

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET18 August 2016Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT 2015/16 &
UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENT & CHANGE IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To bring forward the Council's Annual Efficiency Statement for 2015/16 and provide a summary of improvement and change activity in East Renfrewshire Council, including through the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP).

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to:
- (a) approve the annual efficiency statement 2015/16 for submission to CoSLA;
 - (b) note the progress being made to develop a new change programme for the future - the 'Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP)' and deliver efficiencies for 2016/17 and beyond; and
 - (c) consider the draft summary "A Map of Improvement and Change in East Renfrewshire" (Annex 2) and agree that a final version of this should be presented to Council on 14 September 2016.

BACKGROUND

3. Councils are required to provide annual efficiency statements to CoSLA each year. A summary statement is then developed for the Scottish Government. East Renfrewshire's statement is also placed on the Council website for public access.

4. Efficiencies can arise in several ways, including planned changes as part of the change programme (Modern Ambitious Programme, MAP); departmental or service efficiency work, often linked to budgetary pressures; restructures; and from sound financial management and good business practices (e.g. contract reviews and better procurement).

5. The reporting requirements place an emphasis on how local authorities have "used efficiencies to protect quality and level of services and maintained outputs and outcomes in the face of budget cuts". The Government's definition of efficiency is as follows:

"Where a body managed to deliver services or functions that can be shown to result in a broadly similar (or improved) level of outcome or output for a lower input value than previously, an efficiency saving has been made. The amount saved is the difference between the previous unit cost and what is now spent to deliver the outcome."

6. The Council's high level template for return to CoSLA is attached at Annex 1.

IMPROVEMENT & CHANGE IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

7. In June 2016 Cabinet considered a report updating on the development of the Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) and key priorities for the next period. This report highlighted that each department and the HSCP had its own programme of change, reflecting its priorities for modernisation and redesign. It was noted that this was underpinned by cross-cutting, enabling projects, mainly around ICT.

8. Examples were given on some of the key projects underway and elected members also had the opportunity to hear more at the MAP briefing session in April 2016.

9. There was a commitment made to continue building on these examples over time to ensure that there was good coverage of the significant scale of change that is going on and the considerable pace at which we are embedding the 5 capabilities into everything we do. Attached as Annex 2 is a draft report which aims to further this process – “A Map of Improvement and Change in East Renfrewshire”. There are contributions from each department and a broad-ranging coverage of some of our key projects set out at a high level, organised by Single Outcome Agreement theme.

10. These examples will be built on over time as we continue to deliver change at a significant pace and scale. It is envisaged that this draft will be finalised, with further detail to show the links between each project and the 5 capabilities; it will also be designed to present an easy to read format as part of our drive to make our documents more accessible. Subject to Cabinet agreement, it is proposed that the finalised “Map of Improvement and Change in East Renfrewshire” is taken to Council for consideration on 14 September 2016.

FINANCE & EFFICIENCY

11. In addition to savings generated through MAP, the Council continues to actively review opportunities for applying efficiency savings over the whole range of its services. There is evidence in the attached efficiency statement that, through these efforts and MAP, the Council has made cash-releasing savings of £3,836,232 in 2015/16.

12. These savings are primarily a result of efforts to do more with less. Instead of being considered as new funding sources, these efficiencies represent the Council’s effectiveness at living within its means, meeting the challenges of decreasing resources across the board.

13. The Council is rigorous in its approach to verifying efficiencies (i.e. ensuring no adverse knock-on effect on productivity or quality), but we must balance this with the need to avoid creating a new bureaucracy of monitoring and reporting efficiencies. This can result in an under-reporting of efficiencies and it is likely that the figures reported here are not a comprehensive picture of the significant work being done on a daily basis by services to minimise costs, redesign services, rationalise structures and generally achieve best value for money.

14. As explained in June, it is proposed to fund MAP through funding sources such as Spend to Save; the Modernisation Fund and through the Capital Programme. There is an ambitious and challenging journey ahead and we need to work carefully to develop sound business cases and be realistic about what current levels of capacity and resource will achieve. This may mean the need to reprioritise activities/funding and use external assistance/resource where required. The programme will have the delivery of savings; efficiencies and benefits at its heart and will be a key enabler in the delivery of challenging future budget targets.

CONSULTATION

15. Individual improvement and change projects will be involved in specific consultation and engagement as relevant to their scope. Annex 2 contains various examples of projects that enhance community engagement. There is no requirement to consult on the Annual efficiency Statement, although this will be made available on the Council website as part of public performance reporting.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

16. Partnership working is integral to everything the Council does from our fully integrated Health and Social Care Partnership to our day to day interactions with the Culture and Leisure Trust to partnerships such as City Deal. Further examples of such activity are given in the annexes to this report.

CONCLUSION

17. The Annual Efficiency Statement demonstrates the Council's continued success in driving out real tangible efficiencies and making savings.

18. It is clear from the "Map of Improvement and Change in East Renfrewshire" and from recent updates on MAP itself, that there are significant programmes of work underway moving at a considerable pace right across the Council and HSCP. These are covering some complex and challenging areas which challenge the most fundamental building blocks of how we operate (e.g. our financial systems and core business platforms). These are resource intensive areas of work but, given the right input and commitment, have real opportunity to transform the way we work and deliver efficiencies for the future.

19. We are proud of our reputation for change and improvement. We are clear that the pace and scale of our programme of change and modernisation reaches every corner of the Council and together they are the key levers to achieving our vision for the future to be a *modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future with all.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. It is recommended that Cabinet agree to:

- (a) approve the annual efficiency statement 2015/16 for submission to CoSLA;
- (b) note the progress being made to develop a new change programme for the future - the 'Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP)' and deliver efficiencies for 2016/17 and beyond; and
- (d) consider the draft summary "A Map of Improvement and Change in East Renfrewshire" (Annex 2) and agree that a final version of this should be presented to Council on 14 September 2016.

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27 July 2016

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Modern, Ambitious Programme (MAP) – Update & Progress, Cabinet 16 June 2016
- Annual Efficiency Statement 2014/15, Cabinet 20 August 2015
- A Programme for Our Future Council, Cabinet 4 June 2015

KEYWORDS

This report sets out the Council's Annual Efficiency Statement 2015/16 and updates on change and efficiency in East Renfrewshire Council. Keywords are: efficiency; Modern Ambitious Programme; MAP; PSE; public service excellence; savings; change; improvement; performance; CoSLA.

