

Item: 16

Asset Management Sub-committee: 26 January 2021.

1. Recommendations

It is recommended:

1.1.

That the Committee approves the attached minute as a true record.

1.2.

That the Committee considers the recommendations at paragraph 6.3.

2. Appendix

Draft Minute of the Meeting of the Asset Management Sub-committee held on 26 January 2021.

Minute

Asset Management Sub-committee

Tuesday, 26 January 2021, 10:30.

Microsoft Teams.



Present

Councillors W Leslie Manson, Norman R Craigie, Robin W Crichton, Andrew Drever, Steven B Heddle, John A R Scott and James W Stockan.

Clerk

- Sandra Craigie, Committees Officer.

In Attendance

- Hayley Green, Head of IT and Facilities.
- Darren Richardson, Head of Infrastructure and Strategic Projects.
- Colin Kemp, Corporate Finance Senior Manager.
- Jill Macadam, Solicitor.
- Graeme Christie, Estates Manager (for Items 3 to 7).
- Kenny MacPherson, IT Service Manager (for Items 1 to 7).
- Ian Rushbrook, Capital Programme Manager (for Items 1 to 7).
- John Wrigley, Roads and Environmental Services Manager (for Items 4 to 9).

Observing

- Karen Greaves, Head of Executive Support (for Items 4 to 7).
- Garry Burton, Sport and Leisure Service Manager (for Items 3 to 7).
- Lorraine Stout, Press Officer.

Declaration of Interest

- No declarations of interest were intimated.

Chair

- Councillor W Leslie Manson.

1. Form of Voting

The Sub-committee resolved that, should a vote be required in respect of the matters to be considered at this meeting, notwithstanding Standing Order 21.4, the form of voting should be by calling the roll or recorded vote.

2. Disclosure of Exempt Information

The Sub-committee noted the proposal that the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 8, as the business to be discussed involved the potential disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

3. Revenue Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Corporate Finance Senior Manager, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

3.1. The revenue financial summary statement, in respect of service areas for which the Asset Management Sub-committee was responsible, for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, attached as Annex 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, indicating a budget underspend position of £229,100.

3.2. The revenue financial detail by service area statement, in respect of service areas for which the Asset Management Sub-committee was responsible, for the period 1 April to 31 December 2020, attached as Annex 2 to the report by the Head of Finance.

The Sub-committee scrutinised:

3.3. The explanations given and actions proposed in respect of significant budget variances, as outlined in the Budget Action Plan, attached as Annex 3 to the report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action was being taken with regard to significant budget variances.

4. Corporate Asset Improvement Programmes – Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Corporate Finance Senior Manager, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

4.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 31 December 2020, against the approved corporate asset capital improvement and replacement programmes for 2020/21, as detailed in section 4.1 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Sub-committee scrutinised:

4.2. The detailed analysis of expenditure figures and project updates, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance that action had been taken with regard to significant budget variances and progress made with delivery of the approved corporate asset capital improvement and replacement programmes for 2020/21.

5. Corporate Asset Maintenance Programmes – Expenditure Monitoring

After consideration of a report by the Head of Finance, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Corporate Finance Senior Manager, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

5.1. The summary position of expenditure incurred, as at 31 December 2020, against the approved corporate asset revenue maintenance programmes for financial year 2020/21, as detailed in section 4.1 of the report by the Head of Finance.

The Sub-committee scrutinised:

5.2. The summary of larger works undertaken as reactive repairs, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Finance, and obtained assurance on progress being made with delivery of the approved corporate asset revenue maintenance programmes for 2020/21.

6. Information Technology Strategy

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, together with an Equality Impact Assessment, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the IT Service Manager, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

6.1. That the Information Technology Strategy 2017 to 2020 had been updated following internal consultation.

6.2. The revised draft Information Technology Strategy, for the period 2021 to 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

On the motion of Councillor John A R Scott, seconded by Councillor Robin W Crichton, the Sub-committee resolved to **recommend to the Council**:

6.3. That the Information Technology Strategy, for the period 2021 to 2024, attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute, be approved.

