

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by Chief Officer – People and Technology

**Corporate Services Committee: 19 May 2021**

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**Subject: Digital Transformation**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To provide Committee with an update on the further implementation of the Digital Strategy and seeks approval for the permanent establishment of the core team to support delivery of the Council’s ambitious programme.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**2.1** The Committee is asked to:

- Note that the Digital Strategy work-streams maximise the potential of digital technologies to improve outcomes and services for all our citizens and employees, whilst seeking to reduce costs;
- Approve the permanent establishment of the Council’s core team (currently employed on a fixed term basis); and
- Approve the recruitment of a Graduate Service Designer on a fixed term basis to support the work of the Service Designer.

#### **3. Background**

**3.1** In 2011, the Scottish Government published a Digital Strategy designed to extend connectivity, promote the digital economy, digitise public services and promote digital participation. The Council’s Digital Strategy was published in 2016 with a focus on the delivery of on-line services. In August 2019, following a senior restructure, the Digital remit was transferred from Citizen, Culture and Facilities to People & Technology and a small core team established within the existing Organisational Development, Change & (now) Digital Team.

**3.2** The Digital Team consists of 3 employees (plus other officers across the Council engaged in digital work-streams and part of the ‘virtual’ team):

	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date
Digital Foundations Officer	26/08/2019	25/08/2021
Manager of Digital Leadership, Skills & Culture	02/09/2019	01/09/2021
Service Designer	13/04/2020	12/04/2022

**3.3** The team was established to support the delivery of:

- Digital services designed with end users in mind through regular engagements during design and delivery project phases;
- Improved data quality and the subsequent decision making by presentation of WDC data sets in a visual and meaningful way;
- Improved Digital skills both for employees and residents;
- Digital first approach for all council services from the outset of process design and improvements;
- Alignment of Council services with leading digital/mobile technologies and the benefit therein giving due consideration to end users;
- Maximise digital transactions via self-service giving increased flexibility and reducing the need for face-to-face and telephone interventions where possible; and
- Collaborative working with the National Digital Office and other councils in both informing the WDC programme and sharing best practice.

**3.4** In March 2021, the new Digital Strategy for Scotland, 'A Changing Nation: How Scotland will Thrive in a Digital World', was delivered through collaborative efforts of Scottish Government, CoSLA, the Digital Office for Scottish Local Government and the Improvement Service. This revised strategy sets out how digital will feature in the recovery from the pandemic, a reality already experienced in West Dunbartonshire over the last 12 months as digital solutions have enabled services to continue and facilitated the support strategies for our communities.

**3.5** An SNP motion for the 2021/22 budget was agreed that a report will come to Corporate Services for members to decide whether to accept the Digital Team growth bid.

## **4. Main Issues**

### **Current Work-streams**

**4.1** The Digital Transformation Board was established to provide decision making at officer level and a robust governance framework. It also ensures a collaborative one Council approach to Digital and provides a platform for sharing of good Digital practice. The Board is chaired by the Chief Officer People and Technology, facilitated by the Manager of Digital Leadership, Skills & Culture and includes representatives from all Service Areas. Meetings are now being conducted virtually through MS Teams, ensuring through a digital solution, that the transformation work can continue.

**4.2** The Digital Team, both core and wider/virtual members, support the 4 current sub-groups:

- Better Use of Data;

- Digital Skills (both workforce and communities);
- On-line Forms; and
- Digital Communications.

**4.3** In addition the team oversee and participate in the agreed corporate Continuous Improvement Digital Projects:

- On-line bookings;
- Review of Pecos/ICT procurements; and
- Fit for Future (FfF) Service Reviews.

The fourth project for Medical Adaptations has now been handed over to the service and they are working with ICT to develop a single system that all relevant parties can access and update. This will provide a streamlined, joined up approach to medical adaptations that benefits both the citizen and the Council.

