

Digital Directorate

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Directorate of Internal Audit and Assurance

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Richard Leonard MSP
Convener
Public Audit Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh

18 November 2025

Dear Mr Leonard

MAJOR IT PROJECTS – PROGRESS REPORT

This material provides the Public Audit Committee with the latest report on the progress of major IT projects that are subject to the Technology Assurance Framework for the period to October 2025. In accordance with the Committee's request outlined in your letter dated 30 October 2025, the summary table has been updated to reflect the specified changes for this reporting cycle. This progress update includes the following information:

- Annex A contains the Major IT Projects report
- Annex B contains a Digital Assurance Office update.

Three entries in the Major IT Projects Report - Aspen, Legacy Services Programme, and McCloud Remedy - have experienced cost increases exceeding 10%, due to an expansion of scope or unforeseen complexities within the work.

Increases to Aspen and Legacy Services Programme are reflective of refined methodology in business case estimates and progression of the programme of work respectively. The Legacy Services Programme has developed estimates to include a second phase of work focused on data migration from legacy services to the digital cloud.

The McCloud Remedy Programme has faced considerable complexity and operational challenges, resulting in increases to costs and schedules across both reporting cycles this year. Despite this, Scottish Public Pensions Agency has made significant progress in delivering outcomes for eligible members, supported by strengthened governance and

specialist expertise. Work continues at pace to ensure all members receive their entitlements with no detriment.

New projects listed below are appearing on the report for the first time indicating their recent transition into the delivery or procurement phases of the work.

- Digital Front Door
- Digital Mailbox
- Forensics Services Core Operating System and Data Migration Project

We are beginning to see an increasing number of IT projects within Health that have Scottish Government Senior Responsible Owners (SROs). This brings them within the scope of the Technology Assurance Framework and, consequently, the Major IT Projects report. Previously, many Health digital projects were led by SROs from Health Boards, which fall outside the scope of the Framework. Work is ongoing to develop a clearer understanding of the Health digital portfolio and associated accountabilities, which is expected to result in further Health-related entries in future reporting cycles.

Now that the Digital Portfolio Office is established and driving increased accountability and transparency across the major digital projects landscape, a change is being introduced to how queries from the Committee will be handled. Going forward, when the Committee requests information about specific projects, the Digital Portfolio Office will engage the relevant Accountable Officers to provide responses directly. This approach reinforces the responsibility and accountability associated with both the Accountable Officer and SRO roles. Where queries relate specifically to assurance activity, the Digital Portfolio Office will refer these to the Digital Assurance Office for a direct response.

The report will continue to undergo continuous improvement which will see further amendments to enhance the report. We are happy to discuss the report and future iterations in more detail if the Committee wishes.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Huggins
Chief Digital Officer

Jennifer Inglis-Jones
Director for Internal Audit and Assurance

Annex A:

Major IT Projects Report

for the Public Audit

Committee

18 November 2025

Contents

1. Report scope.....	1
2. Report specification	1
3. Definitions	3
4. Summary of changes	4
5. Detailed project information.....	7
5.1 Projects in delivery or committed to spend.....	7
5.2 Procurement projects.....	25
5.3 Projects closed or cancelled.....	26
6. Digital major project assurance overview	31

1. Report scope

This report has been provided to the Public Audit Committee by the Scottish Government as an update on the major IT projects that have a commitment to spend through planned or active procurement activity, or are in active delivery, and which attract major project assurance activity.

The assurance information within the report has been provided by two key functions of the Directorate of Internal Audit and Assurance, providing the full assurance context to the major projects across different types of assurance. [Section 6](#) provides information on the assurance processes relevant to major IT projects for awareness.

2. Report specification

Data collection and approval

The information contained in this report was collated by the Digital Portfolio Office in October 2025 from:

- the Accountable Officer of each project who provided project information including narrative
- Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance who provided information on project assurance activity.

The Digital Portfolio Office are responsible for collating the required information, creating the report, and submitting the report to the Committee with appropriate approvals.

Estimated whole-life costs

Costs have been shown in millions of pounds rounded to two decimal places.

Estimated whole-life cost variances were calculated as the percentage difference between the two periods being compared. There are two types of whole-life cost variances contained in this report which compare costs across different points in time.

1. Estimated whole-life cost variance since last report shown in section 2 compares the estimated whole-life costs from the current reporting period to the previously reported estimated whole-life costs reported in May 2025.
2. Estimated whole-life cost variance from project baseline shown in section 3 compares the estimated whole-life costs from the current reporting period to the estimated whole-life costs reported in the last approved project business case.

Schedule

Schedule variances were calculated by converting the duration between start and end project dates into months then calculating the percentage change between the total number of months for the two periods being compared. There are two types of schedule variances contained in this report which compare duration from different periods.

1. Schedule variance since last report shown in section 2 compares the duration from the current reported dates to the previously reported dates in the May 2025 report.
2. Schedule variance from the project baseline shown in section 3 compares the duration from the current reported dates to the dates reported in the project's baselined schedule.

Constraints and limitations

There is currently variation in how projects across different areas and organisations calculate costs, with some excluding live running costs and others including them over differing timeframes – this inconsistency limits comparability. To address this, the Digital Portfolio Office is developing a Financial Management Framework, including cost estimation guidance with a supplementary toolkit, to support delivery teams. These resources will underpin the portfolio's pipeline management process and, once finalised, will be made available to both portfolio projects and wider public bodies to help strengthen digital delivery across the public sector.

3. Definitions

Term	Description
Baseline	<p>Whole-life cost baseline refers to the whole-life costs detailed in the last approved business case.</p> <p>Schedule baseline refers to the end date of the project as formally recorded in the last approved business case, Accountable Officer template, funding agreement or other formal documentation that is considered the project's baseline.</p>
Estimated whole-life cost (WLCs)	<p>Estimated WLCs is an estimation of all costs associated with the implementation through the project lifecycle and live running. This includes all capital, resource, any costs covered by other funding streams, operations and live running costs. The live running period has been set at 10 years as the benchmark provided by the Green Book.</p>
Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)	<p>The SRO is the individual responsible for ensuring that a programme/project meets its objectives and delivers the intended benefits. They own the overall business change being supported or enabled by the programme/project and ensures that it maintains its business and vision focus. The SRO typically chairs the Programme/Project Board.</p>
Technology Assurance Framework (TAF)	<p>Independent assurance for major digital projects is provided through the Technology Assurance Framework (TAF) for in scope organisations and is administered by the Digital Assurance Office (DAO).</p> <p>The TAF is intended to improve delivery and ensure that the lessons learned from previous experience are reflected and embedded in future practice.</p>

4. Summary of changes

The table in this section highlights changes since the last report. This information is focused on changes to the project statuses including identifying new projects, as well as whole-life costs and schedules. The project names provided in the summary table hyperlink to the corresponding detailed project information page.

