City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Digital Services Committee - information	Dated: 27/11/2025
Subject: Corporate Data Platform Progress Report - Update	**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
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Summary

This report outlines the ongoing progress in implementing the Corporate Data Platform, which leverages Microsoft Fabric to improve the organisation's data management and analytical capabilities. It addresses the rationale for adopting a modern, federated approach, as recommended by the Data Maturity Assessment, and highlights how Microsoft Fabric's integrated tools will support enhanced data use, data quality, productivity and value across the organisation. The report provides Members with a concise overview of developments and the strategic significance of this initiative, ensuring an informed understanding of the current position and next steps.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In April 2023 the Digital, Information and Technology Service (DITS) commissioned a Data Maturity Assessment with Hitachi Solutions. The final report, presented in June 2023, included a recommendation to 'embrace the federated nature of the organisation, by retaining data in a federated structure, but enhance its use, productivity and value via Data Mesh and modern tools and technologies'. This included an evaluation of Microsoft Fabric, which was announced by Microsoft in May 2023.

2. Microsoft Fabric is a unified, end-to-end data and analytics platform developed by Microsoft that integrates services like Power BI, Azure Synapse Analytics, Data Factory, and OneLake into a single Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) environment. It is designed to simplify the entire data lifecycle—from ingestion and transformation to analysis and visualisation—within one cohesive workspace.

3. Some of the key benefits of Fabric include streamlined data management through a centralised Lakehouse architecture, enhanced collaboration across teams, and built-in AI capabilities for faster, more intelligent insights. Fabric also reduces tool fragmentation and infrastructure costs, making it an efficient and scalable solution for organisations aiming to modernise their data ecosystems.

4. Following receipt of further funding, the Microsoft Fabric platform was implemented in 2024 and a new Data Team was created within DITS to progress with the project. Initially the team consisted of a single FTE but has more recently been increased to two.

Current Position

5. As of September 2025, there are currently 24 data sources mapped to Fabric from both internal systems and third-party data sources. The data pipelines have been fully automated with connections made at the database level or externally through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). This removes the need for any manual intervention and that also means that the data coming into Fabric can be reported on in real time, or at least as often as the data source is updated. There are currently 58 reports and dashboards that have been created utilising Microsoft Fabric. Compute process is at circa 30% of our total capacity, with 80GB data stored in the Fabric platform.

6. One of the key benefits of the Corporate Data Platform approach is that once a data pipeline is created, the data source can be utilised across multiple reports and dashboards, meaning that the data only needs to be mapped once. This is already proving a significant benefit as data pipelines are already being used across multiple areas and this functionality will be enhanced as further data pipelines are created.

7. The Planning workspace is a good example of one major data pipeline feeding single source data from Oracle into multiple workstreams to suit multiple departmental purposes. These include the Geographic Information System (GIS), existing application review reporting and strategic tracking. The Data Team have also worked with the Destination City Programme to remap its public outputs from static upload to API connections from the Office for National Statistics' Nomis service and the London Data Store. External communications are utilising Fabric to draw data from multiple sources including our external websites, internal address books, SharePoint and our environmental impact assessments. Corporate Performance measures are now reporting granular detail on quarterly metrics for each of the departmental workstreams.

8. The remit of the data team includes Microsoft Fabric but also ensuring that there are the appropriate tools in place for data to be managed effectively. One example of this is the Corporate Performance Framework which has been developed by the team using the Power Platform and built upon a structured database held in Dataverse. With the appropriate data structures in place, this means that Corporate Performance data is now being captured consistently and progress reporting has been automated through the use of PowerBI and Fabric.

9. There have been several challenges to the implementation of Microsoft Fabric, not least the fact that it is still a relatively new and immature product, which means that external knowledge and support has been limited. There have also been significant challenges in recruiting sufficiently skilled personnel to the Data Team. The initial 'Head of Data' role required two rounds of recruitment and the 'Data Engineer' role remains vacant after two failed recruitments in June and September 2025. DITS are now working with Reed to recruit to this role having also reviewed the salary offer.

Proposals

10. The key focus for the team for the coming months will be the recruitment to the Data Engineer role and to continue the work with the Destination City to ensure that all data sources are mapped to Fabric through a fully automated and resilient data pipeline. Due to some 'early wins' with the Environment Department there is now significant demand upon the team to map new data sources to Fabric and the team continue to work through requests.

Key Data

11. The Microsoft Fabric platform was initially implemented in April 2024. To date 24 internal and external data sources have been mapped to Microsoft Fabric, supporting the creation of 58 reports and dashboards.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – Strategic Outcome 3 of the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy 2024 is to 'become data driven to improve decision'. The implementation of a robust, corporate data platform is a key foundation to the City Corporation using data much more effectively and provide a business intelligence capability based on resilient, real time data pipelines.

Financial implications – the funding for the use of Microsoft Fabric and the Data function within DITS is fully funded from DITS Local Risk Budgets.

Resource implications – The DITS Data function consists of 2FTE at present. One post is currently vacant, but is being recruited to.

Legal implications - Where concerns existing around data sharing, officers are encouraged to conduct a Data Privacy Impact Assessment and/or seek further guidance from the Data Protection Team.

Risk implications – the Corporate Data Platform addresses a key risk in ensuring that critical reports and dashboards are built upon robust data pipelines, using real time data where available.

Equalities implications – None

Climate implications - None

Security implications – the Corporate Data Platform is built upon a robust access and permissions model utilising 'Lakehouse's' and 'workspaces' to ensure that data is only accessed by authorised officers.

Conclusion

12. In summary, the implementation of the Corporate Data Platform marks a significant step towards achieving the City Corporation's strategic objective of becoming a truly data-driven organisation. By investing in resilient infrastructure, addressing key risks, and ensuring compliance with legal and security requirements, DITS are laying the groundwork for enhanced business intelligence and more informed decision making. Continued support and collaboration across departments will be essential to fully realise the benefits of this initiative and drive lasting value for the organisation and its stakeholders.

Appendices

• None

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