City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Digital Service Committee	Dated: 27/11/2025
Subject: Programme Sapphire (ERP) Update Report – November 2025	**Public report:** For Decision
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
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Summary

An update paper to the Digital Service Committee on the City of London Corporation's Programme Sapphire, which is replacing legacy HR and finance systems with a modern ERP solution. The report highlights the current status of the program's three waves: Wave 1 (Learning Management, Performance & Goals, Recruitment) is complete; Wave 2 (Core HR & Payroll) is at risk due to data challenges; and Wave 3 (Finance & Budget Management) which is at risk, with user acceptance testing now set for mid-November. The report also notes the approval of key change controls, including the introduction of AI for SuccessFactors and integration with MS Teams and mobile access, as well as the proposal for deployment of a CoPilot chatbot (SAPBOT) to support users. The committee is asked to approve scoping work for a new HR Service Management tool and to note ongoing alignment with corporate AI strategy and digital transformation goals.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the programme team to undertake scoping work for the new HR Service Management tool "Employee Service Management" (ESM) Paragraphs 28, 29 & 30
  - Commitment remains to implement ECSC (Employee Central Service Centre) for go-live
  - No use of costed risk provision at this time
- Note the approval of Change Control 07: Artificial Intelligence (AI) for SuccessFactors. This is aligned to the Corporation AI Policy evidenced in Appendix 5B (attachment pending at time of report). Approval of budget is under delegated authority of the board / SRO
- Note the approval of Change Control 08: Integration with MS Teams / Mobile Access. Approval of budget is under delegated authority of the board / SRO

Main Report

Background

1. 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. 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.

3. 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.

4. The Programme is delivering in 3 waves (see appendix 1 for the plan on a page):

Wave 1	Leaning Management System (April 2025) Performance & Goals (May 2025) Recruitment (June 2025)	Q1 2025	Green - Complete
Wave 2	Core HR & Payroll (note movement from Dec 25 to Jan 26)	Q1 2026	Amber
Wave 3	Finance & Budget Management / Forecasting	Q1 2026	Red
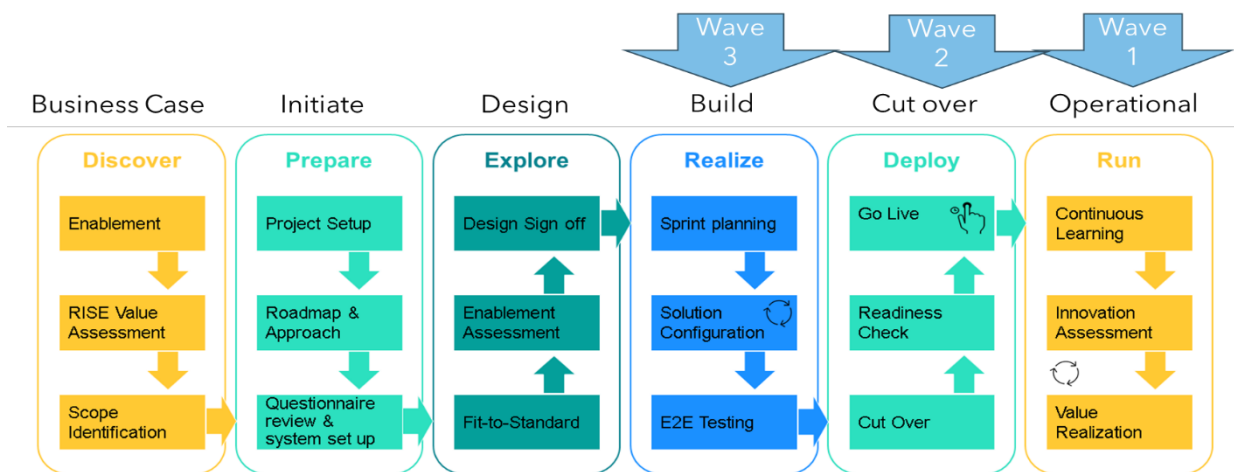
Current Position

HR & Payroll (Waves 1 & 2)

5. In October the Org Manager tool was deployed to stakeholders (including HR Business Partners (BPs), Budget Managers, Finance BPs, and Executive Leadership Board members). This allows for hierarchy visualisation of the organisation structure, which will enable staff to review clearly view and review hierarchies and structures. An establishment control and position management workshop was facilitated between HR and Finance colleagues to develop joined up controls.

6. Recruitment is underway for both HR and Payroll teams to support the interim payroll process across the legacy payroll system and SAP SuccessFactors. The City of London Police made the decision to defer COLP Concur go live until April 2026 to enable them to complete their establishment data cleansing.

7. User Acceptance Testing (UAT) had been completed for Wave 2 Learning Management (LMS), Performance Management & Goal Management) PMGM, Recruitment, Onboarding, Employee Central (EC) including Occupational Health, Succession and Career Development Planning and Concur/Expenses. UAT comprised of 70 people across the Corporation completing over 400 tests.

