

## 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

21 May 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 March 2025. This progress update includes the following information:

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

Aligned to our previous communications on the design of the attached projects report, improvements have been made to address the Committee's specific requests relating to cost and schedule changes, and general usability. The report will continue to undergo continuous improvement which will see further amendments to enhance the report.

As a consequence of driving standardisation to the calculation and reporting of project whole-life costs, it may initially appear that projects have material cost changes when comparing to previously reported figures. The Payments Transformation Project and Aspen Project are examples of this as implementation cost figures were previously reported, which in this reporting cycle have been calculated to cover the whole-life costs as defined in the attached report glossary. There are no material cost changes in these projects however cost variances shown are a result of the amended calculation. As longer-term standardisation is established, this issue will filter out however contextual narratives will be provided in these circumstances during the transition period. Similarly, where projects

progress from outline business case to full business case, cost estimates are naturally refined through increased clarity on deliverables.

We are happy to discuss the report 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**

11 April 2025

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# 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 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 March 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 September 2024.
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 projects 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 September 2024 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 variation in the approach projects in different areas and organisations take to calculating costs. Some calculate implementation costs without live running costs, others include live running costs but for varied durations, i.e. over different number of years. The Digital Portfolio Office will work with colleagues from the Programme and Project Management Centre of Expertise to drive consistency and standardisation however this will require behavioural and process changes which will take time and close engagement with delivery and finance teams across core Scottish Government and wider public bodies in scope.

### 3. Definitions

Term	Description
<b>Baseline</b>	<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>
<b>Estimated whole-life cost (WLCs)</b>	<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>
<b>Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)</b>	<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>
<b>Technology Assurance Framework (TAF)</b>	<p>The TAF is intended to improve delivery and ensure that the lessons learned from previous experience are reflected and embedded in future practice. It applies to new digital public services and new investments in technology for organisations in scope. The main components of the TAF are major project reviews and Digital Scotland Service Standard assessments. <a href="#">Further information can be accessed online.</a></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.

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
<a href="#">Full Business Case Digital Transformation - Stage 2</a>	Care Inspectorate	Moved to Delivery	No change	No change	No change
<a href="#">Digital Infrastructure Programme</a>	Disclosure Scotland	Remains in Delivery	10.73% ▲ [B]	No change	Cost change reflects approved budget from latest business case instead of previously forecasted budget
<a href="#">Digital Service Assets Programme</a>	Disclosure Scotland	Closed	13.87% ▲ [M]	10.71% ▲	Schedule extended due to re-forecasting and an increased monitoring and acceptance period.
<a href="#">Aspen (Management Information Platform)</a>	Forestry and Land Scotland	Remains in Delivery	42.42% ▲ [C]	9.52% ▲	No material change to project cost, the previously reported cost was based on implementation cost and the updated figure reflects the whole-life cost. Increase in schedule due to delays in change management and business readiness activities, extension formally approved through change control.
<a href="#">2022 Census</a>	National Records of Scotland	Moved to Closure	No change	7.38% ▼	Reduction in schedule due to change to dissemination plan for final major data release
<a href="#">Body Worn Video - National Rollout</a>	Police Scotland	Moved to Delivery	6.60% ▲ [M]	10.53% ▲	Increase in schedule due to delays in supplier engagement and increase in cost due to approved expansion of scope.
<a href="#">Core Operational Solutions - Phase 2</a>	Police Scotland	Remains in Closure	No change	14.46% ▲	Increase in schedule due to delays in supplier engagement