CONFIRMATION OF EFFICIENCIES DELIVERED IN 2015-16

1	Local Authority Name	East Renfrewshire Council
2	Total cash efficiency achieved for 2015-16 £'000	£3,836,232
3	<p>Summary of efficiency activity e.g.</p> <p>The main initiatives the local authority has taken over the year to ensure a strategic approach to increased efficiency and productivity and the improvements achieved in these areas.</p> <p>The main information that the local authority uses to assess productivity, service quality and performance and how the scope, usefulness or reliability has been improved during the year.</p> <p>Specific steps the local authority has taken during the year to improve collaboration and joint working to deliver efficient and user-focussed services and the improvements achieved.</p>	<p><u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We operate in the context of very real service pressures from year on year increases in our population – in particular the very young and the very old, with both groups accounting for the vast majority of our service provision. • Our vision is “a modern, ambitious Council, creating a fairer future with all”. To deliver on our outcomes, and our promise to make people’s lives better, we are developing excellence in five key areas: Prevention; Community Engagement; Data; Modernisation and Digital Services. These five capabilities are at the very heart of our programme of change – our Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP). • This has been the first year of MAP. It builds on our successful Public Service Excellence (PSE) programme which ran from 2009 and delivered £4.9million of cashable savings. MAP is working towards creating and implementing the modern, digitally enabled organisation that we want to be, based on an evolving picture of what our future council might look like. It is building on the 5 capabilities, particularly focusing on the areas of digital, data and modernising the way we work, whilst enabling future savings contributions. MAP comprises departmental programmes of change and cross-cutting programmes of enabling work that are managed council-wide, affecting all or many departments. • In addition to MAP the Council has a range of ‘step change’ programmes such as City Deal, Early Years and the Capital Programme. • Much of MAP is about redesigning services end to end from a customer perspective; putting in place technologies to make those journeys more streamlined and efficient; and ensuring that employees and customers have the skills, motivation and trust required to use them. • The pace, scale and reach of change across East Renfrewshire Council is significant. This Annual Efficiency Statement only scratches the surface of the range of projects and initiatives being undertaken. • Our drive to digital is crucial - we want our services to be digital by design; simple and accessible enough to encourage our customers to use them and with a digitally capable workforce able to drive modernised services. We are currently developing a digital strategy to set out our ambition in this area. • We launched a communications campaign this year dedicated to all aspects of our vision. A short animation was produced to cover all aspects of our vision and the ‘big picture’ of MAP (www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk.visionanimation)

- This year we have been one of the first Scottish councils to launch Live Chat on our website. In 2016, all of our high volume services are now available online 24/7 and over 20% of our customers use them. The next stage is to develop our service centres to give customers and staff access to a range of digital devices so customers can be shown how to carry out their business online using a device similar to one they may have at home, seeking to drive as much contact as possible to this cheaper channel of contact.
- We have launched live webcasting of our Council meetings.
- We have piloted and are rolling out the use of Parent Pay to all schools to enhance our online payment facility for school meals, trips etc and consequently reducing the administrative and cash-handling overheads in schools.
- Through various service reviews, improvements and introduction of agile working for our staff, the time taken to process planning applications (up 4.7% despite an 11.6% increase in householder applications), the time taken to process council tax and housing benefit forms, and the response times for non-emergency housing repairs have all reduced this year. This year, our Building Standards service has improved from 94.6% to 98% of applications dealt with in 20 working days, despite a 6% increase in demand. We also experienced an 11% boost in planning applications being received online this year – up to 56%.
- All our services are continually seeking scope to streamline transactional processes, reduce paper and rekeying, introduce electronic documents and smart-forms and improve the way they use data. There are significant projects underway to review and transform our Accountancy, Procurement, Creditors and HR services, with enterprise architecture being used to map these services and the core business platforms that drive them.
- Our Care at Home service has been undertaking a significant programme of transformation for the last few years, resulting in £440,000 of savings to date and another £370,000 planned. The service is currently testing a new digital portal which will allow approved family members to log in and check the status of a relative's care – we hope to launch this early in 2017.
- This year our Environment Department has undertaken a fundamental review of its services and operations with radical recommendations for change based on a set of strategic reviews and service redesigns, with the aim of saving over £2million by 2018/19.
- We have begun the process of automating Free School Meal and Clothing Grants so that customers who are known to us and already verified get these grants automatically rather than needing to apply and us going through various administrative steps and processing. We are launching this with 1500 customers this year.

Procurement

- Implementation of new legislation in April saw the Contract Standing Orders being revised and approved by Cabinet
- New mobile phone contract has estimated savings of 83%
- Community benefits have been realised on a number of contracts
- City Deal SME events have been attended in 3 locations with a joint ERC/RC event planned for August

- Attendance at the annual Supplier Development Programme ‘Meet the Buyer’ event
 - 93% participation level in Scotland Excel contracts
- Shared Services/Collaboration**
- Building on the success of the East Renfrewshire Community Health and Care Partnership, recognised nationally as an example of best integration practice, our new fully integrated Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in August 2015. Whilst we have had 10 years of integrated working to build on, legislation required new governance arrangements and we now have a Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board comprised of elected members, health board non-executives, local clinicians and community and third sector representatives. This new body decides on priorities locally and directs how health and social care services should be funded and delivered.
 - This has been the first year of our Culture & Leisure Trust. Good performance (library visits up 20% on last year, with our new Barrhead Foundry building playing a big part in this bucking the national trend of declining book issues and recording 63% increases in lending in this area, and online library visits up by 12.4%; and sports centre visits are up 7%). The Trust Business Plan demonstrates strong vision and plans for the future.
 - A new major developments team was established to focus on and fast track major economic development projects. This new structure is working well and already we have built industrial units at Crossmill in Barrhead, the first City Deal infrastructure project to be delivered in the Glasgow City deal area. We were also responsible for creating the web infrastructure for City Deal for the whole Glasgow region.
 - We have some of the most successful Community Sport Hubs in the country with 5 now in operation in East Renfrewshire, an increase of one from last year. These are a key way of growing sports participation and bringing together local clubs in a community-led approach.
 - Work carried out through Heritage Lottery Funding has increased visitor numbers to our flagship Rouken Glen Park by almost 500% to nearly 1million per annum.
 - Our in-house telecare service has been extended to provision for a local housing association this year making the service more cost efficient. In addition, this service is supporting our HSCP’s programme of managed early hospital discharge where clients leaving hospital are connected digitally at home through the telecare system. This has contributed to a 42% reduction in time spent in hospital for our residents this year and our re-ablement programme has seen 70% of its clients reducing their care needs and living more independently.
 - We are developing our services for the national MyAccount.
 - Our approach to Community Safety has contributed to a £396,000 cost avoidance for the Fire and Rescue Service in 2015/16 in terms of call-outs prevented.
 - Our successful in-house developed SQA Personal Development Award (PDA) in project management is being rolled out to other interested councils through joint work with the Improvement Service. We are also working with the Improvement Service on enterprise architecture and implementation of the Local Government Reference Architecture model.

