **Governance**

- 5.13 A joint scrutiny task group to hold Shared Service Joint Committee and the programme to account will be established. The final terms of reference will be endorsed with Members and the group once nominations have been sought.

5.14 Core programme governance is now established through a board chaired by Director of Finance and Customer Services Corporate Services – Cheshire East and the Director of Public Service Reform - Cheshire West and Chester and three workstreams covering Workforce, Technical Change and Design.

5.15 A design authority will be introduced in the next phase of the programme to manage dependencies across workstreams to ensure a coherent ICT design is achieved through continuous monitoring of work across multiple workstreams.

### Technical Partner

5.16 The specification for a technical partner has undergone further assurance and refinement and is planned to be published at the end of June. This organisation will support both councils with the move to new tenancies.

5.17 Through the assurance and challenge process provided by Castlerigg, options to simplify the technical solution and reduce risks whilst still delivering the benefits of the programme will form part of the procurement specification.

5.18 The majority of activities for mobilisation are now in place, the programme has experienced a small element of slippage (estimated to be 3 weeks) linked to the availability of data and additional technical assurance for the technical partner procurement. This is expected to be recovered through a shorter technical implementation and regular key data reporting processes are now established.

## 6 Risks and Issues

6.1 As part of the mobilisation activities an updated Risk and Issues log is being populated to reflect the current position and future focus of the programme.

6.2 The top 3 key risks identified are:

Theme	Risk	Mitigation
Workforce skills and capacity	The two new ICT services and retained shared service will not have the right level of skills and capacity to operate sustainably on day one.	An early and on-going assessment of capability gaps as part of the OD strategy for the programme will be completed to indicate the nature of the gap, implications for service delivery and business continuity and target early specialist recruitment where necessary.  The lead-in to the transition gives sufficient time to create strategies for targeting and resolving skills and capacity gaps.

Workforce	Staff will be unsettled through the transition or unhappy with the disaggregation outcome leading to challenges of retention & recruitment & impact on service delivery	<p>Continuous engagement with staff will remain through-out</p> <p>Early and continued engagement and full and meaningful consultation with trade unions</p> <p>The transition will create new opportunities for staff and both councils will commit to support and development.</p> <p>More opportunities will be available for current workforce.</p> <p>Focus on developing current workforce into new roles and skills.</p> <p>Clear visions for ICT in each Council.</p> <p>Joint approach to recruitment for existing vacancies to mitigate redundancies.</p>
Finance - Benefit	There is a risk that baseline data used to build benefits is inaccurate.	<p>Programme finance needs to be reviewed against deliverables and workstreams. Review proposed benefits against the design, plan and budget.</p> <p>The Service baseline has moved on since due diligence by the internal team was undertaken. Initial design modelling will need to be reworked against a refreshed baseline to assess any impact.</p>

6.3 As part of future reporting a risk log will accompany committee reports.

## 7 Next steps

7.1 Following mobilisation, the Shared Services Joint Committee will now receive regular highlight reports to outline progress of the programme, risks and issues and budget information to provide assurance on the delivery of the programme.

## 8 Implications of the Recommendations

### 8.1 Legal Implications

Discussion was held on legal support for the programme, particularly to support new contractual arrangement and the new shared service agreement.

## 8.2 *Finance Implications*

A £5.1m overall programme budget has been agreed, projected benefits are £2.67m combined, payback period is 4 years. Regular reports on programme finances will feature through Members governance as the programme progresses.

## 8.3 *Policy Implications*

The new hybrid model will be aligned to each councils' policies. Common ICT policies will be agreed for the retained shared service.

## 8.4 *Equality Implications*

There are no direct Equality implications at this stage.

## 8.5 *Human Resources Implications*

Implications for Human Resources will be managed by the workforce workstream and will be a critical part of the programme. Engagement with workforce will continue throughout the programme. In addition, a joint session with the Trade Unions are planned throughout the programme and will become a regular working group.

## 8.6 *Risk Management Implications*

A full risk log is being formed and will be reported to Members of the Committee on a regular basis from June.

## 8.7 *Rural Communities Implications*

ICT supports all priorities and communities, and it is important that successful delivery of the service is achieved.

## 8.8 *Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children*

ICT supports all priorities and communities, and it is important that successful delivery of the service is achieved.

## 8.9 *Public Health Implications*

ICT supports all priorities and communities, and it is important that successful delivery of the service is achieved.

## 8.10 *Climate Change Implications*

ICT supports all priorities and communities, and it is important that successful delivery of the service is achieved.

## 8.11 *Ward Members Affected*

This report relates to Shared Services that operate across both CE and CWC, therefore all wards are affected in both Councils.

## 9 Access to Information

Documents are available for inspection at:

Cheshire East Democratic Services  
Westfields, Middlewich Road  
Sandbach  
CW11 1HZ

or:

Cheshire West & Chester Democratic Services  
HQ Building, Nicholas Street,  
Chester,  
CH1 2NP

## 8. Contact Information

Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

Name Gareth Pawlett  
Job Title Chief Information Officer  
E Mail [gareth.pawlett@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.pawlett@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Name: Peter Lloyd  
Job Title: Head of Transformation and Technology  
Email: [peter.lloyd@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:peter.lloyd@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)