City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Digital Services Committee – For Information	**Dated:** **23/09/2025**
Subject: Programme Sapphire (ERP) Update Report – September 2025	**Public report:** For Information
This proposal: • **delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes** • **provides statutory duties** • **provides business enabling functions**	Providing Excellent Services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Caroline Al-Beyerty, Chamberlain
Report author:	Simon Gray, Chamberlain's Department

Summary

1. Significant challenges have been tracked on the Finance (Wave 3) workstream with regards closure of the Playback phase (see below for more detail) and entry to the Testing Phases

2. Issues were escalated to the system integrator (HCL) to fill key resource gaps and bring the programme back to plan. This work was complete in August and good progress was made on the mitigating actions

3. Significant time was used from the plan on this remedial work – delaying the closure of Playback by 1 month. The programme is still tracking to the overall plan and the UAT window of 4.5 months is still in place however planned contingency has been used

4. The Wave 2 (HR) modules have completed System Integration Testing (SIT) and moved into UAT and are on track for delivery in December 2025 as planned

5. The Programme continues to align with Ambition 2025 regards the required solution changes to Sapphire (across HR and Payroll). The intention is to brief

Programme board on options in September and Committee in October for further guidance on the options

6. The change and comms engagement has begun to accelerate in line with the programme delivery schedule with the focus on how the transformation will support the organisation and effect our teams

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Programme Sapphire - Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Programme is the project for the City of London Corporation to replace its current legacy systems; City People (Midland i-Trent) for HR & Payroll and Oracle R12 for both strategic and operational finance.

2. The new ERP Solution will modernise the technology we rely upon to deliver back-office services.

3. A vital component of the new ERP Solution is that it will support the City of London Corporation's culture change. It will promote and enable self-service for all employees to access their information, provide access to real-time information and enable informed business decisions.

4. The change workstream will be key to driving the success of the programme over and above the technology, this is driven by the 'adopt not adapt' principle.

5. The Programme is delivering in 3 waves (see Appendix 3 for further details):

Wave 1	Leaning Management System (April 2025) Performance & Goals (May 2025) Recruitment (June 2025)	Q1 2025
Wave 2	Core HR & Payroll	Q3 2025
Wave 3	Finance & Budget Management / Forecasting	Q1 2026

Wave 1

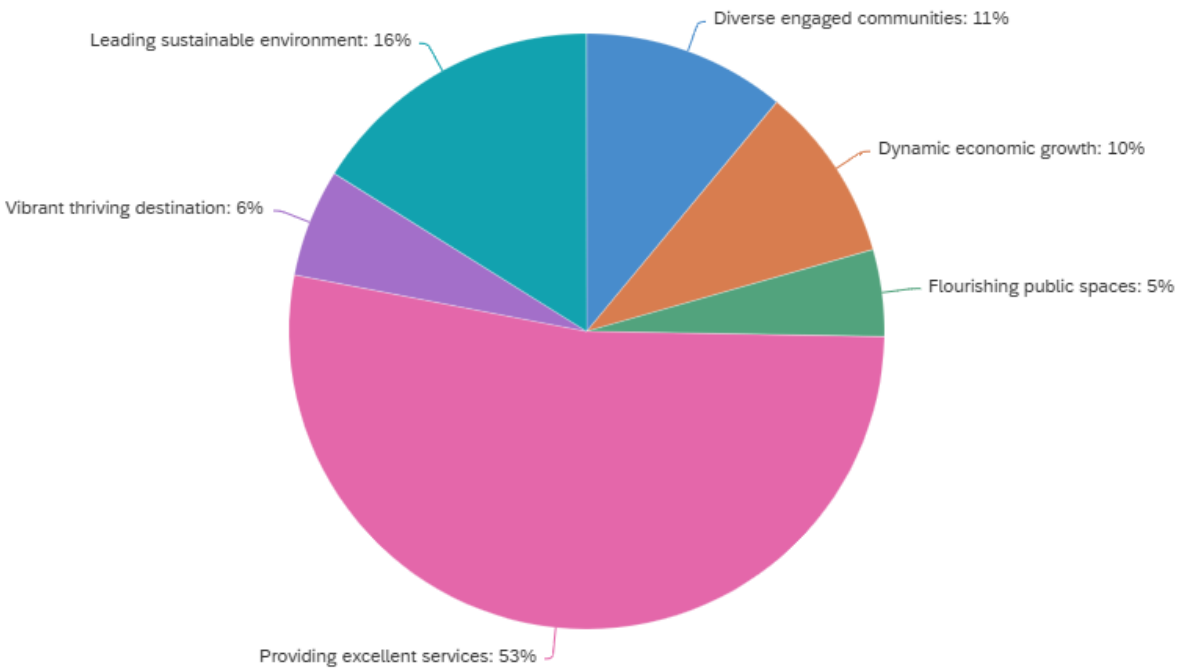
6. **Learning Management Solution (LMS)**
   - The LMS solution is now full operational with support services being provided by the programme until the completion of Wave 2 (full HR Solution). Minimal calls are being received into the programme which relate to standard access queries