		<p><u>Asset Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the last few years capital planning has been particularly challenging given the reductions in funding, high construction inflation and an ambitious programme of new buildings to meet increasing levels of demand. To meet these challenges, the Corporate Asset Management Group has been fundamentally reviewed. Project appraisals are more highly aligned to the overall strategy of the Council and links to appropriate Asset Management Plans. The remit of the group now focuses more clearly on corporate leadership. To ensure that the management of the ambitious build programme is as good as possible an external review has been undertaken and a number of actions to improve resourcing levels and project management are underway. • We have been successful this year in the delivery of major capital projects, including the completion of Eastwood Health and Care Centre, the start of construction for the replacement Barrhead High School, Faith Schools Joint Campus (thought to be the first of its kind in the world), Cartmill Family Centre, Auchenback Family Centre and upgrade of Crookfur Primary School. • Our new Eastwood Health and Care Centre undertook final preparations for its opening in August 2016, offering a range of primary care, clinical, social care and voluntary self-help services under one roof with an on-site café run by a social enterprise as a great training opportunity for young people with learning disabilities. • All of our key public buildings and all schools will soon have free public wi-fi to allow staff and visitors to browse the web, helping us to launch a 'bring your own device' scheme in schools so pupils can bring in their own equipment to use in lessons allowing continuity for homework and home study with a strong focus on developing existing office accommodation to meet the demands of flexible, agile and modern ways of working to improve efficiency and service delivery • All service Asset Management Plans have been updated and are due to be approved. (Housing, Fleet, Property, Roads, Parks/Open Spaces and IT). • The total number of operational buildings has reduced from 118 to 115 • A new Housing Asset Management system was introduced to provide staff and contractors with the capability to update Housing stock condition surveys digitally whilst out on site. This process has proved 3 times quicker for completion of the work. • The use of Asset Management Data has assisted in the development of proposals for the Non Domestic Energy Efficiency Framework (NDEE) with phases planned to bring savings through the introduction of a range of energy efficiencies and new controls.
4	<p>Breakdown of efficiency saving by Procurement, Shared Services or Asset Management £'000 (only where relevant – not all efficiencies will fall into these categories, so the figures here do not have to match the overall total.</p>	<p>Procurement = £968,205</p> <hr/> <p>Shared Services = £110,000</p> <hr/> <p>Asset Management = £81,742</p>

5	Evidence: What performance measures and/or quality indicators are used to ensure that efficiencies were achieved without any detriment to services?	Key sources of evidence include: budget and efficiency templates that measure financial, productivity and quality aspects of each initiative; annual Citizens' Panel survey results; service-level surveys; performance indicators and benchmarks; usage rates for services; external audits and inspections; internal audits; How Good Is Our Service self-assessments.
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Signed (Chief Executive or equivalent)

Signed (if applicable)..... (Council Leader or equivalent)

Date

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A MAP OF IMPROVEMENT AND CHANGE IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Introduction

As a council we have a clear purpose to make people's lives better.

Everything we do has this focus in mind and throughout the council there are a significant range of innovative plans and projects underway to help us improve the services we offer.

The scale and pace of this programme of change and modernisation reaches every corner of our council and together they are the key levers to achieving our vision for the future to be **a modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future with all.**

The structure of our organisation has also changed significantly with the full establishment of the East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and the transfer of council leisure facilities and services to the new East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

Together with our community planning partners we have developed five key outcomes for our communities across early years; life, learning and work; economy and the environment; safe, supported communities and older people.

Striving to achieve these outcomes for our communities filters into all that we do.

To deliver on our outcomes, and our promise to make people's lives better, we are developing excellence in five key areas:

- Prevention
- Community Engagement
- Data
- Modernisation
- Digital

These five capabilities are at the very heart of our programme of change and in 2015 Cabinet approved a new council-wide programme entitled Modern Ambitious Programme (MAP). MAP builds on the success we have achieved through the previous Public Service Excellence programme which ran during 2009 - 2015 and resulted in recurring savings of £4.9m.

MAP is now at the forefront of our vision to create a modern, digitally enabled organisation through excellence in the five core capabilities.

It is our blueprint for transforming services and is making significant and rapid progress in driving forward new ways of working, ensuring service improvement and generating efficiencies - particularly around the capabilities of digital, data and modernisation.

Much of MAP is about redesigning services end to end from a customer perspective by putting in place technologies to make those journeys more streamlined and efficient; and ensuring that employees and customers have the skills, motivation and trust required to use them.

Each council department together with the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Culture and Leisure Trust have their own programmes of change reflecting local priorities for modernisation and redesign.

These departmental programmes of change are underpinned by cross-cutting, enabling projects, mainly around ICT including the provision of public access WIFI in our council offices, schools and other key locations.

We are matching this major focus on service improvement and change with a significant investment in our people to create the in-house capacity and skills within our workforce to manage and lead this change effectively.

We are the first council in Scotland to develop a unique SQA approved PDA project management qualification for our staff. This sector leading approach - which has attracted interest from other local authorities - is building skills across our organisation whilst enabling change projects which are revolutionising services and making real improvements to the lives of our residents and releasing efficiencies at the same time.

Our exciting programme of change ranges from customer, frontline projects to new ways of working for our support services.

The following report highlights the scale and the scope of this ambitious system-wide work and our various change projects are set out in line with our key organisational outcomes.

EARLY YEARS

Early Years Collaborative

We have developed ambitious early years and parenting strategies which have a focus on prevention and early intervention. We knew that the earliest stages of life are crucial to a child's development and life chances. This is why the Health and Social Care Partnership, Education and other key services including Young Persons Services, Housing and Employability together with colleagues from the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust, are collaboratively working with our most deprived communities to improve pre-birth support, help families to become confident parents and build resilient communities for children to grow up in.

Given his expertise in this important area we invited Sir Harry Burns to work with us on this important project and Sir Harry now sits on our Early Years Collaborative Steering Group.

Over the last two years we have worked within the national Early Years Collaborative to test the most effective ways of working together to improve life chances of our youngest citizens. There has been a real focus on supporting families who need a little bit of help to be resilient parents and we have created new posts – Family First workers, to support families living in our most deprived communities.

We will now be taking the most successful of these new approaches and rolling them out to our wider communities. Whilst we recognise that it will take a number of years for the impact of this work to be fully realised we have been hugely encouraged by early results.

Early Learning and Childcare

We have made significant progress in improving early learning and childcare provision in East Renfrewshire.

We have expanded our early learning and childcare estate, opening new centres in Clarkston expanding provision in Neilston and Newton Mearns and have further projects in the pipeline for Newton Mearns, a new community hub which will house an expanded Arthurlie Family Centre, a nursery class in the new non-denominational school in Maidenhill and further places planned for a nursery class in St. Cadoc's Primary.

All centres increased their provision from 570 to 600 hours and now offer parents choice and greater flexibility in accessing the additional 30 hours within their community. Parents have commented very favourably on the flexibility the new allocations policy has offered them with many choosing to opt for family centres which meet their childcare needs allowing them to work. Our staff have responded very well to new ways of working with children and families.

Request for Assistance team

We have simplified the process for all referrals into social work by putting in place a single route through a new Request for Assistance Team.

