

Cheshire East Council

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Shared Services Joint Committee

Date of Meeting: 27 June 2025

Report Title: Shared Services Business Plans 2024-25 – End of Year Report

Senior Officer: Ashley Hughes, Executive Director Resources (S151 Officer), Cheshire East Council; and
Natalie Abraham, Director of Strategy and Transformation, Cheshire West and Chester Council

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the 2024-25 year end performance for the Shared Service arrangements between Cheshire East Council (CEC) and Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWC) against agreed business plans. This includes the budget position, priorities and objectives, and key performance indicators, across all of the shared services for the period 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025.
- 1.2 Overall the performance of the shared services is in line with expectations. Most objectives and key performance indicators have been met across all services. Most services are reporting a balanced or underspent budget, with ICT reporting an overspend. Budget provision has been made by both councils for this budget variances and plans are being taken forwards, via the Gemini Project to secure a sustainable position.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) Note the Shared Services performance for 2024/25.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Shared Services Administrative Agreement makes provision for the Joint Committee to receive reports to enable the review and monitoring of the performance of the shared services to take place. This report provides the 2042-25 year-end position for the current shared services.

4. Background

- 4.1 Currently there are five Shared Services between Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council including:
- Archaeological Planning and Advisory Services (APAS) – CWC hosted
 - Archives and Local Studies – CWC hosted
 - Emergency Planning – CWC hosted
 - ICTShared Service – CEC hosted
 - Transactional Shared Service – CWC hosted
- 4.2 Day-to-day, operational performance is managed by each shared service manager reporting, through their normal line management arrangements, to a service manager in the host authority. There is also a relationship with a client manager in the other authority. The Shared Services Joint Committee's role to oversee performance at mid-year, for the larger shared services and year end for all shared services.
- 4.3 The shared service business plans provide full details of the shared service operation at end of year, including, the budget, objectives, and performance indicators and are included in Appendix 1.

5. Overall Summary

- 5.1 This table below sets out the overall budget and performance of the five shared services for 2024-25 year.

| Service | 2024-25 Planned Budget £ | 2024-25 Outturn £ | Variance from planned budget £ | Number of priorities achieved | Number of priorities not achieved | Number of KPI targets achieved | Number of KPI targets not achieved |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Archaeology Planning Advisory Service | 186,194 | 186,194 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Archives and Local Studies | 579,663 | 583,464 | 3,801 | 7 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Emergency Planning | 355,547 | 256,547 | (99,000) | 8 | 0 | | |
| ICT Shared Service | £13.481,000 | £14.043,000 | 562,000 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Transactional Services | 5,861,000 | 5,398,969 | (462,141) | 17 | 0 | 13 | 3 |

Full details are set out in the individual business plans in appendix 1.

6. Budget Commentary

- Most services, are reporting a balanced budget or underspent financial position
- Archives a local studies service has a very small budget deficit due to a loss of income over the summer.
- ICT Shared Services spending moved from an underspend of £0.156m to an overspend of £0.562m – this was due to a significant decline in the number of commissioned projects/hours, 10,000 reduction in chargeable hours from mid-year forecast, with a corresponding drop in income (+£0.5m).

7. Priorities Commentary

Most of the objectives have been achieved as planned with many continuing over for progression into 2025/26. Of particular note are:

For the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service

- Significant discoveries have been made as a result of development-led work, including a probable Civil War burial from Acton near Nantwich and the remains of a late medieval hall at Tarvin.

For the Archives and Local Studies Service

- The Cheshire's archives: a story shared' project Activity Plan (community engagement plan) delivery has received very positive feedback from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. 94% of audiences had not engaged with archives/local history previously. 91 events or workshops have been held, reaching over 2,000 people across Cheshire.

For Emergency Planning

- Levels of generic preparedness in both Councils are at a high level. Successes include: Plans reviewed: Council Major Emergency Response Plans; River Dee Passenger Vessels; Pandemic Principles Frameworks; and Northwich Flood Operational Plan. Exercises Civic Flame (fire), Aerfen (Dee Passenger Vessels Plan), Urgent Care Facilities Evacuation (CE). Other key work-streams: Martyn's Law, CT, and Service Emergency Response Plans.

For Transactional Services

- Significant progress has been made to progress the Demand Management and Service Improvement Programme including:
 - Mobilisation of the Transactional Shared Service Improvement Programme Board with Senior Leadership representation from both CE and CW&C Councils.
 - Successful delivery of Phase 1 of the UNIT4 Optimisation Programme (Jan to March 2025) which focussed on maximising key Payroll functionality to minimise the level of manual intervention.
 - Successful delivery of a Proof of Concept to build the integrations framework in-house using the latest Azure technology to support data transfer into and out of UNIT4 to other key Line of Business Systems.
 - Launched the TSS Target Operating Model review to ensure the service delivery model is fit-for-purpose, cost-effective and supports the strategic priorities and direction of both councils. This is currently at Options Appraisal stage.

For ICT

- Significant progress has been made in delivering Gemini programme, with every aspect of the operating model changing. The service is upgrading or replacing almost every element of underlying infrastructure to support both councils and it has done so whilst maintaining service and minimising impact on Councils.

8. Key Performance Indicators

Most of the KPIs have been achieved or exceeded the targets set for 2024/25. KPIs of note:

For APAS

- The KPI - % number of records reviewed in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record per annum had a target of 5% and the actual was more than double this at 12%.

For Archives

- Levels of engagement with service, including web and social media engagement, attendance at events, visits to Record Office – the target was 1.8 million engagements and the actual was 2.285 million engagements compared to 1.502 million for 23/24.

For Emergency Planning

- Between 01/04/2024 and 31/03/2025 the Service responded to 37 incidents (CE: 17, CWC: 20) – Collapsed canal, snow and ice, Storms Bert and Darragh, avian influenza, flooding, bomb threats in Chester, chemical tanker in Wilmslow, River Dee pollution incident, mains gas ignition and loss of supply for 7 days in Chester, major fires in Adlington Industrial Estate and Crewe with latter requiring evacuation and shelter of 400 residents, UK social unrest, mains water supply failure in Congleton and Sandbach, and e-mail threats to schools. Involved in delivery of HM King's visit to Crewe and Duke of Westminster's wedding in Chester.

- The training of senior managers is at 88% which is slightly under the target of 90%

For ICT

- The service continues to deliver strong service availability whilst managing a significant amount of complex change.
- It was recognised that we're effectively reporting the service as it was historically rather than where it is now which is misleading. However, these tail projects can't be overlooked and have continued to distort the SLA picture. This tail has now been cleared and for calculation purposes, projects will now fail at the point of the relevant missed milestone and not at closure and so be counted in the month the failure occurs. This should provide a more accurate picture going forward.

For Transactional Services

- Good progress has been made in respect of the unallocated income KPI and it is now above target and continuing to improve.
- Three targets were not achieved. The targets are:
 - Contractual documents issued to schools
 - Contractual documents issued to officers
 - HR issues resolved at the first point of contact

However, the position is greatly improved from 2023/24 and work continues to take place to improve performance through the project work that is underway, a review of business processes, staff recruitment, automation and digitalisation, and the use of metadata.

9. Implications of the Recommendations

9.1 Legal Implications

The Shared Services Administrative Agreement sets out the overall arrangements in relation to the way the sharing Authorities will work together.

The Individual Shared Service Agreements require that Business Plans are regularly refreshed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of both authorities going forward and that performance is reported on a regular basis. Operationally, this is managed on a day-to-day basis by the service managers and their line managers within each Council as part of the operation and management of each of the services. Additionally, each service has client managers in place who are also consulted in the development and monitoring of business plans.

9.2 Finance Implications

The Financial Implications are set out in main body of the report.

9.3 Policy Implications

There are no direct Policy implications

9.4 Equality Implications

There are no direct Equality implications

9.5 Human Resources Implications

There are no direct Human Resources implications

9.6 Risk Management Implications

Risks, assessed as high, are set out in the individual business plans in appendix 1.

Risks are managed by the commissioning client, and service managers within each Council, as part of the operation and management of each of the services.

Risks are included in each organisations risk register as appropriate.

9.7 Rural Communities Implications

There are no direct implications for Rural Communities.

9.8 Implications for Children & Young People/Cared for Children

There are no direct implications for Children and Young People/Cared for Children.

9.9 Public Health Implications

There are no direct implications for Public Health.

9.10 Climate Change Implications

There are no direct Climate Change implications.

9.11 Ward Members Affected

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

10. Access to Information

Documents are available for inspection at:

Cheshire East Democratic Services
Delamere House
Delamere Street
Crewe
CW1 2LL

or:

Cheshire West & Chester Democratic Services
The Portal
Wellington Road
Ellesmere Port
CH65 0BA

11. Contact Information

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

Name: Roger Davies

Email: roger.davies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Name: Rachel Graves

Email: Rachel.graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Shared Service Business Plans 2024/25

SERVICE DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Service Name | Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service |
| Service Manager | Mark Leah |
| Client Managers | Gill Smith (CW&C), Tom Evans (CE) |

OVERVIEW

The Archaeology Planning Advisory Service (APAS) is a sub-regional service which provides advice on the archaeological implications of development to Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council. It also maintains the Historic Environment Record for the two authorities. The service operates as a shared service between Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East councils. It also provides these services to Halton Borough and Warrington Borough councils via bespoke agreements.

