

A large, abstract geometric pattern on the left side of the page. It consists of a solid blue triangle pointing right, followed by a series of overlapping triangles in light grey, a single bright green triangle, and a small dark blue triangle, all pointing right. The background is a light grey gradient.

Renfrewshire Council

Transformation: how councils are redesigning and
delivering more efficient services to achieve planned
outcomes

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

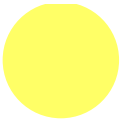
September 2025


Renfrewshire Council: Transformation -
how councils are redesigning and
delivering more efficient services to
achieve planned outcomes. Best Value
thematic work in councils 2024-25



Table of Contents

Key messages	3
Scope of the audit	7
Transformation planning	8
Programme management	14
Partnership working and community engagement	18
Impact of transformation	22
Appendices	26

Key messages

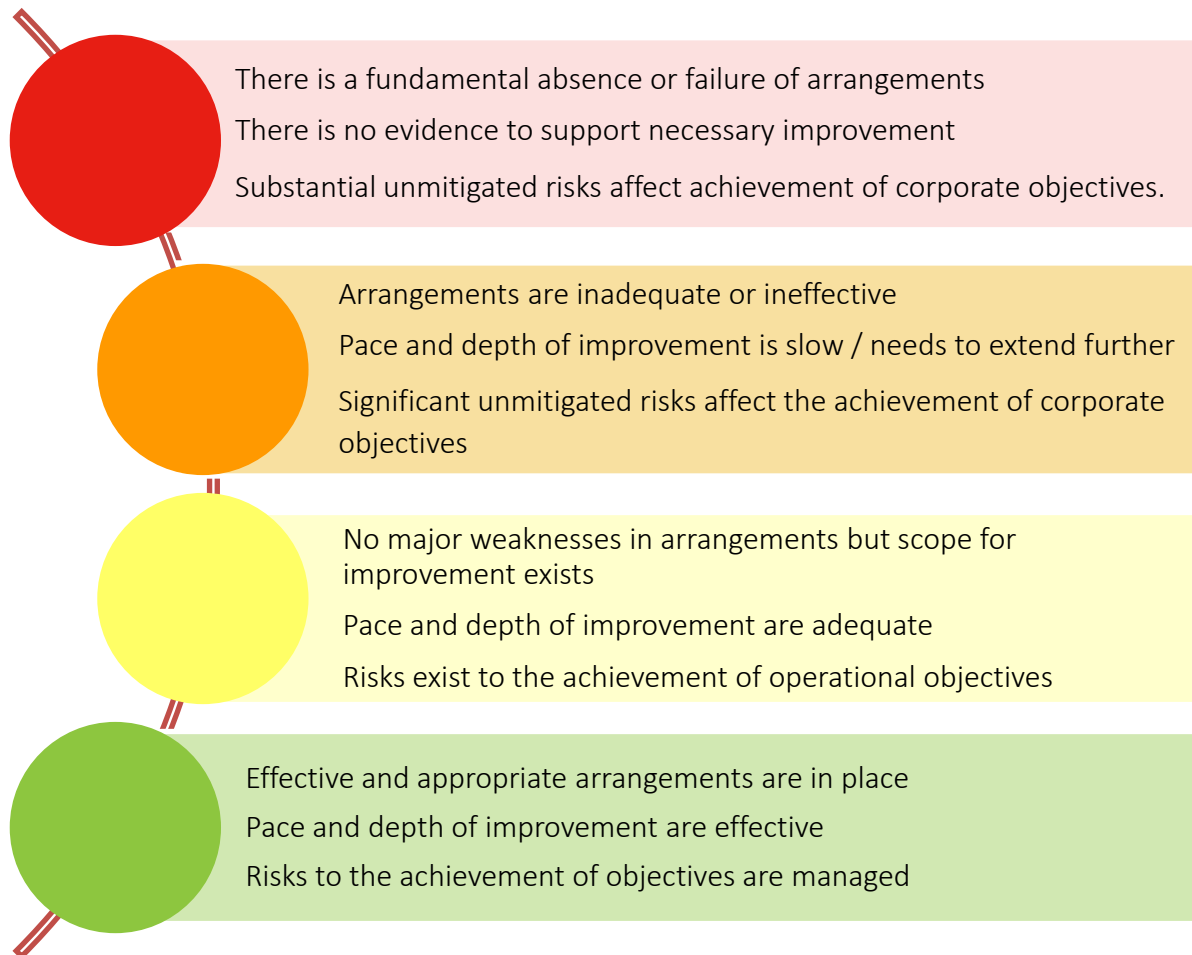
To what extent does the council have clear plans for transformation that link to its priorities and support long-term financial sustainability?	Auditor judgement Minor scope for improvement exists	
	<p>Renfrewshire Council has had a corporate transformation programme in place since 2009. These have been overarching, transformative and adapted to changing circumstances.</p> <p>The most recent phase of the Council’s transformation programme, Reshaping Renfrewshire, commenced in early 2025 and continues this ambitious approach. The Council is well-placed to deliver complex transformation and change programmes, having successfully delivered a range of transformation programmes over the past 15 years.</p> <p>Over this past period the Council have achieved £190m of savings and efficiencies through various projects and debt smoothing.</p> <p>The Council has outlined with appropriate detail its key future transformation projects, the importance of financial sustainability, and how these are to be achieved in the medium term.</p> <p>We are satisfied that links exist between the Council’s corporate objectives and the transformation plans, however these could be presented more clearly to improve clarity and to help measure the impact.</p>	

To what extent do the council's programme management arrangements facilitate effective oversight of its transformation plans?	Auditor judgement	
	Scope for improvement exists	
	The governance arrangements to monitor and scrutinise the transformation programmes are in place.	
	The Council operates the monitoring arrangements at the Boards and management levels with a clear structure of reporting in place.	
	This is supported at an operational level by the existence of appropriate capacity and expertise at Project Management Office function and by using external specialist support where this is deemed more effective.	
	Monitoring arrangements should be supported by further clarity in reporting to Leadership Board on timelines, costs, benefits and measurement methods to support achieving the transformation objectives.	

<p>To what extent are communities and partners involved in the development and delivery of the council's plans for transformation?</p>	<p>Auditor judgement</p> <p>Effective and appropriate arrangements are in place</p>  <hr/> <p>Renfrewshire Council works effectively with partners, including other councils, third and private sector to achieve its transformation objectives.</p> <p>There are good examples of working with communities demonstrating the Council's increased focus on the needs of service users.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council is meeting requirements of working with partners to develop a clear approach to tackling digital exclusion as part of their strategies and plans, understanding digital exclusion locally, who is affected and how.</p> <p>The Council engages with vulnerable groups and considers the impact of service delivery changes and improvements that could be made to support those communities.</p>
<p>To what extent has the council considered the impact of its transformation activity, including on vulnerable or protected groups?</p>	<p>Auditor judgement</p> <p>Effective and appropriate arrangements are in place</p>  <hr/> <p>The Council have equality impact assessments which are prepared for a range of projects, policy decisions and service redesigns.</p> <p>The approaches to measuring, monitoring and reporting varies project to project depending on the nature of the project, the benefits and the timescales in which the benefits are seen. The arrangements are appropriate at a project level.</p> <p>Community Benefits are built into contracts with third party suppliers.</p>

Definitions

We use the following gradings to provide an overall assessment of the arrangements in place as they relate to the wider scope areas. The text provides a guide to the key criteria we use in the assessment, although not all of the criteria may exist in every case.



Scope of the audit

The Audit Scotland's 2023 Local Government Overview (LGO) notes that councils have never faced such a challenging situation. Service demands have increased after the Covid-19 pandemic and funding is forecast to reduce in real terms. Transformation, through greater collaboration with partners, will be key for councils to deliver more sustainable service models in challenging financial climates.

This report sets out how the council is redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

The Accounts Commission's Strategy (2021-26) sets out its priorities to focus on inequalities, funding, communities and recovery. The Code of Audit Practice sets out the Best Value work required to report on these priorities.

This report covers the thematic aspect of the Best Value audit requirements. The Commission has directed auditors to report on transformation and how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes. In carrying out the work, auditors have considered the following questions:

- To what extent does the council have clear plans for transformation that link to its priorities and support long-term financial sustainability?
- To what extent do the council's programme management arrangements facilitate effective oversight of its transformation plans?
- To what extent are partners and communities involved in the development and delivery of the council's plans for transformation?
- To what extent has the council considered the impact of its transformation activity, including on vulnerable or protected groups?

An improvement action plan is included at Appendix 1 of this report. This sets out audit recommendations in key areas, and the council's planned response including responsible officers and dates for implementation.

The coverage of the work is in line with the expectations for council's arrangements for the seven Best Value themes in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, Best Value Statutory Guidance 2020.

Transformation planning

The Council needs to ensure it can deliver sustainable services now and in the future, and difficult decisions will need to be made to achieve this. [The Accounts Commission's Local government budgets 2024/25](#) briefing noted that the cumulative funding gap local authorities across Scotland estimate between 2025/26 and 2026/27 is £780m. This means that, cumulatively, councils need to identify and deliver recurring measures such as savings or increased income of five per cent of their overall revenue budget to be financially sustainable in the short term.

Transformation plans

The Council have had a corporate transformation programme in place since 2009. This transformation programme has been introduced due to growing demand and cost pressures, increasing public expectations, the corporate objective to modernise the Council and the sustained long term financial challenge that the Council faces.