Residents or professionals who want to make a referral into the service or ask for advice or guidance can contact the team who then triage their call to the right place. This much simpler single point of access is speeding up the process for those who need our social work services the most. It is also reducing the overall number of children and young people who need our social work services as the team are now able to more effectively signpost enquiries to more appropriate support in the community or through our key partners.

Fostering

We were concerned that too many looked after children and young people were being fostered out with East Renfrewshire and placed within independent fostering and residential resources. A successful fostering marketing campaign means we will shortly have new registered foster carers in East Renfrewshire.

Having more foster carers available allows the growing number of children who need to be looked after and accommodated to stay in their own community and access their local schools. This work has not only improved outcomes for this group of children, as many tend to do better at school when they remain in East Renfrewshire, but has also reduced the cost of placements.

The next phase of the campaign is to recruit foster carers for teenagers.

Looked after and accommodated young people

We are setting up a Champion's Board that will have representation from the Council's corporate management team, elected members and care experienced young people. The Champion's Board will be chaired by the Council Chief Executive. The Board will listen to and act on the views of our looked after and accommodated young people.

This is part of a much wider programme of change where we have signed up to PACE (Permanence and Care Excellence) - a national improvement programme with the Scottish Government. A key feature of the programme is focussing particularly on children who are looked after at home and improving the destinations and outcomes for these children. By working with key partners, we are trying to increase the number of looked after children at home. We are achieving this by making quicker decisions based on the quality of the care they receive, the need for compulsory interventions and where outcomes are poorer, making decisions quickly to secure permanent placements by increasing the use of kinship where care is undertaken by other family members.

Intensive services review

To reduce the number of young people with complex and challenging behavioural issues who are in residential accommodation we have developed flexible, tailored community based services which is enable more children to live at home with their families.

The next stage of our children and families redesign is to develop and deliver a range of further services which will focus on supporting parents, improving relationships and building resilience.

Innovative approaches such as seven days a week services for children and their parents is key to this redesign to ensure children are active and involved in family and community life.

LEARNING, LIFE AND WORK

Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence has been fully implemented in East Renfrewshire, with our strategic approach praised by Education Scotland. Clusters of schools have designed curriculum which has ensured a smooth gradient of learning and led to increased attainment and achievement throughout the broad general education. We took the time we needed to introduce the new national qualifications in the senior phase, supported schools and subject specialists to work in partnership to write new courses and produce new materials while ensuring we did not jeopardise the attainment of our young people.

Our Education Department and schools make rigorous use of attainment and benchmarking data as well as qualitative measures to inform further improvement and our educational outcomes for learners continue to be amongst the best country. In 2015 we had our best S4 results to date - all testament to the hard work of our staff and pupils, most ably supported by parents. We keep our curriculum design under review and will be considering the benefits of bypassing exams in S4 where this will offer even higher levels of attainment and quality of qualifications.

We have also introduced School Improvement Partnerships to bring about further increases in attainment, especially for those who experience inequality in outcomes. East Renfrewshire is the only council area to take this approach and these partnerships are helping to positively embed the new curriculum across the council by supporting staff to undertake professional enquiry and Masters Level learning, and we are already seeing signs that we are closing the gap between the most deprived and most affluent.

Education Estate: Schools

East Renfrewshire has the highest proportion of 10 – 15 year olds in Scotland. Over the next three years we are investing £77.6m in new and extended accommodation to ensure continued places for the growing number of school age residents in the area.

In recent years we have worked closely with Scottish Futures Trust to build a new Eastwood High School which opened in August 2013. A replacement for Barrhead High is already in construction and we are expanding and refurbishing Crookfur Primary, both of which are financed jointly by the Scottish Government and the Council.

Thought to be a world first we also have under construction a new £18.2m joint faith schools' campus in Newton Mearns. The campus is a replacement for Scotland's only Jewish school, Calderwood Lodge and an additional primary for the Catholic community, recently named St. Clare's.

The digital experience for pupils

The high quality use of ICT in our schools is often commented on in inspection reports. Our only special school, Isobel Mair School, is at the forefront nationally in the use of modern technology to enhance learning experiences. Schools and pupils in East Renfrewshire are proportionately the highest users of Glow (a national digital platform for learning) in Scotland and all our classrooms have benefited from interactive whiteboards for a number of years.

We have piloted a successful Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) project with pupils in Mearns Castle High School and the feedback has been extremely positive. The aim is to roll out Wi-Fi across all our schools in 2016 which will allow us to introduce BYOD to the benefit of all pupils and staff.

Care will continue to be taken to support all pupils and residents to be digitally included and a project is already underway to look at wider digital participation throughout East Renfrewshire.

Improving the digital experience for parents

With about 16,000 pupils in our primary and secondary schools, managing parental communication, information updates and payments is a significant task which has historically been paper and cash based creating a significant administrative overhead.

In response to feedback from parents on how they want to be communicated with we have introduced Group Call, a digital platform for all schools to manage group text and e-mail communications with parents.

A new *Parent Pay* system will be rolled out in August 2016 and this will further enhance the online system for payment of school meals and trips which we introduced in 2009.

We have also introduced an on-line parents evening booking system across many of our schools. This new service is generating excellent feedback from parents because it allows them to choose a date and time slot that suits them rather than using paper based sign - up sheets. This new online solution was developed by a former pupil of Mearns Castle High School.

Going forward there will be a move to online applications for places in nurseries, school admissions and placing requests for schools and school transport. Schools will also, where possible, align annual data checks with consent and permission to reduce bureaucracy and online solutions will be developed in these areas.

Developing the young workforce

An ambitious five year 'Developing the Young Workforce Implementation Plan' was devised in 2015 to address the recommendations of the Wood Commission and meet the needs of the young workforce in East Renfrewshire. The plan focuses on connecting young learners with employment opportunities, expanding the breadth of qualifications available to young people and expanding partnerships between schools and employers to inform curriculum design and work related learning. Our vocational education programme is a key part of this approach and is expanding year on year with more and more young people opting for courses linked to their career choices. We are already seeing children in primary schools developing employability skills through innovative experiences delivered in partnership with colleges, local businesses and employers.

Improving the achievements of our young people

By putting in place new management systems including targets, performance management arrangements and developing a culture of continuous improvement our services for young people have improved significantly.

For example the number of young people gaining accreditation by completing learning programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and Youth Achievement Awards has risen from six in 2005/6 to 1420 in 2014/15.

We now have the highest participation rates in the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award Scheme in Scotland and the second highest achievement rates in Scotland. In 2015/16 we introduced Bronze DofE, tailored for young people with additional support needs. In addition, we have a strong digital focus in the service e.g. digital satellite tracking to ensure our young people stayed safe on a recent trip to Morocco for DofE Gold Award and private social media groups for communication with parents and staff.

Our future focus is to increase participation and success rates to provide young people with improved confidence benefiting them throughout their lives.