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
<a href="#">National Integrated Command and Control System (NICCS)</a>	Police Scotland	Remains in Delivery	41.77% ▲ [M]	22.37% ▲	A significant volume of defects were identified and have subsequently been resolved, however, this has impacted delivery timescales and subsequently affected project costs.
<a href="#">Unified Communications and Contact Platform (UCCP)</a>	Police Scotland	Moved to Delivery	1.96% ▲ [M]	11.11% ▲	Assumptions included within the Supplier tender response have proven to be more complex than anticipated, requiring additional development effort and time, subsequently affecting project costs and timeline.
<a href="#">Moveable Transactions</a>	Registers of Scotland	Moved to Delivery	3.57% ▼ [M]	No change	Reduction in cost due to unrequired contingency amounts
<a href="#">Digital Case Management System - Office of the Public Guardian</a>	Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service	Remains in Delivery	3.03% ▲ [M]	16.67% ▲	Increased cost and schedule due to extended phase 1 of delivery and subsequent replanning of phases 2 and 3
<a href="#">New Mobilising System</a>	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Moved to Delivery	5.16% ▲ [B]	31.43% ▲	Increase in cost due to updated estimates from outline business case into full business case. Increase in schedule due to delays in procurement process.
<a href="#">Digital Evidence Sharing Capability</a>	Scottish Government	Remains in Delivery	38.33% ▲ [B]	54.24% ▲	Previous whole-life cost was based on Outline Business Case Financial Case. The most recent whole-life cost is based on refined estimates within updated Full Business Case. There is no material change to the programme schedule. The end date has been updated to reflect the full anticipated lifetime of the programme, rather than just the implementation phase as previously reported.
<a href="#">Digital Identity Programme - Digital Identity Service</a>	Scottish Government	Remains in Delivery	No change	No change	No change
<a href="#">Electronic Vote Counting: Local Government Elections May 2027</a>	Scottish Government	New to report	New entry	New entry	
<a href="#">Legacy Services Programme Phase 1</a>	Scottish Government	Moved to Delivery	N/A	N/A	Project cost and schedule information was reported as TBC in previous report, figures have now been provided in this report.
<a href="#">Middleware and Java Upgrade Project</a>	Scottish Government	Closed	23.28% ▲ [M]	3.57% ▲	Increased cost due to replanning of the project which took place in October 2023, with full project board backing and approval. The project moved from a December 2023 deployment date to June 2024, which enabled a successful project delivery and continuity of ARE services.

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
<a href="#">National Standardised Assessments for Scotland - Phase 2</a>	Scottish Government		No change	No change	No change
<a href="#">Payments Transformation Project</a>	Scottish Government	Remains in Delivery	107.45% ▲ [C]	13.92% ▲	No material change to project cost, the previously reported cost was based on implementation cost and the updated figure reflects the whole-life cost. Increase in schedule due to delays in building internal capability and challenges embedding common platforms in public bodies.
<a href="#">Shared Services Transformation Programme - Phase 1</a>	Scottish Government	Moved to Closure	2.60% ▲ [M]	Under closure	Increased cost due to extended support requirements for stabilisation and optimisation of Oracle Cloud.
<a href="#">Social Security Programme (IT Elements)</a>	Scottish Government	Remains in Delivery	No change	No change	No change
<a href="#">McCloud Remedy</a>	Scottish Public Pensions Agency	Remains in Delivery	40.85% ▲ [M]	7.55% ▲	Cost and schedule increase due to unforeseen level of complexity, interpretations of tax guidance and system restrictions.
<a href="#">Pension Platform Programme</a>	Scottish Public Pensions Agency	Closed	No change	16.22% ▼	Decreased schedule due to re-scoping of programme.
<a href="#">Digital Travel Data Information Services - Stage 2 Technical Travel Services</a>	Transport Scotland	Remains in Delivery	No change	17.17% ▲	Increase in schedule due to complexity in the build stage around data sets and supplier acclimatising to Digital Scotland Service Standard process.

## **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.

## 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 2023	Sep 2026	-	-	£8.63M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jun 2023	Sep 2026	-	Planning	£8.63M	-
Current report	Jun 2023	Sep 2026	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£8.63M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
N/A	N/A

**Assurance update:** A Pre-procurement Gate was held in September 2024 and the action plan has been completed.

## 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 2021	Oct 2025	-	-	£20.22M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jun 2021	Oct 2025	-	Delivery	£18.26M	-
Current report	Jun 2021	Oct 2025	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£20.22M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
No variance on schedule however the final project within this Programme, Platform Re-Engineering (Phase 2), is currently under review meaning that the scope, timeline and costs could change in the next return.	No cost variance. The cost provided in the previous return was our forecasted budget (what we expected to spend), this has now been updated to reflect the total budget (how much has been agreed to be spent) as it appeared in our last-approved Business Case.

**Assurance update:** The action plan arising from February 2024 Delivery Gate is in progress is expected to complete as the delivery moves towards closure.