7. Island of Hoy Development Trust

Proposed Lease of St Colm's Quadrant Play Park

After consideration of a joint report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, copies of which had been circulated, and after hearing a report from the Estates Manager, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

7.1. That, following consultation with the community, the Island of Hoy Development Trust proposed to introduce new play equipment to the play park at St Colm's Quadrant, Longhope.

7.2. That, thereafter, the Island of Hoy Development Trust would engage with the community to create a development plan and identify potential funding sources.

7.3. That the Island of Hoy Development Trust's objective was to develop a facility which appealed to younger children and included elements to attract all age groups in a setting that was conducive to community engagement.

7.4. That the Island of Hoy Development Trust had requested to lease St Colm's Quadrant Play Park, as outlined on the location plan attached as Appendix 1 to the joint report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure and the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, for a period of 20 years, at a nominal rent of £1 per annum.

7.5. That St Colm's Quadrant Play Park incurred annual revenue maintenance costs of approximately £1,412 per annum.

7.6. That, should the request from the Island of Hoy Development Trust to lease St Colm's Quadrant Play Park be approved, the Trust would become responsible for all maintenance and inspection costs during the period of the lease.

On the motion of Councillor Robin W Crichton, seconded by Councillor James W Stockan, the Sub-committee resolved, in terms of delegated powers:

7.7. That the Island of Hoy Development Trust be offered a lease of St Colm's Quadrant Play Park, Longhope, for a period of 20 years, at a nominal rent of £1 per annum, on terms and conditions determined by the Solicitor to the Council.

8. Plant and Vehicle Replacement Programme

On the motion of Councillor W Leslie Manson, seconded by Councillor James W Stockan, the Sub-committee resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended.

After consideration of a report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, copies of which had been circulated and after hearing a report from the Head of Infrastructure and Strategic Projects, the Sub-committee:

Noted:

8.1. That a multi-year approach to the replacement of plant and vehicles allowed for additional flexibility to vary the timing of individual transactions for unforeseen events, such as delivery period issues or unforeseen programme change.

8.2. The proposed three-year replacement programme in respect of plant and vehicles operated by the Council, at an estimated cost of £1,200,000 per annum, attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

8.3. That, as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21, the Council agreed that a series of projects would be developed for prioritisation with the aim of realising budget savings over the next one to two years, which included a specific strategic review of the Fleet Service.

8.4. That, although the strategic review would consider the longer term approach to fleet purchase across the entire Council fleet, officers currently took advantage of new technology as viable alternatives emerged in the market.

On the motion of Councillor Robin W Crichton, seconded by Councillor Andrew Drever, the Sub-committee resolved, in terms of delegated powers:

8.5. That the Plant and Vehicle Replacement Programme for 2021/22, together with indicative programmes for 2022/23 and 2023/24, attached as Appendix 2 to this Minute, be approved, to be funded from the allocation of £1,200,000 per annum within the Council's current approved capital programme.

8.6. That powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Head of Finance, to adjust the three-year programme, referred to at paragraph 8.5 above, as variations arose and to maximise use of the annual capital allocations.

9. Conclusion of Meeting

At 12:14 the Chair declared the meeting concluded.

Signed: L Manson.



Information Technology Strategy 2021 to 2024

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Introduction

In the course of the previous ICT strategy covering 2017 to 2020, the Council's ICT environment has undergone significant levels of transformation and renewal, which has delivered improvements in capacity, capability, connectivity, and resilience.

Of greatest significance has been the adoption of Microsoft365 cloud services as one of the principal components of the technology platform. This delivered a stable and secure e-mail platform to support the Council's communications. Not only did this return major improvements in service availability, but it provided the platform to allow the Council to continue to operate through the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, via the utilisation of secure, remote access and communications using Microsoft Teams.