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 2024/2025 Planned Budget £ | £186,194.00 |
| Comments | |
| Mid-Year Forecast £ | |
| Comments | |
| End of Year outturn £ | Finance confirms a balanced budget at year end |
| | |

KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

| No. | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | To develop, maintain and manage a comprehensive public information resource – the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER) in accordance with national standards and benchmarks, to inform all policy and development planning decisions and for the better understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment by all. | 31.3.25 | The HER continues to meet all of its relevant Key Performance Indicators (see KPIs 2 and 3 below) and engages in a continuous programme of review and enhancement (see KPI 1 below). In addition, work continues on the digitisation of hard copy elements of the HER (see Key Priority and Objective 6 below) in order to enhance the efficiency of the HER and address the future requirement to operate from a more restricted location. | The HER has met all of its relevant Key Performance Indicators (see KPIs 2 and 3 below) and engages in a continuous programme of review and enhancement (see KPI 1 below). In addition, work has continued on the digitisation of hard copy elements of the HER (see Key Priority and Objective 6 below). This has continued to enhance the efficiency of the HER and address the future requirement to operate from a more restricted location. |
| 2 | Respond efficiently to general enquiries to the Cheshire Historic Environment Record | 31.3.25 | In the first six months of 2024-25 APAS has responded to 98% of general inquiries within the 15 working days target, exceeding the KPI requirement to address 90% of such inquiries within the 15 working days target. | At the end of 2024-25 APAS has responded to 99% of general inquiries within the 15 working days target, exceeding the KPI requirement to address 90% of such inquiries within the 15 working days target. |
| 3 | To advise on development by statutory undertakers and environmental management schemes. | 31.3.25 | In the first six months of 2024-25 APAS has responded to 100% of Countryside Stewardship inquiries within 15 working days, fully meeting the KPI requirement. | At the end of 2024-25 APAS has responded to 100% of Countryside Stewardship inquiries within 15 working days, fully meeting the KPI requirement. |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------|--|---|
| 4 | To advise on the archaeological implications of development, in line with national guidance, from pre-determination to post-determination, including the prospective impacts of minerals, waste disposal, highways, and other infrastructure proposals on the archaeological resource. | 31.3.25 | APAS has continued to supply archaeological development management advice to CW&C, Cheshire East, Warrington BC, and Halton BC. In addition to the usual casework from both urban and rural contexts, much time has been spent on a number of national large projects (some classified as national infrastructure with their different regime for determination) including HyNet CO2, Hynet Hydrogen, and renewable energy schemes (solar farms, battery storage facilities, etc) | Consideration of and advice on National Infrastructure projects has continued to occupy significant amounts of APAS's time. The HyNet CO2 project is the most advanced at present, with the Development Consent Order issued in 2024. Further evaluation work will happen early in 2024-25 which will lead to the development of a full mitigation strategy. Geophysical survey work continues on the HyNet Hydrogen Project and APAS has contributed to discussions concerning the proposed Frodsham solar farm. Significant discoveries have been made as a result of development-led work, including a probable Civil War burial from Acton near Nantwich and the remains of a late medieval hall at Tarvin. |
| 5 | Develop and apply initiatives to drive continuous improvement in operations to enable clients to achieve their outcomes thereby increasing customer satisfaction and providing value for money | 31.3.25 | <p>APAS continues to work closely with the partner authorities' conservation officers to identify historic buildings threatened by development which are neither Listed nor Locally Listed and, where justified, secure an appropriate level of recording before demolition.</p> <p>APAS is also working to try and bring significant work undertaken before the advent of developer-funded archaeology to publication and is currently developing a project with a number of partners to secure the publication of a number of important excavations carried out in Roman Northwich in the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s.</p> | Early 2025 saw the publication of the latest edition of the Chester Archaeological Journal which contained a number of reports related to the work of APAS. These included: a summary report on the excavation of a Roman farmstead in advance of the construction of the Chester Business park, c 20 years ago; a report on the discovery of a late prehistoric skull during highway improvement works at the A51 crossing of the river Gowy; a roundup of archaeological work on the more significant sites investigated under APAS's supervision in 2023-24. |

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---------|--|---|
| 6 | Continuing digitisation of the Cheshire Historic Environment Record | Ongoing | Digitisation of the hard-copy elements of the HER has continued in the first six months of 2024-25 with two part-time HER officers continuing to work enhanced hours to address this issue. Works has been concentrated on two particular areas; the Northwich HER file with its extensive documentation concerning excavations from the 1970s to the early 1990s and the Lindow Moss file which is dominated by the Lindow Man discovery from the early 1980s | Significant progress with regard to digitisation has been made in 2024-25, largely as a result of enhanced hours worked by two members of the team. This has been funded through income earned from HER fees earned over a number of years and forming part of the HER reserve. These funds are now largely exhausted and future income will not be sufficient to sustain continued enhanced hours. A reduced level of digitisation will occur when time permits. |
|----------|---|---------|--|---|

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

| No. | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual | Current Year Target | Mid-year Actual | End of year Actual | Comments |
|----------|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | % number of records reviewed in the Cheshire Historic Environment Record per annum | 8% | 5% | 8.5% | 12% | |
| 2 | % of general inquiries to the Cheshire Historic Environment Record responded to within 15 working days per annum | 100% | 90% | 98% | 99% | |
| 3 | Respond to 100% of Countryside Stewardship inquiries to the Cheshire Historic Environment Record within 20 working days (as required by the National Service Standard) each year | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 4 | % of archaeological development management advice to the partner authorities (Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire East Council responded to within 15 working days per annum | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | |
| 5 | Delivery of annual APAS Report | Achieved | Delivery of report by May 2025 | N/A | In Progress | The annual report for 2024-25 will be issued in May 2025 |

KEY RISKS

| Number | Key Risk Description | Initial Risk Rating | Mid-year Rating | End of year Rating | Comments |
|--------|---|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------|
| | No key risks scoring 9 or over identified | | | | |

ISSUES SUMMARY

| Number | Issue Description | Date issue arose | Date issue closed | Comments |
|--------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| | None | | | |

APPROVAL

| Approval | Name | Job title | Date Agreed |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|-------------|
| Service Manager | Mark Leah | Team Leader APAS | 16.4.25 |
| Client Manager CEC | Tom Evans | Strategic and Environmental Planning Manager | 23.4.25 |
| Client Manager CWC | Gill Smith | Senior Planning Manager | 28.4.25 |
| Head of Service/Director | Rob Charnley | Head of Planning | |

OFFICIAL

SERVICE DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Service Name | Cheshire Archives and Local Studies |
| Service Manager | Paul Newman |
| Client Managers | Rachel Foster (CWaC). Helen Paton (CEC) |

OVERVIEW

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies (CALS) is an Accredited Archive service based at the Cheshire Record Office in Chester, with an extensive digital presence. It is a shared service and part of a nationwide network of statutory archive provision. CALS identifies, collects and cares for archives and publications that are the evidence of Cheshire communities' lives past and present. It delivers access for all archives and local studies collections for information, learning and enjoyment and work to make sure archives survive so that future generations will be able to do the same.

The service also provides core archive provision to Halton and Warrington Borough Councils under a single Service Level Agreement.

CALS' priority at present is the project – 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared' - to relocate the service and engage a wider audience with archives across Cheshire. In November 2022 its application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for £4.5m was successful and the project to relocate the service is within the capital programmes of both councils. The project began in July 2023 and will run until June 2027, with new centres for the service opening in winter 2025/26.

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 2024/2025 Planned Budget £ | £579,663 |
| Comments | |
| End of Year outturn £ | £583,464 |
| | Loss of income following onsite service closure in August. |

KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

| No. | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | End of Year Comments |
|-----|---|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | Continue to deliver the 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared' project Activity Plan (community engagement plan), including ongoing evaluation and branding | Spring 2027 | Activity plan delivery has received very positive feedback from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. 94% of audiences have not engaged with archives/local history before. 91 events or workshops held, reaching over 2,000 people across Cheshire |
| 2 | Deliver year 2 of the 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared' project Collections Conservation Plan, preparing the collections for their move to the new centres | March 2025 | Collections work on track, with most packaging of outsize collections (ie those which do not fit in standard-sized boxes_ completed and surveys to inform future storage of collections nearing completion. |
| 3 | Continue to improve digital access to services and collections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete year 2 of the 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared' project Digital Plan Work with Ancestry to complete their digitisation programme of family history materials | March 2025 | Software developer appointed to develop new forms of digital engagement with service. Ancestry launched c4 million family history records in August and continue to digitise further archives. |
| 4 | Deliver volunteer programme as identified in year 2 of 'Cheshire's archives: a story shared' | March 2025 | Programme on track with volunteers moving to a focus on supporting the collections move. |
| 5 | Deliver access to services through libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver part of relocation project Activity Plan with/in libraries Library staff training | March 2025 | Improved services in libraries through staff training sessions, ongoing support for enquiries received by libraries and enhancement of digital services through digitisation carried out by Ancestry. |
| 6 | Implement closure of onsite public service in preparation for move, including communications plan and promotion of existing alternative forms of access | June 2024 | Service closed in August, following extensive communications campaign. No adverse reaction and remote/digital services continue uninterrupted. |
| 7 | Renegotiation of SLAs with Warrington and Halton | January 2025 | Ongoing. Quarterly meetings in place to review delivery. Updated costs of new service from April 2026 shared. |

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

| No. | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual | Current Year Target | Mid year Actual | End of year Actual | Comments |
|---|--|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Accredited Archive status maintained | Maintained | Maintained | | Maintained | Accreditation review held May 2025. Outcome expected July |
| 2 | Participants in activities who are new to archives | NEW | 80% | | 94% | |
| 3 | Levels of engagement with service | 1.502m to end Jan | 1.8 m | | 2.285 million | Includes web and social media engagement, attendance at events, visits to Record Office |
| 4 | Percentage of volunteers who would recommend volunteering to their friends | 95% | 95% | | 95% | Survey held each June |
| NB KPIs relating to onsite public service not included as this service is paused during 2024/25 | | | | | | |

KEY RISKS

| Number | Key Risk Description | Initial Risk Rating | Mid year Rating | End of year Rating | Comments |
|--------|--|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Renegotiation of SLA with Warrington and Halton not concluded successfully, resulting in missing opportunities to support respective priorities and inability to deliver new service model | 9 | | 8 | Ongoing discussion with positive quarterly review meetings being held on delivery plans. Updated costs and principles behind cost model shared and awaiting response. |
| 2 | Inflationary pressures mean costs of relocation project exceed budget, resulting in inability to deliver project or deliver agreed vision | 12 | | 8 | Contract price for construction in place, with significant contingency allocation. Still at early stage of construction. |