As this report focuses on projects with committed expenditure through planned or active procurement activity, or those currently in delivery, the summary table below has been organised according to the defined top-level project status. This ordering reflects the typical progression through the project lifecycle. A secondary level of ordering highlights changes since the previous report. Within each category, projects are listed alphabetically by name. The sequence of project statuses is as follows:

- Procurement activity
 - Remains at procurement activity
 - New to report – procurement activity
- In delivery
 - Remains in delivery
 - Moved from procurement to in delivery
 - New to report – in delivery
- Under closure
 - Remains under closure
 - Moved to under closure
- Closed
 - Moved to closed

Cost variances presented in this report are due to the reasons listed below which been indicated on the summary table using the shorthand as follows:

1. Changed methodology for calculating whole-life costs [C]
2. Business case progression leading to increased accuracy of cost estimates [B]
3. Material cost increases [M]

[Section 5](#) provides more detailed information relating to each project, including previously reported information alongside the updated information, and schedule and variance changes from project baselines. The project names provided in the table hyperlink to the corresponding detailed project information page.

Project name	Organisation	Project status compared to last report	Latest estimated whole-life cost compared to last report	Latest schedule compared to last report	Reason for change
Electronic Vote Counting: Local Government Elections May 2027	Scottish Government	Remains at procurement activity	No change	No change	No change
Aspen (Management Information Platform)	Forestry and Land Scotland	Remains in delivery	£3.03M ▲ 44.38% [C]	3 months ▲ 4.35%	Cost change reflects previously reported delays and inclusion of live service costs.
Body Worn Video - National Rollout	Police Scotland	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change

Project name	Organisation	Project status compared to last report	Latest estimated whole-life cost compared to last report	Latest schedule compared to last report	Reason for change
Digital Case Management System - Office of the Public Guardian	Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Digital Evidence Sharing Capability	Scottish Government	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Digital Identity Programme - Digital Identity Service	Scottish Government	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Digital Infrastructure Programme	Disclosure Scotland	Remains in delivery	No change	5 months ▲ 9.62%	Increase in schedule to better support decommissioning of legacy systems
Digital Travel Data Information Services - Stage 2 Technical Travel Services	Transport Scotland	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Full Business Case Digital Transformation - Stage 2	Care Inspectorate	Remains in delivery	£0.72M ▲ 8.34% [B]	2 months ▲ 5.13%	Cost change reflects increase to scope
Legacy Services Programme	Scottish Government	Remains in delivery	£6.20M ▲ 73.81% [B]	3 months ▲ 9.38%	Costs and schedule increase reflects inclusion of the next phase of work
McCloud Remedy	Scottish Public Pensions Agency	Remains in delivery	£2.00M ▲ 13.33% [M]	35 months ▲ 61.4%	Increases reflect unanticipated complexity and technical issues
National Integrated Command and Control System (NICCS)	Police Scotland	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
New Mobilising System	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Payments Transformation Project	Scottish Government	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Social Security Programme (IT Elements)	Scottish Government	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Unified Communications and Contact Platform (UCCP)	Police Scotland	Remains in delivery	No change	No change	No change

Project name	Organisation	Project status compared to last report	Latest estimated whole-life cost compared to last report	Latest schedule compared to last report	Reason for change
Digital Front Door	Scottish Government	New to the report – in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Digital Mailbox	Scottish Government	New to the report – in delivery	No change	No change	No change
Forensics Services Core Operating System and Data Migration Project	Scottish Police Authority	New to the report – in delivery	No change	No change	No change
2022 Census	National Records of Scotland	Moved to closed	No change	No change	Project closed
Digital Enabled Policing (DEP) - Core Operations Solution (COS) Phase Two	Police Scotland	Moved to closed	No change	No change	Project closed
Moveable Transactions	Registers of Scotland	Moved to closed	-£0.50M ▼ 6.17%	No change	Project closed under budget
National Standardised Assessments – phase 2	Scottish Government	Moved to closed	No change	No change	Project closed
Shared Services Transformation Programme - Phase 1	Scottish Government	Moved to closed	-£0.50M ▼ 0.83%	No change	Project closed under budget

5. Detailed project information

Following the highlight of changes since the last report in the previous section, this section provides more detailed information on each major IT project. This section provides the previously reported information and provides budget and schedule variance in relation to each project’s baseline. Costs have been shown in millions of pounds rounded to two decimal places.

5.1 Projects in delivery or committed to spend

This section contains projects that are currently in delivery or projects which are preparing for procurement activity.

Aspen (Management Information Platform), Forestry and Land Scotland

Accountable Officer: Kevin Quinlan, Chief Executive Officer, Forestry and Land Scotland

Senior Responsible Owner: Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office

Project description: The purpose of the project is to help FLS become financially sustainable and more business minded by putting in place new systems and updated processes that will modernise the way FLS manage finance, procurement and business planning. It will replace legacy finance systems with a modern, fit-for-purpose Enterprise Resource Planning system. It will adopt best-practice processes and it will also revise and redesign the Chart of Accounts.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Mar-20	Dec-25	-	-	£8.06M	-
Last report – May 2025	Mar-20	Dec-25	-	Delivery	£6.84M	-
Current report	Mar-20	Mar-26	3 Months – ▲4.35%	Delivery	£9.87M	£1.81M – ▲22.44%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Project Board approved a delay to go-live so that risks associated with change management and business readiness could be addressed. Go-live is now scheduled for Nov 2025 with project close expected by end of Mar 2026.	The EWLC has been updated this period to include (1) the cost of the previously reported project delays, now known (£1m) and approved by ELT (2) initial estimates for support team running costs for 10 years (£2m) - these costs were approved in the full business case and should have been included in previous reports. Further refinement of the support costs is expected by end of March 2026 as more accurate information becomes available costs of the support team and the managed support service. No other changes to cost are expected. The difference between the current report and the baseline is due to the 12 month extension to the delivery phase.

Assurance update: A Go-Live Gate was held in September. The Action Plan will be submitted in October prior to a live launch in early November.

Body Worn Video - National Rollout, Police Scotland

Accountable Officer: Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Chief Digital Information Officer

Project description: Delivery of a Body Worn Video solution is included within scope of the Digitally Enabled Policing Programme. Drivers for change include supporting the objectives of the Serving a Changing Scotland Strategy and the Scottish Government Digital Strategy for Justice in Scotland (2014). These aim to maximise officer visibility, increase the detection and prevention of crime, strengthen operational and partner decision making, improve access and communities and build public confidence through transparency and legitimacy.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Mar-22	Jun-27	-	-	£35.07M	-
Last report – May 2025	Mar-22	Jun-27	-	Delivery	£35.07M	-
Current report	Mar-22	Jun-27	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£35.07M	£-0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: Body Worn Video successfully delivered in various divisions with positive feedback received. Divisions are currently receiving post-Go-Live Business Change support, whilst Business Change also focuses on next Go-Lives.