8. All HR Admin, Manager and Employee tests were successfully executed, apart from 5 of the 7 Occupational Health tests. There are 2 remaining OH defects yet to be resolved which are non-critical for go-live as these are currently manual processes. The full report can be viewed in Appendix 3.
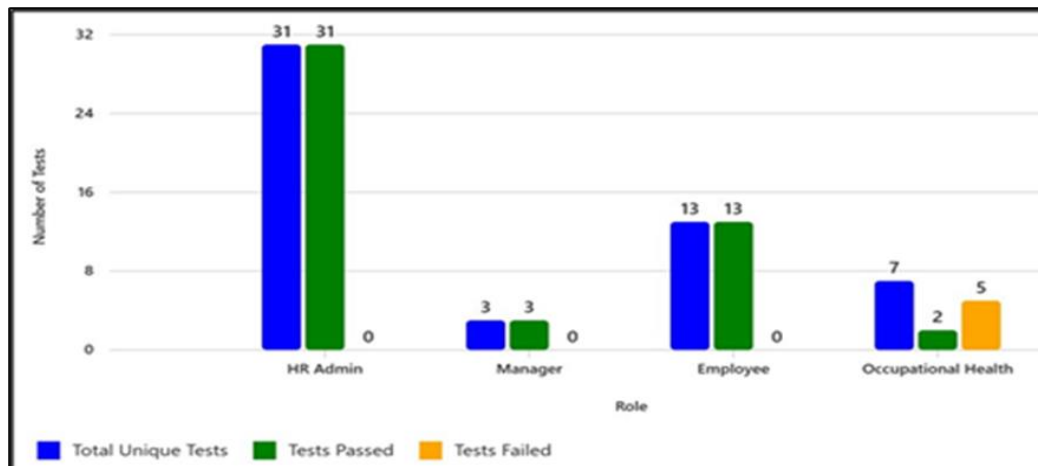
9. Business Analysts have been onboarded to document the new HR processes, support the WalkMe implementation (on-screen training) and design the user training. SAP Standard Reports are being activated for all HR modules ready to demo to business users.

10. The biannual SAP updates have been applied in non-production, the SMEs have been reviewing the impact and planning their testing activities.

11. Wave 2 modules are now progressing to Solution Pre-Launch Checks, which includes SAP assurance checks and recommendations are being reviewed to confirm if they can be implemented prior to go live.

12. The Cutover process is the migration of data from the current City People to SAP SuccessFactors which will occur in November. Note the dates are subject to change when the go-live date is confirmed but the activities / steps within the cutover window are mapped and will remain consistent.

13. Members should note that in readiness for the migration, work has been undertaken to ensure data accuracy and input any outstanding changes. During the cutover period, data will be locked to ensure consistency of data with exception processes in place to deal with urgent changes (e.g. payroll). CoLP & Pensioner data is excluded as this is only required for the later payroll go-live

14. Go-live is currently forecast for December / January which would represent a slippage of 1 month. This is due to data challenges related to the hierarchy updates within the Corporation and need to preserve suitable testing period. The likely slippage of the Go-live timeframe has been approved by the SAPphire Programme Board.

Change & Communications

15. To support the go-live of Wave 2, November sees numerous SAP SuccessFactors HR Roadshows held across all COL sites. The Roadshows will see members of the Programme Team presenting to colleagues the new SAP SuccessFactors

System and how the new HR system will work for them. The Roadshows also form the first stage of training for users, role specific training will be delivered coinciding with go-live.

16. SAP hosted several Away Days at the Experience Centre in October and November for HR & Finance colleagues.
    a) HR Senior Leadership Away Day - that focused on strategies for HR leadership to successfully take ownership of new ways of working.
    b) Finance Away Days x 4 – that focused on the art of the possible, with focus sessions on Budget & Forecasting, Corporate Accounting and Transactional Finance and procurement.

17. Finance Change Agents from across the City of London Corporation have been onboarded to be champions of Programme Sapphire Finance workstream.

18. Communications have been distributed through various channels to managers and all staff on the HR cutover plans. The Change Champion network remains regularly engaged on programme activities.

Finance (Wave 3)

19. Scripting of tests continues with the planned start of Project Team Testing (PTT) on the 17/11 at risk at time of report due to delays with System Integrator build and open RAID (Risk, Action, Issue, Decision) items. This started with 86 in October with the target to close all build related items before the commencement of Project Team Testing (PTT). The current tracker as at 15th November is 31 open items (18 of these relate to the FI-CA build which is the sub-module for Contract Accounts Receivable and Payable which the build is delayed on). This remains a continued risk to the programme which is being monitored by executives from HCL, SAP and the Corporation Leadership team / SRO.