ISSUES SUMMARY

| Number | Issue Description | Date issue arose | Date issue closed | Comments |
|--------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------|
| | None | | | |

OFFICIAL

APPROVAL

| Approval | Name | Job title | Date Agreed |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|-------------|
| Service Manager | Paul Newman | Archives Manager | 23/5/25 |
| Client Manager CEC | Helen Paton | Cultural Economy Manager | |
| Client Manager CWC | Rachel Foster | Head of Communities, Culture and Libraries | |
| Head of Service/Director | Rachel Foster | Head of Communities, Culture and Libraries | |

OFFICIAL

SERVICE DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Service Name | Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team (JCEPT) |
| Service Manager | Chris Samuel |
| Client Managers | Vanessa Griffiths (CW&C)/ Chris Allman (CE) |

OVERVIEW

The overarching aim of the Shared Emergency Planning Service is to ensure that both Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Cheshire East Council, have the capability to respond effectively and efficiently to any major emergency in support of their communities, and the multi-agency response. Key objectives for the 2024-25 Business Plan are as follows: consolidation of foundation emergency management tasks including staff training, generic response plans, and C2 (virtual and physical); industrial and reservoir planning and testing; learning and implementing lessons from a range of incidents including the pandemic; continuing to get ready for the implementation of Martyn's Law; and the review and testing a number of subject and site specific plans and exercises including National Power Outages, animal diseases, and pandemics. This work is set against a background of a continued need to bolster future team capacity and resilience; this includes the proposed implementation of career grades for junior officers, and the formalisation of the swift redeployment of additional staff from both Councils should the team need reinforcing during future, long-term incidents – a feature of recent years.

The challenges and opportunities that will shape future service delivery and inform key objectives are as follows: (1) Councils' budgetary constraints, (2) continuing uncertainty re: the proposed implementation schedule for Martyn's Law and the team's role in that area moving forward, (3) Government's National Resilience Framework and its impact on work of the team, especially the 'Whole Societal Resilience' pillar, (4) risk of a further reduction in top-tier COMAH sites in Cheshire, which could impact cost recovery, and (4) Incidents - continued increase in number of Major Incidents/ Major Incidents Standbys will lead to increased activation of Council Major Emergency Response Plans and thus an impact on this business plan.

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 2024/25 Planned Budget £ | £355,547 |
| Comments | |
| Mid-Year Forecast £ | £19k underspend |
| Comments | |
| End of Year outturn £ | Outturn £256,547 - £99k underspend (CW&C: £51k U; CE: £48k U) |
| | Year end budget position reflects increased cost recovery from statutory work and an overall reduced expenditure. |

OFFICIAL

KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

| No. | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | End of Year Comments |
|-----|--|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | Continue implementation of the Emergency Management Training & Exercise Programme. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Managers: CWC: 100%; CE: 88%. 17 SM workshops and 1-2-1 training sessions provided. Further sessions planned. Members: CWC: 2 sessions in Nov/ Dec 2024. CE: sessions being planned in Q1-2. Bespoke training provided to Chester Markets Team and CE/ CWC Comms Teams. Joint BCM/ EP Workshops delivered in CE and CWC. |
| 2 | Continue implementation of the off-site planning and exercise regime to ensure that both authorities meet their statutory emergency planning obligations under the COMAH, REPPiR, and PSR legislation. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 17 COMAH plans and exercises within statutory timescales – HSE and ONR content. COMAH - 9 plans revised, and 5 exercises delivered. REPPiR - planning for Level 2 Exercise 'Kauri' on 20 Jan 2026 underway. Draft Radiation Monitoring Framework – out for consultation. Aim is to go live in June 2025. Major Accident Hazard Pipelines Plan – plan up-to-date. |
| 3 | Ensure relevant On-Site and Off-Site Response Plans for CW&C and CE Reservoirs (as per Flood & Water Management Act, 2010) are revised and tested. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CE: Tatton Mere On-site Plan delivered on 26/11/24. CWC: Shakerley Mere On-site Plan delivered on 23/01/25. CE: Trentabank/ Ridgeway Plan – plan exercised in May, and updated version issued in August. Reports – latter complete; former – being drafted. |
| 4 | Increase community resilience and emergency preparedness levels by continuing the implementation of medium and long-term projects. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Resilience work continues across both boroughs – several TPCs interested in developing Community Emergency Plans. 32 plans in place across CE (17 & CWC (15). Societal resilience - Major progress made. Implemented a CRF working group and delivered two Summit Events. Secured 20 mins training slot at Safety Central (Lymm) to educate school children in societal resilience. Ruth Stevens and Saoirse O'Neill spoke at the 3rd National Consortium Conference in March. Team has created a Regional Societal Resilience Group which has met and has received excellent feedback, strengthening relationships with Greater Manchester, Lancashire (Blackburn) and Staffordshire. |
| 5 | Increase levels of emergency preparedness across both authorities generally. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of generic preparedness in both Councils are at a high level. Successes - Plans reviewed: Council Major Emergency Response Plans; River Dee Passenger Vessels; Pandemic Principles Frameworks; and Northwich Flood Operational Plan. Exercises Civic Flame (fire), Aerfen (Dee Passenger Vessels Plan), Urgent Care Facilities Evacuation (CE). Other key work-streams: Martyn's Law, CT, and Service Emergency Response Plans. |

| | | | |
|---|---|------------|---|
| 6 | Undertake and participate in appropriate incident debriefs internally and at a multi-agency level for Major Incidents in CW&C and CE. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic Task and Finish Groups (TFG) now stood down in both Councils with actions completed. Development Pathways work still ongoing with colleagues in HR (CWC), this will feed into progressing a similar pathway in CE. • Storms Babet and Henk: Debrief Reports published, TFG established in CWC with live Action Plan now complete. Ongoing TG taking over to enable continuous learning. Workstream to continue into 2025-26. • Grenfell Tower Inquiry Report – CWC: Working Group established with range of EP recommendations completed. CE: Working Group being established, meets 17/06, reports into Risk and Assurance Board. • Ongoing - CWC: Debrief Report for Dee Banks/ Huntington Gas Ignition MIS issued. CE: Debrief Report for Adlington Fire MIS and Crewe Fire MI reports issued. CRF: team has participated in several multi-agency debriefs following incidents during 2024-25; Collapsed Canal Embankment MI – debrief on 12/03. |
| 7 | Continue participation in and co-ordination of Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) projects, planning, training and exercises. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team continues to support and assist CRF Work Programme and Exercise Calendar delivery. Examples of recent activity include: major roles in preparing for the postponed MTA Exercise 'Paddock', and delivery of the CRF Societal Resilience project. • Officers continue to represent both Councils at a range of multi-agency meetings including CRF Delivery Board, Executive Board, Risk Assessment Working Group, Industrial Issues, CONTEST, Cyber, Warning and Informing, Pandemics, and Interoperability. |
| 8 | Develop and apply initiatives to drive continuous improvement in operations to enable clients to achieve their outcomes thereby increasing customer satisfaction and providing value for money. | 31/03/2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience Direct training completed by all team members and accounts fully audited. • Improvements in use of MS Teams as incident logging and action tracking tool implemented and well received. |

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

| Number | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual | Current Year Target | Mid year Actual | End of year Actual | Comments |
|--------|---|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Overall delegate satisfaction with training events provided, i.e. Very Good, Good or Satisfactory. | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | Continued excellent feedback received on training courses. |
| 2 | All CEC Senior Managers (M5 and above) have attended an Emergency Management (EM) Workshop within last 24 months. | 94% | 100% | 90% | 88% | Majority of Senior Managers are within their mandatory 2 year training period. |
| 3 | All CW&C Senior Managers (G15 and above) have attended an EM Workshop within last 24 months. | 91% | 100% | 97% | 100% | Majority of Senior Managers are within their mandatory 2 year training period. |
| 4 | Statutory plans and exercises delivered within agreed timescales | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | All COMAH, REPPiR and PSR plans are within agreed ONR & HSE timescales. |
| 5 | Major Incidents/ Major Incident Standbys responded to by Duty Emergency Planning Officer within appropriate timescales. | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | Between 01/04/2024 and 31/03/2025 the Service responded to 37 incidents (CE: 17, CWC: 20) – Collapsed canal, snow and ice, Storms Bert and Darragh, avian influenza, flooding, bomb threats in Chester, chemical tanker in Wilmslow, River Dee pollution incident, mains gas ignition and loss of supply for 7 days in Chester, major fires in Adlington Industrial Estate and Crewe with latter requiring evacuation and shelter of 400 residents, UK social unrest, mains water supply failure in Congleton and Sandbach, and e-mail threats to schools. Involved in delivery of HM King's visit to Crewe and Duke of Westminster's wedding in Chester. |

KEY RISKS

| Number | Key Risk Description | Initial Risk Rating | Mid year Rating | End of year Rating | Comments/ Mitigation |
|--------|--|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Loss of permanent staff | 8 | 8 | 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career grades 6-8 implemented on 12/05/2025 with the aim of retaining trained, experienced junior staff moving forward. |
| 2 | Town and Parish Councils choose not to participate in Community Resilience Programmes. | 6 | 6 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak at parish and town council meetings and attend TPC conferences. Target specific councils based on risk. Design and implement alternative approaches where required. Work with CRF BC Team to implement NCSR+ strategy. |
| 3 | Failure to deliver agreed objectives as a result of team responding to a medium to long-term major incident, e.g. influenza pandemic. | 6 | 6 | 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise procedure for swift redeployment of additional staff from both LAs should the team need reinforcing during future incidents - further work required re: original intention as development pathway will not resolve this issue. Incident support for CEMARTs - development pathway drafted with CWC HR – hoping to launch in Q1-2 of 2025-26; will share/ liase with CE HR once completed. |
| 4 | Failure to deliver agreed objectives as a result of team responding to significant number of Major Incidents/ Major Incident Standbys throughout year. | 6 | 6 | 6 | |

