Essex County Council Organisation Strategy

Report title: Future of the Council's Corporate IT System
Report to: Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Report author: Cllr Chris Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs
Date: 30 September 2021   **For:** Consideration
Enquiries to: Amanda Moore, Programme Director
County Divisions affected: Not applicable

1. Introduction

This session will consider the work undertaken by the Corporate Systems Programme to implement My Oracle, the new corporate IT system that will be used for managing HR, Payroll and Finance transactions.

2. Action required

2.1 The update is for consideration and discussion.

3. Background

3.1 ECC currently use 'The Corporate System' (TCS), for the provision of core business processes e.g. paying suppliers, paying employees and general ledger.

3.2 Having been sourced in 2014, the system is considered 'of its time' and it does not support modern working practices, it is also hosted on ECC networks which creates resilience issues.

3.3 In March 2020, Cabinet approved the decision to move to a cloud-based system called 'My Oracle' and the Corporate Systems Programme began implementation, with a target launch date of October 2021.

4 Progress to date

4.1 The programme is on track for launch in October 2021.

4.2 My Oracle has been built and tested it to make sure it works, and we have engaged with employees and suppliers so that they know what is changing and what they will need to do differently.

4.3 Training and familiarisation sessions are underway and will continue throughout September and October.

4.4 The final transfer of data from TCS to My Oracle and the subsequent business reconciliation activity will take place between 24th September – 3rd October and the new system will be 'live' from 4th October.

5 Benefits of My Oracle

5.1 The move to My Oracle will result in significant change activity across the organisation and this presents benefit opportunities derived from the exploitation of new technology.

5.2 The table below outlines the immediate benefits to ECC.

My Oracle feature	ECC Benefit
Upgrades are quarterly releases included as part of Oracle licence model	The system is continuously improved and enhanced, bringing new features and fixing bugs. No big system upgrades/change programmes required for My Oracle.
Enhanced User Experience	My Oracle is a more user focussed intuitive product, this will mean that employees will spend less time doing administrative tasks and have more time to focus on the things that matter most to the people of Essex.
Reduction in system complexity.	Reduction in number of errors currently being produced by our current system due to misuse/misunderstanding of the system and complexity within our current processes.
	Improved / simplified decision making as a result of a more intuitive solution (e.g. configurable dashboard / reports or real time data).
No ongoing service management contract required	No requirement to retain service management contract with Fujitsu beyond transitional period as this can be managed in house via the My Oracle Support team.
Alternative device access (phones/tablets)	Employee can access some elements of My Oracle from alternative devices.
Not reliant on ECC Network	Enhanced resilience of system, access to system as not dependent on ECC network / infrastructure
Legal compliance	As solution cannot be customised the risk of system being non-compliant with legal requirements (e.g. GDPR) is reduced
Maintains financial control	Retains existing robust financial controls / data integrity (single source of the truth)

6 Fujitsu/Evosys as Systems Implementor

6.1 Throughout the programme, Fujitsu have acted in the role of 'systems implementor' supported by their supply chain partner, Evosys. This has involved working with the ECC team to set up and prepare My Oracle and transfer the data from TCS.

6.2 Fujitsu and Evosys were selected to act as systems implementor due to the combination of Fujitsu's in-depth knowledge of ECC's current system and Evosys' experience in implementing the Oracle system in the Local Government Market.

6.3 They will continue to provide support services for a transitional period to ensure service continuity for My Oracle whilst ECC develops its in-house support capability.

7 Flexibility/future proofing

7.1 My Oracle is a licenced based product which allows flexibility if the organisation size or shape changes. The current ECC licences are for 5 years until 2025, with the option to extend for a further 5 years.

7.2 It is market leading in new technology for large local authorities and has the functionality and potential for scalability if needed for a wider role, and by adopting the best practice processes, it means that ECC can benefit from the product's ongoing evolution through frequent supplier led updates providing improvements and enhancements to the system every 3 months.

7.3 The Oracle system is already used by Thurrock Council, Suffolk Council, Norfolk Council and several London Boroughs and Unitary authorities.

8 Supporting future ECC Technology Transformation

8.1 The implementation of My Oracle is a significant step in transforming Essex County Council through the adoption of evolving technology, and the new system has several capabilities that will modernise ECC's ways of working in the future.

8.2 So far, the programme has focused on implementing the Core HR/Payroll and Finance modules to meet the immediate needs of the organisation, but a business case for a second phase, looking at further opportunities for digitisation of core support services is underway, due in Autumn this year.

9 Next Steps

9.1 My Oracle will launch w/c 4th October and a business case for phase 2 of support services digitisation is due to be completed in Autumn 2021.