## Aspen (Management Information Platform), Forestry and Land Scotland

**Accountable Officer:** Kevin Quinlan, Chief Executive Officer

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Michael Hymers, Head of Corporate Office

**Project description:** The purpose of the project is to help Forestry and Land Scotland (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 2020	Mar 2025	-	-	£8.06M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Mar 2020	Jun 2025	-	Delivery	£4.80M	-
Current report	Mar 2020	Dec 2025	9 months - ▲ 15.00%	Delivery	£6.84M	£1.23M - ▼ 15.20%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
We are on track in relation to User Acceptance Testing and therefore the Aspen system is close to being ready on time. However, change management and business readiness activity is taking longer than anticipated. Additional time has been granted by Project Board to ensure risks are addressed.	No current material change to project cost, the previously reported cost was based on implementation cost and the updated figure reflects the whole-life cost. The estimated whole-life cost will increase in future reports due to the recent project delays that have been agreed by project board. There will also be more accurate information available on the cost of a managed support service and the cost of the support team.

**Assurance update:** A Health-check was conducted in November 2024, a subsequent Action Plan Assurance Review was completed in March 2025. A Go Live Gate Review is currently being planned with Digital Assurance Office.

## 2022 Census, National Records of Scotland

**Accountable Officer:** Linda Sinclair, Director of Corporate Services and National Records of Scotland 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. A General Report on the programme was laid before parliament on 17 December that included strategic lessons learned that will be used to support the design and delivery of the next Census programme.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Oct 2015	Dec 2024	-	-	£140.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Oct 2015	Dec 2025	-	Delivery	£140.00M	-
Current report	Oct 2015	Mar 2025	3 months - ▲ 2.73%	Under closure	£140.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Change to dissemination plan for final major data release (multivariate data) reflecting additional work on data security for small area statistics, splitting into two releases with the first by end 2024 and second by end March 2025.	

**Assurance update:** The Digital Assurance Office has discharged the Programme from further digital assurance.

## 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 2022	Dec 2026	-	-	£38.25M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Mar 2022	Dec 2026	-	Planning	£32.90M	-
Current report	Mar 2022	Jun 2027	6 months - ▲ 10.53%	Delivery	£35.07M	£3.18M - ▼ 8.30%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Change Request approved 13 February 2025 at Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee to extend timeline by 6 months due to a delay in supplier engagement which affected solution build and testing.	Baseline estimated whole-life cost was estimated prior to Full Business Case approval and did not include network infrastructure as was originally out of scope. Full Business Case estimated whole-life cost was £38.25M, which was reduced to £35.07M due to reduced network upgrade costs, with Change Request approved at Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee on 13th February 2025.

**Assurance update:** A Go Live Gate was completed in February 2025.



## Core Operational Solutions (COS) - Phase 2, Police Scotland

**Accountable Officer:** Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Chief Digital Information Officer

**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 Phase 3 does not meet the threshold for PAC Major ICT Projects, therefore, will not be reported on going forward.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jul 2017	Jun 2024	-	-	£36.82M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jul 2017	Jun 2024	-	Under closure	£36.82M	-
Current report	Jul 2017	Jun 2025	12 months - ▲ 14.46%	Under closure	£36.82M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
COS Phase 2 is currently in Closure with the End Project Date expected to slip to 30 June 2025, awaiting Change Request. 3 February 2025 at Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee to extend timeline by 6 months due to a delay in supplier engagement which directly impacted solution build and testing schedules.	N/A

**Assurance update:** No further digital assurance activities have taken place since the last update due to the delivery transitioning between the close of Phase Two and initiation of Phase Three.

## 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 2018	Mar 2025	-	-	£7.94M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Nov 2018	Mar 2025	-	Delivery	£7.90M	-
Current report	Nov 2018	Aug 2026	17 months - ▲ 22.37%	Delivery	£11.20M	£3.26M - ▲ 41.06%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Extended timeline formally approved via change request at Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee in March 2025. A significant volume of defects were identified and have subsequently been resolved, however, this has impacted delivery timescales and subsequently affected project costs.	Estimated whole-life cost change approved via formal change request at Scottish Police Authority Resources Committee in March 2025. A significant volume of defects were identified and have subsequently been resolved, however, this has impacted delivery timescales and subsequently affected project costs..