Establishment of the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust

In 2015 the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust was established representing the achievement of a major transformation project in a relatively short timescale.

All ERC sports and leisure facilities, halls, libraries and Eastwood Park Theatre transferred into the new organisation.

Efficiencies and customer service improvements have already been achieved since last year. Attendances are also now at a five year high across a number of our sports centres and libraries.

Recent improvements include a new more competitive pricing structure for gyms and fitness, new online bookings processes and a redesign of the library service.

During 2016 the Trust will also be developing revised letting and concessions policies, a pricing and product review and a commercialisation policy looking at new ways to generate income to invest back into services.

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Rouken Glen Park

In partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund we have invested £3m in Rouken Glen Park.

In consultation with the community we agreed a number of key projects to transform facilities at the park including:

- A new path from the main entrance leading up to the walled garden
- A new play area
- Complete refurbishment of the Pavilion to make it fully accessible, install a permanent exhibition about the park and create a meeting / activity area
- The walled garden returned to its original layout in the nineteenth century
- Water quality improvements to the boating pond

The project also inspired the contribution of our local community and volunteers were actively involved throughout the process.

This work has resulted in an increase in visitor numbers from 200,000 in 2010 to more than 900,000 last year to make Rouken Glen one of the most visited attractions in Scotland.

Our parks team aim to achieve more than a million visitors during 2016 and have ambitious plans to offer a range of new activities for all age groups in partnership with the voluntary sector and small local businesses.

City Deal

When the Council was successful in achieving an investment of £44m in the local area through City Deal, we realised that our existing structures would not achieve delivery of such a major infrastructure programme at the pace and scale required.

A new major developments team was established to focus on and fast track major economic development projects. This new structure is working well and already we have built industrial units at Crossmill in Barrhead, the first City Deal infrastructure project to be delivered in the Glasgow City deal area.

Economic Development

A fully integrated and multidisciplinary Economic Development team has been established to maximise growth, economic sustainability and employment in East Renfrewshire.

The team have been at the forefront of the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Policy through the regeneration of Barrhead Town Centre.

This sector leading work, highlighted as an example of best practice at a global regeneration conference in Edinburgh in June 2016, included a successful recruitment model working in partnership with Asda Barrhead which saw 60 per cent of store based jobs going to East Renfrewshire residents. This model is currently being promoted to new businesses locating to the area such as Aldi, Lidl and Greene King.

Planning and Building Standards

The introduction of agile working for our Planning and Building Standards teams when they are out in the field has resulted in much faster response times, a reduction in previously labour intensive manual processes and increased customer satisfaction.

Agile working has also had a direct impact on the percentage of building warrants dealt with within 20 days, where our performance has increased from 94.6 per cent to 98 per cent over the last year despite a six percent increase in demand.

Further improvements to up the pace and scale of change in our services as part of the department's overall change programme are now underway.

Housing Services

Agile working for our housing repair tradespeople means that when out and about in the community carrying out repairs their jobs are now delivered straight to their tablet or phone on which they can also complete paperwork. This has cut out the need for them to physically travel back to base between jobs, speeded up response times to call outs, reduced mileage costs and increased customer satisfaction.

We have also introduced new systems for our teams who carry out important safety surveys on our properties. The old manual paper based system has been replaced with a new digital solution which the team can update instantly whilst out on site.

A number of other services offered by the team are being digitised and streamlined for improved customer service and increased efficiency. This includes maximising technology for housing allocations for both on line applications and the allocation process itself.

Housing Services are also developing a text messaging system for our repair appointments, The system will also automatically issue an appointment reminder a day prior to the appointment. The overall aim is to minimise 'no access' repairs – ensuring the customer is at home when we attend, saving staff time, becoming more customer focused and efficient.

Cleansing and Waste Services

In response to feedback from our residents a new kerbside recycling system will be introduced in October 2016.

The new four bin service will mean households can recycle more than ever before and will also lay the foundation for the council to meet the new national Charter for Household Recycling. The changes will also save the council money by reducing the landfill tax we pay.

Transport Team

We have introduced electric pool cars to reduce our staff carbon footprint whilst out and about at meetings. Three Nissan Leaf cars are now available through a new booking system and will easily manage 100 miles on a single charge. A further four electric cars are due to be purchased through grant funding in the coming months to allow more staff to access these environmentally friendly vehicles.

Sustainability

We were one of only two councils in Scotland to deliver an extremely challenging Carbon Management Plan (CMP) target and achieve a reduction of Council controlled carbon emissions of 26.6 per cent over five years. We achieved this through raising staff awareness, replacing inefficient lighting systems, installing more efficient heating (boilers) and installing electrical equipment around our estate.

To ensure our energy consumption and carbon emission rates continue to reduce we aim for at least a 2.5 per cent reduction every year.

However, much of our estate is still old and not fuel efficient. We are working with the Scottish Futures Trust as a pathfinder Council to implement energy conservation measures through a new national framework and expect to be the first council in Scotland to use this.

Capital Planning

Over the next eight years we have committed to a record £155m programme of capital build projects ensuring continued investment across early years, education, health and social care and local communities.

The capital planning process has however been particularly challenging as we try to balance the need for an ambitious programme of new buildings to meet increasing demand with overall reductions in council funding and high rates of construction inflation.

To meet these challenges our corporate approach to asset management has been fundamentally reviewed. Project appraisals are more highly aligned to the overall strategy of the Council and the remit of the group now focused more clearly on corporate leadership.

To ensure that the management of our ambitious build programme is as good as possible an external review has been undertaken and a number of actions to improve resourcing levels and project management are already underway.

Managing council buildings

The Council has many buildings of various ages and conditions. We have therefore been reviewing our approach to making the best use of our buildings in terms of efficiency but equally important to make them places which help our staff work in more modern ways such as mobile and agile working. To do this we need to take a cross council approach and therefore we will be introducing a “Corporate Landlord” approach to ensure that our investment in maintaining, improving and operating all our buildings is effective and supports new ways of working.

SAFER, SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES

Self - directed support

Our Public Social Partnership has helped us to embed self-directed support in learning disability services, but we have also introduced new approaches for children with additional support needs and their families, who have much more control over how they choose to use funding to meet their needs. We have also increased the number of older people who exercise their right to control their budgets, using public money in creative and effective ways. In addition we are one of two Scottish partnerships participating in a Government funded pilot called ‘My Life My Way’ which supports older people living in care homes to have a much more personal experience.

Community justice redesign

Legislation passed in early 2016 requires new arrangements for planning and delivering community justice services to be put in place locally. The term ‘community justice’ describes those agencies and services that work individually and in partnership to manage offenders, prevent offending and reduce reoffending and the harm it causes. The existing Community Justice Authorities are being replaced by a national body called Community Justice Scotland and local Community Justice Boards which should be part of our community planning arrangements. We need to have this in place by 1 April 2017. Work is underway to make these new arrangements as efficient and effective as possible.