Assurance update: As a Go-Live Gate was held for the project in February, there has been no further assurance since the last update. An action plan has been received and recommendations can be closed once evidence is received in support of action taken. There is no further mandatory assurance requirement however the Senior Responsible Owner may request a health check to support the transition to business as usual.

Digital Case Management System - Office of the Public Guardian, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Accountable Officer: Malcolm Graham, Chief Executive Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service

Senior Responsible Owner: Tim Barraclough, Executive Director for Tribunals and Office of the Public Guardian

Project description: Development of new case management systems for the Office of the Public Guardian, as funding allows, to support online submission, end-to-end digital case management, and new functions to provide better service to public. Scoping of project progressing. The Tribunals and OPG Lab has recently carried out a proof of concept focused on Power of Attorney workflow.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Feb-22	Mar-26	-	-	£6.80M	-
Last report – May 2025	Feb-22	Mar-26	-	Delivery	£6.80M	-
Current report	Feb-22	Mar-26	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£6.80M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: Phase 1 of the project went live in January 2025 and development for the second Phase is underway.

Assurance update: The majority of recommendations (including all critical recommendations) from the Go-Live Gate are closed and the Digital Assurance Office continues to liaise with the project to monitor completion of the small number of open recommendations.

Digital Evidence Sharing Capability , Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Neil Rennick, DG Education and Justice

Senior Responsible Owner: Andrew Hendry, Chief Digital Information Officer, PS & Denise Swanson, Deputy Director CLLS

Project description: This project will aim to deliver a service to collect and share digital evidence at every stage of a criminal case and prosecution across the justice sector. It is a collaborative project, being developed by and for Criminal Justice Sector (CJS) partners, supported by the Scottish Government.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan-16	Mar-31	-	-	£38.00M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jan-16	Mar-31	-	Delivery	£38.00M	-
Current report	Jan-16	Mar-31	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£38.00M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: The first phase of the Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) programme has been successfully rolled out nationally with DESC available to all police divisions.

Assurance update: The intended Delivery Gate which was noted in the last update is now scheduled for late October/early November.

Digital Identity Programme - Digital Identity Service, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Lesley Fraser, DG Corporate

Senior Responsible Owner: Isaac Smith, Deputy Director, Components and Infrastructure

Project description: The Scottish Government’s Digital Strategy contains the commitment to work with stakeholders, privacy interest groups and members of the public to develop a robust, secure and trustworthy mechanism by which an individual member of the public can prove their identity and/or entitlement to a public sector service or a benefit online. The aim of this programme is to deliver the commitment to develop a common public sector approach to online identity assurance, as part of digital public services.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan-18	Dec-28	-	-	£45.00M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jan-18	Dec-28	-	Delivery	£45.00M	-
Current report	Jan-18	Dec-28	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£45.00M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
No variance. Still on track for completion at end of 2028.	The SOC and OBC estimates are for completion of the Beta phase, not Whole Life Cost. We are now reporting the whole life cost (£45M)

Additional Narrative: Following a delivery date assessment in July ScotAccount is in Public Beta. People currently use ScotAccount to access a range of public services, including disclosure checks, witness gateway, debt management, registration to sell tobacco and vapes. Work to integrate ScotAccount with the NHS MyCare App is underway. Full Business Case for live running is under development.

Assurance update: A Delivery Gate was held in July and an action plan has been received.

Digital Infrastructure Programme, Disclosure Scotland

Accountable Officer: Gerard Hart, Chief Executive Disclosure Scotland

Senior Responsible Owner: Lynne McMinn, Director Digital

Project description: Digital work needed to replace or enhance certain existing digital systems and supporting infrastructure in order to provide a framework upon which the requirements of existing and future legislation can be delivered. This Programme of work has transformed the Disclosure Scotland processing system and resulted in significant savings, as the final project, Phase 2 of the Platform Re-Engineering project progresses, technical and financial benefits will be fully realised. This will include running cost savings from a reduction in required resources, increased efficiencies, and reduced monthly licence costs.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jun-21	Oct-25	-	-	£20.22M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jun-21	Oct-25	-	Delivery	£20.22M	-
Current report	Jun-21	Mar-26	5 Months – ▲9.62%	Delivery	£20.22M	£0.00M – ▲0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
<p>Following a review of scope, timeline, and costs, the revised completion date is now 31 March 2026. This short extension supports the decommissioning of our legacy platform and reflects a more realistic delivery plan based on improved understanding. Initial estimates were based on assumptions around complexity of the remaining work and delivery pace. Since then, Amazon Web Service has supported complex areas, and conducted targeted proofs of concept—covering networking, microservices, and Informatica Identity Resolution – helping to surface risks and clarify unknowns and enable more accurate replanning. From January to March 2025, delivery was deliberately slowed to prioritise delivery of the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020. The programme now moves forward with greater clarity and momentum. While some risks remain—particularly in the final stages of microservices migration—these are being actively managed.</p>	<p>No cost variance. Cost is not increasing as the increased Platform Re-Engineering (phase 2) budget is offset by surplus from the Platform Re-Engineering (phase 1) budget, therefore overall Digital Infrastructure budget remains unchanged.</p>

Additional Narrative: This Programme of work has transformed the Disclosure Scotland processing system and resulted in significant savings. As the final project, Phase 2 of the Platform Re-Engineering project progresses, technical and financial benefits will be fully realised. Dual running of the legacy and new Platforms means that key financial benefits will not be fully realised until the legacy Platform is decommissioned in 2025/26.

Benefits will include savings as a result of fewer resources required to support and maintain the Platform on an ongoing basis and a target reduction of 20% in running costs as a result of operating a more efficient Platform. 2024/25 spend was £1.4m, representing a saving of £94,522 (6.3% against baseline). 2025/26 YTD (April to August) spend is £397k, representing a saving of £102,876 (20.6%) against baseline, indicating we will achieve the target benefits savings by the end of the project and current financial year.

Assurance update: There have been no further reviews since the last report but actions from previous reviews are being monitored. The next review will be a Go-Live Gate which is expected to take place in early 2026.