The programme has had four phases, and the fifth phase is currently in the process of being implemented:

Phase	Introduced
Transforming Renfrewshire	2010-2015
Better Council	2015-2019
Right for Renfrewshire Phase 1	2020-2022
Right for Renfrewshire Phase 2	2023-2025
Reshaping Renfrewshire	2025-2028

The initial phases have focused on internal transformation; how the Council and services have been structured and organised, how business processes operate and activities are designed, and how the Council internally has made use of technology to help deliver services.

The Right for Renfrewshire (R4R) programme commenced in late 2019 and was intended to be a three-year programme, however, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, this was paused to allow Council resources to be fully diverted to managing the widespread impact of and response to the COVID19 pandemic. This phase is now coming to its end in 2025.

The change delivered to date has been considerable and wide ranging, from deploying new technologies and digital capability, to innovating on a range of fronts with new delivery

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

models, redesigning services and business processes, as well as key collaborative and shared service projects covering strategic waste and City Region arrangements. Financial benefits have been realised through opportunities to reconfigure both Council structures as well as discrete services and functions, streamlining of the size and shape of the workforce has been significant over the past 15 years, rationalising the scale of the Council's assets utilised to deliver services as well as growing existing and establishing new income streams available to the Council.

Case studies

Full case studies are included in Appendix 1 and we present summaries below.

Digital Journey

The Council's Digital journey has evolved over the last 10 years with a core aim of transforming how the Council delivers services and enables digital inclusion. The programme is closely linked to the organisation's strategic corporate objectives and has involved communities and a number of third party partners over a long term basis. A good example of working with partners and communities on this programme, has been the use of UK wide funding to progress the development of a business case to install free superfast broadband in 80% of social homes, building on the Council's initial foundation of a 20 year Connectivity as a Service Framework which invested around £2m to connect all council buildings to a new superfast broadband network and which attracted an additional £40m of follow-on private investment to develop a commercial gigabit network across Renfrewshire. This resulted in connecting businesses and homes alike and promoting Renfrewshire as one of the most digitally connected geographies in the UK.

Underpinning the digital transformation programme are the principles of fairness, equality and ensuring citizens benefit from the programme. The Council worked with partners and communities to establish Citizen Voice, a cross-sector partnership with private and third sectors to explore collaboration opportunities and minimise digital exclusion. For example, the impact on vulnerable and protected groups was considered through a specific initiative to work with a local charity to create a community-led secure device recycling point.

Outcomes that the Council highlights as achieved through the programme include: Green Print – aimed at a reduction of cost and contribution to net zero targets, introduction of an ICT model 'as a service', Digital Health & Care with almost 100% digital telecare provision and Renfrewshire HCSP being first in Scotland to achieve Platinum accreditation in this area. Other outcomes have included digital learning and teaching, including tackling inequalities and improving health and wellbeing of citizens. A volunteer digital community champions network was also established, with digital inclusion events and measuring of the digital inclusion in the area.

Customer and Business Services

This started with redesign of the Council's structure in 2015 when several functions within the council were consolidated into a single Customer and Business Service. The project has significantly redesigned how customers contact the council and how their requests are fulfilled. It also changed how the Council manages large scale financial and business transactions and manages and provides business support resources across all service areas of the Council.

There were a number of methods used to transform the services including: robotic process automation, enterprise resource planning, provision of over 170 digital services for customers and introduction of a digital customer service advisor supported by AI technology. In establishing these tools, the Council has been working with several carefully selected third party partners. These partners have been involved to provide support and expertise to the Council based on their experience of involvement in similar projects. In many instances they have delivered against key skill transfer strategies to ensure the Council's capability in relation to a range of specialist digital skills has been achieved to support long term transformation objectives.

Reshaping Renfrewshire

The fifth phase of the transformation, which was branded Reshaping Renfrewshire and introduced formally in February 2025, will continue to have a significant focus on the development of the organisation, including ensuring financial sustainability. At the same time, it will combine its internal focus with a wider outward perspective that considers Renfrewshire's geography, economy, demography and communities.

The current phase of transformation is influenced strongly by financial sustainability objectives, but also by local considerations which include population changes and expectations of increase delivery of services in digital form and infrastructure regeneration programmes. What also informs the transformation programme are national issues which include climate net zero targets, health and social care reforms, education, population change, equalities considerations and trauma informed and person-centred policy making.

The key themes of Reshaping Renfrewshire are:

1. Financial sustainability and planning
2. Investment in our place
3. Community engagement
4. Digital
5. Early intervention
6. Our people

7. Economic growth

The current transformation programme contains several specific projects in different areas with appropriate level of detail given for each. Some of them are continuing from the past priorities reflecting their long term and continuing nature, while some are new.

Transformation is a key aspect that runs in parallel to the Council's plan and financial planning, as shown in the diagram below. The corporate plan covers the five-year period from 2022-2027 and was refreshed at its midpoint in June 2024.

The Council has five strategic outcomes in the corporate plan:

1. Place - working together to enhance wellbeing across communities
2. Economy - building an inclusive, green and resilient economy (matching people, skills and opportunities)
3. Fair - nurturing bright, happy and healthy futures for all
4. Green - leading Renfrewshire to Net Zero
5. Living our Values - making a difference together

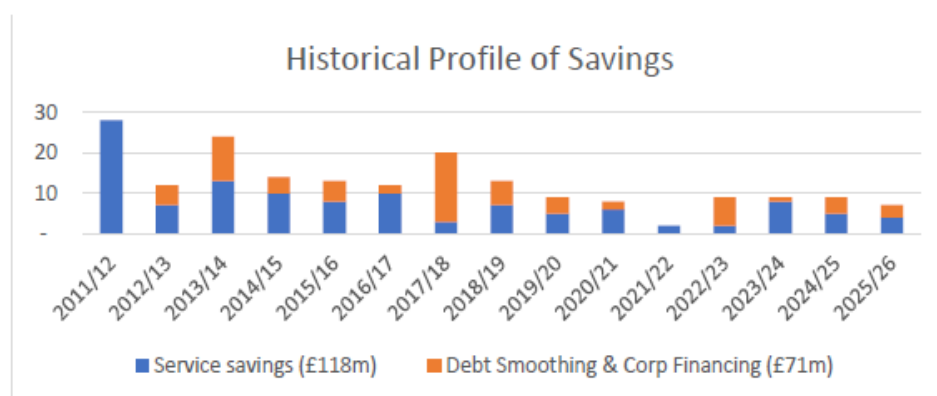
There is also the theme of 'improving outcomes for children and families' which runs through all five of the strategic outcomes and underpins all that Renfrewshire Council wish to achieve.

We are satisfied that links exist between the Council's corporate objectives and the transformation plans and while we note there is alignment between transformation programme objectives and the corporate plan outcomes, these were not formally mapped against each other. The Council should consider demonstrating the links between the transformation programme and its corporate plan with more clarity to help demonstrate measurement of impact of the transformation plan against the corporate plan.

Recommendation 1

Financial planning and transformation

The Council links its previously achieved savings to the first four phases of the project and have achieved the following savings:



The original financial savings target for the previous phase of the transformation programme, R4R, was to support delivery of £25m of recurring savings. The actual savings delivered were approximately £45m, which was made up of £26m of service savings and £19m of savings from continuation of the long-term corporate financing and debt smoothing arrangements, including changes to loan charges. Although the Council exceeded their savings target, it is worth noting that this target was for the first two years of R4R (2020-2022). After that period of R4R the Council was recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and additional financial pressures. The additional savings were in response to this dynamic financial environment.

The next phase of the transformation programme (Reshaping Renfrewshire) does not currently have detailed saving plans or financial targets as presented in a report to the Leadership Board in February 2025. However, the report from February did confirm an expectation that the level of savings required to be delivered as part of this phase will be similar to those delivered in the previous phase (around £25m). The exact level is subject to clarification as the financial position emerges over the course of this year.

Service Modernisation and Reform Fund

To support the transformation and improvement of council services the Council established a Service Modernisation and Reform Fund (SMARF). This fund is used to support services in implementing change and funding development costs for projects that are expected to bring long-term benefits to the Council. Throughout any financial year, service directors will also utilise any short-term capacity within existing service budgets to support change activity which reduces any required draw on the SMARF reserve as well as accessing external funding opportunities where these become available. This allows the Council to protect the fund's capacity to support further work over the long term. SMARF had a balance of £10.2m at 1 April 2025.

The fund is increased where there are one-off surpluses in revenue budgets in anticipation of further change and transformation costs being likely. Based on current commitments the Council estimates that there is sufficient funding available for 2-3 years of costs, but they also anticipate there to be further funding required in order to exploit potential opportunities arising in relation to utilisation of AI.

Medium to long term planning

The Council has long term planning in place for a number of strategic areas, which include capital programmes such as; housing, digital, the Learning Estate, workforce planning and roads maintenance. These key programmes are linked to long term strategies and can stretch between 5 to 30 years. The council breaks these projects down into shorter 3 year cycles, including R4R or Reshaping Renfrewshire to effectively manage , implement and monitor individual projects and programmes. This allows the Council to demonstrate a strong history

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

of delivering transformation, efficiency savings and improved outcomes over the medium to longer term.

As an example the current 2025-28 Reshaping Renfrewshire cycle of the transformation programme will have links to longer term objectives and themes which in this case include:

- Digital – new 5 year strategy – building on the successful programme to date and moving into the next phase of delivery based on current technological advances.
- Learning Estate strategy – will be delivered over a period of up to 25 years – reflecting the complexity of the process, drivers of demand and the scale of the financial costs involved, all of which will require longer term financial strategies to be developed.
- Housing regeneration programme has initially been focused on a delivery programme encompassing a 10 year major regeneration programme, with an overall programme likely to be progressed over a period of 20-30 years.
- Strategic Property Review and place shaping strategy (including priorities arising from the One Ren review) are being progressed through the Reshaping Renfrewshire programme, with key programmes of work and projects informing the medium to longer term ambitions of the organisation.