**Assurance update:** No further digital assurance has taken place since the last update. The Digital Assurance Office understand that Police Scotland is reviewing the path to live for the project and any further assurance requirement will be considered once the approach is agreed

## Unified Communications and Contact Platform (UCCP), Police Scotland

**Accountable Officer:** Deputy Chief Constable Transformation

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Chief Digital Information Officer

**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 2019	Mar 2025	-	-	£10.21M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Dec 2019	Mar 2025	-	Planning	£10.20M	-
Current report	Dec 2019	Oct 2025	7 months - ▲ 11.11%	Delivery	£10.40M	£0.19M - ▲ 1.86%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Extended timeline formally approved via change request at Scottish Police Authority Resource Committee in December 2024. Some assumptions included within the Supplier tender response have proven to be more complex than anticipated, requiring additional development effort and time, subsequently affecting project costs.	Estimated whole-life cost change formally approved via change request at Scottish Police Authority Resource Committee in December 2024. Some assumptions included within the Supplier tender response have proven to be more complex than anticipated, requiring additional development effort and time, subsequently affecting project costs.

**Assurance update:** The next planned digital assurance point is a Go Live Gate currently targeted for Summer 2025.

## 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 baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jul 2021	Jun 2024	-	-	£8.40M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jul 2021	Jun 2025	-	Planning	£8.40M	-
Current report	Jul 2021	Jun 2025	12 months - ▲ 34.29%	Delivery	£8.10M	£0.30M - ▼ 3.57%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Good progress has been made on the build of the new registers. Complexities with the secondary legislation required for the commencement of the registers, including securing UK Government approval for a required Order under Scotland Act 1998 in order to bring financial instruments into scope of the Act, and the lead time required for such an Order to be made, have resulted in the proposed implementation date for the two new registers to be put back to Spring 2025 and project completion June 2025.	Whole life cost variance relates to unrequired contingency amounts. Also budget was amended between financial years due to unavoidable delays in the legislative process. Spend tracking slightly below forecast due to resource changes – within tolerance of small contingency in project.

**Assurance update:** A combined Delivery/Go Live Gate was completed in February 2025.

## 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 2022	Sep 2025	-	-	£6.60M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Feb 2022	Aug 2025	-	Delivery	£6.60M	-
Current report	Feb 2022	Mar 2026	6 months - ▲ 13.95%	Delivery	£6.80M	£0.20M - ▲ 3.03%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Schedule variance is due to replanning of the project Phases with a longer Phase 1 delivery and replanned Phase 2 & 3 deliveries.	Variance of estimated whole-life costs is due to a restructuring of the project Phases. Phase 1 implementation was moved from October 2024 to January 2025 to allow for additional business and system readiness activities to be carried out. Phases 2 & 3 were then replanned with future delivery dates. This increased costs slightly to account for a later Phase 1 delivery.

**Assurance update:** A Go Live Gate was completed in September 2024 and the action plan is in progress.

## 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 2023	Oct 2026	-	-	£40.99M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2023	Dec 2025	-	Planning	£38.98M	-
Current report	Jan 2023	Nov 2026	1 months - ▲ 2.22%	Delivery	£40.99M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
The project end date was formally changed to November 2026 due to a split in the implementation approach which was necessary due to delays in the procurement process. This has resulted in a new approved baseline since the last report.	Previous whole-life cost was based on Outline Business Case Financial Case, the most recent whole-life cost are based on refined estimates within the approved Full Business Case Financial Case

**Assurance update:** A Gate 3 (Investment Decision) took place in August 2024 and a Delivery Gate is currently underway. A Go-Live Gate is planned for September 2025.

## Digital Evidence Sharing Capability, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Neil Rennick, Director General Education & Justice

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Andrew Hendry, Chief Digital Information Officer Police Scotland; Denise Swanson, Deputy Director Civil Law and Legal System

**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 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 2016	Mar 2031	-	-	£38.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2016	Nov 2025	-	Delivery	£27.47M	-
Current report	Jan 2016	Mar 2031	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£38.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
There is no material change to the programme schedule. The end date has been updated to reflect the full anticipated lifetime of the programme, rather than just the implementation phase as previously reported.	Previous whole-life cost was based on Outline Business Case Financial Case. The most recent whole-life cost is based on refined estimates within updated Full Business Case.