Digital Travel Data Information Services - Stage 2 Technical Travel Services, Transport Scotland

Accountable Officer: Alison Irvine, Chief Executive Officer, 90Transport Scotland

Senior Responsible Owner: Mary Docherty, Head of CTITU

Project description: Appointment of a Technical Supplier(s) to oversee delivery of the Programme for Government initiative to implement the following:

- Data Management (collation, processing, output and associated services);
- Travel data technical system(s), including Fares Aggregator
- Disruption data services; and if required
- Associated services including Digital Information Provision (Website/App)

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan-21	Mar-29	-	-	£6.00M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jan-21	Sep-30	-	Delivery	£6.00M	-
Current report	Jan-21	Sep-30	18 Months – ▲18.37%	Delivery	£6.00M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Implementation of the MVP took longer than anticipated due to complexity in the build stage around data sets and supplier acclimatising to Digital Scotland Service Standard process.	-

Additional Narrative: The Minimal Viable Product was released in Sept 2024 with further iteration in April 2025. A further update with additional functionality and bug fixes relating to accessibility is scheduled for release in Oct 2025, with 2 more scheduled releases to implement a number of improvements over 2026.

Assurance update: A health check was held in May. An action plan has been received and all but one recommendation is closed.

Full Business Case Digital Transformation - Stage 2, Care Inspectorate

Accountable Officer: Jackie Irvine, Chief Executive

Senior Responsible Owner: Gordon Mackie, Executive Director Digital and Data

Project description: The project will deliver a fully integrated digital platform for scrutiny of regulated care services. It will replace inflexible legacy systems at high risk of failure, by supporting risk-led dynamic scheduling and conduct of scrutiny, reducing manual effort so staff can concentrate on higher value work, and improving data quality and better information capture and sharing.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jun-23	Sep-26	-	-	£8.63M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jun-23	Sep-26	-	Delivery	£8.63M	-
Current report	Jun-23	Nov-26	2 Months – ▲5.13%	Delivery	£9.35M	£0.72M – ▲8.34%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Reflective of revised project scope	The increase in cost is specifically allocated to the increase of scope to include Registrations and Complaints and rebuilt within the CRM

Assurance update: A health check was held in July following an extension to the project scope. The action plan is completed.

Legacy Services Programme, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Roy Brannen, DG Net Zero

Senior Responsible Owner: Nick Downes and Douglas Petrie, ARE Deputy Directors

Project description: Important business systems that are essential to the smooth operation of services, delivered by Agriculture and Rural Economy directorate (ARE), rely on various legacy technologies. The primary objectives for Phase 1 of the programme are to mitigate the associated risks to business continuity and cyber security. Phase 2 of the programme will address the external requirement to fully exit all service delivery from the Scottish Government's on-premises Saughton House Data Centre (SHDC) and migrate to the shared service SG AWS Cloud. SHDC will close at the end of December 2026 and all servers will be fully decommissioned.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Apr-24	Mar-27	-	-	£14.60M	-
Last report – May 2025	Apr-24	Dec-26	-	Delivery	£8.40M	-
Current report	Apr-24	Mar-27	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£14.60M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
<p>We are on track for the re-baselined end of Phase 2 in March 2027. The end date has moved out by three months compared to the previous report to account for post migration tasks to be completed in Phase 2 that were not previously included in the Phase 1 only report. Successful completion of Phase 1, which includes the decommissioning of the old technology, is dependent on the migration to the digital cloud that will be delivered in Phase 2.</p>	<p>The estimated WLC provided in Spring 2025 included only Legacy Services Programme (LSP) Phase 1 delivery only.</p> <p>The new estimate provided includes both LSP Phase 1 and Phase 2, accounting for the variance. Costs are based on supplier costs only and do not include SG staff time. This covers implementation only. The whole life costs of live running have not been included. Live running will be taken forward under BAU budgets integrating delivery and IT resource and this has not been estimated separately for the programme. It is impossible to estimate until we have more clarity on future service and operating requirements and other external constraints on costs that are not yet known. We must also understand implications for staffing capacity and care & maintenance for the new environment, requirements for cyber defence activity, application life management and replacement strategies.</p>

Additional Narrative: The period from Dec 2026 - March 2027 will be used for post migration fixes. The availability of resource to be deployed onto this programme linked to the fixed closure date for Saughton House Data Centre is the major source of delivery risk.

Assurance update: A health check was held in July and a follow up Assurance of Action Plan was held in October.

McCloud Remedy, Scottish Public Pensions Agency

Accountable Officer: Stephen Pathirana, Chief Executive Officer, SPPA

Senior Responsible Owner: Frances Graham, Chief Transformation Officer

Project description: Project to remedy discrimination arising from 2015 pension reform. Project scope includes NHS Scotland Pension Scheme, Scottish Teachers’ Superannuation Scheme, Police Service of Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service pension schemes. Includes system and process changes required and rectification of any pensions adjustments needed.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Oct-20	Oct-23	-	-	£15.00M	-
Last report – May 2025	Oct-20	Jul-25	-	Delivery	£15.00M	-
Current report	Oct-20	Jun-28	56 Months – ▲155.56%	Delivery	£17.00M	£2.00M – ▲13.33%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
The Remedy Programme has been enormously complex, with unanticipated technical issues arising that presented huge operational challenges - shared by other pension administrators across the UK. Challenges vary by scheme, but include: data quality/format, delayed ill health certification and late stage receipt of updated guidance.	The Remedy Programme has been enormously complex, with unanticipated technical issues arising that presented huge operational challenges - shared by other pension administrators across the UK. Many of the challenges SPPA has faced have had to be mitigated by a combination of the recruitment of specialist pension expert employees and contractors as well as management to implement necessary governance. System costs have been higher than anticipated due to the functionality necessary to perform highly complex calculations exceeding the capability of readily available software solutions.

Additional Narrative: While the Remedy Programme has not progressed at the pace we would like, significant progress has been made in servicing the 215,000 members who are eligible for the 2015 Remedy. A large proportion of the eligible members, from active and retired cohorts have already received their Remediable Service Statement (RSS), made their choice, and see it put into payment swiftly. Work is ongoing at pace to ensure the remaining members receive their RSS as soon as possible. The project's absolute end date will be June 2028 although most schemes will be finalised in 2026. Many individuals are already receiving the most valuable pension benefits and where there is a difference in monthly pension payment, the difference varies with many only seeing a small annual uplift. The Remedy period impacts, at most, seven years of overall pension accrual (between 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022) so members who retired closer to April 2015 will see the least difference in their pension, if any at all. Where there is an increase, arrears are backdated with interest added, which can result in a significant lump sum payment and is greatly anticipated by eligible pensioners. The application of interest ensures there is no detriment to the individual, regardless of when the payment is made.

Assurance update: The project had discharged its assurance requirements following the last review in February 2024 which concluded that, while challenges remained, strong leadership was in place to drive the project to conclusion. Following the recent notification of a change to estimated Whole Life Costs and the project end date, the Digital Assurance Office will review the position with SPPA.