The Council is also developing a strategic funding model which will set out a long-term approach for the Council to support future strategic investment planning long term savings as part of the Learning Estate Strategy and wider place-shaping strategic agendas which will present significant investment requirements to support long term transformation objectives. The Council plans to set out the detail in relation to the financial requirements of this funding model, as part of the Council's long term financial planning arrangements, in their updated financial outlook to be presented to the Council in September 2025.

As shown by the savings profile above, the level and scale of savings that the Council has delivered has been reducing as the transformation programme progressed over the last 15 years. This provides a challenge in the ability to continue to deliver savings at a level required by the Council, especially in the current financial climate.

Going forward, the Council have noted that there is an increasing level of challenge to deliver the scale of savings over a sustained period. Without multi-year funding settlements, long-term financial planning for transformation programmes is challenging and can be further impacted by Scottish Government changes or ring-fencing in national funding streams. The cost of a range of goods and services can also add challenge within transformation programmes, particularly over infrastructure and regeneration programmes.

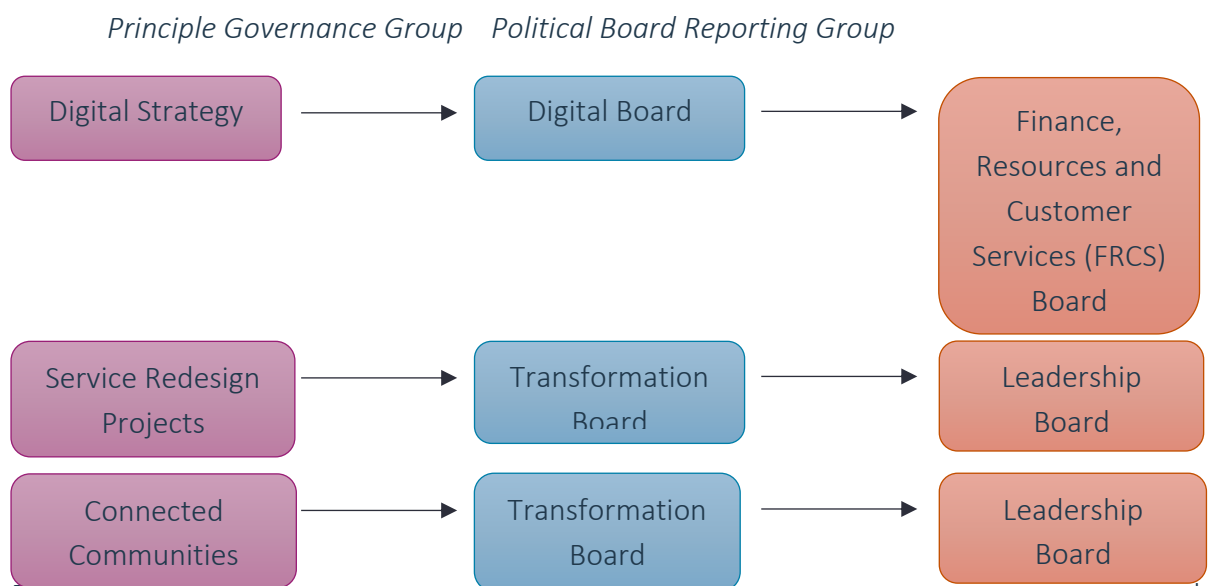
Programme management

It is essential that the Council has good programme management arrangements in place to ensure it is making sufficient progress against its transformation plans. It is important that the Council has the structures and the staffing resource in place to deliver its transformation ambitions. In addition, the Council must ensure that both senior officers and elected members have appropriate oversight of progress.

Governance structure

The Council have established a refreshed Transformation Board to provide strategic oversight of the current Reshaping Renfrewshire phase of the transformation programme. In the previous phases the transformation updates were presented to the corporate management team through 'portfolio' updates on themes aligned to the strategic outcomes a minimum of twice a year.

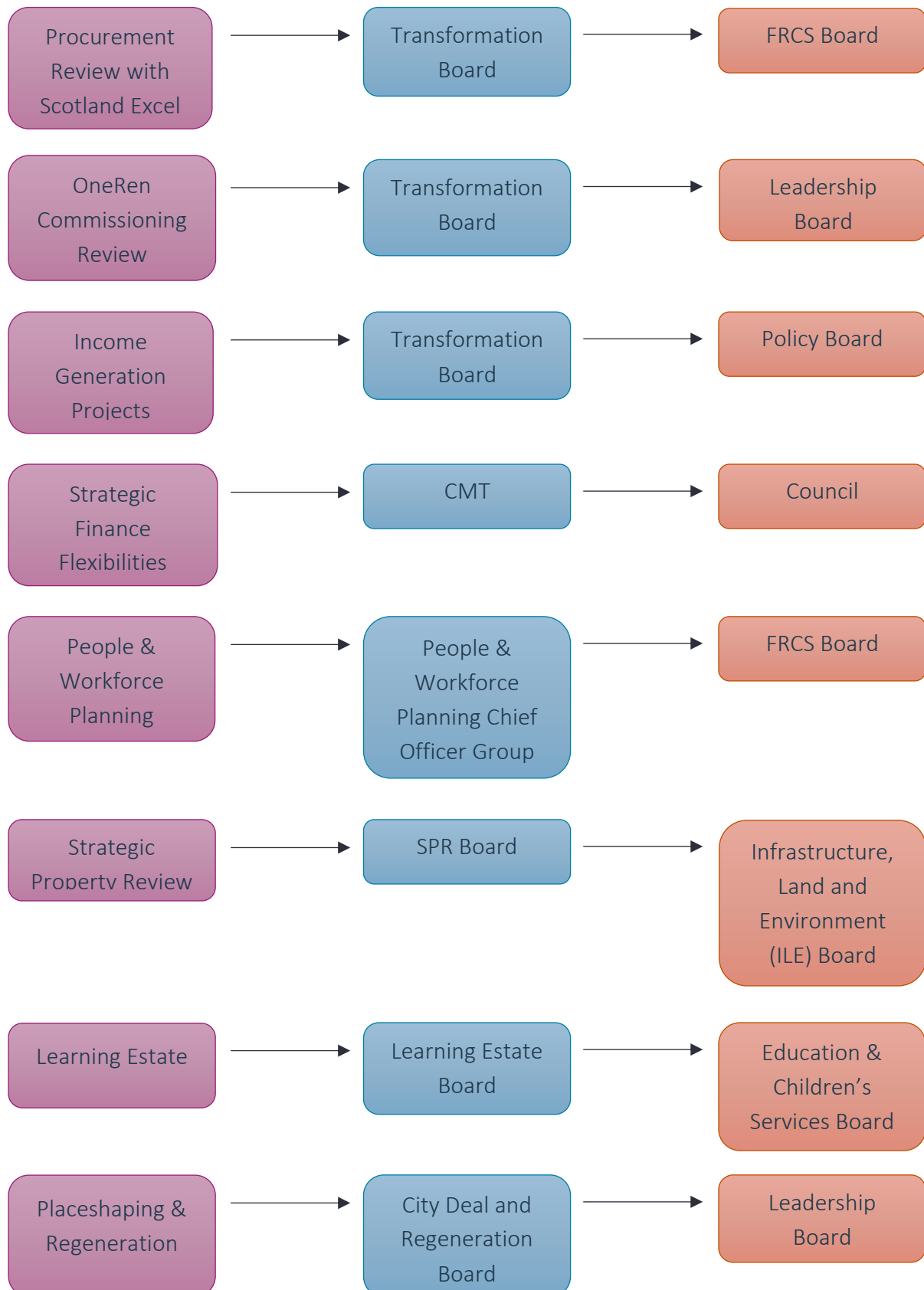
The diagram below gives the detail of the Council's governance arrangements for transformation and the oversight of its transformation plans. The Leadership board is responsible for approving and providing the highest level of governance oversight of the overall Transformation Programme with individual workstreams overseen by a relevant officer governance group and reporting to the relevant political Board. Such Boards would receive updates at appropriate points in time on the progress against the objectives set. To allow a more efficient oversight of the complex environment, the responsibility of governing the project is done at a workstream level and split between different council Boards (for political oversight) and governance groups (for officer oversight) chaired by Head of Service or Director or the Chief Executive. All of the officer level structure is then reported to the corporate management team at appropriate points during the project progress (see Appendix 2 for further detail).



Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

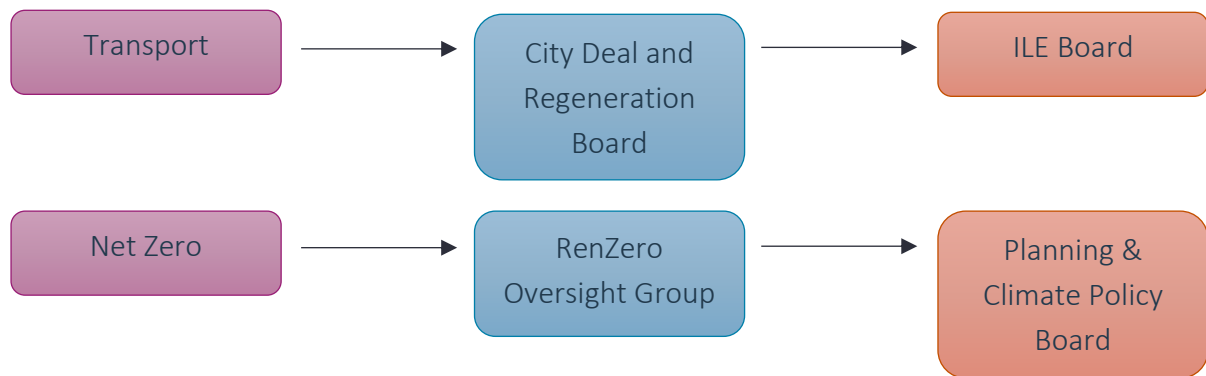
2024-25



Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25



The Council also has a corporate Project Management Office (PMO) function with Programme Management Unit specialists who are able to support major transformation projects and programmes. The Council recognises the importance of this function being appropriately resourced and having the required knowledge to be able to provide this support. There are specialists in the following three areas:

- Project and Programme Management
- Business Change Analysis
- PMO/ Governance

Capacity and expertise

The Council has recently reviewed industry best practice, and the strategic direction of the wider change management industry, and are undergoing a programme of training staff in the Association of Project Management (APMP) qualifications to keep their skills current and in line with industry best practice. The project and programme management staff use their Project Management Framework (a toolset based on Prince 2 and APMP methods) to ensure consistent quality delivery of the service.

The Council's capability has been recognised by national professional bodies in recent years with awards including Programme of the Year (APM), and some staff being nominated for awards such as Emerging Project Professional of the Year (APM), and Business Analyst of the Year (British Computer Society). The PMU has also just been selected as a finalist by the APM as 'Public Sector Organisation of the Year' for 2025.

A number of corporate support teams including finance, legal, ICT, procurement, comms, policy and PMO staff have 'business partnering' arrangements across council services and meet regularly to share updates, progress, best practice and troubleshoot any issues.

Capability and new technologies can be both an enabler and a barrier and as new technologies and priorities emerge nationally, all local authorities could struggle to recruit the technical specialist expertise required. The Council therefore complements its internal expertise with externally commissioned technical and professional support where required.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

An example is through an implementation of ICT “as a service” which provides flexibility to expand or contract capacity as the Council’s requirements change. This approach removes the need to carry the same level of in-house capacity in particular areas, or to keep pace with the rapidly changing skills and expertise where demand for new skills escalated in a highly competitive and increasingly costly market.

Monitoring arrangements

The Leadership Board (one of the Council’s committees) considered the update on the transformation programme in February 2025 and will have oversight of regular reports to be presented at key points during the transformation progress. The first of such reports was considered in June 2025.

Regular reports on transformation and key strategic programmes are provided to the corporate management team for oversight. This is in addition to programme boards which members of the corporate management team (CMT) may also chair or participate in. Regular updates have been provided on the Learning Estate Strategy, Digital Board, Connected Communities and Strategic Property Review amongst others.

Taking the learning estate strategy as an example, this included an overview of the strategy, timelines, updates on the key projects, key risks, background, strategic vision, how the vision will be delivered, core facts, prioritisation matrix and core team to allow the CMT to have oversight of the programme.

As part of further strengthening and linked to the new Reshaping Renfrewshire programme, the Council intends that to complement the ongoing Board reporting already in place. An additional annual report on the overarching transformation programme to be presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board to allow for overview and scrutiny of progress. In 2023/24 the Council undertook a self-assessment of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board using the CIPFA best practice guidance. As a result, the Council have undertaken work to respond to the recommendations, with the aim of strengthening the scrutiny arrangements for the Council. This additional activity in relation to transformation oversight will further strengthen the role of this Board.

Reporting to the Leadership Board

We note that the timescales and financial impact or expected savings is provided for some of the projects in the reporting to the Leadership Board, but not for all. As different projects mature in their progress the Council should ensure consistency of the reporting it presents in its updates on the transformation programme. Also, while the Council develops its strategy and savings plan it should report timing, savings, cost and benefits expected to measure against those. **Recommendation 2**

Partnership working and community engagement

The Best Value in Scotland report noted that councils must now rethink how they work together, and with local partners and communities, to provide financially sustainable services. Few councils provide services jointly or share support services across different councils to a great extent.

Community engagement overview

The Council has a new Consultation and Engagement Policy which was presented to the Council's Leadership Board in February 2025. Before this policy was introduced, the Council had a consultation policy and toolkit, which had been in place since the mid 2000's and had been subject to regular updates. This provided guidance on the key stages of consultation, consultation methods to use, deciding who to consult and an overall overview of consultation.

This has been developed to provide best practice guidance for Council officers and services and is underpinned by the Council's vision, mission and values. The nature of the community engagement is bespoke to the nature of the programme and is tailored to specific groups. The introduction of the policy is to give the community engagement a more structured approach.

One of the examples of the way the Council approaches its working with communities during transformation programmes is a housing regeneration programme which uses a number of different mechanisms to support community engagement including:

- Social media pages
- Neighbourhood pop-ups
- Neighbourhood shops
- Consultation events
- Attendance at community events
- Provisions of newsletters
- A dedicated Housing Regeneration and Renewal section on the Council's website

In line with legislation, a range of services for which the Council has responsibility are delegated for delivery to Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership which is facing significant financial challenges. In response, the HSCP has approved a new Sustainable Futures programme to identify transformation and change and secure significant recurring savings. Although this programme is reported through the HSCP and does not directly form part of the Reshaping Renfrewshire programme, the Council has a key interest in the success of this due to the HSCP delivering a range of priority outcomes across Renfrewshire and the

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

financial risk exposure to the Council. There will also likely be opportunities where the Council can work with the HSCP and NHS to identify transformation opportunities. One of such activities was launched in June 2025 by a public consultation on proposed efficiencies and savings with feedback gathered through public and staff engagement. These engagement activities included face to face and online events as well as an online and paper questionnaire.

Another example of the Council engaging with communities is through the Council Events Strategy 2025-2028. The strategy sets out the delivery of the programme of visitor and local events. A programme of research was carried out to gain public and stakeholder input to the Council's events strategy. An online consultation survey was carried out and 778 responses were received. Four focus groups were also carried out. The results of this survey were collated, summarised and factored into the development of the Events Strategy.

Renfrewshire Council have also been involved in Citizen Voice, which is a cross-sector partnership across the public, third and private sectors and included the Council, housing associations, health authorities and voluntary sector organisations to address digital exclusion. Digital is one of the key areas of the Reshaping Renfrewshire phase of transformation.

Other partners the council works with to deliver its transformation ambitions include:

- OneRen – providing leisure services in the area
- Regional partners (including through the Glasgow City Region, or cross local authority initiatives linked to waste)
- Long term private sector delivery partners for key transformation projects across for example digital projects, development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Innovation District (AMIDs).

Specific community and third sector engagement

Housing Led Regeneration and Renewal Programme had an extensive engagement, consultation and communications programme sitting alongside the investment programme itself, ensuring tenants and residents and the local community are kept informed of the plans as they evolve, have the active opportunity to influence this and then can collaborate with the Council on the wider regeneration plans for the area. As part of the initial scoping work, door to door surveys were carried out with the tenants and residents in the identified areas, which gave insight into their needs, experiences and views and helped to shape the next steps.

Throughout the 'on the ground' regeneration, consultation and engagement continues including through pop up events, newsletters and teams will also base themselves on site

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

where possible – for example, housing staff are based in Howwood Road two days a week to answer any questions and build up relationships in that community, alongside a Facebook page too.

Neighbourhood renewal plans are being developed involving Council services and community representatives in each of the eight regeneration areas which will operate in parallel with the physical regeneration plans. These will be tailored to the needs and circumstances of each area, going beyond housing and the immediate external environment and taking account of broader issues such as links to health and wellbeing, access to outdoor space and sustainable travel and employment or training opportunities to maximise the benefits achievable for local residents.

The Our Energy from Waste programme is a £700m, 25-year Clyde Valley Residual Waste Project between Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire and Viridor, which serves almost one-sixth of Scotland's population. This project will see up to 190,000 tonnes of general waste diverted from landfill and converted to low-carbon energy and is expected to provide a net saving of almost 50,000 tonnes of CO2e every year. Renfrewshire makes up approximately 21% of the total waste handled in the facility, and each council has to provide a guaranteed minimum tonnage for processing. The main commercial contract is between North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) as lead authority and Viridor. This is supported by an Inter Authority Agreement which sets out the relationship between NLC and the other member councils. Renfrewshire expects to pay £4.6m for the service in 2024/25. This is funded from mainline revenue budgets.

The Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drugs Commission reported in 2020 with the Council agreeing the allocation of £2m of funding to support the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. This was prior to national funding streams such as the Drug Deaths Mission and Medication Assisted Treatment standards being provided to local Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships. This has meant that additional national funding has been drawn down which has been able to complement and add to the funding provided by the Council, including some services now being mainstreamed. The funding from the Council has supported numerous projects, with a formal evaluation of the programme now nearing completion. Programme oversight has been provided by a board chaired by the chief executive which meets every 8 weeks.

Vulnerable groups engagement

Services progressing transformation projects are required as part of corporate guidance to complete equality impact assessment processes from the start of a transformation project. This helps them identify potential impacts as a project develops and ensure that officers and partners focus their efforts on identifying impacts and mitigating these where possible.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

Positive examples of this include work with the Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel to ensure we are considering the impacts of service delivery changes and improvements for low-income households. This has successfully shaped processes relating to school meal debt, provision of free school meals, employability services and a summer holiday programme for low-income families.