ISSUES SUMMARY

| Number | Issue Description | Date issue arose | Date issue closed | Comments |
|--------|--|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Loss of permanent staff | Ongoing | 12/05/2025 | Completed |
| 2 | Town and Parish Councils choose not to participate in Community Resilience Programmes. | Ongoing | | See mitigation above. |
| 3 | Failure to deliver agreed objectives as a result of team responding to a medium to long-term major incident, e.g. influenza pandemic. | Ongoing | | See mitigation above. |
| 4 | Failure to deliver agreed objectives as a result of team responding to significant number of Major Incidents/ Major Incident Standbys throughout year. | Ongoing | | See mitigation above. |

APPROVAL

| Approval | Name | Job title | Date Agreed |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Service Manager | Chris Samuel | Senior Manager – Emergency Planning | 20/05/2025 |
| Client Manager CEC | Chris Allman | Director, Planning and Environment, Cheshire East Council | 21/05/2025 |
| Client Manager CW&C | Vanessa Griffiths | Head of Public Protection Service, Cheshire West and Chester Council | 21/05/2025 |
| Head of Service/Director | Vanessa Griffiths | Head of Public Protection Service, Cheshire West and Chester Council | 21/05/2025 |

OFFICIAL

SERVICE DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Service Name | Transactional Services |
| Service Manager | Mel Fitzpatrick |
| Client Managers | Karen Grave - CEC |

OVERVIEW

Transactional Shared Services is currently hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council and provides services for both Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Councils in addition to schools, academies, council businesses and other organisations choosing to buy-back the following functional services:

Recruitment & Pay

49.45 FTEs delivering the full lifecycle of recruitment & payroll services including:

- Recruitment & Selection Support
- Administration of Pre-Employment Checks
- Maintenance & Management of Employee Records
- Employment Contract Admin
- Payroll & Reconciliation
- Comms & returns to Statutory Bodies

Governance & Support

22 FTEs supporting the functional use of the councils HR, Finance and Payroll system
UNIT4 ERP covering:

- System Admin & Maintenance
- System Development
- Customer Contact Helpdesk
- System Access Requests
- System Hierarchy
- Position Admin Forms
- Microsite with training materials
- Testing upgrades

Payments & Income

46.61 FTEs delivering a complete accounts receivable lifecycle and a fully compliant end-to-end purchase to pay service including:

- Maintenance of 35k Supplier Records
- Payment Administration
- Income Administration
- Cash Management

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 2024/2025 Planned Budget £ | Gross expenditure £5.815m Gross income £5.815m Net Budget £Nil |
| | This includes an additional £0.718m budget agreed by part of the Stabilisation Plan agreed by both Cheshire East (CE) and Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) Councils to support the recruitment of additional resources in Recruitment and Pay and Governance and Support pending the UNIT4 Healthcheck and Optimisation Programme. |
| Mid-Year Forecast £ | Forecast £0.238m underspend |
| Comments | The forecast underspend is mainly attributable to recruitment delays with the additional posts agreed as part of the Stabilisation Plan. |
| End of Year outturn £ | Forecast £0.462m underspend |
| Comments | The underspend consists mainly of (£-0.386m) underspends in staffing as the TSS Stabilisation Plan has been implemented through the year in addition to a slight increase in income compared to the budgeted position (£-0.076m). |

KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGY MAP: 24/25 OBJECTIVES & PRINCIPLES

Financial

Objective 1: Shared Transactional Services will operate within its financial envelope and drive out efficiencies through:

Demonstrating VFM

Effective Demand Management

Maximising customer retention

Embracing Continuous Improvement

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Customer | <p>Objective 2: Shared Transactional Services will provide a clear and consistent Core Service Offer and place all customers at the heart of everything that we do through:</p> <div> <div>Empowerment & Engagement</div> <div>Improving the Customer Journey & Experience</div> <div>Encouraging & Acting on Customer Feedback</div> <div>Delivering Right First-Time Services</div> </div> |
| Systems/Processes | <p>Objective 3: Shared Transactional Services will ensure operational processes and procedures demonstrate best practice and enable the cost efficient, cost-effective delivery through:</p> <div> <div>Embracing Digital First</div> <div>Intelligence-Driven Decisions</div> <div>System Optimisation & Inter-operability</div> <div>Simple, consistent, and transparent processes</div> </div> |
| Organisational Capacity | <p>Objective 4: Shared Transactional Services values colleagues, maximises capability and embraces innovation and change through:</p> <div> <div>Celebrating Success & Building on Strengths</div> <div>Listening, Engaging & Empowering Teams</div> <div>Effective workforce planning & development</div> <div>Supporting our Colleagues Wellbeing</div> </div> |

| Number | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments |
|--|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1) Financial Objective: Shared Transactional Services will operate within its financial envelope and drive out efficiencies | | | | |
| 1.1 | Mobilise and roll-out Demand Management & Service Improvement Programme | 31/03/25 | <p>Work is ongoing on the Demand Management Programme the objectives of which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demonstrate best practice and enable the most efficient, cost-effective delivery for residents, customers, and the council; ➤ Embrace the principles of digital first, standardisation, automation and self-serve in the re-design and delivery of services; ➤ Reduce costly multiple hand-off processing through embracing re-design and continuous improvement approaches to minimise failure, avoidable and preventable demand; ➤ Improve the design of internal processes, automation, and accessibility through the provision of information, training, and workforce development to enable self-help and embedding of new processes and procedures as business-as-usual practice. ➤ Continue to work collaboratively with colleagues across the councils to reduce printing, paper, and avoidable transactional contact & associated costs, aligned with meeting environmental targets & reducing the carbon footprint. <p>A Transactional Services Programme Transformation Board will be established in quarter 3 to oversee the delivery and assurance of the Service Improvement Programme.</p> | <p>Significant progress has been made to progress the Demand Management & Service Improvement Programme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mobilisation of the Transactional Shared Service Improvement Programme Board with Senior Leadership representation from both CE and CW&C Councils. ➤ Successful delivery of Phase 1 of the UNIT4 Optimisation Programme (Jan to March 2025) which focussed on maximising key Payroll functionality to minimise the level of manual intervention. ➤ Successful delivery of a Proof of Concept to build the integrations framework in-house using the latest Azure technology to support data transfer into and out of UNIT4 to other key Line of Business Systems. ➤ Launched the TSS Target Operating Model review to ensure the service delivery model is fit-for-purpose, cost-effective and supports the strategic priorities and direction of both councils. This is currently at Options Appraisal stage. <p>The Programme will continue to be progressed as part of the 25/26 Business Plan.</p> |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|---|--|
| 1.2 | Review Invest to Save options in relation to Paperless and Cashless developments | 31/03/25 | <p>Good progress is being made on the Paperless and Cashless developments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase in the number of auto-recognition of supplier invoices from 102 in July to 426 in Sept 2024 reducing the level of manual intervention ➤ Paperless Direct Debits Soft Market Testing completed and business case in development ➤ Roll out of new Chip & Pin Devices ➤ New Purchase Cards live in CEC and currently being rolled out in CWaC <p>The governance, assurance and delivery of the Paperless and Cashless developments will be overseen by the Transactional Service Improvement Programme Board from quarter 3.</p> | <p>Good progress is being made on the Paperless and Cashless developments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase in the number of auto-recognition of supplier invoices from 426 in Sept 2024 to 1,990 in March 2025 reducing the level of manual payment processing/intervention. ➤ Paperless Direct Debit business case being finalised with opportunities to maximise across different income streams being explored. ➤ New Purchase Cards now live in both CEC and CWaC. ➤ Electronic Dispatch of remittance advice mobilised across core payment groups significantly reducing the costs associated with printing and postage. <p>Further Paperless and Cashless developments will continue as part of the TSS 25/26 Business Plan.</p> |
| 1.3 | Agree and mobilise new Pay Mechanism | 31/12/24 | <p>Significant work has been undertaken in relation to review of the Pay Mechanism and all key financial and volumetric activity data has been refreshed. The detail is currently under review by both Councils with a view to mobilising in quarter 4 and back-dating to April 2024.</p> <p>In addition to the Paymech being a basis for cost apportionment, the opportunity to identify and share best practice to drive down avoidable and failure demand will be maximised across the shared service.</p> | <p>The Pay Mechanism based on key financial and volumetric activity data has now been agreed and implemented across both CEC and CWaC.</p> <p>Opportunities to identify and share best practice to drive down preventable and failure demand will continue to be maximised across the shared service.</p> |