**Assurance update:** Planning is underway to run a Delivery Gate in support of the conclusion of national rollout and transition to Business as Usual

## Digital Identity Programme - Digital Identity Service, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Geoff Huggins, Chief Digital Officer

**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 2018	Dec 2028	-	-	£45.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2018	Dec 2028	-	Delivery	£45.00M	-
Current report	Jan 2018	Dec 2028	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£45.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Programme remains on schedule for Live Running in 2028.	

**Assurance update:** The action plan arising from the Delivery Gate held in June 2024 is in progress. The next assurance activity is under planning for later this year.



## Legacy Services Programme Phase 1, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Roy Brannen, Director General Net Zero

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Nick Downes, Douglas Petrie, Agriculture and Rural Economy 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 the Phase 1 of the programme are to mitigate the associated risks to business continuity and cyber security. The Legacy Programme has also been established to address a number of external requirements resulting from the wider Scottish Government technology roadmaps which will be addressed in subsequent phases.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Apr 2024	Dec 2026	-	-	£8.40M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Apr 2024	Tbc	-	Planning	Tbc	-
Current report	Apr 2024	Dec 2026	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£8.40M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Delivery continues based on the current programme plan as per the original 2024 business case. The project is on track to meet the key objectives of Phase 1 by the end of 2026. Phase 2 migration plan is now undergoing impact assessment to ensure compatibility with wider business as usual priorities. The availability of resource to be deployed onto this programme is the major source of delivery risk.	The estimated cost (of phase 1) remains as previously estimated at £8.4 million - 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 is has not been estimated separately for the the phase 1 deliverables and is impossible to estimate until we have more clarity on future phases, understand dependencies from new priorities and other external constraints on costs that are not yet known.

**Assurance update:** An Assurance of Action Plan review took place in August 2024. A Health check took place in April 2025.

## Payments Transformation Project, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Geoff Huggins, Chief Digital Officer

**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 2018	Mar 2026	-	-	£23.03M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Sep 2018	Apr 2025	-	Delivery	£11.10M	-
Current report	Sep 2018	Mar 2026	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£23.03M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Target for entering Public Beta phase October 2025 with a pipeline of public bodies to onboard 2025/26 and 2026/27. Significant delay with building internal capability (Engineering and Technology) to support an effective off boarding of technology partner lead to 12 plus months delivery delay. Significant support (Technical and Digital expertise and advice) required to support public bodies adopt common platforms due to limited capacity and capability in public bodies which impacts pace of delivery.	£23.027 million whole life costs taken from approved 2020 Full Business Case over 10 year period to 2030. The previous reported figure (£11.1m) reflected the estimated implementation cost of the project (agile development phases Alpha and Beta only). The updated figure (£23m) reflects the whole life cost by accounting for design, build and ongoing maintain and running of the service.

**Assurance update:** A Technology Assurance Framework (TAF) Delivery Review assessment was undertaken in April 2024, with action plan progressing. A supplementary TAF Delivery Health-check was conducted in November 24 ahead of onboarding a major new customer. The next assurance activity; TAF Delivery Gate to Live is scheduled for June 2025 and will assess the programmes readiness to progress toward public Beta phase planned for October 2025.

## Shared Services Transformation Programme - Phase 1, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Lesley Fraser, Director General 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 baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jun 2020	-	-	-	£58.48M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jun 2020	Dec 2024	-	Delivery	£58.48M	-
Current report	Jun 2020	-	-	Under closure	£60.00M	£1.52M - ▲ 2.60%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Project is currently under closure, a formal end date will be provided in the next report.	Work to stabilise / optimise Oracle Cloud has led to extended support requirements

**Assurance update:** A Go Live Gate was completed in August 2024 and the action plan arising from the review was completed prior to progression to live operation. The next programme assurance activity is a Gate 0/5 Review (Operations Review and Benefits Realisation) in the second half of 2025.

## Social Security Programme (IT Elements), Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Louise Macdonald, Director General 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 2017	Dec 2025	-	-	£277.40M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2017	Dec 2025	-	Delivery	£277.40M	-
Current report	Jan 2017	Dec 2025	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£277.40M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
N/A	N/A

**Assurance update:** A Go Live Gate was completed in October 2024 to support the launch of Pension Age Disability Payment into pilot. The requirement for further assurance activity will continue to be reduced in 2025 as the programme will operate with earned autonomy in recognition of positive assurance outcomes in recent years.