7. **Performance Management and Goal Management (PMGM)**
   - PMGM went live in May 2026 – the initial focus is on entering Goals for the 2025/26. Reviews for 24/25 were completed in the previous solution.
   - As of 8th September, the following completion rates were recorded – the outputs of which will be picked up by the Service / Corporate Services Committee going forwards

   - Table 1 – Performance Goals Completion Rates

Department	No	Yes
BARBICAN CENTRE [205]	50%	50%
Central London Forward [77EF]	100%	0%
CHAMBERLAIN'S [111]	19%	81%
CITY BRIDGE FOUNDATION [275]	25%	75%
CITY SURVEYOR'S [173]	4%	96%
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT [325]	40%	60%
COMPTROLLER & CITY SOLICITOR'S [115]	7%	93%
CORPORATE STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE [120]	18%	82%
ENVIRONMENT [343]	14%	86%
Heart of the City [77EG]	67%	33%
INNOVATION & GROWTH [377]	8%	92%
PEOPLE & HR [190]	63%	38%
REMEMBRANCER'S [159]	19%	81%
TOWN CLERK'S [177]	27%	73%
Grand Total	**24%**	**76%**

- Diagram 1 – Goals by Corporate Objective



8. Recruitment

Recruitment went live in June 2025 - an overview of the data is below:

- Total Applications: 7,929
- Application completed conversion (started and finished application): 61%
- Careers Site Visits: 105,000
- Visits conversion (Visited careers page and finished application): 12%
- Direct applications: 26%
- Candidates progressed to Hiring Manager Review: 731
- Candidates progressed to Interview: 429
- Candidates progressed to Offer: 62

Time Between Key Stages Average

- Application to Hiring Manager Review: 15 days
- Application to Interview: 23 days
- Application to Regret: 18 days
- Job created to job posted: 5 days

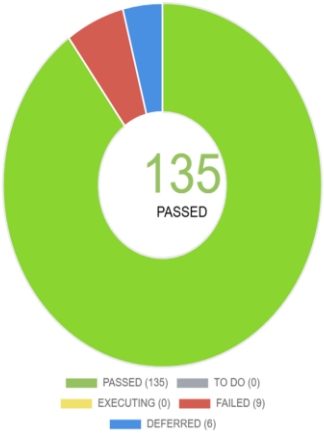
We are now working with the business team to set clear baselines for measuring transformation initiatives which will be discussed at Corporate Service

Wave 2 Update

9. Progress is Amber – the payroll activities will now be split from the Wave 2 plan to allow more accurate reporting (as the decision was taken by Committee / Programme Board to align to Ambition 25). The plan is on track. There are risks to delivery being tracked with mitigating work in progress to maintain Green status. The design for SuccessFactors (the Core HR & Payroll solution which is part of SAP ERP Product) is complete with the following exceptions:

Module	Progress Update
Occupational Health (December 2025)	• Solution is in UAT and progressing to plan
HR Service Desk (December 2025)	• SAP have sunset their existing product and the Corporation will need to evaluate the alternative product to ensure compliance with requirements. • Plan as updated is to deliver the current product in line for December 2025 and design / build has been completed on that basis) • Change request being prepared to assess impact of new product and whether programme resource can develop alongside to maximise resources and deploy as a subsequent development in 2026. Impact assessment will go to Board / Committee in October
Employee Health & Safety (April 2026)	• Workshops are complete and SAP have supported addressing the key features requested by the City team. Now moving into build phase but early playback has been positive. Go-Live date to be confirmed (would align to Wave 3 but business may want additional testing time and no burning platform for current solution).
Payroll (December 2025)	• Options are currently being evaluated to support both Sapphire and Ambition 25 plans • Current payroll has gone through System Integration Testing successfully and UAT has started

Wave 2 – ECP SIT Overall progress as on 14-August-2025:



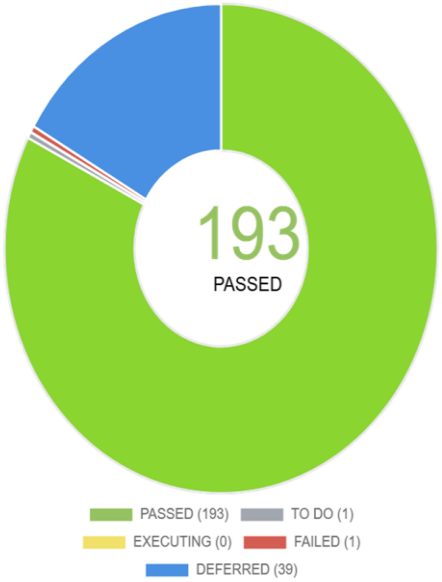
Day	Daily planned	Daily Actual complete (Passed/Differed)	In progress (executing or open defects)	% of daily target execution	Planned % SIT Complete	Actual % of SIT Complete*
31-Jul-25	7	8		114%	5%	5%
01-Aug-25	25	26		100%	21%	19%
04-Aug-25	20	36	1	180%	35%	44%
05-Aug-25	20	11	1	90%	48%	50%
06-Aug-25	20	17		80%	61%	63%
07-Aug-25	15	16	1	133%	71%	73%
08-Aug-25	15	10		80%	81%	79%
11-Aug-25	15	12	2	93%	91%	89%
12-Aug-25	11	5	2	54%	100%	92%
13-Aug-25	2		2	100%	100%	94%
14-Aug-25						
15-Aug-25						
Grand Total	**150**	**141**	**9**			

- Planned Payroll Parallel Run to establish data quality

Employee Central

- System Integration Testing has been completed on Employee Central

Wave 2 – EC SIT Overall progress as on 31-July-2025:



Day	Daily planned	Daily Actual complete (Passed/Differed)	In progress (executing or open defects)	% of daily target execution	Planned % SIT Complete	Actual % of SIT Complete*
10-Jul-25	18	10		100%	8%	3%
11-Jul-25	8	8		100%	16%	4%
12-Jul-25	20	31		100%	16%	5%
14-Jul-25	15	14		93%	24%	14%
15-Jul-25	17	17		100%	32%	20%
16-Jul-25	18	21		117%	41%	28%
17-Jul-25	18	17		94%	49%	32%
18-Jul-25	18	15		83%	57%	40%
19-Jul-25	0	12		100%	57%	46%
21-Jul-25	14	14		100%	65%	49%
22-Jul-25	15	13		87%	71%	58%
23-Jul-25	15	10		67%	78%	74%
24-Jul-25	15	16		107%	82%	74%
25-Jul-25	15	7	1	53%	88%	83%
26-Jul-25	4	4		100%	88%	85%
28-Jul-25	4	3		75%	92%	87%
29-Jul-25	7	7		100%	96%	91%
30-Jul-25	13	13		100%	100%	97%
31-Jul-25	-	-		-	100%	99%
Grand Total	**234**	**232**	**1**			