National Integrated Command and Control System (NICCS), Police Scotland

Accountable Officer: Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Assistant Chief Constable Local Policing North and C3

Project description: The National ICCS system will facilitate the control of Police Scotland’s operational communications via Airwave radio terminals and C3 telephony systems, utilising voice and data protocols. In addition, it shall enable the mandatory introduction of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) being implemented by the Home Office as a full replacement for Airwave TETRA radio communications. A single ICCS platform for Police Scotland, compatible with ESN framework and devices, will enhance the cross-site working, improve business continuity (moving staff across ACR sites) and reduce training overheads (single training course).

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Nov-18	Aug-26	-	-	£11.20M	-
Last report – May 2025	Nov-18	Aug-26	-	Delivery	£11.20M	-
Current report	Nov-18	Aug-26	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£11.20M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: Divisional Go-Lives have continued. Any operational concerns which are found are continuing to be investigated by supplier and Police Scotland.

Assurance update: There have been no further reviews since the last report pending an update from the project on the current status.

New Mobilising System, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Accountable Officer: CO Stuart Stevens, Chief Officer

Senior Responsible Owner: ACO Jon Henderson, Director of Prevention, Protection and Preparedness

Project description: Rationalisation of control rooms and implementation of single system. Control Room rationalisation was completed under Phase 1 of the Command and Control Futures Programme. The re-named New Mobilising System Project will implement a single Command and Control solution across Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan-23	Nov-26	-	-	£40.99M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jan-23	Nov-26	-	Delivery	£40.99M	-
Current report	Jan-23	Nov-26	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£40.99M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: The project remains on target to deliver the new Integrated Communications Control System (ICCS) to the three Operation Controls (OC) by end December 2025; and the new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) to the three Operation Controls (OC) by end November 2026.

Assurance update: A Delivery Gate was held in May and an action plan has been received. A Go-Live Gate was held in October which gave approval for launch of the Integrated Communications Control System. Further assurance will be planned in due course for the Computer Aided Dispatch System.

Payments Transformation Project , Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Lesley Fraser, DG Corporate

Senior Responsible Owner: Isaac Smith, Deputy Director, Components and Infrastructure

Project description: Development of a common platform and service that standardises the way the Scottish Government and the wider public sector in Scotland makes and (in the future) takes payments to and from citizens and businesses.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Sep-18	Mar-26	-	-	£23.03M	-
Last report – May 2025	Sep-18	Mar-26	-	Delivery	£23.03M	-
Current report	Sep-18	Mar-26	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£23.03M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	Full Business case costed over a 10 year period from 2018. Variance is due to a move to reporting whole life costs (£23M) rather than the previously reported implementation costs for Beta development phase only (£12.5m)

Additional Narrative: The service is in Public Beta and has processed over £2 billion in payments, supporting major partners such as the Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) and Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland. Ongoing development of the platform will continue through 2025/2026 and new partnerships have been agreed for adoption.

Assurance update: A Delivery Gate was held in June and an action plan has been received.

Social Security Programe (IT Elements), Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Miriam Craven, DG Communities

Senior Responsible Owner: Stephen Kerr, Director, Social Security

Project description: To enable Scottish Government control and administration of devolved welfare benefits.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan-17	Dec-25	-	-	£277.40M	-
Last report – May 2025	Jan-17	Dec-25	-	Delivery	£277.40M	-
Current report	Jan-17	Dec-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£277.40M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: The programme continues to deliver on target and is expected to close in the Spring 2026 PAC report.

Assurance update: A health check for Cross Border cases was held at end September/early October with an action plan currently being prepared. As the Programme is in its final year and has been afforded earned autonomy, it is likely that this was the final digital assurance review. A Gate 0/5 Review Operations Review and Benefits Realisation is scheduled for October 2025.

Unified Communications and Contact Platform (UCCP), Police Scotland

Accountable Officer: Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Chief Digital Information Officer (CDIO)

Project description: In support of the 2026 vision and Digital Strategy, the business needs across Police Scotland have developed to require additional functionality from our contact platforms, including integrated digital communication channels, presence and availability information. There is a need to replace the contact platforms throughout Police Scotland with modern, unified communications and contact solutions that better meet the changing needs of the business whilst rationalising the range of technologies to standardise technical and supplier support and maintenance requirements and finances - UCCP aims to carry this out.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Dec-19	Oct-25	-	-	£10.40M	-
Last report – May 2025	Dec-19	Oct-25	-	Delivery	£10.40M	-
Current report	Dec-19	Oct-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Delivery	£10.40M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: UCCP Go-Live planned for 11th November 2025, with training plan commenced. Final product testing and integration with existing software has commenced.

Assurance update: A Go-Live Gate was completed in early October and an action plan has been requested.

Digital Front Door, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Caroline Lamb, DG Health and Social Care

Senior Responsible Owner: Jonathan Cameron, Deputy Director, Digital Health and Care

Project description: The Digital Front Door initiative is designed to create a streamlined digital platform that allows individuals in Scotland to interact more effectively with health and social care services. This app will serve as a single access point for users to manage their health and care information, book appointments, and receive notifications about their care.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	May-21	Mar-36	-	-	£389.50M	-
Current report	May-21	Mar-36	0 Months – ● 0.00%	-	£389.50M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	N/A - First submission to PAC

Additional Narrative: Full Business Case is currently undergoing approval.

Assurance update: A Critical Friend Review of the Outline Business Case was carried out in December 2024. A Business Justification Gate was held in March 2025 and an action plan has been received. The next review, a Go Live Gate for the first release, is scheduled for November.

Digital Mailbox, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Lesley Fraser, DG Corporate

Senior Responsible Owner: Isaac Smith, Deputy Director, Components and Infrastructure

Project description: Digital Mailbox is a new project, aiming to transform the way we communicate with citizens. The team will be aligned to the public sector reform objective of getting 80 million letters sent via the mailbox by 2030, saving costs across Scotland.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Oct-24	Mar-30	-	-	£12.50M	-
Current report	Oct-24	Mar-30	0 Months – ● 0.00%	-	£12.50M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	N/A - First submission to PAC

Additional Narrative: The project is still on plan for releasing the first iteration with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) using the MyCare app for end of 2025. Plans for a full rollout with NES will be up to end of 2027 for all NHS Boards. Further work is planned with Food Standards Scotland, Rent Services Scotland, and engagement with some Local Authorities has begun to enable us to reach the 2030 target of 80m letters being processed via the digital mailbox.

Assurance update: A Pre-Procurement Gate was held in April and an action plan has been received.

Forensics Services Core Operating System and Data Migration Project , Scottish Police Authority

Accountable Officer: Chris Brown, Chief Executive, Scottish Police Authority

Senior Responsible Owner: Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services

Project description: The purpose of the FS COS project is to deliver a fully functioning core operating system which allows FS to implement a more efficient and business-led approach to service delivery.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jun-23	-	-	-	£21.90M	-
Last report – May 2025	-	-	-	Planning	-	-
Current report	Jun-23	Mar-30	- Months – ● 0.00%	-	£21.90M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	N/A - first submission

Additional Narrative: Invitation to participate (ITP) and invitation to tender (ITT) approved through project/programme governance, pending a successful pre-procurement Technology Assurance Framework review the ITP will launch in late October, full ITT to launch December 2025. Project remains on schedule to deliver a Full Business Case in 2026.