Community Safety

Our CCTV control room’s aim of preventing crime and antisocial behaviour was aided by the introduction of a new digital image platform. In the future we will move towards wireless CCTV cameras which will reduce installation costs and increase the flexibility in choosing camera locations. Wireless CCTV will remove the Council’s reliance on fibre-optic cabling and eradicate significant third party annual revenue costs. The advantages brought by the digital image platform provides operators and ultimately Police Scotland with sharper imaging than analogue imaging in relation to the detection of crime and antisocial behaviour, this has been particularly advantageous in moving to digital image storage burned to DVD’s for use in court as opposed to VHS recording.

GRIP

Our Greater Results in Partnership group meets weekly to identify issues of disorder crime and antisocial behaviour. This is led by Police Scotland and brings together the Council and Scottish Fire and Rescue to review crime and antisocial behaviour, it provides collaborative resolution to problems in communities and is able to take swift action on perpetrators. The group further is able to analyse crime and antisocial behaviour patterns enabling joint deployment of resources in hot spot areas with a view to preventing crime and antisocial behaviour.

Protecting our citizens

Our Trading Standards colleagues have redesigned their service by moving from enforcing standards to a more customer focused prevention approach so much so that they have now been renamed the Prevention Service.

Their innovative work - such as a call blocker scheme which prevented more than 100,000 nuisance calls in its first year - is making a real difference to the lives of our residents by protecting them from personal and financial harm and enabling them to stay in their own homes longer.

The team estimate that their prevention work has saved residents and the public purse £2m in 2015/16. Every £1 spent is saving an estimated £26 for the taxpayer.

OLDER PEOPLE

Full integration of health and social care

Building on the success of the East Renfrewshire Community Health and Care Partnership, recognised nationally as an example of best integration practice, the new fully integrated Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) was established in August 2015. Whilst we have had 10 years of integrated working to build on, legislation required new governance arrangements and we now have a Health and Social Care Partnership Integration Joint Board comprised of elected members, health board non-executives, local clinicians and community and third sector representatives. This new body decides on priorities locally and directs how health and social care services should be funded and delivered.

Community led support

Our Health and Social Care Partnership is one of only three Partnerships in Scotland to test a new transformation programme. The programme works on the principle that frontline community health and social care support and services can be delivered out of "hubs" based in and working with local communities. Experience of delivering the model in England and Wales with social work services is that this results in reduced bureaucracy, better outcomes for individuals and greater efficiency, reducing demand on expensive specialist services. Work to implement this programme will begin in summer 2016.

Better support for people with learning disabilities

We have improved our service for people with learning disabilities by establishing a unique new Public Social Partnership (PSP) model. A PSP enables the Health and Social Care Partnership and third sector providers to collaborate together to design and test innovative services. Through this new model we have been able to redesign the support we are providing to more than 120 people with learning disabilities. This has led to a real improvement in the quality and personalisation of the services we are now able to offer, helping people move from group living to their own accommodation and choosing their own

care providers. As we continue to redesign our wider learning disability services our unique partnership will be at the heart of what we do.

Care at home

A radical five year change project to improve our care at home service to support some of our most vulnerable residents is well underway and has already helped hundreds of residents to regain their independence following hospital discharge.

Our redesigned home care service is helping residents cope with short term physical problems so that they can stay in their own homes and recover in familiar surroundings while at the same time freeing up residential and hospital services for those who need it most.

We are transforming the way home care staff work through the use of smartphones, giving them better access to information. Each time a member of the home care team visits a home they 'log-in' using radio frequency identification, so we know when they have visited and how long they spend at the house. Through monitoring of care delivery we can plan how we use our staff more effectively and provide more accurate billing for the services we deliver.

The next phase of the project will see the introduction of a new digital portal which will allow approved family members to log in and check when home care staff will next visit their relative.

Telecare

Digital technology has lots of applications in helping our residents live independently for longer.

As the technology improves there are more and more pieces of kit that can be used. HSCP staff have been pioneering their use of technology to drive change and improvement in care for patients

In partnership with the Digital Health Institute, we have set up a special demonstration room so that residents and their carers can see all the different types of technology that can be used to make people feel safe and chose the ones that will suit them best. For people coming out of hospital we can fit telecare within 24 hours and we provide it free of charge for six weeks.

Locality working for our health and social care staff

We have established three integrated multi-professional teams aligned with groups of GPs in East Renfrewshire. Health and social care for adults and older people are accessed via a single point of access. Teams include staff from social work, occupational therapy, rehabilitation, community nursing and business support. Each team also includes an advanced nurse practitioner who works to support people to remain at home where possible, preventing unnecessary hospital admission. We also reach into hospitals to help people get home quickly. Our next stage is to align home care staff to the localities under single management arrangements to fully integrate services for older people and people with long term conditions.

OUR CUSTOMERS

ERC on-line

We realised that our residents increasingly want to access services via our website and we therefore wanted to make sure that our site was as user friendly as possible.

In 2013/14 our website was awarded SOCITM's top four star rating. SOCITM provides a national local authority website ranking system. We have successfully retained these four stars during 2014/15 and 2015/16.

We were also one of the first councils to optimise our site for mobile phone compatibility and we remain one of the fastest loading mobile sites of any UK council.

We continue to focus on improving the accessibility and functionality of ERC online to make it even easier for our residents to use. We plan to introduce new features such a greater degree of personalisation where our website will offer people information based on what they tell us they are looking for.

To further improve digital confidence and awareness across the council an e-learning module is currently being developed which will be open to all staff.

Customer First

Over the years major frontline services have been added to our customer service team - Customer First - portfolio including Registration, Housing Repairs, Licensing and recent welfare reforms and the team now deal with almost half a million contacts each year.

In 2016 all high volume services are now available online and over 20% of our customers use them. Our new gadget bars - dedicated desks in our two customer service centres with various tablets and devices that people generally have at home - are installed and ready to offer assisted service to encourage people to get online when public access Wi-Fi is available later in the year. Live Chat has been introduced and allows customers to have live online support. This has had very positive customer feedback, including from hearing impaired customers for whom phones are difficult. Customer First also work closely with the Communications team to provide social media updates and responses.

Customer First is moving towards hosting more services on our website to meet the demands of our customers who are doing more online and also save the council money.

Money Advice & Rights Team (MART)

In 2015 we integrated three separate teams: Money Advice, Income Maximisation and Welfare Rights to form the Money Advice and Rights team providing a more efficient and effective service for our residents. Due to changes with welfare reform, demand for the service is growing with a 161 per cent increase in 2015/16 alone, with the service focused towards the alleviation of poverty and the effects of debt in the community making a positive difference to the lives of residents.

In this first year 2966 clients have been supported with financial gains of £3,658,838. This means that every £1 spent on employee costs generates a financial return of £6.74 in the community.

Together with our council tax and benefits team MART is already working with key partners to increase the visibility of the service and help maximise financial gain for as many people in the community as possible.