| 2) Customer Objective: Shared Transactional Services will provide a clear and consistent Service Offer and place all customers at the heart of everything we do | | | | |
|---|---|----------|--|--|
| 2.1 | Undertake annual Customer Satisfaction Survey and compile results & key areas of learning | 30/06/24 | <p>A Customer Satisfaction Survey was undertaken concluding in quarter 1 with a view to helping the shared service to gain insight and feedback from customers to inform the continuous improvement of the service offer set within the context of available resources.</p> <p>Results were analysed in quarter 2 with the following headlines being summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 279 responses were received from both CEC, CWaC and schools/academies ➤ The top 3 services rated as very good or good are Income, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks and Outward Payments ➤ The services where improvements were identified by customers are Unit4 application, UNIT4 position admin and Payroll Helplines. <p>Improvement suggestions provided through the survey included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improved telephone support ➤ Investing in staff knowledge development ➤ Improving response times ➤ Improving Guidance & the UNIT4 Microsite ➤ Providing more training ➤ Improving Communications <p>As detailed throughout the business plan update, significant improvements are being progressed across the shared service portfolio which will help to improve the customer experience and service offer.</p> | <p>Developments to improve the customer experience have commenced roll out in quarters 3 and 4 of 24/25 including the following improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The approach to training through the mobilisation of a Knowledge Transfer Programme based on themes highlighted through customer insight and Business Intelligence Dashboards ➤ The UNIT4 guidance on the Microsite has been reviewed and updated to ensure it is up-to-date and can be more easily navigated ➤ Monthly Newsletters are being issued monthly through Council corporate communication channels to ensure key messages and help guides are communicated seamlessly in a joined-up way. ➤ The Recruitment and Pay Enquiry form has been launched with reporting capabilities being enhanced on a continuous basis to help the service to understand customer requirements and help improve response times. <p>Improving the customer experience and service offer will continue to be prioritised and progressed as part of the 25/26 Business Plan and the broader TSS Transformation Plan to ensure this is taken forward at pace and scale.</p> |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|--|--|
| 2.2 | Review and Re-launch User Engagement Forums | 31/12/24 | <p>A Change Champions skills audit is currently underway as part of the review and relaunch of User Engagement Forums. The next stage of the review will include the development of a Knowledge Transfer Session to upskill the knowledge and capability of Change Champions further reinforcing the resources available to proactively support shared service customers.</p> <p>Engagement with existing council forums and groups is being explored with view a to focussing on the business process end-to-end rather than a system focus encompassing the 'why' and the 'what' in addition to the 'how.'</p> <p>The role of Super-Users is currently being explored with a proposal being drafted to trial the approach in Finance with a view to evaluating the benefits and potential to scale-up further.</p> | <p>The existing Change Champion audit has been completed, and the network has been rebranded as Support Champions. A series of sessions to upskill the Support Champions have taken place and an ongoing programme will be developed with delivery ongoing throughout 25/26.</p> <p>A Communication Campaign is planned to re-launch the Support Champions, to ensure users are clear of their role in terms of providing support and guidance.</p> <p>Attendance at existing forums held by the Councils has taken place to reinforce the business process view rather than one which is system specific. These were seen as successful and will look to be continued in the future.</p> <p>Further work will continue in 25/26 to embed the Support Champion role to ensure this resource is recognised and maximised as part of the broader Shared Service support model.</p> |
| 2.3 | Undertake Access Channel Review into Shared Services | 30/09/24 | <p>A business process review has recently been undertaken on the access channels into Recruitment and Pay and as a result, an enquiry form was launched in October linked to a case management system.</p> <p>This will improve the monitoring, performance management and customer experience in relation to enquiries whilst helping the Team to identify trends and high demand areas to inform the themes for future Knowledge Transfer sessions.</p> <p>The next phase of the development will see the case management system linked to a Power BI dashboard to ensure the service is able to intuitively manage performance real-time.</p> | <p>Progress has been made with embedding the new Recruitment & Pay enquiry form. The case management system is now fully operational and has enhanced the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Track and monitor enquiries ➤ Improve response times and service quality ➤ Identify high-demand areas <p>The system has brought notable improvements there is still a need to further enhance the reporting mechanisms for additional analysis on recurring themes and to ensure data insights are timely, actionable, and feed into the Knowledge Transfer Programme.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|----------|--|---|
| 2.4 | Review approach in relation to training and knowledge transfer | 31/12/24 | <p>Taking on board the feedback from shared service customers as part of the customer experience survey, a review is currently underway of the approach adopted by the service in relation to training of knowledge transfer to service customers.</p> <p>Knowledge Transfer sessions have been launched with sessions on positions, processing leavers (farewell process) and introductions for new school staff successfully completed. A further timetable of sessions is currently being defined linked to demand management and the identification of key themes and trends or key timetables (year-end) for session focus.</p> | A variety of knowledge transfer sessions have taken place with the focus initially being on the support champion upskilling sessions. Other sessions were introduced in 24/25 that will now become embedded in our approach, these include introduction to Unit4 sessions targeting new starters, school's new bursar sessions and a series of bi-monthly 'hot topic' sessions designed as refreshers or enhancement to the training material as part of either demand management or the introduction of new or revised business processes. |
| 3) Systems & Processes Objective: Shared Transactional Services will ensure operational processes and procedures demonstrate best practice and enable the cost efficient and effective service delivery | | | | |
| 3.1 | Commission UNIT4 Health check and develop Optimisation Plan | 30/06/24 | <p>The UNIT4 Heathcheck focussing on HR and Payroll has now been successfully concluded with a series of recommendations focussing on the key priorities in terms of the optimisation of UNIT4 functionality.</p> <p>A phased Optimisation Programme is currently being developed with a view to Phase 1 being rolled out in quarter 4 subject to the necessary approvals.</p> | <p>Phase 1 Part 1 of the UNIT4 Optimisation Programme has been successfully delivered focussing on key priority Payroll workstreams to maximise the functionality of the system and minimise manual processes and interventions.</p> <p>The Shared Service is currently in the process of commissioning Phase 1 Part 2 of the UNIT4 Optimisation Programme with a view to further maximising the system functionality.</p> <p>This priority will continue to be progressed as part of the 25/26 TSS Business Plan.</p> |
| 3.2 | Develop the UNIT4 Support Contract Forward Strategy | 31/12/24 | <p>Good progress is being made through the mobilisation of a Strategy Group with representatives from both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Council. This group is overseeing the coordination of several key workstreams in relation the Transactional Shared Service forward strategy.</p> | <p>Good progress continues through the work of the Joint Strategy Group with representatives from both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils.</p> <p>The future shape and scope the of the UNIT4 Support Contract is intrinsically linked to the outcome of the TSS Service Model Review which currently at Options Appraisal stage.</p> <p>This priority will continue to be progressed at part of the 25/26 TSS Business Plan.</p> |



| | | | | |
|-----|---|----------|---|---|
| 3.3 | Develop Unit4 Incident and Development Prioritisation Protocol | 31/12/24 | <p>A Prioritisation Framework has been drafted and an outline shared with the relevant Governance Groups.</p> <p>The Prioritisation Framework will be applied to the existing work pipeline as a beta for the new Change Prioritisation Protocol which will be launched in quarter 4 to inform the prioritisation of the 25/26 UNIT4 work programme.</p> | <p>A UNIT4 Development Prioritisation Framework has now been fully developed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A Prioritisation Protocols to inform the risk-based prioritisation of UNIT4 developments including alignment with resource plans and a refreshed Change Control documentation. ➤ A forward plan / pipeline of development requests. ➤ A refreshed governance model with the formal launch of a Change Advisory Board. <p>The Prioritisation Framework is currently travelling through the appropriate governance structures and will be mobilised as part of the TSS 25/26 Business Plan.</p> |
| 3.4 | Undertake Risk-Based End-to-End Business Process Reviews | 31/03/25 | <p>A series of business process reviews have been undertaken to improve both the customer experience and maximise efficiency and effectiveness of the shared service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Farewell and Leavers policy and process review ➤ Contracts generation and automation (Officers) ➤ Contracts generation and automation (Schools) ➤ Recruitment & Pay Customer enquiries <p>Further reviews are planned in quarters 3 and 4.</p> | <p>Quarters 3 and 4 have focussed in solidifying the business process reviews undertaken in the first part of BAU. Further business process reviews have included a review of gaps in the UNIT4 hierarchy to improve workflow.</p> <p>Business Process Reviews will continue to be prioritised as part of the 25/26 Business Plan with a specific focus on the business processes associated with the UNIT4 Optimisation Programme.</p> |
| 3.5 | Review Performance Framework and align to Balanced Scorecard approach | 31/03/25 | <p>The Performance Framework has been refined in 24/25 with further iterative improvements planned to align with the role out of key developments.</p> <p>As the 'as is' service core offer is further refined, the performance framework will be further reviewed and refined to align with the Balanced Scorecard approach for mobilisation in 25/26.</p> | <p>The Performance Framework has been refined in 24/25 with further iterative improvements planned to align with the role out of key developments.</p> <p>As the 'as is' service core offer is further refined in line with the outcome of the TSS Service Delivery Model review, the performance framework will be further reviewed and refined to align with the Balanced Scorecard approach.</p> |




| | | | | |
|--|--|----------|--|--|
| 3.6 | Develop Intelligence Dashboards to support the service to effectively manage demand and performance across operational, tactical, and strategic tiers. | 30/09/24 | <p>Significant progress has been made with the development of Business Intelligence Dashboards to support the team to effectively reduce preventable demand and proactively manage performance of the service. These include the introduction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An Overpayments dashboard by Recruitment & Pay tracking the number, value, and root cause to support proactive performance management. ➤ A Position Admin Form dashboard to ensure timely support to services, schools, and other customers. ➤ A dashboard in relation to requests for UNIT4 support to support a timely customer response and enable the identification of trends and themes to inform Knowledge Transfer Sessions to build the capability and knowledge of system users. <p>Further opportunities will be maximised to embed the Intelligence Dashboards into Business-as-Usual practice with further roll out planned to other key areas of the Shared Service.</p> | <p>Further progress has been made with the development and roll out Business Intelligence Dashboards to support the team to reduce preventable demand and proactively manage performance of the service. These include the introduction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gaps in the hierarchy dashboard to support efficient workflows within Unit 4 ➤ No Purchase Order (PO) No Pay compliance dashboard to identify trends and highlight/improve non-compliance with relevant Councils and Customers ➤ Late/Unpaid invoices dashboards created to support the compliance checks and address the root cause. ➤ Employment Contracts tracker to support the effective management of demand, resource deployment and improved KPI compliance. ➤ Users of Unit 4 dashboard to help identify new starters or new users to support a proactive approach to training and engagement. <p>Further opportunities will be maximised to embed the Intelligence Dashboards into Business-as-Usual practice with further roll out planned to other key areas of the Shared Service in 25/26.</p> |
| 4) Organisational Capacity Objective: Shared Transactional Service values colleagues, maximises capability and embraces innovation and change | | | | |
| 4.1 | Co-produce and embed the Service Core Offer | 31/12/24 | <p>Work has been undertaken to review the service offer and catalogue with a view to this reflecting the 'as is' current service scope. The updated service offer will be subject to review and sign off by both Councils in quarter 3.</p> <p>Further work is currently being scoped to review the future Target Operating Model of the service.</p> | <p>A TSS Service Delivery Model review is currently underway to ensure the shared service model is fit-for-purpose, cost-effective and supports the strategic priorities and direction of both councils. This is currently at Options Appraisal stage.</p> <p>The core Service Offer will be further refined in 25/26 to reflect the outcome of the Target Operating Model review.</p> |