A key strategic area that the Council has focused on linked to their digital transformation aspirations has been in relation to Digital Inclusion. A network of support for communities was developed across Renfrewshire to ensure they could benefit from the opportunities within this transformation programme. This included dedicated and trained volunteer digital champions, 21 Digi Zones and a mobile Digi Zone supporting communities to get on-line through the provision of digital inclusion support, Renfrewshire's first ever Digital Inclusion week was delivered with over 30 events taking place over 5 days and an annual Digital Inclusion impact report was developed to measure Digital Inclusion in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire has been recognised as an exemplar and case study in Audit Scotland's "Tackling Digital Exclusion" report for enabling digital inclusion, delivered through multi-sector collaboration using person-centred and place-based approaches.

The independent evaluation of the digital champions, which is detailed in the case study in Appendix 1, concluded that in the first year of delivery, the Digital Champion Network has, as part of Citizen Voice, supported and increased the digital inclusion of Renfrewshire citizens.

Impact of transformation

It is important that the Council has success measures in place to demonstrate the impact of its transformational activity on service quality; outcomes for people who use services, inequalities and/or savings.

Overall performance measurement

The Council has a performance framework to measure against its 2022-27 Council Plan objectives. A high level summary of the Framework is presented below:



The framework assumes 6 monthly reporting to Leadership Board with performance indicators against action progress grouped by Council Plan strategic outcomes. These outcomes have also one cross-cutting theme – Improving outcomes for children and families.

Service Improvement Plans (SIP) at each service level were also given a new format to make them aligned with the above. The reporting is done on 6 monthly basis to relevant Boards including an annual outturn report. All performance indicators and actions in the Council Plan Framework are included in SIPs.

The next stage of performance reporting is carried out at operational level with a range of service-specific performance reporting across Council to the appropriate Policy Board, together with statutory performance reports.

The Council also has an officer performance board in place to drive improved performance across Council Plan strategic outcomes, explore the LGBF and other benchmarking in more

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

depth and undertake 'deep dives' on Council-wide performance, with a particular focus on outcomes and the golden thread between performance and priorities.

Project level impact measurement

The Council have equality impact assessments (EQIAs) which are prepared for a range of projects, policy decisions and service redesigns. There is corporate guidance that requires an EQIA to be completed at the start of a change process and this ensures that impacts on relevant groups are identified.

An example of the assessment was an EQIA for Clyde Waterfront and Riverside Project in November 2021. The assessment included a number of different types of consultation to determine the potential equity issues of the project. These are summarised as follows:

- Research
- Officer/ Practitioner Knowledge and experience
- Consultation
- Stakeholder meetings
- Publication and feedback
- Planning Process
- Contractor Negotiation and Award

Overall, through the above methods, there were few potential significant equality issues identified for further consideration by the Council. The most significant potential issues were found through research where it was noted that older people and people with disabilities can be disproportionately negatively affected and economic development has the potential to impact any equality groups. An assessment of the Clyde Waterfront and Renfrew Riverside Project impact on Equality Protected Characteristics and all other stakeholders is also produced which further considers the impact on vulnerable or protected groups.

Other recent examples of EQIAs include:

For the Housing Innovation Project (HIP) the EQIA included consultations with service leads within the housing service including homelessness and was informed by statutory consultation with service users as well as partnership working with the Renfrewshire HSCP.

For the Housing Regeneration Programme extensive pre-implementation consultation has been carried out with tenants in the regeneration areas, (all within 5-10% Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, SIMD zone). Neighbourhood renewal groups are set up to facilitate ongoing engagement with tenants during the regeneration process and Engage Renfrewshire have been actively involved particularly at Howwood Road, Johnstone.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

The Council has been rolling out a new early intervention model, funded by the Government's Whole Family Wellbeing initiative. This extensive project involves collaboration with third sector partners, whose contributions have been essential to the successful launch and ongoing integration of the service. The third sector has been instrumental in the implementation of this model and has, therefore, been included in the Equalities Impact Assessment.

Benefits measurement

Benefits management approaches are designed to be consistent with industry best practice – following principles of PRINCE 2 and APM guidance. Potential benefits of projects are identified when the initial business cases are developed and are the focus of the justification for delivering the project. As options are considered for delivering the project, these are compared in terms of their ability to deliver the project requirements, project benefits, and overall value for money.

As the project is defined and designed, the details of the expected benefits are set, agreed how they will be measured, monitored and reported. The approaches to measuring, monitoring and reporting varies project to project depending on the nature of the project, the benefits and the timescales in which the benefits are seen.

Using City Deal as an example, quarterly performance reviews are submitted to the City Deal PMO in respect of each of the projects. The business case for each project set out the outputs and outcomes for each project and included timelines for when these are expected to be realised, particularly for follow-on investment, as the deliverable of both projects is enabling infrastructure to encourage future development. On a quarterly basis the Council review delivery of both outputs and outcomes to ensure they are delivering as per the business case expectation. In carrying out the benefits realisation monitoring, a range of council teams are involved, and also spatially map out the development that has arisen as a result of the investment.

Some recent examples of the benefits measurement include:

Housing Regeneration Programme a benefits management profile has been established since the planning stage of the 10 year programme. This is monitored via a benefits tracker. As the programme involves multi-faceted regeneration outcomes, including housing stock retrofitting new build, energy efficiency, land regeneration and health outcomes these benefits are tracked and managed by thematic groups which are multi agency partnerships. Benefits are reported at Programme Board level, Council, and directly to communities via Neighbourhood Renewal Groups.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils

2024-25

Housing Innovation Project benefits have been embedded from the start with a Benefits Profile (setting out intended and potential benefits) and how to track these. This is being followed up by benefits tracking at the Solution Design phase of the project whereby business analysts are working with subject matter experts to catalogue benefits that can be achieved and will be able to measure them as they will be applied in the new system and therefore allowing these benefits to be effectively managed. These success measures are and will continue to be reported at Project Board, Council Board level, and via corporate communications and, post implementation, will be reported to the public through tenant newsletters.

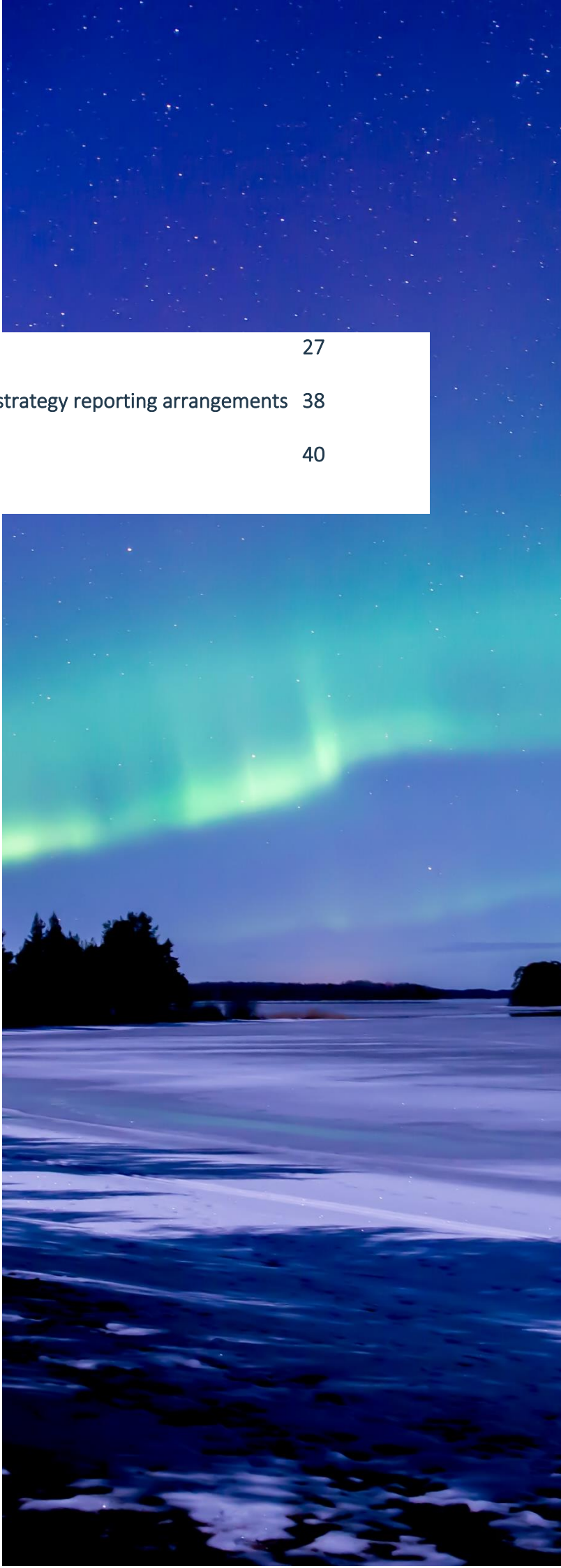
The Green Print Project has followed a robust project methodology from the outset. The project has utilised a data orientated approach to baseline the current position and to inform options for consideration. As part of gathering the options, the project team were able to evidence clear opportunities where savings could be made. Analysis of data was used to inform the number and type of printers required for each location, and importantly, to reach agreement with stakeholders on significantly reducing the numbers of printers to be located across council buildings, including schools. This data was then included in the procurement specification to market. The procurement specification aligned with the Council's Green Print Strategy, future-proofing the solution for the duration of the new contract and ensuring suppliers understood the current printer estate and the future model that the Council was seeking to implement.