Community Engagement

Major improvements have been made to ensure consistently high community engagement processes and the coordination of council consultations. This has involved a move from paper based systems to a digital first approach.

All consultations now meet council wide engagement principles and are often 'digital-first' with response levels increasing. Staff also now have access to training, advice and support.

We have introduced Survey Monkey and Citizen Space - a central location for all online consultations. Since 2012 the site has hosted 192 surveys generating more than 16,500 responses with 175 registered users across the organisation.

In 2014 we mapped 845 community groups and activities across East Renfrewshire covering all age-ranges, localities and a diverse range of issues and interests. This data has been used to enable services to reach relevant communities and stakeholders.

All services in the council are improving the way they work with communities encouraging participation in many ways including through volunteering.

Community Councils

We have taken action to build relationships and strengthen the role and remit of Community Councils.

This has involved the development and introduction of one of the most ambitious Schemes of Establishment for Community Councils in order to improve how they operate and represent their communities. The scheme has led to the creation of seven new community councils and community development work to establish the remaining four. This is underpinned by our most extensive programme of training and support for Community Council members.

As part of our work strengthening our 5th capability of community engagement we will ensure the Council and Community Planning Partnership meets its responsibilities in relation to the Community Empowerment Act and in supporting third sector and communities to take advantage of its opportunities. This includes strengthening the culture of feedback, dialogue and communication. We will support co-production and capacity building as communities become more resilient as well as supporting the new Community Councils to thrive.

Invoice payments

We are aiming to make major improvements to our systems for paying invoices. To do this we are redesigning our Creditors Service including the roll-out of electronic document and records management to improve invoice processing and be a precursor to e-invoicing.

Social media

We were early pioneers of social media and current levels of engagement and growth on our social media channels are exceptional. An important social customer service interface is also now delivered through these channels.

In the past year, our Facebook audience has grown by 26% and Twitter has grown by 19%. This has been achieved by a focus on generating two-way dialogue with our followers and consistently swift responses to customer questions and comments.

To further enhance levels of direct engagement with our communities we have recently piloted live social media events and mini campaigns.

A recent live Facebook Q&A session on the introduction of our new kerbside collection arrangements reached some 19,600 people in a single three hour session. Elsewhere a month long 'exam wisdom' social media campaign on coping with exam stress resulted in 131,000 twitter impressions (number of times tweets were viewed) and more than 20,788 people were reached on Facebook.

We plan to build on our social media successes by carrying out more live engagement events and mini campaigns in future together with an increase in in-house generated video and image led content.

EFFICIENCY

ICT services

Over the last two years the ICT service has been redesigned to support the transformation agenda. The team have delivered agile solutions, piloted wireless in schools and upgraded many IT systems. The digital foundations of the service are being strengthened with the adoption of 'Enterprise Architecture' principles across the whole organisation. This means our IT systems will be designed rather than emerge. We have also introduced ICT business relationship managers; an innovative concept where each department has an IT professional allocated to them to support them to introduce new transformation IT.

Our ICT team will focus on two key areas going forward. The first is to redesign ICT services to meet the future demands of our council. This will be achieved by the adoption of high quality industry standard processes and increasing performance management capability. The second area of focus is to support our Modern Ambitious Programme and digital transformation outcomes. This will be achieved through using modern agile working practices, aligning core skills to future demand and ensuring that innovative technology solutions are delivered effectively and at the right time

New ways of working for health and social care staff

The development of the new £15m Eastwood Health and Care Centre, which opened its doors to patients this summer, has not only delivered major benefits for local residents but has also facilitated a major transformation in agile and flexible working for HSCP staff.

When plans for the new centre were approved it was agreed that HSCP staff would transfer into the new centre to ensure more seamless working between health and social care professionals and provide an opportunity for efficiency through a reduction in buildings.

This presented a challenge however due to available space within the new centre's floor plan. In the run up to the opening a major piece of transformation work was undertaken to get our staff working agile so that when they did move into the new centre, new ways of working would be fully embedded.

The new arrangements are now working well and staff work flexibly so we no longer need one desk space for every person. Eastwood Health and Care Centre will be the blueprint for the other buildings as we modernise our workspaces to support integration and flexible working.

Environment Department transformation programme

Our environment department is at the early stage of an ambitious whole system programme of transformation. All processes are being redesigned to make them digital from beginning to end with the aim of improving customer experience and satisfaction, generating efficiency and protecting frontline services.

At the heart of this programme are the principles that modernisation, maximising self-service, being digital by design and driving information as an asset will be able to generate savings at the same time as improving customer experience and staff satisfaction.

Education Department administration review

Our education department is undertaking a comprehensive review of administrative and clerical processes in schools and throughout the wider department to introduce more streamlined and modern ways of working including better tailoring of services between home and school.

As part of the review process there has been extensive parental consultation through Parent Councils, online surveys and engagement with staff at all levels including our trade union partners.

Current processes and structures are being reviewed and redesigned with a view to ensuring staff are empowered to play their part in making appropriate, timeous decisions to best meet the needs of all our learners and parents and carers.

In order to inform our review we carried out a thorough process to map out the nature and volume of all existing administration activities and tasks and the processes used.

This has been a far reaching exercise and has identified best operational practices which are being shared across the system and has also informed further opportunities for new digital solutions which are now being explored.

The review includes reshaping our clerical and administrative staffing structure and ensuring our workforce has the right skills and supports to be fit for the future.

Council tax and benefits

A top line review of our council tax and benefits service has been completed resulting in significant efficiency savings to date. A range of opportunities for modernising, digitising and streamlining work have been identified. This includes making as much available online for customers through the use of smart-forms wherever possible. Smart-forms feed customer information straight into where the work is being done reducing the need for information to re-entered into our systems after it has already been inputted once by the customer and therefore speeds up our processes.

The continuation of welfare reform, the establishment of a new Scottish Benefits Agency and changes to council tax arrangements will mean further changes to the way our council tax and benefits service is organised going forward.

Print services

A redesign of our in-house print service has generated significant savings by moving to a single supplier for central printing services and the introduction of an on-line e-print ordering system for internal customers.

Going forward the Communications Team will focus on the personalisation of our communications which will be aligned more strategically by target audience for maximum impact.

Modernising HSCP finance systems

We have undertaken a major redesign of HSCP financial processes and procedures through the implementation of a new Care Finance package. This is replacing manually intensive systems and provides a robust financial reporting and monitoring tool to provide detailed, timely and accurate reporting at a client, team and service level. This has been very challenging to deliver but it has transformed our approach and strengthened our financial governance.

Accountancy

The Accountancy Team have identified a number of ways that they can make their processes more efficient. In particular they are at the forefront in our Digital Professionals - Excel programme where they have started to really improve skills in excel spreadsheets with over 40 staff across the Council signed up to offer support to each other and providing advice through a digital blog.