From a Technology Assurance Framework perspective a Go Live Gate was completed in October 2024 to support the launch of Pension Age Disability Payment into pilot. The requirement for further assurance activity continues to be reduced in 2025 as the programme is operating with earned autonomy in recognition of positive assurance outcomes in recent years. In regards to Gateway Reviews, the last Gateway Review 0 on the Programme took place in February 2024 and the next and final Gateway Review 0 is currently scheduled to take place in Autumn 2025.

## McCloud Remedy, Scottish Public Pensions Agency

**Accountable Officer:** Stephen Pathirana, Chief Executive Officer Scottish Public Pensions Agency

**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 2020		-	-	£15.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Oct 2020	Mar 2025	-	Delivery	£10.65M	-
Current report	Oct 2020	Jul 2025	-	Delivery	£15.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Due to complexity of calculations, interpretation of tax interest charges and system restrictions projected dates have moved.	Complexity of regulations has resulted in larger actuarial verification costs. Slippage due to complexity and interpretation of TAX guidance from HMRC has resulted in having to extend timelines.

**Assurance update:** No further digital assurance activities are anticipated for this project.

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

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

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Mary Docherty, Head of Concessionary Travel and Integrated Ticketing Unit

**Project description:** Appointment of a Technical Supplier(s) to oversee delivery of the Programme for Government initiative to implement: 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 2021	Sep 2030	-	-	£6.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2021	Apr 2029	-	Delivery	£6.00M	-
Current report	Jan 2021	Sep 2030	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£6.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
Procurement ran from January 2021 to contract award in March 2023 and formal project kick off in May 2023. Build timeline was longer than initially planned (increasing from 9 month duration to 16 months, launching the product in September 2024) due to complexity of new data sets being ingested from 3rd parties and supplier being new to the DSSS process. Contract is for 4 +1 +1 years commencing on launch date so no impact on overall costs.	

**Assurance update:** A health check is scheduled for late May 2025.

## **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 2024	May 2027	-	-	£12.00m	
Last report – Sep 2024	-	-	-	-	-	-
Current report	Feb 2024	May 2027	0 months - ● 0.00%	Planning	£12.00m	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
N/A	N/A

**Assurance update:** A Pre-Procurement Gate was held in March



## National Standardised Assessments for Scotland - Phase 2, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Neil Rennick, Director General Education & Justice

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Alison Taylor, Deputy Director: Improvement, Attainment and Wellbeing

**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 baseline	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from baseline
Baseline	Jan 2020	Jul 2026	-	-	£17.00M	
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2020	Jul 2026	-		£17.00M	-
Current report	Jan 2020	Jul 2026	0 months - ● 0.00%	Delivery	£17.00M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

Project narrative on schedule variance	Project narrative on cost variance
N/A	N/A

**Assurance update:** No further digital assurance activity is expected.

### 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.

#### Digital Service Assets Programme, Disclosure Scotland

**Accountable Officer:** Gerard Hart, Chief Executive Disclosure Scotland

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Lynne McMinn, Director of Digital Strategy and Innovation

**Project description:** The elements that improve our working service. Projects that are focused on the enhancement of Disclosure Scotland services. The scope includes the build of new service assets that facilitate the direct ingestion of Police Scotland data and also the build of a new online account.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from last report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from last report
Last report – Sep 2024	Jun 2022	Oct 2024	-	Delivery	£5.84M	-
Current report	Jun 2022	Jan 2025	3 months - ▲ 10.71%	Closed/benefits realisation	£6.65M	£0.81M - ▲ 13.87%

#### Project narrative on project closure

Within this Programme, 2 assets were developed.

1. The online account, is an asset which provides foundational capabilities to ensure Disclosure Scotland can comply with the new legislation, as required by the Disclosure Scotland Act (2020). The Online Account delivered the following:
  - Individuals and organisations can now interact with DS securely via their own online account
  - Individuals and organisations can now review disclosure content in a digital way
  - Individuals can now share results via their online account

## Project narrative on project closure

- The identity of individuals can now be verified using Digital Identity Scotland
2. Ongoing Monitoring Other Relevant Information (OM ORI), is an asset which allows effective information sharing in an optimal digital way between Disclosure Scotland and Police Scotland. This delivered:
- a Portal for Police Scotland to submit OM ORI, with the information being uploaded directly on to the Person Profile on our internal case management system (Phoenix) in real-time.
  - functionality for Disclosure Scotland that allows real-time management for the flow of the submissions on receipt of OM ORI on our internal case management system (Phoenix)