The impact of the Covid-19 emergency is that previously normal practices have very quickly been superseded by the "new normal" and the public sector continues to understand and address these challenges as they continue to evolve. De-facto use of building and physical locations and local area networks is no longer adequate as many staff now work from home, from remote locations and offices.

While the emergency accelerated the shift to digital, this "Digital Shift" was already in progress. Service user expectation to engage with the Council through digital channels continues to increase but limitations in consumer connectivity in Orkney are still a constraining factor in progress and maintains a complementary demand for the traditional means of face to face and telephone.

This means that we must continue to support service delivery to match these demands, whilst at the same time recognising that for a good number of our customers, the more traditional methods are working well and need to be maintained.

We continue to provide cost effective secure ICT solutions for our staff and customers.

ICT, done well, reduces workloads, simplifies processing, supports better systems integration, and provides efficiencies.

Further to this, we will adopt a common approach to technology as much as is practical, so that solutions are repeatable, equipment is standardized, and economies of scale can occur by doing many things the same way as best we can. IT should not be a "pick and mix" solution and what works in one area should be broadly repeatable.

Simplifying IT sits at the heart of the successful adoption of digital solutions, ensuring good practice is well understood and ensuring secure practice. If it is hard to understand it is hard to support and hard to secure. IT needs to stay simple as far as practical.

Distributing this offering across the organisation and across the complex geography of Orkney is a growing demand, and meeting this need by providing an IT solution that is common, simple and everywhere underpins this strategy, along with the need to ensure and assure from a standpoint of privacy, security and governance.

We have established effective ICT governance, and an open communications approach, by regularly presenting our improvement plans to members and staff through news bulletins, seminars and committees. We have established an ICT culture of proactively asking for and listening to feedback on our services and have adopted a continuous improvement approach based on our customer's identified requirements.

This document outlines our direction, highlights our priorities and compliments our Digital Strategy. It reflects feedback from our consultations and aims at providing a strategy that will support a flexible modern agile approach to providing ICT services.

Cyber Security

Moving into the future, Orkney Islands Council will become increasingly dependent on the use of digital technologies to provide services and to communicate with its citizens. With the increase in the use of publicly visible technology, there is an increased risk of exposure to threats from criminal and other malicious parties. There has been a significant rise in the incidence of cybercrime in recent years with no signs of this trend abating. The Council must rise to the challenge of meeting this increased risk through implementation of strong security controls and raising staff awareness while at the same time enabling the use of innovative and progressive technological solutions where possible.

Cyber security is a term that encompasses the technological areas of Information Security and focuses on protective mechanisms and controls for ICT infrastructure and services. It is based on sections of the Information Security standard ISO27002 and the Cyber security standard ISO27032.

The purpose of the Cyber Security section within this Strategy is to maintain a secure physical and virtual environment, with a high degree of resilience and confidence, based on national standards, and to maximise the benefits to the Council and its citizens.

Strategic Targets

- To adopt recognised standards to counteract cyber threats including the UK Government Cyber Essentials scheme.
- To implement suitable security controls to support efficient functioning of OIC ICT infrastructure.
- To develop co-operative connectivity with public sector and third sector bodies.
- To develop a culture of security by raising awareness of personnel to vulnerabilities, risks and threats from cyberspace and the need to protect information systems.
- To actively participate in national initiatives for sharing intelligence.

Governance

Good governance helps to ensure that investment in ICT delivers benefits to the wider community as well as addressing corporate and service objectives. Our local plan will take account of national and local initiatives and developments. We continue to work closely with colleagues in the NHS and we will seek opportunities to work with other Orkney based partners.

Together with other Scottish Councils including Highland Council, Moray Council, Argyll and Bute Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, we are members of the Pathfinder North Project and we are also in Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN). These partnerships provide a firm platform for deriving benefits from joint working, shared systems, and procurement.

Good governance requires us to be open and accountable. Feedback from stakeholders tells us that we need to explain our services and the value of changes to the business.