Assurance update: A combined Business Justification and Pre-Procurement Gate was held in October and, at the time of writing, is at report finalisation stage.

5.2 Procurement projects

This section contains digitally-focussed service and facility contracts which are distinct from the previous digital programmes and projects. Standard digital projects may have procurement involved in them however the majority of their digital delivery is carried out by the project’s organisation, such as a digital tool or legacy system upgrade. The projects in this section differ from those as there is no, or limited, digital delivery involved in the project by the project organisation.

Examples of procurement projects specific to this section are where a supplier is contracted to deliver a new digital service, or a framework contract is procured to enable access to future digital services through framework call-off processes.

Electronic Vote Counting: Local Government Elections May 2027, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Dominic Munro, Director for Constitution

Senior Responsible Owner: Luke McBratney, Deputy Director, Elections and Constitutional Projects

Project description: Project to deliver electronic vote counting services for the local government elections due to be held in May 2027 on behalf of the 32 local authorities in Scotland.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Feb-24	-	-	-	-	-
Last report – May 2025	Feb-24	May-27	-	Planning	£12.00M	-
Current report	Feb-24	May-27	- Months – ● 0.00%	Planning	£12.00M	£12.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
-	-

Additional Narrative: The contract was awarded in September 2025 and the tendered price is within the agreed budget. While the contract is primarily for the electronic counting of votes cast in the local government elections in May 2027, it includes an option for extension until January 2032 to enable local authorities to use it to purchase services for the electronic counting of votes cast at local government by-elections. This is an optional service and local authorities meet the costs of electronically counted by-elections directly.

Assurance update: There has been no further assurance since the last update while the project has been in the procurement phase.

5.3 Projects closed or cancelled

This section contains projects that are now closed or cancelled and provides schedule and cost variances since the last reported information.

2022 Census, National Records of Scotland

Accountable Officer: Linda Sinclair, Director of Corporate Services and NRS Accountable Officer

Senior Responsible Owner: Alison Byrne, Chief Executive, National Records of Scotland

Project description: The programme of work, including IT to support Scotland’s Census 2022, which will be primarily online.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Last Report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Last report – May 2025	Oct-15	Mar-25	-	Under Closure	£140M	-
Current report	Oct-15	Mar-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Closed	£140M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on project closure
<p>This was a large-scale, multi-year and multi-faceted programme (whole lifetime costs of £140m) through which National Records of Scotland has been able to gather, analyse and present over a billion statistics. The digital first approach was very popular and secure, but the programme faced challenges, having to adapt to the impact of Covid-19 and a lower than anticipated response rate.</p> <p>The accuracy and quality of the data received and produced was of a high standard, with no security breaches occurring. 89% of responses were made online, exceeding the target of 70%, with published user consultation reports showing that the topics included in the Census met the needs of users.</p> <p>In the 2022 Census, Scotland had a final person response rate of 89.7%. This was lower than the original target of 94% and lower than the 97% response rate for the 2021 Census in England & Wales. The reasons for this are complex and more information is provided in Chapter 4 of the 2022 Census General Report.</p> <p>NRS responded to the lower-than-expected response rate by integrating administrative data into our design in a groundbreaking way that has given confidence in the ability to innovate with new types of data. These changes were made under the guidance of an International Steering Group which NRS had brought together to give it and users confidence in the changes it was making.</p> <p>NRS are already building on experience and lessons from the 2022 Census, including reflective case studies developed with DAO on NRS approaches to integrated assurance, procurement, contract management, resourcing, information governance and standards, cyber security, meeting the digital standard, and Go Live checklist. A key part of NRS plans for the 2031 Census is continued close collaboration and alignment with other UK census bodies as set out in the UK Concordat on Statistics, which will include holding the census at the same time across the UK and the sharing of contracts and expertise.</p> <p>While the unique circumstances around Scotland’s Census 2022 are unlikely to be repeated, the successes and challenges incurred in delivery have provided NRS with a crucial understanding of Scotland’s communities and how to evolve the service in future.</p>

Assurance update: As noted in the last update, the project has discharged its assurance requirements.

Digital Enabled Policing (DEP) - Core Operations Solution (COS) Phase Two, Police Scotland

Accountable Officer: DCC Bex Smith, Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

Senior Responsible Owner: Andrew Hendry, Chief Digital Information Officer (CDIO)

Project description: Increase public safety by replacing aging legacy ‘silo’ information management systems, with a single national platform capable of meeting present day operational requirements and public expectations of a national police service. Required to address strategic risks regarding access to key operational data, data quality and organisational capacity. Critically required for legislative compliance with General Data Protection Regulation. Deliver significant operational, time and costs savings benefits through streamlining, removal of waste, reduction in failure demand, automation of processes and by providing officers with access to the right information at the right time. COS is fundamental to realisation of the 2026 Strategy. Delivery of COS is a key component of the DDICT (Digital, Data and ICT) Strategy.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Last Report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Last report – May 2025	Jul-17	Jun-25	-	Under Closure	£36.82M	-
Current report	Jul-17	Jun-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Closed	£36.82M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on project closure
<p>The Digitally Enabled Policing Programme (DEPP) Core Operational Solutions (COS) Project Phase 2 delivered the following modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Productions- Insight- Crime and Enquiry- Warrants- Direct Measures <p>Benefits were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Replacement of 44 disparate systems- Creation of single national pool of data- Enabled mobile crime creation- National systems to enable national processes- Enhanced information access via data lake and PowerBI- Enabling future digital change- Continuous Development via Digital Support and Evolution Group (DSEG). <p>Whilst project closure was delayed, this allowed the West Crime benefits to be collated and formal change process was adhered to.</p>

Assurance update: As per the previous update, no further assurance will be carried out for this phase of the project. The Digital Assurance Office has received the project closure report and continues to monitor action plan progress.

Moveable Transactions, Registers of Scotland

Accountable Officer: Chris Kerr, Director of Policy and Corporate Services and Accountable Officer

Senior Responsible Owner: Anne Godfrey, Head of Policy and Legal

Project description: The key project deliverable is the development of two new public Registers required in support of the Moveable Transactions (Scotland) Bill where details of assignments and corporeal (and some incorporeal) moveable property which had been used as security to raise finance are registered and publicly searchable.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Last Report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Last report – May 2025	Jul-21	Jul-25	-	Delivery	£8.10M	-
Current report	Jul-21	Jul-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Closed	£7.60M	£-0.50M – ▼6.17%

Project narrative on project closure
The Register of Assignations and Register of Statutory Pledges were successfully launched on 1 April 2025 and the Project closed on 30 June 2025. Delays in the legislative timetable for the secondary legislation resulted in a delay to planned implementation of April 24. Total cost was under budget at £7.6m.