Community Benefits

Community Benefits are built into contracts with third party suppliers. For example, on the Green Print Project, work on wider community benefits in partnership with Canon is an additional benefit from the project. One of the community benefit offerings is to provide a tailored course to help S3 and S4 pupils with life skills and career advice with a focus on positive destination outcomes for school leavers. The team are aiming to run a course with 3 schools in 2025, the first being Johnstone High in May. There will also be linkages with social media presence, cyber protection, sustainability and Net Zero.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Case studies	27
Appendix 2: Transformation workstream and strategy reporting arrangements	38
Appendix 3: Action plan	40



Appendix 1: Case studies

Case study 1 – Digital Journey

This has been a ten-year long programme that has changed how the Council work and deliver services to their communities whilst incorporating digital inclusion.

Digital is cross-cutting and supports all of the Council's strategic priorities and outcomes but the projects most closely align with place, economy, fair and living our values.

The Council have involved a wide range of commissioned partners in their strategic digital redesign journey, including:

- CommsWorld & City Fibre – Connectivity
- Data Vita (formerly Pulsant) – Data Centre (IaaS)
- Intelligens Consulting – Horizon Scanning
- ICS.AI – Digital Assistant
- Derby City Council – 'Millie'
- DigiRen Network / Citizens Voice Forum (involved multi/cross-sector partners from across a range of industries – Digital Inclusion
- Fairer Renfrewshire "Lived Experience" Panel – Digital Inclusion
- YMCA Scotland – The Promise / Digital Inclusion
- Unit 4 – ERP (SaaS)
- Quorum – Specialist Security Operations Centre
- Microsoft via Phoenix – Microsoft 365 application
- As part of Glasgow City Region, securing £3.2m from the UK Government's Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to support the development of 4 innovative business cases including Smart Social Housing

Renfrewshire Council is the lead partner across the projects.

The approach to partnership working and collaboration across this programme has been to select, develop and cultivate key strategic partners who will work with the Council over the longer-term (rather than one-off short term projects) and who recognise Renfrewshire Council as a local authority they want to work with to deliver sector leading projects that can showcase the development of capability and new approaches.

The Council have maximised funding opportunities across this transformation programme, including in digital where, for example, funding was secured nationally from the UK DSIT to fund the first stage of the business case development. The Council is currently funding the second stage of this process and if approved, this project will result in the installation of free superfast broadband and Internet of Things sensors in 10,000+ (over 80%) of social homes

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

with the overarching aim of keeping people safe, well and socially connected in their own home.

The Connectivity as a Service Framework (CaaS) also secured £2m internally and attracted in excess of £40m in follow-on private investment across Renfrewshire to install future-proofed connectivity across the region placing Renfrewshire as one of the most digitally connected regions across the UK.

The Fairer Renfrewshire Panel, comprises of people with lived or living experiences of poverty and inequalities, have helped shaped the creation of 21 DigiZones and a mobile DigiZone, which further strengthens the Digital Inclusion approach in Renfrewshire and underpins all of the projects outlined in this case study.

An example of the bespoke engagement with service-users is through the user-centred design approach to reporting a 'special uplift' request. This process has been transformed, through people-centred redesign with the input of a user panel of 50 customers who had recently used the service. This process has now been fully digitised, and 2 case studies were produced for customers and staff, to explain what had happened and to act as a good practice example demonstrating the opportunities within the digital programme. The team examined 'pain points' for customers, mapping the entire end to end process from a customer's point of view. These were all addressed using digital solutions and these were fully implemented, with customers and staff being kept fully informed and involved throughout. The new process scored 4.7 out of 5 for resident satisfaction.

Underpinning the Council's digital transformation is the principle of fairness and equality – ensuring that all of Renfrewshire's citizens can benefit from the opportunities of digital transformation.

Citizen Voice works in partnership across the public, third and private sectors, exploring collaborative approaches to digital equity. Citizen Voice seeks to minimise the number of people who are digitally excluded in Renfrewshire and to maximise the opportunity for everyone to have equal access to the benefits and opportunities of digital.

The Council has also considered the impact of the project on protected and vulnerable groups. For example, work is being progressed with a local charity that works with diverse minority ethnic groups across a broad range of protected characteristics. This work will enable digital inclusion, through the creation of a community-led secure device recycling project, which, once developed will provide an opportunity for local communities and businesses to donate their unwanted digital devices.

Phase 1 of this transformation took place from 2015 to 2020, Phase 2 from 2020 to the current time. Phase 3 will be launched through the Council's new digital strategy, which was

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

presented to Policy Board in April 2025 and will support the Council's digital transformation journey through to 2030.

One of the individual projects in this transformation programme, Green Print is considered in more detail below.

Within Green Print, the expected cost of the new printer contract is £1.8m over 6 years.

There were a number of project objectives:

- To reduce costs through:
- A reduction in the number of printers leased over the duration of the contract
- A reduction in print consumables
- Contributing to net zero targets through the reduction in use of paper and energy associated with a reduced printer estate
- Digital upskilling and use of digital solutions
- Reducing information governance risks associated with a reduction in the incidence of print related securing incidents

The project has had a positive contribution to the Council's RenZero strategy:

- The printers have been configured so print jobs are not automatically printed when they are sent. This has resulted in saving a significant amount of printing as many users will send a document for printing and then not collect it.
- The Green Print project contributes to the RenZero key theme, Circular Economy: we will make Renfrewshire a circular economy society: minimising waste and maximising reuse, recycling and recovery of resources rather than treating them as waste. The circa 40% reduction in the printer estate makes more effective use of printers and in doing so reducing the use of raw materials and water at source.

The contract saving is projected to realise £600k over the life of the contract, which is 25% of the overall contract value.

The project team successfully managed to reduce the number of devices deployed by over 40% (from 952 to 554). Opportunities for further savings, over and above the £600k, have been identified and plans are in place to:

- Move from laser jet paper to recycled paper, with effect from 1 April 2025. This would be a reduction of £2 per box.
- Move to electronic payslips across the organisation, enabling all staff to view their payslip via the ERP, from 1 April 2025.

Extensive engagement with the Corporate Management Team and Senior Management Teams has taken place to highlight current print behaviours and identifying opportunities to

reduce down print volumes and where appropriate, utilise more digital ways of working (e.g.) electronic newsletters.

There are a wide range of service quality benefits across the programme, a selection of these are outlined below.

- ICT as an Operating Model – this project was progressed from 2015 over a 5-year period. The “as a service” model provides organisations with the opportunity to fulfil their ICT & digital requirements externally, delivering access to the best technology and skills through hosted services solutions, with significant flexibility to expand or contract capacity as the Council’s requirements change. This strategic transition removed the need to carry the same level of in-house capacity, or to keep pace with the rapidly changing skills and expertise, something which the Council found an increasing workforce planning risk as technology rapidly developed, existing workforce skills lost pace with technology development and as demand for new skills escalated in a highly competitive and increasingly costly market. The “as a service model” developed quickly and provided the Council with the opportunity to radically redesign and strategically transition the service model, pushing the majority of the Council’s key infrastructure and major corporate systems into cloud hosted solutions provided by external service providers.
- Becoming a Digitally Enabled Council - sector leading deployment of advanced technology, including advanced automation and artificial intelligence base digital assistants, has been achieved to significantly reduce costs to serve customer contact whilst simultaneously expanding and improving citizen access to services on a 24/7 basis, redirecting over 1 million contacts and transactions per year away from traditional people-based interactions.
- Digital Infrastructure Foundations - significant transformation and modernisation of the Council’s underlying ICT and digital infrastructure has been delivered, providing the critical foundations that are a pre-requisite if the Council is to have the capability to take advantage of rapidly digital technology opportunities to transform service delivery and how the services work.
- A Digital Place – establishing Renfrewshire as one of the most digitally connected regions in the UK – with 92% of all domestic and business premises now connected to a sector leading broadband infrastructure, recognising the critical nature of this capability in the modern world to attract people and business to visit, live, work, invest and locate here.
- Digital Leadership and Skills – significant progress has been made to develop leadership and skill across the organisation including the establishment of a network of digital Champions, completion of a digital Maturity Assessment in partnership with the Digital office, transitioning employees full on line with the Business World ERP system which provides a wider range of 24/7 on-line services to workforce and developed better use of data and insight through bespoke workspaces and dashboards for employees, line managers and Services, assisting all to do their job roles much more effectively.

Consumption of digital capability and channels is expected to increase significantly across all workforce as digital capability increases and this will remain a key area of development for the People Strategy.

- Smart Data – the Council has made progress to make better use of data and secure intelligence to inform service provision and decisions. This has included:
 - a. Development and implementation of a Data Strategy Framework across all Services to improve data management and exploitation capabilities and established a Data Advisory Group to provide a corporate approach to data governance.
 - b. The successful rollout of new printer fleet solution, with a dedicated dashboard developed with key insight data on usage to allow managers to better understand print behaviours. This evidence-based approach supports the Council's Green Print Strategy and climate ambitions.
 - c. Used data to predict, track and manage absence of children and young people across the learning estate and used data sources to automate the awarding of Free School Meals and Clothing and Footwear Grant provision.