20. The Public Sector Module (PSM) Chart of Accounts data values (Grants, Funds, Functional Area) provided for Data Migration. The Public Sector Module supports this flexible coding but is a new development for SAP which has meant understanding of the solution has been challenging and SAP have had to provide additional support. The level of confidence is now high that the solution will meet our management and transactional information requirements across the ERP solution (e.g. to capture the coding information within Payroll to prevent re-work). The Chart of Accounts is now being reviewed by finance colleagues across the Corporation to ensure it meets the needs of the whole organisation (e.g. CBF have specific requirements as a charity which differ from the Corporation).

21. Review of standard reports undertaken in a workshop on the 5th November. Outcome is for the Corporation to determine what can be met with standard / out of the box reports vs ones that will be specific to public sector requirements (e.g. the Corporation aged debt report is different to a commercial debt reporting template.

22. Review This is underway of process maps by the subject matter experts of the standard SAP systems process which have to be updated by the System Integrator

to reflect the Corporation build / design. Once signed off these process maps will be used to support the creation of test scripts for User Acceptance Testing and to create the end to end business processes.

Change Controls

23. Within the Programme Structure, Proposed and Required changes go through a rigorous challenge process before a request for approval. This process is as follows:
    a) Workstream Review – Requests for change are discussed and agreed at workstream level.
    b) Submission – If agreed, the Workstream Lead (or delegated team member) completes a change request form.
    c) Solution Standardisation Board (SSB) – SSB reviews change request forms fortnightly for impact assessment and/or decision.
    d) Escalation – Approved changes follow the defined governance path (Functional Board → Programme Board → Member Steering Group/ Digital Services Committee as required

24. Major / Critical changes – Urgent changes (i.e. those exceeding agreed thresholds scope, cost may be submitted urgently outside of scheduled meetings and will follow escalation pathway. Major / Critical changes with programme wide impact must be considered by Member Steering Group and approved by Digital Services Committee.

25. All Change decisions are recorded in the Change Log, managed by the PMO and reported to Functional and Programme Boards. A summary of the requested changes is below. Changes not ready for decision have been placed in Appendix 4. Corporate Services Committee provided the strategic direction that:

    a) The level of automation / intelligence should be increased
    b) That the strategy should be to maximise / accelerate the transformation

No.	Name	Stage	Cost	Complexity	Standard	Decision
01	CoLP access to EC	Assessment	L	L	Y	N
02	Rostering Solution	Assessment	M/H	M	Y	N
03	Pensions Self-Service	Assessment	L	L	N	N
04	Payslip Email	Assessment	L	L	Y	N
05	Leavers Portal	Assessment	L	L	Y	N
06	Casuals End Date	Assessment	L	L	N	N
07	**AI for SuccessFactors**	**Approval**	**L**	**L**	**Y**	**Y**
08	**MS Teams Integration/Mobile Access**	**Approval**	**L**	**L**	**Y**	**Y**
09	H&S Integration	Assessment	L	L	Y	N

26. An overview of Changes requiring approval from Digital Services Committee are detailed below:

Change Control 07: Artificial Intelligence (AI) for SuccessFactors	
Status:	"Approval" – The impact assessment is complete and has been approved at Programme Board October 2025.The full change control can be found in Appendix 4
Background:	SAP has inbuilt AI functionality, but it must be enabled to provide access. This will provide efficiencies for professional teams in processing data.
Change Requested:	The change will initially allow for a limited pilot to a controlled set of users / functions to ensure that: i) Benefits are established for use cases ii) Feedback can be gathered on the features offered
Additional Information:	This is standard functionality within SAP. The original scope was "building brilliant basics" therefore not included in the scope for the System Integrator (SI). Given the need to provide operational support / efficiencies to the HR service and free professional resource from manual activities, the delivery is being accelerated. In Appendix 5A / 5B the use of Joule (the SAP AI Tool) has been assessed against the Corporation Standards, and no issues are flagged and there is alignment on the solution. Note that this report is due to be finalised on the 7th November and the paper will be released as soon as available with apologies for it not meeting the committee paper deadline due to a dependency on a 3rd party (SAP).
Cost Implications:	The estimated cost of the change by the System Integrator (SI) is £22,430. The existing programme resource will be used to deliver with no additional cost expected. The SI cost is currently being reviewed by SAP to satisfy that it represents good value.
Approval:	Approved by Programme Board October 2025.