With more savings required the Accountancy team are now fundamentally redesigning all their processes to reduce paperwork and double keying of information to make processes as 'lean' as possible and reduce workload on staff. The way in which central support recharges are allocated has been reviewed and improvements were introduced to make the process much clearer. In tandem the Financial Regulations of the Council are being reviewed to make them simpler to understand and to remove unnecessary layers of approvals. This will help not just the finance team but staff all over the Council.

In the next phase, the finance system will be upgraded. This will give a great opportunity to put in a system that takes advantage of digital technology to both reduce the workload on staff and to improve controls.

Procurement

The Procurement team have just completed a review of rules around our contract procedures. This review has very successfully simplified down contract standing orders, put in place simplified procedures to support standing orders and reduced the bureaucracy in placing small orders benefiting both Council staff and suppliers.

The next phase of Procurement reform is to support operational teams to be more strategic in their use of procurement. The procurement process will also be further reformed to make it more digital with increased ability to accept e-invoices and information gathering streamlined and digitised.

Legal

The Legal team are about to reform how they administer the very complex documents that they need to carry out their work. They will start with digital dictation and then move onto speech recognition to reduce the costs of typing. They will also introduce a digital case management system meaning that eventually they can go paperless (or nearly) as well as ensuring that all relevant documents can be shared with the relevant team. Meanwhile a national programme is underway to introduce online licensing.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit will now be providing an internal audit system for both Culture and Leisure Trust and the Integrated Joint Board. Both are "stand alone" companies and although the internal audit function is not expected to be complex, it will involve some changes to working practice.

Whole system business support

Prior to 2012 administrative support was spread across the Council leading to duplication, single points of failure and multiple hand offs. Four Business Support teams were created to bring together disparate elements of administrative support allowing for savings and staff reductions to be made with further savings achieved each year since.

As we further embed digital and agile processes throughout the organisation our business support teams are providing a key business intelligence function by extrapolating data and creating meaningful information to help us improve service delivery and outcomes for our customers.

OUR PEOPLE

It is essential that our staff are fully engaged in our modernisation programme and our vision to be a modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future with all.

We are working hard to ensure that staff are empowered and supported to work differently, to embrace and lead change and to understand their own important role in achieving our goals.

We are therefore matching our major focus on service improvement and change with a significant investment in our people.

A number of our new initiatives, developments and communications activities to support, motivate and inspire staff on our modernisation journey are set out below.

Workforce planning

We have put in place robust workforce planning systems to ensure that we have real time quality data about our workforce to allow a detailed understanding of the issues affecting the council with regards to our workforce.

This approach has helped us to identify areas where we can strengthen our approach - particularly in relation to our ageing workforce. In response we working to ensure robust succession planning and been very active in driving forward our successful modern apprentice programme.

Most recently we have also fully realigned workforce model with that of the NHS to further support the effective integration health and social care.

Our workforce planning group are also working together to make more detailed plans at a departmental level to help managers focus on core priorities and detail what the workforce should look like to support the future council.

Leadership programmes

To support the development of staff by giving them the training, skills and support they need to take their roles to the next level we have developed a number of in-house leadership programmes linked to our five capabilities and values.

Our Supervisors for the Future, Managers for the Future, Leaders for the Future and Vision for the Future programmes cover all supervisors, management and leadership levels and to date more than 174 colleagues have taken part in one of these important programmes.

We also have a comprehensive training calendar of courses, again linked to our five capabilities, to ensure that we can cater for any training and development needs which may be identified as part of the personal development review that each member of staff takes part in annually.

In-house Professional Development Award (PDA) in Project Management

We are the first council in Scotland to be accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority to deliver an approved qualification in project management for staff to ensure the right skills are available in-house to drive our programme of modernisation.

This HND level course – Professional Development Award (PDA) in Project Management - gives project managers the opportunity to develop their capabilities and use practical skills and theory to deliver a framework for service change.

More than 20 staff have already been through the course and councils from across Scotland are now looking to ERC's modernisation and change programme - in particular the empowerment of staff to lead change - to inform the way their own programmes could be delivered in future.

Simplifying our strategy documents

With the wide range of services the Council provides, developing strategies and plans can be complex. A few years ago, we developed our “Outcome Delivery Plan” which helped us focus on the most important activities that would make our residents lives better.

This year we have further developed this by using a very visual format called a Driver Diagram. Rather than lots of lengthy text, we have diagrams that show what we aim to achieve, how we will know we are making progress and what the critical activities that we will undertake to improve outcomes for our residents.

We will keep working to improve our diagrams but already they have helped us make sure that we are prioritising our scarce resources onto what really matters.

Organisational Development

We have established a cross council Organisational Development Board to ensure staff are fully involved and engaged in our vision.

The OD Board, chaired by our Director of Environment, has a focus on recognising the value of our staff and that supporting them to get involved in the delivery of our Vision for the Future is crucial to its success.

It leads on highlighting specific projects and areas of work we must complete to make sure we are fit for the future both in terms of our staff and the way the council functions.

Since its formation the Board has worked with staff to establish new organisation values and has been central in our work to embed these values and our five capabilities into everything we do as a council.

The OD Board also plans to launch a staff reward and recognition scheme linked to our five capabilities and values early in 2016.

Staff communications campaign

To ensure that our staff understand the various elements of our vision and their own role in achieving our goals we launched a dedicated staff communications campaign earlier this year.

Phase one of our campaign included a special edition of our staff **insider** magazine, a Vision for the Future intranet portal, a short Vision for the Future animation and a Core Brief for managers to deliver to their teams, offering an opportunity for individual departments and teams to provide updates on their priorities for change moving forward.

Phase two of this campaign will launch later this year focusing on the council's 20th birthday reflecting on what we have already achieved and our key successes over the last 20 years, while looking ahead to the future and current modernisation programme progress.

HR online

The last few years have seen a significant number of HR processes go on-line. Employees can now access expenses, payslips, PRD information, training approvals and overtime modules either through their work computer or through their own computer or even their smartphone. More modules will be added to make the system as paperless as possible. To support the move to online, HR will be introducing an Electronic Document Management system to streamline and digitise all HR processes allowing HR practitioners to spend more time in the field supporting departments.

Absence Management

Absence management is an area of key focus for the Council. A more robust Maximising Attendance Policy has been introduced as well as a capability policy. A highly professional occupational health organisation is also being used to support complex cases. As a result of these measures absence rates have greatly improved this year to an average of 9.8 days per employee from 11.2 days in 2014/15. We will continue to focus on reducing these rates further as a key priority.

Self-evaluation

We have also recognised the need for our departments to self-evaluate the success of the services they provide to ensure ongoing improvement at every level.

Right across the council we have an approach in place - tailored for specific services such as education, social work and customer service for teams to take an evidenced based approach to self-evaluation. This self-evaluation process is also fully aligned with our performance reporting and annual service planning cycle allowing our Corporate Management Team to take a very balanced approach to targeting areas for further improvement.

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