Across the programme, there are a wide range of positive outcomes for the people who use services, a selection of these are outlined below:

- Digital Health & Care - over 99% of the switchover from analogue to digital telecare provision has been completed and Renfrewshire is the 1st HSCP in Scotland to achieve Platinum accreditation for digital telecare. The HSCP workforce is now benefiting from the Digital Enablement of frontline Care at Home Services through implementation of Totalmobile scheduling and Public Access WI-FI has been installed in Care Homes, Sheltered Housing complexes and in Health & Social Care Settings such as Adult Day Care Centre. A local directory (Well in Renfrewshire) was established to enable professionals to access a range of person centred and place-based supports for people they support and in response to COVID-19 Pandemic, expanded provision of digital day support for older people.
- Digital Learning and Teaching – there has been a significant increase in internet bandwidth across the learning estate with 1 gigabit internet lines in most sites and 5 gigabit in high schools, scalable in the future to 10 gigabit across all sites making Renfrewshire Schools some of the most connected in the country. A national CoSLA Excellence awards was secured for tackling inequalities and improving health and wellbeing through collaborative work delivering an alcohol and drugs awareness education resource for children and young people and Rollout of GroupCall and Parents Portal has been embedded to improve communication with parents and carers. A current priority for Children's Services is to develop a new strategy for digital learning and teaching which will begin to set out how the newly secured connectivity within the learning estate can be capitalised on to provide a step change in the role digital plays to support the teaching workforce and pupils.

- Digital Citizen –progress has been made to develop a network of support across Renfrewshire with a dedicated and trained volunteer Digital Champions, 21 Digi Zones and a mobile Digi Zone supporting communities to get on-line through the provision of digital inclusion support, delivered Renfrewshire’s first ever Digital Inclusion week with over 30 events taking place over 5 days, developed annual Digital Inclusion impact report to measure Digital Inclusion in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire has been recognised as an exemplar and case study in Audit Scotland’s “Tackling Digital Exclusion” report for enabling digital inclusion, delivered through multi-sector collaboration using person-centred and place-based approaches.

Case Study 2 – Customer and Business Services

In February 2015, the Council’s Leadership board approved the consolidation of several existing Finance and Resources functions covering Operational Services, Customer Services and Corporate Business Support to become a single Customer and Business Services (CBS) division. This project has significantly redesigned how customers contact the council and how their request is fulfilled and how critical internal corporate support functions are managed and delivered.

The Council has used the following methods in its transformation of Customer and Business Services:

- Robotic Process Automation as a way of reducing unnecessary manual processes by automating administrative, logic-based tasks. There are currently 51 live processes ranging from regular daily processes; Council tax Direct Debit, Housing Universal Credit Managed payments; Seasonal bulk processes; Garden Waste permit checks, Free School Meals & Clothing grants and One-off ad hoc runs like the updating of 70,000 thousand Unique Property Reference Numbers to provide enhanced data quality. From 20/21 to 22/23 over 44,000 resource hours were saved, equating to a value of approx. £660k and in 24/25 the Council are predicting that RPA processes will result in a saving of 13,400 resource hours equating to £317k.
- ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system: This single system combined human resources, payroll, procurement and finance functions. ERP has been a key component of the savings delivered within Business Services over the past few years. With approx. 17 live forms and embracing the principle of self service has resulted in most of the Council’s employees and managers submitting a wide range of requests including overtime, expense claims, employee leave notifications, flexible working requests, planned leave request, unplanned leave recording online.
- The provision of digital services, specifically for routine and simple enquiries. Over 170 digital services providing customers with a choice in how they can interact with the Council.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

- Optimising the existing digital capabilities and horizon scan for new emerging technology.
- Introducing a digital customer service advisor ('Millie'), powered by AI technology to further support customers with telephone enquiries – 24/7 365 days per year. This implementation opens the digital world to customers who would not necessarily have chosen to interact online and releases customer service capacity to enable the Council to support more vulnerable customers with more complex needs.

Renfrewshire Council don't view this as a 'stand-alone' project. Transformation is an embedded part of their business-as-usual model, and they are continually looking at ways to improve the services they provide.

Renfrewshire Council used the following partners to aid this transformation:

- Granicus (CRM, MyAccount, Engagement HQ)
- Commsworld (Contact Centre Telephony),
- ICS.AI (Digital Customer Advisor),
- Unit 4 (ERP)
- Derby City Council

These partners have been involved to provide support and expertise to the Council based on their experience of involvement in similar projects in order for Renfrewshire Council to achieve the best outcome possible. The partners have supported a range of community benefits, however, have not funded the transformation.

The Council engaged with communities on the digital consultation tool (Engagement HQ) during the development of that strategy in 2023. As part of the service design methodology, the Council developed User Researcher capabilities within the team to engage with customers at the start of the process to help shape requirements and then again at the end of the process to support testing of the newly designed service.

An example of the bespoke engagement with service-users in order to improve services and put their needs at the heart of the transformation is through the user-centred design approach to reporting a 'special uplift' request. This process has been transformed, through people-centred redesign with the input of a user panel of 50 customers who had recently used the service. This process has now been fully digitised, and 2 case studies were produced for customers and staff, to explain what had happened and to act as a good practice example demonstrating the opportunities within the digital programme. The team examined 'pain points' for customers, mapping the entire process from a customer's point of view. These were all addressed using digital solutions and these were fully implemented, with customers and staff being kept fully informed and involved throughout. The new process scored 4.7 out of 5 for resident satisfaction.

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

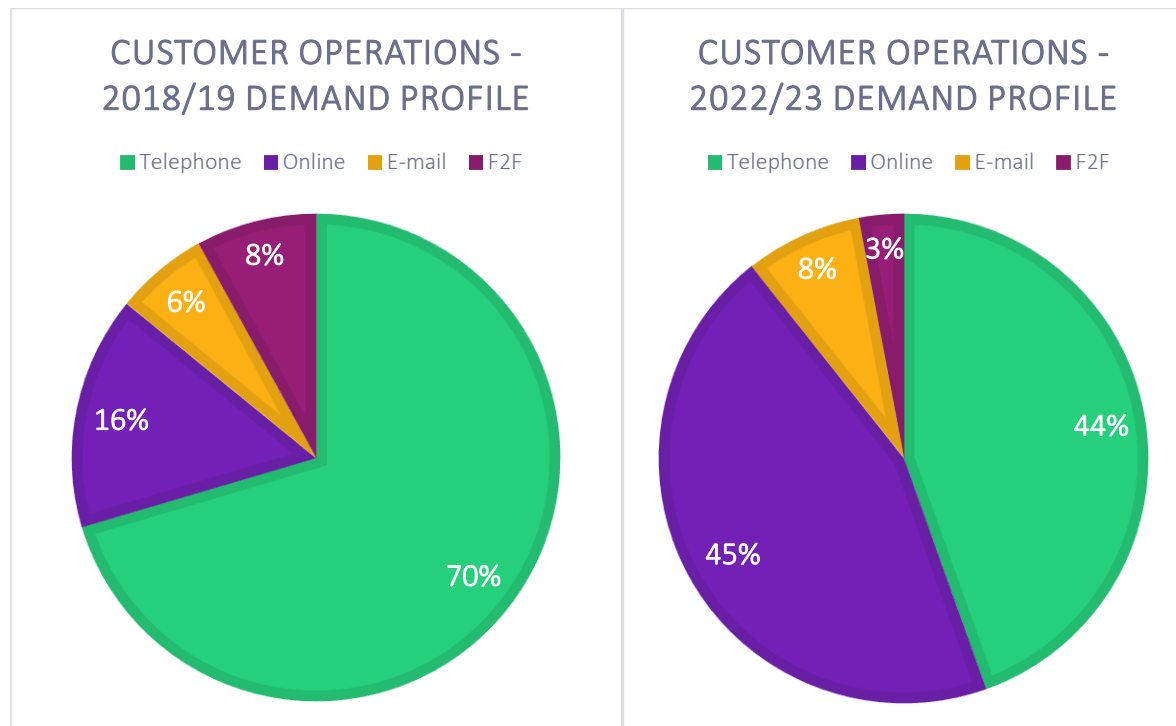
The Digital Operations team are part of the Digiren network, co-led by a third sector interface (Engage Renfrewshire), which plays a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for digital inclusion initiatives across the area. As part of this membership, they are aware of the views of all member groups and have sought feedback on new services which have been developed. Additionally, the revenues team within Business Services has participated in the 'Fairer Renfrewshire Lived Experience Panel' and as a direct result of customer feedback has used the enhanced technical skills of its team to introduce a wider range of payment plans for Council taxpayers.

The project savings are outlined below. The current service budget is £17m and taking account of indexation, the cost to deliver the service is approximately 60% of what it otherwise would have been had it not been for the transformational programme.

In terms of cost associated with the technology and in-house skills used to support the service change, this has totalled around £6.5m over the same period, providing a cumulative cash payback ratio of 5.7:1. Recurringly, the costs of the technology and team is around £1m per annum providing a payback ratio running at around 8:1 demonstrating a very strong rate of return for the investment. This cost has been met by the Council's service modernisation and reform fund and will continue to support the technology and functions as opportunities to deploy the learning across other service areas are now explored.