Assurance update: The project has discharged its assurance requirements with actions closed from the last review and the project closure report shared with the Digital Assurance Office.

National Standardised Assessments – phase 2, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Neil Rennick, Director General Education and Justice

Senior Responsible Owner: Alison Taylor, Interim Director of Learning

Project description: A replacement provider has been procured for the delivery of National Standardised Assessment (online literacy and numeracy assessments made available to children in receipt of publicly funded education in Scotland since August 2017 in English and December 2018 in Gaelic medium), to provide phase two of the assessment service from 2022. Rather than separate contracts for the English and Gaelic assessments, a single replacement service provider has been appointed to run both assessment systems through a single assessment platform.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Last Report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Last report – May 2025	Jan-20	Jul-26	-	Delivery	£17M	-
Current report	Jan-20	Jul-26	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Closed	£17M	£0.00M – ● 0.00%

Project narrative on project closure
At the end of the last school year (June 2025), implementation of the NSA phase 2 project came to an end. NSA phase 2 is now in a settled state with the current provider well established, with all aspects of the phase 2 NSA system up and running.

Assurance update: As noted in the last update, the project has discharged its assurance requirements.

Shared Services Transformation Programme - Phase 1, Scottish Government

Accountable Officer: Lesley Fraser, DG Corporate

Senior Responsible Owner: Brian Reid, Director of Corporate Transformation

Project description: The Shared Services Programme will deliver a new HR and Finance platform (Oracle Cloud), which replaces decades-old systems and will sit at the heart of our new corporate shared services offering to Scottish Government core and over 30 public bodies, helping to build a resilient corporate capability and drive efficiency and effectiveness of our HR and finance processes.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from Last Report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Last report – May 2025	Jun-20	Mar-25	-	Under closure	£60M	-
Current report	Jun-20	Mar-25	0 Months – ● 0.00%	Closed	£59.50M	£-0.50M – ▼0.83%

Project narrative on project closure
The Shared Services Programme (SSP) Phase 1 formally closed on 31 March 2025, following successful implementation of the Oracle Cloud platform from October 2024. Benefits realisation activity is ongoing, with further optimisation and continuous improvement of the platform planned for 2025/26.

Assurance update: Ongoing engagement to determine the date of the Gate 0/5 Operations Review and Benefits Realisation.

6. Digital major project assurance overview

Independent assurance for portfolios, programmes, projects and new or transformed digital services is provided by the Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance through the Technology Assurance Framework (TAF) and Gateway Review.

TAF is managed by the Digital Assurance Office (DAO) and is mandatory for central government bodies, excluding health bodies. It applies to new major investments in technology.

The Portfolio, Programme and Project Assurance Hub (PPPA) arrange and manage Gateway Reviews for major investments (which are typically delivered by projects and are defined by the [Scottish Public Finance Manual](#) (SPFM) and are assessed by Senior Responsible Owners as high risk. In scope organisations are all Scottish public bodies covered by the SPFM.

The DAO and PPPA work closely together and with Senior Responsible Owners to plan and co-ordinate the assurance approach for each project.

For major digital projects such as those included in this report, independent assurance is provided primarily through the Technology Assurance Framework (TAF) however Senior Responsible Owners may also ask for independent project assurance through Gateway Review at specific stages such as investment decision or benefits realisation. Programme assurance is provided through a Gate 0 strategic assessment. An overview of the range of services provided through TAF and Gateway review is set out below.

6.1 Technology Assurance Framework

The standard review points for major digital projects are:

- Business Justification – considers whether the project has a sound basis at the outset and a robust Strategic Outline Case.
- Pre-Procurement – considers readiness for commencement of the procurement exercise and whether the commercial risks are understood.
- Delivery – considers whether the delivery strategy remains appropriate and there is a valid Full Business Case. It also examines whether delivery is on track and standards are met.
- Go-Live – considers whether the solution is ready to be launched and the organisation is ready to accept the business change.

In addition to the above standard review points, projects may also have:

- Health checks – these take place outwith the mandatory review points e.g. at the request of the Senior Responsible Owner or to support major delivery milestones in multi-year projects.

- Assurance of Action Plan – considers the appropriateness of action taken in response to the critical recommendations of a previous review, usually for a project with a delivery confidence assessment of Amber/Red or Red.

6.2 Gateway Review

PPPA arrange and manage the following types of assurance reviews:

Portfolio assurance

The purpose of a portfolio assurance review is to provide senior leadership and key stakeholders with confidence that work is controlled on track and is aligned with policy or strategy. A positive review can provide confidence that an organisation's portfolio of investments in change is being managed and controlled in the right way.

Programme assurance

A Gate 0 – Strategic Assessment investigates the direction and planned outcomes of a programme, together with the progress of its constituent projects. It is expected that a programme will have at least 3 Gate 0 reviews. At the beginning, the mid stage and at the end. An early Gate 0 review is particularly valuable as it helps to confirm that the way forward is achievable, before plans have been finalised.

Project assurance

- Gate 1 Business Justification - investigates the Strategic Outline Case and the proposed way forward to confirm that the project scope is clear and achievable, and the project is likely to deliver what is required.
- Gate 2 Delivery Strategy - investigates the assumptions in the Outline Business Case and proposed approach for delivering the project. If there is a procurement, the delivery strategy will include details of the sourcing options, proposed procurement route and supporting information. This review will also check that plans for implementation are in place.
- Gate 3 Investment Decision - investigates the Full Business Case and the governance arrangements for the investment decision to confirm that the project is still required, affordable and achievable within the proposed time. This review will also check whether the implementation plans are robust.
- Gate 4 Readiness for Service - investigates the organisation's readiness to make the transition from the specification/solution to implement and go to 'go live'. Where appropriate it will assess the capability of delivery partners and service providers.
- Gate 5 Operations Review and Benefits Realisation - confirms that the benefits set out in the business case are being achieved and that the operational service (or facility) is running smoothly, and the agreed strategic outcomes are being met.

Each of the above reviews has a supporting workbook that contains suggested areas of investigation and examples of evidence. The areas of focus during the review will be agreed between the review team, PPPA, SRO, and project team.

Project Validation Review

Explores the critical aspects required for setting up a project effectively, capability needed and if emerging options will deliver the outcomes before making commitments.

Project Assessment Review

These take place outwith the fixed review points e.g. at the request of the Accountable Office, Senior Responsible Owner, or to support major delivery milestones in multi-year projects. This review has a bespoke terms of reference.

