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**REPORT TO: CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON 7 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the progress made in developing the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (A) 2 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to considering Capital and Revenue Budgets and long term financial plans.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee reviews and notes progress on the projects set out in the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme (IMP);**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council has established an Improvement and Modernisation Programme to deliver transformational change across the authority, which was first approved by the Council on 12 December 2018 with the most recent update being considered by the Corporate Committee on 25 April 2023 (para 7 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 Subsequent reports to the Council and Corporate committee (see background papers references below) have expanded and adjusted the IMP programme of work. A comprehensive statement of the total remaining programme of work now comprised within the IMP is set out in **Appendix 1** with an update on the current position for each area of work.
- 3.3 Key points of progress to note from the update in **Appendix 1** are:
- Smarter Working Project is on target. The full business case is completed and implementation is in progress with committee room refurbished and headquarters office moves complete;

- The Depot Review reported to Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee on 20 June 2023 with progression of some early property savings and work has commenced on removing these from the Council operational base;
- Customer Service redesign has moved to project closure with end of project report under consideration by the programme board;
- Schools for the Future has continued to develop the Elgin High School extension, Forres Academy and Buckie High school projects and Inveravon case for closure has been accepted by Scottish Government. Considerable work has been required to respond to the RAAC in Forres Academy with cross service input and community engagement on the future of Forres Academy us underway;
- Raising Attainment - Well-being (ASN) has an improved focus on key priorities which are progressing on well, although the overall programme plan needs to be updated to reflect this to enable more accurate monitoring of planned actions which is likely to shift the RAG rating to green;
- Raising Attainment (Pastoral Care) – following consideration of a range of options the ECLS Committee on 19 September 2023 (para 12 of minute refers) decided that in light of the current financial position and cost of available options this project should be concluded;
- Raising Attainment – This project is moving to the delivery phase to put in place mobile device management in schools.

3.4 Transformation is one of the elements in the hierarchy of measures to ensure the council is financially sustainable moving forward. Therefore, work is underway to consider the “Council of The Future” and transformation work that would be necessary to support this. Given the history of transformation within the Council reaching back to Designing Better Services, which rationalised office accommodation; reviewed vehicle use (including pool cars); introduced mobile and flexible working for office and field workers (DLO and care at home); to Digital Services that resulted in over 80 services being available online and more recently the projects in IMP1 and IMP2, a further programme of significant transformation is challenging. However, there are some new projects that are being defined and some areas where acceleration may be proposed. One of the issues in progressing this next stage of IMP work, is identifying dedicated resources and this is being considered alongside the definition of opportunities, all of which will be reported to the Council as soon as possible. It is anticipated that this will be in the first quarter of 2024.

3.5 The Internal Audit report on Transformation identified an action in relation to the Programme Governance policy that the Council uses to ensure that it is current. Work has been undertaken through the Project Managers Network and CMT/SMT to take this forward. This has been relatively light touch and a

revised document has been prepared (attached at **Appendix 2** for information). However, further consideration is required of the practical implications of this in terms of the project and programme governance arising and the capacity to provide and sustain this across all projects given the ongoing pressures on resources. This requires to be considered further by CMT/SMT particularly in relation to existing projects so that the full implications of the refreshed policy can be considered by committee when it is reported for approval. It is anticipated that this will be to the next Corporate Committee.

- 3.6 The Council has been challenged in the Best Value Audit feedback to ensure that the pace of change is secured and maintained. As a small local authority this is particularly challenging as finite resources are stretched across broad strategic and operational remits. However, as business administration and smarter working showing progress across the spectrum of the IMP.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Improvement and Modernisation Programme is the development of the commitment in the Corporate Plan to a programme of modernisation and improvement to contribute to a financially stable Council.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None.

**(c) Financial implications**

This financial implications of the IMP have been approved in previous reports. There is no change to this from the content of this report.

Project	Cost 2018 to 2022 £000s	Projected Cost 2022/23 £000s	Actual Savings 2018 to 2022 £000s	Projected Savings 2022/23 £000s	Projected future savings £000s	Total projected savings £000s
IMP	674	223	118	800	1,714	2,632
Digital Services	362	82	44	3	150	197
ELC review	-	91	-	-	500	500
Service restructure	398	-	1,165	-	-	1,165
CAT	53	-	189	-	-	189
Depot Review (initial savings)	-	-	-	-	42	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>2,406</b>	<b>4,725</b>

**(d) Risk Implications**

The risks associated with the IMP have been reported to Committee previously and are managed through the relevant programme boards and overseen by CMT/SMT. There are no changes to the current risk profile and it is noted that progress is being made in maintaining pace which was previously noted as a risk. However, the risks associated with change and the success of transformation remain and will continue to be monitored

In order to manage these risks, the council will:-

- (i) Ensure that all projects meet a given standard of governance that is proportionate to the change.
- (ii) Ensure there are adequate resources for the overall programme of work and for individual projects.
- (iii) Manage the dependencies and interdependencies across the scope of the change and its implications for other areas of prioritised work.
- (iv) Appoint appropriate project resources and failing which, review whether objectives are deliverable and review planned work accordingly.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There continue to be challenges in securing time from stakeholders involved in a demanding workload. The post of Head of Transformation remains vacant and there are currently no plans to activate recruitment, however, this will be reconsidered as work to develop a programme of further transformation to address the ongoing budget gap is developed.

**(f) Property**

No direct implications from this report, although property is the subject of one of the workstreams and the issues arising from this will be reported in due course with activity on climate change being progressed as a stand-alone programme of activity.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

For the purposes of this report an Equality and a Socio Impact Assessment are not required, however it is acknowledged that various workstreams will identify change that will have an impact on equalities and socio economic considerations and will be reported in due course.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no immediate climate change implications directly arising from this report. However, flexible working is one of the workstreams and the issues arising from this will be reported in due course.

**(i) Consultations**

The Corporate and Senior Management team have been involved in the review work referred to in this report and have been consulted on the report. The comments received have been incorporated into the report and project updates.

## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Committee is invited to acknowledge the progress in the projects contained in the Improvement and Modernisation Programme and the improving picture of progress across the programme of work. IMP is focussed on council priorities, particularly financial sustainability and to manage risks associated with ongoing budget position it is proposed to bring forward a further report to consider how the programme of work can be developed and accelerated to support financial sustainability of the Council.

Author of Report: Denise Whitworth, DCE ECOD  
Background Papers: Reports updating on progress on Improvement and Modernisation Programme to:  
12 May 2021 Full Council (Item 09 [Report](#) and Appendix [A / B / C / D / E](#))  
15 September 2021 Full Council (Item 15 [Report](#) and Appendix [1 / 2 / 3](#))  
15 March 2022 Corporate Committee (Item 13a [Report](#) and [Appendix](#))  
30 August 2022 Corporate Committee ([Item 06 Report](#) and [Appendix](#))  
25 April 2023 Corporate Committee ([Item 08 Report](#) and [Appendix](#))  
Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-895 / SPMAN-1108985784-917 / SPMAN-1108985784-912