**4.4** The team support training cohorts to achieve the Lean/Six Sigma Yellow Belt qualification and deliver an ongoing development programme to these cohorts which includes training on:

- Service Design;
- Agile Project Management;
- Commercialisation;
- Customer Journey Mapping; and
- Benefits Realisation.

**4.5** The Digital team conducted the corporate digital survey in 2019 and lead on the associated actions such as:

- Improving Microsoft Office skills through the MS Teams community;
- Improving Microsoft Excel skills to make better use of data; and
- Using Outlook to help with time management and task delivery.

**4.6** The Digital team have participated in the Scottish Government's CivTech 4.0 Innovation programme and worked with the successful supplier to develop an additional module of their Trickle communication and collaboration product to support employee wellbeing.

### **Fit for Future Service Reviews**

**4.7** In seeking to approach service review and design in a holistic way and, in so doing, incorporate feedback from Trades Union colleagues on areas where people practices could be improved, the 10 step 'Fit for Future' model was developed (detailed in Appendix 1).

Initially this involves a 6 step 'Discovery stage' during which the service is

researched from both a service user and an employee perspective. The supporting processes and data sets are examined, as are the supporting technology and on-line platforms. A thorough review of people practices is also conducted.

Findings from the Discovery stage are presented to the Service Chief Officer at a 'Show & Tell' event and thereafter ideation workshops are held with employees to generate recommendations for improvement. The findings and recommendations are compiled into a report which is handed over to the service for implementation.

The digital team leads on the overall approach, on 4 of the 6 Discovery steps and will retain a support and enabling role in respect of the implementation plan.

**4.8** The first service to be reviewed using this innovative approach was Waste Services. This has now concluded with an action plan in place. The main themes identified for improvement were:

- Reduce duplication of data sets and improve data quality by establishing a master data set for waste;
- Refresh bin collection routes to ensure the most economical route is followed;
- Redesign the key processes to suit the needs of the service user and support these with regular meaningful communication and updates for the citizen; and
- Collaborate with other internal services to provide a joined up approach to waste collection.

**4.9** The Fit for Future Service Review for Working 4 U began on 1 February 2021.

Step 7, the 'Show & Tell' (which provides a summary of the findings from the previous 6 steps) was held on 24 March 2021. The main themes identified included:

- Multiple data sets/systems in use so there is no single view of the citizen/client;
- Processes requiring updating and streamlining;
- Website needing updating and ensure information is accurate;
- Referral form needs amended to gather relevant information which will in turn reduce the need for any follow up contact; and
- 38 mailboxes are currently in use and these should be rationalised.

Appendix 2 shows an infographic which summarises the findings from the review of the W4U service.

**4.10** The intention of the Fit for Future programme is that service reviews will take place consecutively but with some additional overlap to deliver more

sooner. The Repairs Contact Centre Fit for Future review began with a 'kick-off' meeting on Monday 12 April 2021.

With each service review, learning is developed on how the approach works and allows improvements to be introduced to make it even better.

Moving forward, the scope of the people review will be extended to include wellbeing within Step 6 and a FfF maturity matrix will be developed and introduced to ensure services continue to develop in these areas.

## **Service Design**

- 4.11** A Service Design Officer was appointed on a two-year fixed term basis in April 2020. This recruitment exercise had to be repeated a number of times before securing an appropriately skilled candidate due to the shortage of applicants with the required attributes.

WDC were one of the first Councils to recruit a Service Designer and demand has increased significantly as others recognise the growing importance of this skill set.

- 4.12** Service Design training has been developed internally and, to date, 62 employees (over 6 cohorts) have attended this training. These figures include a condensed version of the training which was delivered to the Communities Team in March to better support our community facing services.

A further condensed version of the training is scheduled to be delivered to HSCP colleagues in May and this will be followed by training for the Strategic HR team.