Critical Friend Review

A short critical friend review for the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) on specific issue(s) e.g. the business case.

Assurance of Action Plan (AAP)

The AAP is for projects with an Amber/Red or Red Stage Gate Assessment (SGA) and gives the SRO and stakeholders assurance the project is addressing the recommendations from a review and provides a reassessment of the SGA.

Annex B - DIGITAL ASSURANCE OFFICE UPDATE – NOVEMBER 2025

7. Introduction

The [Technology Assurance Framework](#), administered by the Digital Assurance Office (DAO), has been in operation since 2017. It aims to reduce the likelihood of projects failing for common reasons, improve delivery and ensure that the lessons learned from previous experience are reflected and embedded in future practice.

The spring 2025 update provided an overview of assurance outcomes since 2017-18 up to 2024-25. This update focuses on insights from assurance undertaken in 2024-25 and provides an update on our continuous improvement work.

8. Continuous improvement overview

The DAO catalogues and codes the recommendations from assurance reviews to draw out insights on common challenges for projects and service teams. The common challenges identified from major digital project reviews and Digital Standard assessments have been published annually since 2022-23 and are available on the [digital blog](#)¹. Deep dives on common challenges have also been prepared on [planning](#), [governance](#), [procurement and contract management](#) and [resourcing](#).

These insights are reported to Scottish Government and other public sector leaders, acting as a prompt to ensure steps are being taken to mitigate against these common challenges. They are shared with Scottish Government teams – Digital Directorate, Programme and Project Management Centre for Expertise, Digital Commercial Service, Scottish Procurement and Property Directorate – who provide guidance and training for those delivering digital projects and programmes to help inform the support they provide.

The DAO is also working with organisations that have engaged with assurance to share their experiences from delivery, which might help others to deliver digital projects. A focus for our most recent case studies and events has been on the impact of assurance, and how to get the most from the process. We have shared perspectives from SROs on the value they have received from assurance and how they have embedded assurance into their projects. All of our case studies are available on the digital blog.

¹ The digital blog is available on the Scottish Government website and you can subscribe [here](#) for updates.

The insights and case studies are actively promoted to those delivering projects and services through various forums that support digital project and service delivery. We have collaborated with the Social Security Programme and the Digital Commercial Service to promote our insights and case studies at Once for Scotland and Scottish Government commercial week events earlier in 2025.

Improvements are made to the Technology Assurance Framework on an ongoing basis to reflect emerging practice and respond to feedback on the process. Major digital project gate reviews are structured around a checklist which sets the content of the review. A comprehensive review of the gate checklists was initiated in 2023, with new checklists launched in 2024. There is currently an interim update underway.

9. Digital Scotland Service Standard Assessments

Following a decision by the Executive Team to discontinue independent assessment of compliance with the Digital Scotland Service Standard (DSSS), the committed pipeline of assessments concluded in June. The de-prioritisation of this work was critical to ensure the Directorate for Internal Audit and Assurance could continue to provide essential services and focus resource on the assurance of major digital projects.

The requirement for services to adhere to the Standard has not changed and service teams are required to maintain evidence of compliance. Scottish Government is implementing digital portfolio management across the organisation and Executive Agencies, and is considering the assurance and compliance arrangements outwith the portfolio management processes. Major digital projects continue to undergo mandatory assurance during their lifecycle.

10. Insights from 2024-25

In 2024-25 there were 288 recommendations from 37 major digital project reviews. Insights from these reviews have been published on the [digital blog](#). Five themes stood out as dominant areas for improvement:

10.1 Invitation to tender (ITT) and evaluation criteria

Recommendations focused on: ensuring that the ITT reflects the scope and scale of services required; that there is specialist or peer review of ITT documents; that there is a clear criteria for issuing the ITT and that there is clarity on pricing requirements.

10.2 Organisation and planning

Recommendations focused on: having in place a high-level plan that identifies all major milestones and events; more detailed project plans to be produced for the short and mid-

term, which include dependencies and resource requirements; plans should be reviewed and updated as the project moves through lifecycle and there should be a long-term, holistic view of the project/programme.

10.3 Resource requirements and/or capability

Recommendations focused on: proactive resource planning including the preparation of a resource plan which considers resource needed through the lifecycle, aligned to the project plan; securing specialist expertise/support; extending existing resources within the project team and escalating resource requirements and constraints where they cannot be resolved by the SRO.

10.4 Governance and control

Recommendations focused on formal governance processes being in place which are communicated, understood and followed; having appropriate governance structures including strategic oversight, board membership, meetings and formalised arrangements and governance arrangements being kept under review as the project moves through its lifecycle.

10.5 Communications/engagement

Recommendations focused on having in place clear communication plans for specific areas of work; engaging with a broad range of stakeholders to support successful project delivery; implement, monitor, review and update the communications plan as the project progresses and share delivery plans, priorities and milestones with stakeholders.

The themes described above regularly feature as dominant themes from assurance with the exception of communications and engagement which emerged as a new dominant theme this year. Focusing on communications and engagement there were 20 recommendations in 2024-25, generated from 15 reviews of 13 different projects. Around a third of the recommendations were from business justification gates, where the projects were at an early stage. Recommendations at this stage focused on identifying stakeholders and putting in place a communications strategy and plans.

In 2024-25 there were 22 Digital Scotland Service Standard (DSSS) assessments. Insights from these assessments have been published on the [digital blog](#). The criteria that were less likely to be met and the focus of the recommendations made, were:

Criterion 1: understand users and their needs – undertake appropriate impact assessments; involve a diverse range of users; have in place a plan for testing; have a description of research activities and timelines and understand how research becomes insight.

Criterion 5: make sure everyone can use the service – test the inclusivity of the service; prepare an accessibility statement which includes details about plans to improve accessibility where relevant; include diverse perspectives; ensure the service is inclusive and use simple language.

Criterion 6: have a multidisciplinary team – make sure the team has a resource plan, identifying the right mix of skills to deliver the whole service; keep the resource plan up to date and identify and document ways of working.

Criterion 9: define what success looks like and publish performance data – understand what success for the service looks like with clear, measurable metrics to show whether success has been achieved; define the approach to publishing data; establish processes for ongoing performance monitoring and clearly indicate how the service is meeting relevant NPF outcomes.

Criterion 13: operate a reliable service – plan for major events; ensure disaster recovery plans are complete and define, measure and report on non functional requirements.

Criterion 14: ensure sponsor acceptance – establish robust governance structures; document risk management and decision making processes; secure appropriate sponsor/ministerial sign off and communicate clearly with stakeholders.

18 of the 22 DSSS assessments in 2024-25 were for medium to high risk/cost services. The criteria that were most challenging for those services to meet included those set out above as well as criterion 11 – make new source code open, with recommendations focused around putting place a plan for making software open source.