Strategic Targets

- Asset Management Sub-committee considers reports from ICT on a regular basis, including on the delivery of this Strategy, the ICT Capital Programme and the ICT Asset Management Plan.
- The Information Services Programme Board (ISPB) meets four times a year to review ICT Performance, consider significant change requests, agree the ICT Capital Programme and ensure strategic fit working with the Council's Asset Management Strategy.
- The Digital Member Officer Working Group will continue to meet as required and will include as part of their remit the need for effective ICT infrastructure and systems to support delivery of the outcomes in the Digital Strategy.

Customer Focus

What we do as a Council touches the lives of most people in Orkney. Much of the time it won't be noticed, which is how it should be. Our services are provided in the background, efficiently and there when they are needed. Our staff need ICT to support them in delivering these services. At the same time our customers have an increasing expectation to be able to use technology to interact with our services at a time and in a way that suits them.

Technology can be difficult to understand and use. ICT will use their expertise to work with Services to introduce ICT that has a stronger 'Customer Focus'. Any new system needs to meet the needs of our external and internal customers, with the design stage taking both into account as early as possible.

Strategic Targets

- ICT staff will continue to support the further development of the Customer Services Platform (CSP). This system provides an external internet-based service interface for our customers whilst providing staff with a platform to track and progress service requests efficiently.
- ICT will use feedback from customers and staff to deliver continuous improvements to our business processes.
- We will review our Service Charter and introduce new targets as appropriate to support our changing business needs.
- For staff, we will work with Customer Services to improve internal fault reporting and service delivery through the Service Desk, and make sure that all important information is communicated effectively and clearly to staff.
- For Services, we will continue to support and work with the Digital Champions network to shape our use of new digital technologies.
- We will encourage our stakeholders to work with the Digital Champions to discuss their issues and any planned ICT developments.
- Where available and appropriate we will use technology and user workshops to train and inform staff on our service technologies.
- We will concentrate on developing and updating user guidance with the aim to make our staff more technically independent on the systems they use.

Digital Workforce

Technology offers a tangible benefit to customers. ICT therefore needs to embrace emerging technology and deliver a service that meets our customer expectations. This also means supporting our workforce to develop their own digital skills and implementing hardware that supports a more digital workforce.

Staff currently use some inefficient paper-based processes that absorb both time and money needlessly. Along with staff and stakeholders, ICT needs to continue to streamline and improve these internal processes using available and emerging technologies and create a digitally educated and aware modern workforce. At the same time, and through effective implementation of service workforce planning, all teams have the opportunity to attract new staff who are likely to be more intuitive users of technology, and this will begin to tip the balance towards a more confident Digital Workforce.

Strategic Targets

- Support the introduction of new streamlined electronic processes and collaborative communications using available interactive technologies, such as Office 365, Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS), CSP and many other available ICT solutions.
- Demonstrate leadership behaviour that supports and fuels a digital culture among staff and customers.
- Listen to and support staff on how 'to get the best', from these systems through providing pro-active knowledge bases.
- Advise on appropriate training using available browser based interactive platforms such as provided by partners, iLearn, ICT Helpdesk and all other available resources.
- Improve and develop our staff's digital competency.

Infrastructure and Systems

The Council's ICT assets, both physical and data, need constant maintenance and investment to ensure they remain fit for purpose and can fully support the Council's business objectives. These systems must be resilient, secure, available and enable improved public services whilst supporting innovation and change.

When ensuring resilience, consideration must also be given to responsible and careful arrangements around the supply and consumption of energy. Making use of such technologies as Cloud services, server virtualisation and remote collaboration and conferencing will assist in achieving a 'power light' collaborative green digital strategy.

One of the key themes of the recent digital transformation is the move "out" of the buildings and beyond the normal perimeters of the council's local area network. Therefore, there is a challenge to be met in the continuing established of a OIC network without walls that provides access to IT systems widely, flexibly, securely and responsively.