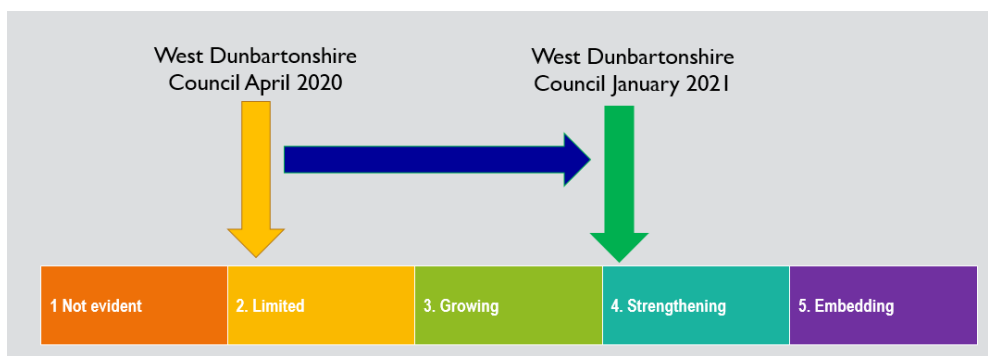
- 4.13** The Service Design Academy offer a variety of Service Design training which varies in cost from £495 per person for a 0.5 day training session to £2,900 for a certified training course. A comparable cost of the WDC Service Design training is £1,300. This equates to a potential saving of £80,600 in training costs.
- 4.14** The training consists of 7 modules with one module being undertaken per week.

<b>Topic</b>	
Week 1	Introduction to Service Design
Week 2	Empathy Mapping
Week 3	Journey Mapping
Week 4	User Research
Week 5	Ideation
Week 6	Prototyping
Week 7	Show and Tell

- 4.15** During this training, attendees are introduced to both the theory of service design and the practical application of service design tools. This culminates in a Show & Tell where the prototype(s) to a given problem/issue are presented.

The 'Virtual Cuppa and a Chat' which ran weekly as a trial from October 2020 until March 2021 was implemented as a result of this service design training. The purpose of this was to give employees a space to come together, talk about a variety of topics and, often facilitating the 'meeting' of colleagues where employees have joined the Council during the pandemic and so have never actually met. The 'Virtual Cuppa and a Chat' continues to run every 3 weeks in the form of desk based Yoga.

- 4.16** A Service Design maturity assessment was completed by the Service Designer when they joined in April 2020. This illustrated that WDC had limited use of Service Design.



This assessment was repeated in January 2021 and showed that WDC's service design maturity had developed markedly. The new assessment classes WDC as having an 'awareness and support for user-centred design and the principles of the Scottish Approach to Service Design is evident at many levels of the organisation'.

- 4.17** The National Audit Office have listed evidence of a Service Design approach as being key to transformational change projects and subsequent inspections will look for evidence of this.

They have also identified 6 key characteristics of a digital council:

- Digital Leadership;
- User focused;
- Digital Workforce;
- Collaborative;
- Technology & Data enabled; and
- Innovative.

Each of these characteristics is managed and monitored by the Digital Team albeit dedicated work streams are not set up in exactly this way.

- 4.18** A Service Design community has been established to promote the use and benefits of service design across WDC and has also assisted with:
- the development of a bespoke support programme for Building Services;
  - the corporate roll-out of Trickle (an engagement App) to allow better communications with employees who do not have access to email, Zoom or MS Teams; and
  - the development of Ideation sessions (currently productively used in FfF) as an agreed replacement for the good idea fund.
- 4.19** A Scottish Service Design community has also been established (led jointly by West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Councils). This has generated interest from a number of organisations including Stirling Council who have requested access to WDC service design training. A meeting has been arranged to discuss how to take this forward.

### **Online Collaboration Tools**

- 4.20** The Digital Team have supported ICT in the deployment of online collaboration by delivering training on the use of MS Teams.

The team also support the Microsoft 365 Project Team and have established a MS Teams ambassador group with over 60 ambassadors across the Council trained on additional functionality of MS Teams. The digital team facilitate this group which meets monthly and offers support to others who are in need of assistance.