| | | | | |
|-----|---|----------|--|---|
| 4.2 | Undertake skills audit and develop Workforce Development Plan | 30/09/24 | A skills audit has been undertaken across the shared service, with skills gaps identified and matrices included in Business Continuity Plans. Workforce Development Plans are currently in train with capacity and capability being developed through the multi-skilling of teams. | <p>Further progress has been made in addressing skills gaps through several key initiatives. Flexible team arrangements have been mobilised across different service areas, enabling teams to build capacity and capability while gaining exposure to new skill sets.</p> <p>Teams have been supported to participate in a range of cross-functional projects, which has contributed to broader knowledge-sharing and capability development. Knowledge transfer sessions have been delivered to help embed learning and build critical knowledge and skills across teams.</p> <p>Workforce Development Plans will continue to be a critical priority in the 25/26 Business Plan.</p> |
| 4.3 | Roll-out Management Development Programme | 31/03/25 | Significant progress has been made in the roll-out of the Management Development Programme. All Managers across the shared service have benefited from external coaching twin tracked with HR Policy Development Training Programme covering key modules including Wellbeing and Absence Management. Further modules will be rolled out in quarters 3 and 4. | <p>The Management Development Programme continues to be supported through the 'Play Your Part' Charters and Conversations with key development opportunities being supported through this approach.</p> <p>Further modules of training as part of the HR Policy Development Programme are being planned for delivery in 2025/26.</p> |
| 4.4 | Support Service Colleagues to undertake the Data Apprenticeship Programme and translate the benefits into the Shared Service. | 31/03/25 | <p>Two Governance and Support Team members have successfully completed the Data Apprenticeship Programme with a further cohort scheduled to commence the programme at the next intake.</p> <p>This training has been crucial to the mobilisation of Business Intelligence Dashboards to support the proactive performance management of service performance.</p> | <p>A further three Team Members (one from Recruitment & Pay and two from Payments and Income) are now undertaking the Data Apprenticeship Programme as part of the second Cohort.</p> <p>The skills gained through the Data Apprenticeship Programme will continue to be harnessed to support data-led developments and proactive performance management ensuring the delivery of high quality, right first-time services.</p> |

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

| Payments & Income | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Number | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual CEC | Previous Year Actual CWaC | Current Year Target | Mid-year Actual | End of Year Actual | Direction of Travel | Comments |
| TS001 | Payment to Supplier within terms | 96% | 93% | 90% | 90% | 90% | ↔ | Performance is on target with a positive direction of travel when compared with the mid-year position. |
| TS002 | Timely and accurate resolution of unallocated income | 81% | 85% | 85% | 82.5% | 88% | ↑ | <p>Timely and accurate resolution of unallocated income is usually a period behind as the team work on these during the month following cut off.</p> <p>Performance is above target with a positive direction of travel when compared with the mid-year position.</p> <p>Challenges were experienced earlier in the year with the bedding down of processes associated with CEC change of banks. Collaborative efforts to resolve the issues have been successful with a significant increase in performance observed from September taking performance back above target for the second part of the year.</p> |
| TS003 | Timely and accurate Direct Debits Collected | 100% | 100% | 90% | 100% | 100% | ↔ | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |
| TS004 | Issues resolved at first point of contact | 98% | 100% | 90% | 100% | 99% | ↔ | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |

| Recruitment & Pay | | | | | | | | Comments |
|-------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Number | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual CEC | Previous Year Actual CWaC | Current Year Target | Mid-year Actual | End of year Actual | Direction of Travel | |
| TS005 | Confirmation and Final Contractual Documents of Employment provided for each new employee within 5 working days of complete and accurate information being received (Officers) | 55% | 66% | 95% | 70% | 73% |  | <p>In line with historic trends, contract requests increase over the Summer-period for September new starters/position changes.</p> <p>Additional resources have recently been recruited which will further support the Teams capacity.</p> <p>Whilst the performance position remains below target, the direction of travel is positive with performance improving when compared to the mid-year position.</p> <p>A Project Team has been established to review business processes and maximise digital first solutions. Developments have been identified to streamline and reduce manual processes, maximise contract auto generation and enable proactive performance management through the introduction of Business Intelligence Dashboards.</p> |
| TS006 | Confirmation and Final Contractual Documents of Employment provided for each new employee within 5 working days of complete and accurate information being received (Schools) | 49% | 57% | 95% | 67% | 72% |  | <p>The Contract automation improvements will be fully mobilised in May 2025. This will reduce help to reduce the demand on the team, improve the customer experience and performance against the 5-day KPI target.</p> |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---|---|
| TS007 | Percentage of pay made accurately and on time (Officer) | 99.40% | 99.40% | 99% | 99.56% | 99.58% |  | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |
| TS008 | Percentage of pay made accurately and on time (Schools) | 99.35% | 99.43% | 99% | 99.54% | 99.61% |  | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |
| TS009 | Issues Resolved at first point of contact | 45% | 64% | 90% | 57% | 60% |  | <p>The % of issues resolved at first point of contact is dependent on the complexity of the enquiry and whether specialist advice or more detailed case investigation is required for example in relation to tax refunds. The KPI is currently based on call volumes and the service has experienced a high level of complex enquiries which has impacted the resolution at first point of contact rates.</p> <p>A business process review has recently been undertaken on the access channels into Recruitment and Pay and as a result, an enquiry form was launched in October linked to a case management system. This will improve the monitoring, performance management and customer experience in relation to enquiries whilst helping the Team to identify trends and high demand areas to inform the themes for future Knowledge Transfer sessions. The KPI metadata is currently being reviewed to reflect the revised enquiry protocol. The KPI scope and reporting has been updated in the 25/26 Business Plan.</p> |

| Governance & Support | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---|
| | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual CEC | Previous Year Actual CWaC | Current Year Target | Mid-year Actual CEC | End of Year Actual | Direction of Travel | Comments |
| TS010 | Percentage of INCIDENT halo tickets closed within 5 working days of receipt | 82% | 82% | 90% | 87% | 90% | ↑ | <p>Performance is on target with a positive direction of travel when compared to the mid-year position.</p> <p>A lower level of incidents reported has meant that even a small proportion not closed within the 5-day KPI, reduces performance below target. The KPI definition, metadata and target has been revised as part of the 25/26 Business Plan development.</p> |
| TS011 | Percentage of INTERNAL SERVICE request halo tickets closed within 5 working days | 88% | 88% | 85% | 92% | 94% | ↑ | Performance is above target with a positive direction of travel when compared to the mid-year position. |
| TS012 | Percentage of fully completed POSITION ADMINISTRATION FORMS actioned within 5 working days | 97% | 97% | 90% | 99% | 99% | ↔ | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |
| TS013 | Percentage of HELPDESK calls answered | 98% | 98% | 95% | 98% | 98% | ↔ | Performance is above target with a steady direction of travel. |

KEY RISKS

| Number | Key Risk Description | Initial Risk Rating | Mid-year Rating | End of year Rating | Comments |
|--------|--|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Continued loss of income from schools | 9 | 9 | 9 | A review is underway as part of the broader Service Delivery Model review to outline the current position, future service delivery options and mitigations. |
| 2 | Capacity within service to continue to progress and embed the new Service Model. | 9 | 9 | 9 | Recruitment to the additional posts agreed as part of the Stabilisation Plan is now concluded. Work is ongoing to develop the revised Service Core Offer and associated Target Operating Model/future Service Delivery Model. The UNIT4 Optimisation Programme will also help to maximise automation and resources across the service to further reduce the risk rating. |

ISSUES SUMMARY

| Number | Issue Description | Date issue arose | Date issue closed | Comments |
|--------|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Optimisation of the UNIT4 ERP System | Ongoing | | A UNIT4 Health check on HR and Payroll has been undertaken and an Optimisation Programme has been mobilised with (Phase 1 Part 1 successfully concluded in March 2025 and Phase 1 Part 2 launched in May 2025) to ensure system functionality is fully optimised. |

APPROVAL

| Approval | Name | Job title | Date Agreed |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Service Manager | Mel Fitzpatrick | Head of Transactional Shared Services | 19/05/2025 |
| Client Manager CEC | Karen Grave | Director of People | |
| Client Manager CWC | | | |
| Head of Service/Director | Debbie Hall | Director of Finance | 20/05/2025 |

OFFICIAL

Shared Service Business Plan 2024 to 2025

SERVICE DETAILS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Service Name | ICT Shared Services |
| Service Manager | Gareth Pawlett |
| Client Managers | Roger Davies, Valda Williams |

OVERVIEW

- ICT Shared Service is a shared ICT service hosted by Cheshire East Borough Council (CEC). It currently manages multiple diverse devices, infrastructures and application sets belonging to the two Councils and related partner organisations.
- The shared service provides:
 - Devices - Core IT End User Computing (EUC) Platform, Microsoft365,
 - Infrastructures - A single managed service for the provision of network and communications,
 - Hybrid data platform - A hybrid EUC and applications platform, co-located across Microsoft's Azure platform and the Datacentre in Kelly House,
 - User support services - comprising of the IT Service Desk and three levels of support in line with well recognised service management standards (ITIL v3) covering devices, infrastructure, and applications,
 - IT security, architecture and change management, project management and applications development and,
 - IT for several other organisations across Cheshire, comprising schools, wholly owned trading companies and strategic partnerships/joint ventures.

Note: It will be a year of significant change and as a result, some of the 24/25 objectives could be impacted by the delivery of the ICT Hybrid Model / Gemini Programme.