- Single exception has been resolved and UAT is now underway on the solution

10. The programme has now deployed the “OrgManager” tool which allows for a dynamic representation of the City hierarchy to resolve data issues that are essential for both workflow in SAP and the Ambition 25 modelling work. The July data has now been reconciled and this will be maintained on a monthly basis

11. Quality Assurance reviews are being undertaken across the solution by SAP and will be shared at the next committee meeting

12. There is a planned leadership day to be help at SAP office in September to highlight the transformation opportunities and ensuring the planned programme activities are aligned to the HR service

Wave 3 Update

13. Progress against the overall plan is currently logged as Amber although this was tracked as Red in August while the System Integration addressed priority issues on the programme as listed below:
    - Resource gaps from the system integration partner (HCL) were escalated by the Board / SRO and have now been resolved but the delays were logged. A new Finance Lead is now in place from HCL to drive the programme
    - The chart of accounts design has been subject to an external review and will be presented back to the Finance Leadership Group / Finance Director in September with a summary at the next committee meeting of any actions required
    - The plan is to deliver for 1st April 2026 and the baseline plan is in place. The focus is on mapping the dependent activities between the system integrator and Corporation resource to complete the plan
    - A change lead for Finance is now in place to focus on the Finance transformation / engagement
    - UAT will be delivered in 2 phases – the programme team will lead on testing in Oct / Nov with the wider business performing testing in Jan / Feb
14. The impact of the above was the loss of 1 month which was planned contingency. This means that further delays will potentially impact the planned go live although a significant and lengthy UAT window has been maintained with the System Integrator having to absorb some of the impact. Further delays will mean that the SI milestone payment for entry to UAT is impacted.

Change Management

15. Multiple briefings have been provided to the Change Champions network and they continue to engage the wider Corporation on the key programme messages (see Appendix A)

16. The programme will be utilising "WalkMe" as part of the SAP solution. This is being funded from the Programme training budget (not a change). WalkMe provides personalized, in-app guidance that adapts to each role and workflow activity in a more digital experience (reducing the need for traditional training guides which becomes outdated and require maintenance with product releases). This will streamline tasks with real-time walkthroughs and automations to boost productivity and drive user satisfaction. A demonstration will be arranged for the Member Steering Group.

17. The Viva Engage Community has been launched as a central place to share updates and gain engagement

Digital Services Update

18. The focus now on preparing for Wave 2 / 3 testing cycles – this is an incredible amount of work but is being managed to plan

19. Cutover plans are being discussed with the business in readiness for the Wave 2 deployment in December 2025. These have been presented to both the Ambition 2025 board and Sapphire HR Boards for feedback

20. Changes from the build cycle are being managed against the data migration needs

Budget Update

21. The overall budget forecast is unchanged at £19.4m
22. The costed risk provision is £8.6m – a recommendation was made in the June Board which is detailed in the confidential section for £21k

Look ahead

23. HR UAT for Phase will be completed and Payroll UAT (WAVE 2). Finance will progress with system integration testing and preparation for UAT.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications - The ERP Programme supports the Corporate Initiatives to deliver brilliant basics and mitigates the risk of unsupported legacy systems.

Financial implications – Digital Services Committee, Finance Committee and Court of Common Council have approved the budget envelope to bring in the relevant resources including backfills.

Resource implications - The requirement of resourcing is detailed in this paper.

Legal implications - All staff resourcing, and employment contracts will comply with statutory requirements and be in line with best practice.

Risk implications - Failure to baseline the programme roles would place a risk on the organisation.

Equalities implications - An Equalities Impact Assessment was done initially and is currently being updated and will be brought back for review. This will be routinely updated throughout the life of the programme.