- 4.21** The Digital Team were instrumental in the implementation of Zoom for Council meetings and Committees working with the Committee Admin Team to develop an approach which worked, the subsequent training of officers and Elected Members and supporting the meetings themselves to ensure events ran smoothly.

### **Workforce Planning Console & Better Use of Data**

- 4.22** In order to better support mature workforce planning and management scrutiny of workforce data, the 'console' was developed to provide real-time graphical information direct from the Workforce Management System.

This was delivered by the 'Better Use of Data' sub group and has now been implemented across all Chief Officer areas.

- 4.23** The console was further developed to provide an employee status report during the Covid pandemic. This report allows managers to see the status of their employee(s) against the following criteria:

- allocated as a volunteer in another service;
- working at an education hub;
- an essential worker; and
- a key worker or simply as yet unallocated.

**4.24** The requirements for COVID reporting to Scottish Government were significant and resource intensive at a time when teams were stretched responding to the impacts of COVID. An absence report was developed to simplify reporting and create capacity.

**4.25** The 'Better Use of Data' sub-group was established to bring together key employees whose work has a large focus on WDC data sets.

This sub-group have collaborated with the Scottish Digital Office's Data team and hosted a 'data deep dive' exercise (attended by a number of other councils) which explored the potential benefits of the introduction of a data hub (i.e. a central repository for data).

Findings indicated that the introduction of a data hub would be a lengthy and costly piece of work however significant benefits were also anticipated once the work was completed specifically the single/master view of the citizen that would become available.

Improving data quality internally moves WDC closer to the data hub model therefore this is now the focus for the sub-group. Data quality is also investigated as part of the FfF service reviews.

**4.26** The data sub-group attendees have recently completed training to develop a fuller understanding of Data Consultancy and this will allow the development of a consistent and thorough approach to reviewing of data sets.

Key elements of this training will be shared with the wider data community (which is currently being established) to help employees understand and promote the importance of data within their own service areas.

Members of this data community will initially be introduced to the GIS mapping system and supported to make use of this tool. This will increase the GIS user base and also build data skills and confidence in the wider community.

### **Next Steps for the Digital Team:**

**4.27** Subject to approval of employment status, the core team will:

- Continue to refine the Fit for Future approach and work on prioritised Service Reviews with dates agreed as capacity allows;
- Continue to build Service Design capacity through the delivery of



Service Design training and the set-up of a Service Design Champions group and development programme;

- Establish a Data community to improve data quality, demonstrate the benefits of data visualisation and identify opportunities for data sharing;
- Participate in the implementation of Microsoft 365 and build capacity across the MS 365 suite of products;
- Continue to develop and offer opportunities for the development of employees digital skills;
- Continue to support the Automation programme and the development of a sustainable automation pipeline via the F4F reviews and other improvement work;
- Identify opportunities to maximise the use of free solutions such as 'Near Me' for video appointments with WDC citizens and
- Begin development of a new digital strategy aligned to the various national strategies, commitments and programmes of improvement.

## 5. Options Appraisal

5.1 As a result of the staggered recruitment, all 3 core officers have different start and finish dates (paragraph 3.2). Two options were considered:

- The first option would be to extend the contracts of the two fixed term employees appointed earlier in 2019 for a period of 7 months at a cost of £73,052 and appoint a Service Design Graduate on a 2 year fixed term basis at a total cost of £64,899 split over 3 financial years (inclusive of on-costs).
- The second, and preferred option would be to appoint all 3 core officers on a permanent basis and appoint a Service Design Graduate on a 2 year fixed term basis. The team have funding from the Change Fund for the existing fixed term contracts and the recommendation would be to fund from core budget from 2022/23 onwards (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

Posts*	Grade	Additional Cost (2021/22)	Annual Cost (2022/23)
Manager of Digital Leadership, Skills & Culture (for 7 months)	G10	£39,017	£69,621
Digital Foundations Officer (for 7 months)	G9	£34,035	£60,699
Service Designer	G9	n/a	£60,741
Service Design Graduate (for 8 months in 2021/22)	G5	£20,685	£32,820
<b>Total (inclusive of on costs)</b>		<b>£93,737</b>	<b>£223,882</b>