BUDGET SUMMARY

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 2024/2025 Planned Budget £ | Gross Expenditure £13.48m Gross income £13.48m Net Outturn Nil |
| Comments | Planned Budget - 24/25 Budget is based on 100,000 hours to be commissioned by both Councils for the Shared Service. |
| Mid-Year Forecast £ | Net Nil |
| Comments | <p>ICT Shared service has reported a forecast of net nil at mid year.</p> <p>An in-year pressure on income is being mitigated by a significant reduction in third party contract costs plus lower than budgeted staffing expenditure due to vacancies.</p> <p>Important to note that this position is reliant on project income of £3.8m which assumes 60k project hours to be delivered this year. Should the level of commissioned hours reduce, steps will be taken to mitigate this position with a reduction in Agency staff.</p> |
| End of Year outturn £ | -£0.562m |
| | <p>Shared Services spending moved from an underspend of £0.156m to an overspend of £0.562m - there was a significant decline in the number of chargeable hours with a corresponding drop in income (+£0.5m).</p> <p>Azure nodes previously forecast in Strategy were moved to Shared Services increasing spend (+£0.1m) and there was an increase in agency costs due to staff taking less time off than forecast (+£0.08m).</p> |

KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

| Num ber | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------|------------|--------|----------|--------------|---|--------|----------|-------------------|--|--------|----------|-------------------|--|--------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------|-------------------|--|--------|----------|------------------|--|--------|----------|------------------|---|--------|----------|------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|----------|--------|---|--------|----------|--------|--|--------|--------|--------|--|--------|----------|--------|---|--------|---------------------|--------|--|--------|---------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------|--------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------|---------------------|------------|---|---|
| 1 | <p>Implement the recommendations from the Shared Service Review for ICT / Delivery of the Gemini Programme: The milestone plan and due dates per milestone are shown below. The overall target date for completion is April 25.</p> <table><tr><th>Workstream</th><th>Milestone Delivery Table Milestone</th><th>Completi on Date</th><th>Status</th></tr><tr><td>Mobilisation</td><td>Initiation</td><td>Jun-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Mobilisation</td><td>Establish governance and programme controls</td><td>Jun-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Technology Change</td><td>Procure an external Technology Partner</td><td>Sep-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Technology Change</td><td>Options appraisal data centre and networks</td><td>Feb-24</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Technology Change</td><td>Establish new O365 Tenancy</td><td>Dec-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Technology Change</td><td>Migration to new O365 Tenancy complete</td><td>Aug-24</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Workforce Change</td><td>Confirm HR policy framework to be applied to transition of staff</td><td>Dec-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Workforce Change</td><td>Define and deliver process to transition staff to CWC and CE services</td><td>May-24</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Workforce Change</td><td>Skills analysis and development plan</td><td>May-24</td><td>Underway</td></tr><tr><td>Design</td><td>Initial design of CWC and CE separated services</td><td>Nov-23</td><td>Complete</td></tr><tr><td>Design</td><td>Establish shadow management arrangements</td><td>Mar-24</td><td>Closed</td></tr><tr><td>Design</td><td>Retained shared service model design and costs</td><td>May-24</td><td>Underway</td></tr><tr><td>Design</td><td>Performance management framework and SLAs</td><td>Oct-24</td><td>Yet to be initiated</td></tr><tr><td>Design</td><td>Process definitions between ICT services</td><td>Oct-24</td><td>Yet to be initiated</td></tr><tr><td>Formalisation</td><td>Shared Service agreement</td><td>Nov-24</td><td>Yet to be initiated</td></tr><tr><td>Formalisation</td><td>Soft launch of new service model</td><td>Dec-24</td><td>Closed</td></tr><tr><td>Formalisation</td><td>Formal Disaggregation of staff</td><td>Mar-25</td><td>Yet to be initiated</td></tr></table> | Workstream | Milestone Delivery Table Milestone | Completi on Date | Status | Mobilisation | Initiation | Jun-23 | Complete | Mobilisation | Establish governance and programme controls | Jun-23 | Complete | Technology Change | Procure an external Technology Partner | Sep-23 | Complete | Technology Change | Options appraisal data centre and networks | Feb-24 | Complete | Technology Change | Establish new O365 Tenancy | Dec-23 | Complete | Technology Change | Migration to new O365 Tenancy complete | Aug-24 | Complete | Workforce Change | Confirm HR policy framework to be applied to transition of staff | Dec-23 | Complete | Workforce Change | Define and deliver process to transition staff to CWC and CE services | May-24 | Complete | Workforce Change | Skills analysis and development plan | May-24 | Underway | Design | Initial design of CWC and CE separated services | Nov-23 | Complete | Design | Establish shadow management arrangements | Mar-24 | Closed | Design | Retained shared service model design and costs | May-24 | Underway | Design | Performance management framework and SLAs | Oct-24 | Yet to be initiated | Design | Process definitions between ICT services | Oct-24 | Yet to be initiated | Formalisation | Shared Service agreement | Nov-24 | Yet to be initiated | Formalisation | Soft launch of new service model | Dec-24 | Closed | Formalisation | Formal Disaggregation of staff | Mar-25 | Yet to be initiated | April 2025 | <p>This period has seen the successful completion of the Technology change. The Technology and Finance workstreams remain Green.</p> <p>As part of the workforce mapping and transition it is the intention to identify areas where additional training would benefit staff and service transition. Shadow management will now be limited due to the HR transition process.</p> <p>The HR workstream is currently red due to initial delays with the development of Job profiles and JDQs in CE. Development and evaluation are now complete for both councils so it is expected that formal consultation will commence in December 2024 subject to sign off from Board and Trade Unions.</p> | <p>Significant progress continues to be made on the Gemini Programme.</p> <p>The technical workstream has completed work on the new CWaC Microsoft 365 platform. Work to ensure the CEC Ourcheshire environment is tidied up and follows the same best practice as CWaC is nearing completion.</p> <p>Phase 2 work on Network, Security and Data Centre have been mobilised and will be completed in the next financial year.</p> <p>Although there have been delays in the HR workstream which means the new service designs will not be live until September 25, significant progress has been made and staff consultation has been completed.</p> <p>Further detail on Gemini progress has been shared</p> |
| Workstream | Milestone Delivery Table Milestone | Completi on Date | Status | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mobilisation | Initiation | Jun-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mobilisation | Establish governance and programme controls | Jun-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Technology Change | Procure an external Technology Partner | Sep-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Technology Change | Options appraisal data centre and networks | Feb-24 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Technology Change | Establish new O365 Tenancy | Dec-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Technology Change | Migration to new O365 Tenancy complete | Aug-24 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workforce Change | Confirm HR policy framework to be applied to transition of staff | Dec-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workforce Change | Define and deliver process to transition staff to CWC and CE services | May-24 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workforce Change | Skills analysis and development plan | May-24 | Underway | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | Initial design of CWC and CE separated services | Nov-23 | Complete | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | Establish shadow management arrangements | Mar-24 | Closed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | Retained shared service model design and costs | May-24 | Underway | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | Performance management framework and SLAs | Oct-24 | Yet to be initiated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Design | Process definitions between ICT services | Oct-24 | Yet to be initiated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formalisation | Shared Service agreement | Nov-24 | Yet to be initiated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formalisation | Soft launch of new service model | Dec-24 | Closed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Formalisation | Formal Disaggregation of staff | Mar-25 | Yet to be initiated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Num ber | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments |
|------------|---|----------------------------|--|---|
| | | | | by way of separate updates durn the year. |
| 2 | Continuous Improvement – delivery of a jointly agreed service improvement plan based on the following key themes: New Business, Delivery on commitments, new metrics (security and compliance), User experience, Process improvement and Operational Strategy; with an associated Performance Management Framework (PMF). | March 2025 | For SIP, queue management and incident handling was well under control and we were continuing a downward trajectory of demand on the Service Desk. The post Gemini CWC migration issues have heavily impacted this. However, hopefully once this hypercare period is out of the way we can get back on track. For Halo improvements the focus is very much on separation activity. However, that does afford the opportunity to ensure that we are reviewing all requests and ensuring where still needed that they have appropriate associated up to date knowledge articles, both for internal support and as guidance for users where applicable. We're making some progress on shift left. The reduced demand from CE on the Desk is definitely associated with the continuing maturity of ACM, the Lighthouse portal and the Bright Sparks community. They are really making a difference where they are supporting their teams. We've changed our approach and engagement too with the Bright Sparks which is leading to greater feedback and insight into the | Demand levels for the Service Desk have settled back down to pre CWC migration levels and we have been able to continue with the shift left activity and focus on technical adoption for the Bright Sparks Community and more widely across CE. A recent focus and campaign on Copilot Chat take up has been well received. The work towards the Halo split is continuing and taking the opportunity to simplify process and introduce more automation and self-serve. Other change activity is on hold whilst we implement the new service designs. |
| 2.1 | Service Improvement Plan (SIP) to drive continuous improvement in operations. | | | |
| 2.2 | Customer Satisfaction Survey to be carried out. | | | |
| 2.3 | Implement changes to Performance Management Framework (PMF) | | | |

| Num ber | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|
| | | | needs of the organisation. The increased take up of the biTsize sessions demonstrates we are focusing on the right topics and the user community is seeing the value of training and using the technology effectively. From an internal shift left perspective, this is work in progress but will hopefully gain momentum as part of the Gemini service design phase. Customer satisfaction survey was postponed following the instigation of the Gemini Programme and multiple initiatives already underway in each council which could detract from meaningful participation. It was also agreed that the survey would not be undertaken until an agreed approach was identified. Our incumbent survey provider was no longer able to reflect the complexities of the councils' structures to deliver the right level of analysis. | |
| 3 3.1 3.2 | Culture - To ensure all senior managers are highly visible and consistently display the positive behaviours of the Council. To ensure all staff have the skills, support, and frameworks to enable them to be successful and to deliver effective services. To ensure the service embraces change and champions the cultural standards, values and behaviours which will be beneficial to our shared service partners. | March 2025 | Good progress has been made in this area. Both Councils continue to develop their champion networks, Digital Pioneers in CWaC and Bright Sparks in CEC. Engagement has continued with these groups, Gemini focussed in CWaC and maximising the use of technology with CEC. Several workshops have been delivered and | Continued good progress has been made in this area. Councils continue to collaborate closely with their respective champion networks, Digital Pioneers in CWaC and Bright Sparks in CEC. |