Climate implications - None

Security implications - None (other than standard vetting requirements)

Conclusion

24. The programme is tracking to plan on deliverables and budget and no use of costed risk. The key principle of adopt not adapt is being adhered to with minimal change. Risk and issues will continue to be monitored / reported with the focus on robust planning for Wave 2 & 3. The levels of change management / stakeholder

engagement need to ramp up to support the transformation journey over the next quarter and will be reported on at the next stage report.

Appendices

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Appendix 01 – Change Champions Newsletter

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter for the Change Champion network. This edition is dedicated to updating you on the latest developments and resources from **Programme Sapphire – delivering SAP, our new HR and Finance system.**

Programme Sapphire – current focus
HR

- We are currently working on **preparing schools for their Performance Management & Goal Setting go-live** - scheduled for mid-September, in line with the school year.
- Most of the organisation will have **mid-year review meetings and record outcomes in SAP in October.** We are currently developing training materials and will be running demo sessions to support managers and employees.
- **More HR modules**, like Onboarding and Offboarding, and requesting leave by mobile app **will go live as part of Wave 2 in December.** We'll be sharing more information with you nearer the time.

Finance

- The Programme Sapphire team has successfully **completed the design phase for finance** and is now **working through the 'playback' stage**. Playbacks are interactive sessions where the team reviews how processes in the new SAP system will work. It's a key step in making sure the system reflects the agreed business requirements and provides an early understanding of how the system handles specific tasks.
- **In September,** we'll be sharing more detailed updates on the progress of the Finance workstream and what's coming next.

Helpful resources

We've created an **exclusive SharePoint page for Change Champions**, linked to our Teams channel. This is your go-to place for **slides, recordings and key actions from the monthly briefings**, links to **key Programme Sapphire resource**s and **training**...and more. Check it out and add it to your bookmarks.

There is now a **SAP Training Hub on Colnet**. You'll find videos and quick guides to help you and your colleagues **learn about the modules that are currently live**: **e-Learning**, **Performance and Goals,** and **Recruitment**. They're perfect for sharing in team meetings. Got a question? **Programme Sapphire Training Manager Casey Lopez is here to help**.

Change Champion actions for August

✅ **Use the monthly tracke**r **to share how you're helping people understand SAP and what it means for them.** Examples might be running drop-ins or lunch & learn sessions, or sharing key resources at a team meeting. Logging your activity is vital for sharing knowledge and ideas , so we can collaborate and support each other. Need help or inspiration? Reach out to Change Network Engagement Manager, Lucy Eckley

🙋🏻‍♂️ 🙋🏻‍♀️ **Consider joining the Roadshows 'squad'** We're looking for Champions to help design the SAP roadshows in November – so they work well for all locations and colleagues in every part of the Corporation. We already have five Champions involved and have space for a few more. Interested? Drop us an email and we'll be in touch.

Dates for your diary

We're looking forward to seeing you at the next Champions briefing on **Thursday 21 August** for the latest from the Programme Sapphire team and to connect with the Change Champion network.

Join the conversation

PROGRAMME SAPPHIRE

Improved Efficiency | Increased Capacity | Improved Information

SAP: Your New HR and Finance Platform

Your place to learn about all things SAP!

Programme Sapphire now has a Viva Engage Community The team will be **sharing updates on SAP**, **answering questions** and **encouraging engagement** from colleagues across all departments.

Please **join the community,** take an active part in the conversation and **encourage your teams and departments to take part**.

And remember...our Teams channel remains the dedicated space for conversations and resources for the Change Champion network.

Inspiring change

🍭 **What's Your Next Lollipop Moment?**
We often don't realise the impact we have, especially when we're answering questions that feel simple or routine to us. But to someone else, that small moment of help can make a big difference.

In this short video, **"Leading with Lollipops"**, Drew Dudley reminds us that leadership is found in everyday actions. As we roll out the new SAP system, it's a great reminder that guiding a colleague through a tricky screen or offering a bit of encouragement can mean more than we think.

As you're watching, think about what your next lollipop moment could be!

📩**What did you think of this first edition? What would you like to see in future newsletters?** Send us an email **to let us know...**