\* These posts have been evaluated in accordance with the SJC Job Evaluation Scheme

## **6. People Implications**

- 6.1** As detailed in Table 1 above, the preferred option and the recommendation to this Committee is to secure permanency for the core team in addition to recruiting a Service Design Graduate. This would further support the Council's digital journey. An existing permanent Change Facilitator role, currently vacant, will also be converted to a Digital Project Support role.
- 6.2** Securing this permanent resource would reduce the risk of loss of the skill to A.N. Other organisation offering permanent opportunities. The ambitious programme of digital change, supported by National Digital Office, the Accounts Commission and the National Audit Office, will not be delivered by the end of the current fixed term contracts. This would place the Council at a disadvantage and would not realise the full benefits of the strategy.

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 7.1** Total financial investment of £317,618 for 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 7.2** This investment would reduce upon completion of the SD graduate's 2 year training programme.
- 7.3** There are no procurement implications associated with this report
- 7.4** A report was submitted to Council on March 22 that advised the first year of Digital Team costs would be funded from the Change Fund. This paper also advised of an annual cost of £168K additional costs to the Council from 2022/23 (i.e. after the Change Fund stopped funding)

## **8. Risk Analysis**

- 8.1** Skills held by the digital team are attractive to other employers and many opportunities are available. The programme of change is significant and the 3 strong core team are all fixed term.

## **9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 9.1** An EIA (#345) for the Digital Team Growth Bid was undertaken and is attached in Appendix 3.
- 9.2** This shows that there are positive impacts overall and some particular positive impacts for some groups.

## **10. Consultation**

- 10.1** The Trade Unions have played a key role in a number of digital initiatives such as supporting those employees without email access, the roll-out of 'Trickle' for communication/collaboration and highlighting poor people practice which is now being reviewed in Step 6 of the Fit for Future approach.

The Trade Unions will continue to be involved moving forward.

- 10.2** Digital is a standing item on the monthly Convenors meeting and consultation is undertaken in accordance with our local collective bargaining methodology.

## **11. Strategic Assessment**

- 11.1** The Council's Digital Strategy and associated work-streams supports the following Council strategic priorities:

- Meaningful engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged;
  - The adoption of a service design approach to digital transformation and FfF service reviews puts citizens at the heart of the process to design or redesign services and processes;
  - By proactively engaging with citizens (and using a variety of communication channels to do this), we learn about their experiences (good and bad) and can introduce improvements as a result;
  - We strive to work with those 'seldom heard voices' to ensure services are available and accessible to all.
  
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents;
  - The introduction of Lean/Six Sigma to WDC as a continuous improvement tool has encouraged services who have participated in the programme to remove waste from their processes, introduce consistency in their approach and consider areas of value that can be added for the benefit of the citizen;
  - The establishment of in-house communities for MS Teams and Service Design provides a means of cross organisation working, and allows for upskilling of employees in a supportive and safe environment whilst promoting the use of new technologies and sharing feedback;
  - Listening to citizens experiences during FfF service reviews provides an opportunity to streamline and improve back office processes which can then be accessed via on-line channels such as the website and on-line forms.

- Open, accountable and accessible local government.
  - The Digital Team are preparing short information recordings on data quality which will be advertised via the intranet. The reason for doing this is to promote that data and digital is not just the job of the Digital team – every employee has a responsibility in this;
  - A data community will also be set up to encourage good data practice which will assist in the move towards publishing of open (non-personal) data sets;
  - Moving forward, the Digital team will look for opportunities to share data sets in a safe and secure way which will provide a holistic view of the citizen within WDC.

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**13 April 2021**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Fit for Future Approach  
Appendix 2 – Fit For Future Findings Infographic  
Appendix 3 – EIA

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Wards Affected:** All