| Num ber | Service Priorities/ Objectives | Date due for completion | Mid-Year Review Comments | End of Year Comments |
|------------|--|----------------------------|--|--|
| 3.3 | Extended Leadership Programme initiatives driving cultural and operational change | | communications has increased in both Councils. | Engagement has continued with these groups, Gemini focussed in CWaC and maximising the use of technology with CEC. Regular communication continues in both Councils. |
| 3.4 | Support Champion Networks in both Councils – to improve staff engagement,innovation and visibility | | Collaboration between the teams has been excellent especially in the delivery of Gemini tenancy migration. Some issues to resolve post migration but the teams are working on it. | |
| 3.5 | Undertake a Skills Audit of the service to ensure the organisation has the right skills and capabilities now and for the future (including talent management) – link to Gemini Programme | | | |
| 3.6 | Undertake roadshows and workshops in both Councils – to improve visibility and awareness of ICT across the Councils | | Significant work as part of Gemini HR Workstream on skills and capabilities as we look to populate both service designs. Staff Development a key part of this process with budget available for training where required. | Collaboration between the teams has been excellent. |
| | Develop strong relationships with both Councils their ICT Client teams and the wider business | | | |
| | Ensure all staff have access to PDRs, 1-2-1s and Team Meetings | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|------------|--|--|
| 4 | Strategy and Design - To explore strategic partnerships and promote how ICT can be utilised effectively and efficiently as an enabler in the delivery of the Councils and other customers business objectives. To define the technical architecture and roadmaps to support Council business objectives. | March 2025 | Gemini Phase 2 is being mobilised to deliver the recommendations following the Kelly House Options Appraisal. The programme will deliver significant technical change absorbing that activity that was previously delivered under Essential replacement and Security and Compliance programmes. All projects are going through a design phase before being approved by Business Design Authority to move in to delivery. | Good progress in being made in Gemini programm. Significant technology change has been planned, design and mobilised. |
| | 4.1 Refresh of Strategic Roadmaps (Infrastructure / Applications) to improve business planning processes and product support. | | | |
| | 4.2 Deliver Essential Replacement activity to ensure ICT Services are performant and compliant and in line with emerging strategies ** Dependency here with the Kelly House Options Appraisal work and the subsequent recommended direction of travel. | | | |
| | 4.3 Support the Councils (Joint Business Design Authority) to enable exploitation of existing ICT investment or design of new services. | | | |
| | 4.4 Strategic partnerships to exploit ICT Investment and support transformation. | | | |
| 5 | Governance - To provide a framework of governance to ensure the provision of robust information, intelligence, and business cases to support effective decision-making. | March 2025 | Simplification of governance to support ICT/Gemini has been delivered. The Gemini Programme Board has taken over the role of Joint Strategic Board, with the Joint Business Deign Authority supporting the programme board. Existing operational governance remained unchanged with Technical Design Authority and Change Advisory Board continuing as business as usual. | The Gemini Programme Board has taken over the role of Joint Strategic Board, with the Joint Business Deign Authority supporting the programme board. Existing operational governance remained unchanged with Technical Design Authority and Change Advisory Board continuing as business as usual. |
| | 5.1 Provide effective decision-making support to operational services through Joint Strategic Board, Joint Service Improvement Board, Joint Business Design Authority | | | |
| | 5.2 Technical Design Authority to ensure all new ICT capabilities follow appropriate design process and adhere to strategic principles of Simple, Standard, Share and Self-Serve | | | |
| | 5.3 Ongoing Business Management with responsibility for Financial Reporting, Project Management Office, Vendor Management and Sourcing and Resourcing within ICT Service. | | | |
| | 5.4 Ensure all technical change is managed through the formal change process including ICT Change Advisory Board (CAB) | | | |

| | | | | |
|------------|---|------------|--|--|
| | | | | the business design authority. |
| 6 | Financial Sustainability - To ensure the ICT Shared Service operates at the optimal cost base to support the Councils, challenging existing service delivery models whilst maximizing resource utilisation. To create a sustainable ICT Shared Services structure to support the Councils and its partners. | March 2025 | Progress to reduce third party spend and agency costs has been good with over a 20% reduction in agency roles since the start of the financial year. | Shared Services spending moved from an underspend of £0.156m to an overspend of £0.562m – this was due to a significant decline in the number of commissioned projects/hours, 10,000 reduction in chargeable hours from mid-year forecast, with a corresponding drop in income (+£0.5m). |
| 6.1 | Regular Financial reporting through JSB | | Financial reporting continues through BAU finance reporting as well as business design authority. | Azure nodes previously forecast in CEC Strategy were moved to Shared Services increasing spend (+£0.1m) and there was an increase in agency costs due to staff taking less time off than forecast (+£0.08m). |
| 6.2 | Development of a sustainable financial strategy (balancing customer demand and growth pressures) with the need for an affordable cost model – delivered by Gemini Programme | | ICT Shared service has reported a forecast of net nil at mid-year. | There has been an over 25% reduction in agency roles/costs in 24/25. |
| 6.3 | Recruitment of/New staffing structure for ICT Services – delivered by Gemini Programme | | An in-year pressure on income is being mitigated by a significant reduction in third party contract costs plus lower than budgeted staffing expenditure due to vacancies. | Both Councils will be moving to their new service designs and respective cost models in 25/26. |
| | | | Important to note that this position is reliant on project income of £3.8m which assumes 60k project hours to be delivered this year. Should the level of commissioned hours reduce, steps will be taken to mitigate this position with a reduction in Agency staff. | |

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

| Num ber | Key Performance Indicator Description | Previous Year Actual | Current Year Target | Mid-year Actual | End of year Actual | Comments |
|------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey covering full range of services. | | 75% | N/A | N/A | This was postponed following the instigation of the Gemini Programme and multiple initiatives already underway in each council which could detract from meaningful participation. It was also agreed that the survey would not be undertaken until an agreed approach was identified. Our incumbent survey provider was no longer able to reflect the complexities of the councils' structures to deliver the right level of analysis. |
| 2 | Delivery of projects to time, cost and quality milestones | | 75% | 56.7% | 58% | The year-end position reflects the closure of the significant tail of projects that we have been continuing to work through. This has ranged from complex projects with changes to scope and supplier difficulties. Some projects were also on hold for a significant period, having been impacted by the technical split activity within the Gemini Programme. This was intentional to avoid the cost of doing the work twice. It was recognised that we're effectively reporting the service as it was historically rather than where it is now which is misleading. However, these tail projects can't be overlooked and have continued to distort the SLA picture. This tail has now been cleared and for calculation purposes, projects will now fail at the point of the relevant missed milestone and not at closure and so be counted in the month the failure occurs. This should provide a more accurate picture going forward. |
| 3 | Availability of basket of critical systems and services | | 99.0% | 99.3% | 99.4% | |

KEY RISKS

| Num ber | Key Risk Description | Initial Risk Rating | Mid-year Rating | End of year Rating | Comments |
|------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | <p>Information management, data security (including CyberSecurity)</p> <p>Corporate policies, protocols, tools, and technologies for the authority continue to be developed, with information management maturity and staff understanding and working practice.</p> <p>The lack of a consistent approach to information management may result in security and safety breaches, leading to the loss of confidentiality and potential disclosure of sensitive personal information.</p> <p>This lack of consistency may also result in difficulties in timely access to key information. Decisions based on poor or absent data may result in a failure in service delivery.</p> <p>In conjunction, ineffective data security measures may lead to the inappropriate use of data, data protection issues and fraud resulting in loss of reputation and financial penalties.</p> | 16 | 12 | 12 | <p>There is continued heightened risk currently through state sponsored attacks and increased ransomware activity, this has been evidenced recently in the press and impacted organisations such as M&S and Co-op.</p> <p>There has been activity to minimise any increase in the risk rating such as.</p> <p>Several communications have been given to the organisation, its staff, and members to raise awareness on good security practises and techniques as well as assurance on how prepared the councils technologies and tools are.</p> <p>Work is progressing on the procurement of a Security Operations Centre (SOC) that can provide round-the-clock monitoring and protection of the council's network and systems.</p> <p>In both Councils sessions have been held with the wider leadership teams as part of the Business Continuity Planning sessions, the sessions were scenario based with one of the themes being a cyber-attack. The scenario was preceded by a briefing describing similar attacks across the public and private sector. These sessions are invaluable to raise awareness and prepare services to reduce vulnerabilities.</p> |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | | | <p>The Councils are moving to Zero Trust architecture, this is a direct result of increased threats posed to the working infrastructure. This shift is in line with the latest thinking and guidelines issued by the NCSC.</p> <p>Identity Management – projects are continuing to ensure that identities are protected through increased monitoring and controls. Access from locations outside of the UK are automatically blocked reducing the attack surface. There are regular phishing tests to understand the behaviours of staff and their understanding of cyber risks.</p> <p>Application Management – work is ongoing to ensure that MFA and SSO is applied to applications that are cloud hosted.</p> <p>Data Security – continued enhancement of the existing security controls to ensure that the latest threats are mitigated and protected. Work is continuing to strengthen the resilience capabilities of data storage and protection. Work has progressed to refresh the Cyber Incident Response Plan and associated workbooks to ensure that the Council is best equipped should an incident occur. There has been changes to cloud backups to ensure that there is coverage in the event of a cyber incident.</p> <p>The Shared Service has also reflected on some of the early lessons learned from the M&S and Co-op attacks and implemented mitigation actions.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|

ISSUES SUMMARY

| Number | Issue Description | Date issue arose | Date issue closed | Comments |
|--------|--|------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1 | The original budget is based on the business model of 100,000 commissioned hours. Any reduction in commissioned hours will reduce income and put pressure on the outturn position. | 01/04/2024 | 31/03/2025 | The funding model is no longer fit for purpose and will be replaced as part of the delivery of Gemini Programme. |

APPROVAL

| Approval | Name | Job title | Date Agreed |
|--------------------------|----------------|---|-------------|
| Service Manager | Gareth Pawlett | Chief Information Officer/ Head of ICT Services | |
| Client Manager CEC | Valda Williams | ICT Business Planning and Compliance Manager | |
| Client Manager CWC | Roger Davies | Head of Digital, Data and Technology | |
| Head of Service/Director | Adele Taylor | Interim Director of Finance and Customer Services | |

OFFICIAL