Continuing partnerships and collaboration with other councils has provided further opportunities to understand, enhance and improve our digital approach and overall network capabilities. Such partnerships as the Society of Council IT Managers (SOCITM), Pathfinder and SWAN along with our own locally implemented improvements have provided an understanding that we can apply to expanding and linking our digital network to our users throughout our islands, premises, and schools.

Furthermore, our partnerships in the public sector, especially across Orkney, and our relationship with the technology economy across the isles, will be of importance. While we cannot merge infrastructure and systems across discrete organisations, we will seek to enhance our partnership and digital collaboration.

Strategic Targets

- We will continue our existing activities to ‘harden’ our local core infrastructure to provide an accessible, secure, and stable ICT platform for existing and future systems requirements.
- Ensure that our network fully enables access to electronic resources such as the Scottish Educational Digital Network (GLOW) and supports Council employees working in more flexible and mobile ways, including widening access to the Intranet.
- Continue to develop the use of Cloud technologies to enhance our ICT offerings to customers and staff on an enhanced expanded local to cloud based network infrastructure.
- Work with staff and partners in meeting their expectations and needs through identifying what systems and equipment are required; improve efficiencies by identifying and removing redundant systems on our infrastructure.
- Ensure our ICT Infrastructure represents ‘value for money’ and supports the council’s business objectives.
- Improve our resilience and disaster recovery infrastructure through the successful implementation of our ICT Disaster Recovery and Resilience Capital Programme, which includes partnership working with NHS Orkney.
- Ensure that our data holdings are secure, accurate and available to services to derive maximum value from the data we hold.

Internal and External Customer Communications

Effective communications between our customers, partners and staff is an essential ingredient to provide high quality Council services. Balancing security and data protection obligations, while providing good ways to collaborate with partner organisations in the public sector and Orkney economy will be a theme for our enhancements in our digital offerings.

Documentation and access to documentation forms an essential part of effective technology based interactive services. It provides information to customers and staff required to deliver services. We will continue to support the ongoing development of Records Management solutions and governance standards being applied across the Council’s data holdings both on-premise and in the cloud, which will help us produce a robust documentation infrastructure, while meeting our green targets.

Strategic Targets

- Continuously improve the Council’s digital communications infrastructure and encourage its use, through providing facilities to support Council employees and customers to work and interact in a more flexible and mobile way, supporting sustainable communities.
- Introduce and promote digital document and record management to support effective, secure document creation and storage.

- Ensure easy access for staff and customers to information and meet our legislative data management requirements.
- Continuously improve our use of technology and work towards using systems that are used by others
- Work proactively with partner organisations and other councils to achieve the best fit technologies for our customers - do not re-invent the wheel.
- Assist Customer Services to improve the way we work and communicate with our customers. Continuously review the way we collect staff and customer feedback through surveys and providing information on our activities and plans to our customers and staff.
- Continue to develop our ITIL processes around IT support in incident management, service management, problem management, change management and asset management, including the creation of staff 'self-help'.

Delivery of the Strategy

Each key aspect of this Strategy will be allocated to a lead officer within the IT Management Team and they will be responsible for preparing a Delivery Plan to demonstrate how each of the Strategic Targets will be delivered.

These Plans will set out the operational targets, resources required and performance indicators to demonstrate improvement.

Scrutiny of this Delivery Plan will be through regular (twice a year) reports to the Information Services Programme Board (ISPB) and the Asset Management Sub-committee.

Appendix 2.

Plant and Vehicle Replacement Programme

Pages 1 to 4.

Resolved that, under section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public were excluded from the meeting for this item on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 8 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

This constitutes a summary of the Appendix in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 section 50C(2) as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985.

Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 – Schedule 7A

Access to Information: Descriptions of Exempt Information

Paragraph 8. The amount of any expenditure proposed to be incurred by the authority under any particular contract for the acquisition of property or the supply of goods or services.