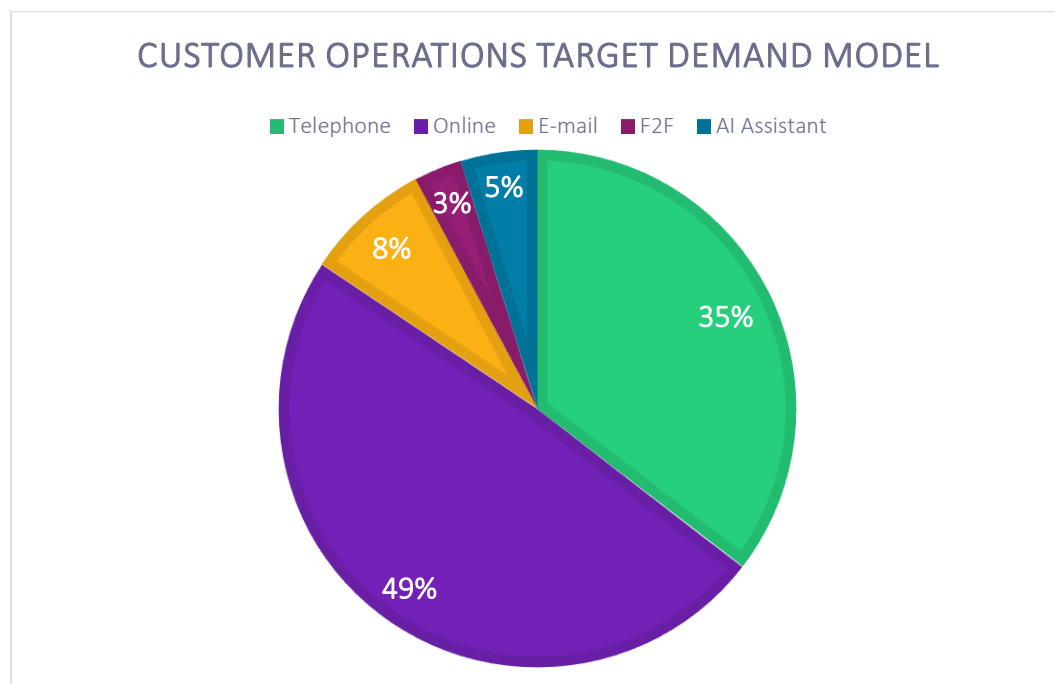
Since the start of this transformation of Customer and Business Services in 2015, a total cumulative savings of almost £59m (cash terms) have been achieved, with the running annual recurring saving of £8.2m (cash terms) as outlined in the table below (taking account of inflationary factors this is closer to £10m in 2024/25 price base). To put this in context of real-life front-line service impact, the recurring savings have protected the ability of the Council to employ 200 newly qualified teachers or 285 homecare workers.

Better Council Change Programme	15/16 - 16/17	£3,200,000
Council Tax Savings	18/19	£200,000
Water Direct Phase 1	18/19	£300,000
Digital First / RPA / ERP	19/20	£1,000,000
HB Subsidy Saving	19/20	£50,000
Water Direct Phase 2	19/20	£250,000
Customer Transactions (Right For Renfrewshire Programme)	20/21 - 22/23	£3,200,000



From the charts above, you can see the shift in contact channel since 2018, as more customers choose to interact through the online customer portal. This provides customers with the freedom to carry out their transaction in a manner and at a time that suits them.

The business case created for the introduction of the AI digital advisor assumed a call deflection rate of 5% as indicated in the target demand model chart below. Since introduction in November 2024, the Council are already seeing that deflection higher than 30%.



The service redesign methodology ensures efficiencies are gained end to end, and not just at the start of the process. Below are a few examples of the improvements made to outcomes for people:

- Free School Meals and Clothing Grant applications were previously paper based and could take up to 4 weeks. Following the redesign, this process now takes less than 5 days.
- Taxi and Private Hire applications were also paper based, and in the move to a digital solution, this has removed the need for drivers to attend a face-to-face appointment, therefore maximising the time they can spend on the road.
- During COVID, the approach to digital service design allowed new grants to be available swiftly, taking the Low-Income Pandemic Payment as an example, this was built within a matter of days, and included a fully automated approval process resulting in payments being made to 66% of applicants within 24-hours.
- Committed to continuous improvement and the ongoing transformation, in 2021 Business Services created a small team dedicated to Continuous improvement, Employee Engagement and Workload & Resource planning.
- Over and above efficiency savings, with the support of the Continuous Improvement Team, the use of optimised technology RPA, ERP and in-house systems has enabled Business Services to respond quickly and easily to new and increasing demand.
- Development of in-house software systems, supported with RPA have been critical to the Service in respect of increasing demands; DWP's transition to Universal Credit, the growth in administration of Discretionary Housing Payments, Free School Meals &

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

Clothing Grants, Garden waste charge exemptions, and the desire to reduce Council Tax credit balances.

The service's continuous drive for improvement through transformation has also resulted in a number of improved outcomes:

- Aligned with the Council's Net Zero ambitions, the launch of e-billing for Council tax has resulted in a simplified solution for the issue of bills electronically. The Council is undertaking a take-up campaign prior to annual billing this year, with Non-Domestic Rates also going live with e-bills this year.
- Using RPA as a key support, the challenge of reducing Credits within the Council Tax account has resulted in a 22% reduction in the overall level since start of 2023.
- Utilising the Council's digital form capability, the Children's Services admin support team now provides online forms for school placing requests, school transport requirements and milk/snack funds.
- Automation of the ISP (Independent Sector Payments) process using RPA reduces the chance of error and speeds up critical charging information need to be transmitted to Care Homes used by the Council for vulnerable residents.
- Adoption of automation functionality within the Council's Revenues and Benefits system, layered with RPA functionality has resulted in a more efficient process for customers in receipt of Universal Credit and needing to apply for Council Tax Reduction support. This has resulted in 52% of work generated by DWP notifications being automated.
- Recognising the criticality of smooth and efficient recruitment to key council services, the recruitment optimisation project was dedicated to refining processes for efficiency and effectiveness, in collaboration with HR colleagues and services across the Council. As a result, significant transformation has been achieved. By leveraging the ERP system capability, the Council's Document and Workflow System and Robotic Process Automation Software has resulted in a significant reduction in the time taken to undertake recruitment: from an average of 79 days taken to prepare a preferred candidate pack (required to agree a start date) in 2022 to just 19 days in 2023.

These are just a few examples which demonstrate how the outcomes for the people of Renfrewshire have been improved through the evolutionary transformation of Customer and Business Services over the past ten years. Processes are not intrusive on the lives of customers, and critically, the Council aims to ensure financial support is provided to the right people as quickly and efficiently as possible. Because of the approach taken at Renfrewshire Council when redesigning services, this helps to create positive outcomes for service users and the result has been a positive reflection of transformation of service delivery.

Appendix 2: Transformation workstream and strategy reporting arrangements

Workstream / Strategy	Principal Governance Group	Officer Chair	Monitored as part of overall Transformation Arrangements	Reports into CMT	Political Board Reporting Route
Digital Strategy	Digital Board	Head of Digital	Yes - specific projects	Yes	FRCS Board
Service Redesign Projects	Transformation Board	Director of Finance & Resources	Yes	Yes - as part of Transformation Update Report	Leadership Board
Connected Communities	Transformation Board	Director of Finance & Resources	Yes	Yes	Leadership Board
Procurement Review with Scotland Excel	Transformation Board	Director of Finance & Resources	Yes	Yes - as part of Transformation Update Report	FRCS Board
OneRen Commissioning Review	Transformation Board	Director of Finance & Resources	Yes	Yes	Leadership Board
Income Generation Projects	Transformation Board	Director of Finance & Resources	Yes	Yes - as part of Transformation Update Report	Policy Board subject to specific income stream being considered
Strategic Finance Flexibilities	CMT as part of financial strategy	Chief Executive	No	Yes – as part of financial strategy updates	Council as part of financial

Renfrewshire Council: Transformation - how councils are redesigning and delivering more efficient services to achieve planned outcomes.

Best Value thematic work in councils 2024-25

Workstream / Strategy	Principal Governance Group	Officer Chair	Monitored as part of overall Transformation Arrangements	Reports into CMT	Political Board Reporting Route
					strategy updates
People & Workforce Planning	People & Workforce Planning Chief Officer Group	Head of HR & OD	Yes	Yes	FRCS Board
Strategic Property Review	SPR Board	Director of EH&I	Yes	Yes	ILE Board
Learning Estate	Learning Estate Board	Director of Children's Services	No	Yes	Education & Children's Services Board
Placeshaping & Regeneration	City Deal and Regeneration Board	Chief Executive	No	Yes	Leadership Board and
Transport	City Deal and Regeneration Board	Chief Executive	No	Yes	ILE Policy Board
Net Zero	RenZero Oversight Group	Director of EH&I	No	Yes	Planning & Climate Policy Board

Appendix 3: Action plan

Our action plan details the weaknesses and opportunities for improvement that we have identified during this audit.

Issue / risk	Recommendation	Agreed management action / timing
1. Links to corporate objectives We are satisfied that links exist between the Council's corporate objectives and the transformation plans and while we note there is alignment between transformation programme objectives and the corporate plan outcomes, these were not formally mapped against each other.	We recommend that the Council should consider demonstrating the links between the transformation programme and its corporate plan with more clarity to help demonstrate measurement of impact of the transformation plan against the corporate plan.	Schematic to be produced mapping Transformation projects to Council priorities. Corporate reports on transformation will also clearly denote alignment with Council Plan priorities. Responsible officer: Director of Finance and Head of Policy and Partnerships Due date: March 2026

Issue / risk	Recommendation	Agreed management action / timing
<p>2. Reporting to the Leadership Board</p> <p>We note that the timescales and financial impact or expected savings is provided for some of the projects in the reporting to the Leadership Board, but not for all. As different projects mature in their progress the Council should ensure consistency of the reporting it presents in its updates on the transformation programme. Also, while the Council develops its strategy and savings plan it should report timing, savings, cost and benefits expected to measure against those.</p>	<p>We recommend that the Council continues to update its reporting to the Leadership Board to improve high level oversight.</p>	<p>Six monthly reports will be submitted to the Leadership Board and the format will be developed to address the auditor recommendations.</p> <p>Responsible officer: Director of Finance</p> <p>Due date: December 2025</p>



© Azets 2025. All rights reserved. Azets refers to Azets Audit Services Limited. Registered in England & Wales Registered No. 09652677. VAT Registration No. 219 0608 22. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK and regulated for a range of investment business activities by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Moving forward with confidence