Change Control 08: Integration with MS Teams / Mobile Access	
Status:	"Approval" – The impact assessment is complete and the Change has been approved at Programme Board October 2025. The full change control can be found in Appendix 02
Background:	The programme scope was set to "delivering brilliant basics" but it has been identified that a level of integration with MS Teams would better support our workforce from day 1. In addition, mobile apps that allow non-PC based staff flexible access to their solution to perform standard tasks would greatly benefit the individual users experience. Change Requested: The mobile apps are standard functionality with no changes planned but access will be securely provided in line with existing policies. Access will be available on both

	personal and corporate devices but subject to the same controls as other corporate applications (e.g. MS Teams). Functionality will include:
	i) Employee Self-Service (ESS): Enabling staff to update personal details, request leave, access learning resources, and view pay summaries directly from their mobile devices. ii) Manager Self-Service (MSS): Supporting managers in approving employee requests, managing team information, conducting performance reviews, and overseeing recruitment activities efficiently on the go. The access to MS Teams uses standard APIs developed by SAP which will be enabled for the Corporation. This is aligned to the "Single Pane of Glass" which is part of the Digital Services Strategy.
Change Requested:	The access to MS Teams uses standard APIs developed by SAP which will be enabled for the Corporation. This is aligned to the "Single Pane of Glass" which is part of the Digital Services Strategy. The functionality is detailed in Appendix 4.
Additional Information:	This is standard functionality within SAP. The original scope was "building brilliant basics", so not included in the scope for the System Integrator (SI). Feedback from users as part of the change engagement strategy is that mobile access is the most requested feature for employees.
Cost Implications:	The estimated cost of the change by the System Integrator (SI) is £28,000 (40 days effort). The existing programme resource will be used to deliver with no additional cost expected.
Approval:	Approved by Programme Board October 2025

Proposals

Service Desk Management Solution

27. Members were previously informed that SAP had announced the Service Desk solution that the Corporation was implementing was being replaced or "sunset" in 2028. This product is known as Employee Central Service Centre (ECSC). The decision was taken to continue implementing this solution as the replacement was untested in the UK market

28. In readiness for a future change, the programme has continued due diligence on the new solution – "Employee Service Management" (ESM). The product will offer further automation and Teams integration which will benefit the People Service and align to the People Strategy

29. The decision remains to implement ECSC. Alongside this the programme will complete the scoping work for the new product to inform the future timeline and plan for migration. Dates on this are pending. Doing the scoping work now will reduce cost for the Corporation as the Programme Team and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are already in place and can be used to assess the viability of the product in more detail.

30. Members are asked to approve this decision and note there will be support from a specialist SAP partner to complete this work. Strategic support for this decision has been provided by CSC at the October meeting but final decision rest with this committee. At this time no additional funding is being sought and the costed proposal will be presented when the scoping work is complete.

CoPilot Agent for Programme Sapphire

31. Background: The programme is committed to delivering in harmony with the existing Corporation strategies and technical landscape –the solution should complement each other wherever possible. For this reason the Programme will be deploying a CoPilot "chatbot" or "SAPBOT" which aligns to other advances launched by the Digital Services team to provide easier access / support for staff.

32. Purpose: SAPBOT is an AI-powered CoPilot Agent developed to support colleagues engaging with Programme Sapphire. It enhances user experience by providing quick, reliable guidance and reducing pressure on support teams.

33. What SAPBOT Will Do: Provide instant answers to frequently asked questions about Programme Sapphire.

- Offer step-by-step training support and navigate colleagues to learning materials, aligning with Joule AI (SAP AI integration, built to work with CoPilot through integration).
- Assist users in identifying the right help channels for technical or process queries.
- Improve access to programme information and updates.

34. Benefits:
- **Faster response times**: Immediate support on common queries
- **Reduced demand on teams**: Automation of first-line support allows programme resources to focus on critical and high value work
- **Improved user experience**: Accessible guidance for all colleagues across the City Corporation
- **Scalability**: Increased capability to support wider adoption during and post go live

35. Alignment to Corporate & Digital Strategy:
- **Automation & AI adoption**: Demonstrates delivery of the DDAT Strategy ambitions to leverage emerging technologies

- **Brilliant Basics**: Enhances core services through a robust, user-friendly support channel
- **Dynamic Economic Growth / Providing Excellent Services**: Enables a more efficient workforce empowered with the right tools and information.

36. **The Vision:** SAPBOT will become the primary frontline support channel for Programme Sapphire, continuously improving through real-time insights and learning whilst being easily accessible via the Programme Sapphire Intranet Page. This innovation reflects our commitment to embracing AI to unlock productivity and deliver smarter public services.

Conclusion

Programme Sapphire is making significant progress in modernising our HR and finance systems, despite some delays and data challenges. Continued alignment with corporate digital strategy and the adoption of AI and automation are expected to enhance service delivery and user experience.

Appendices
Appendix 1 – Programme Plan on a Page
Appendix 2 – SAP SuccessFactors HR Roadshows Schedule
Appendix 3 – UAT Stats
Appendix 4 – Changes in review
Appendix 5A / 5B - Enable SAP Joule for SuccessFactors (note that Appendix 5B currently in draft)
Appendix 6 - Key Functions Available in Teams

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