Overall, the end date of this programme was extended from October 24 - January 25, following the Online Account project being re-forecasted, the public beta milestone being moved out and us including a longer monitoring and acceptance period. It was delivered under budget; the total programme spend was 5.96 m against a 6.65 m budget as per the last approved the Business Case. This programme has made efficiencies across the Disclosure process holistically, enhanced communications and engagement with our customers and supports the Scottish Government vision of a 'New Digital Strategy for Scotland'. Key benefits realised include;

- We set a target to deliver end to end disclosure application, identity verification and results services through the online account model. A total of 162, 340 customers have received their results online (up to Jan 2025), with the same being issued to countersigning employers.
- Online disclosures are around 1.5 days faster than traditional paper certificates due to the removal of print waiting time.
- Reduction in postage costs - Now that more people are receiving their results digitally, we have seen a drop in postage costs despite price increases by Royal Mail. In prior years we have spent around £1m on postage costs and this year we are forecasting to only spend approximately £700k and have seen the monthly spend for printing drop to only £42k in January. This is forecasted to continually reduce now that all of our key services offer digital results.
- The OM ORI Portal provides improved data security in comparison with the previous mechanism.
- Introduction of Auditability of OM ORI data sharing history.
- Reduced OM ORI process administration

**Assurance update:** The action plan arising from previous assurance activity is ongoing but no further assurance points expected as the project moves to closure.

## Middleware and Java Upgrade Project, Scottish Government

**Accountable Officer:** Roy Brannen, Director General Net Zero

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Lamine Lachhab, Chief Technology Officer

**Project description:** The project is focussed on upgrading a critical component within our technology stack. This work is vital in ensuring our systems remain stable, reliable and secure whilst continuing to provide the common interface for technologies involved in making Agriculture payments. This Middleware Project is an upgrade project that is essential to mitigate the cyber security risks associated with running out of support software and is the first project in a multi-year Programme of Legacy remediation work.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from last report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from last report
Last report – Sep 2024	Jun 2022	Oct 2024	-	Live - further releases planned	£4.60M	-
Current report	Jun 2022	Nov 2024	1 months - ▲ 3.57%	Closed/benefits realisation	£5.67M	£1.07M - ▲ 23.28%

### Project narrative on project closure

The Middleware & Java Upgrade was formally closed on 05 November 2024 with the full scope as set out in the business case being delivered for this project. The increased cost was due to the replanning of the project which took place in October 2023, with full project board backing and approval. The project moved from a December 2023 deployment date to June 2024, which enabled a successful project delivery and continuity of ARE (ARE) services. The upgrade benefits Agriculture and Rural Economy by ensuring there is a stable, supported and compliant platform to enable payments to continue to ARE customers. It is providing greater business flexibility in supporting current service delivery and provide a more flexible platform that can be adapted to deliver future schemes designed in the ARP (Agricultural Reform Programme) and will help future projects including the Legacy Services Programme.

**Assurance update:** Digital assurance activity concluded with the Go Live Gate held in May 2024 and no further independent assurance activity is expected.

## Pension Platform Programme, Scottish Public Pensions Agency

**Accountable Officer:** Stephen Pathirana, Chief Executive Officer Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA)

**Senior Responsible Owner:** Frances Graham, Chief Transformation Officer

**Project description:** The provision of, and migration to a cloud hosted and managed Pension and Payroll administration platform, together with associated support and maintenance beyond March 2026 (when the current contract ends). Phase 2 scope of the project includes Member Record Structure, Engage, Data Transformation, P&F Arrears, Data Quality Dashboard & Pensions Dashboard.

Report	Start date	End date	Schedule variance from last report	Project phase	Estimated whole-life cost	Estimated whole-life cost variance from last report
Last report – Sep 2024	Jan 2020	Mar 2026	-	Delivery	£15.30M	-
Current report	Jan 2020	Mar 2025	12 months - ▼ 16.22%	Under closure	£15.30M	£0.00M - ● 0.00%

### Project narrative on project closure

The Pensions Platform Programme (PPP) has now been formally closed, with full approval and sign-off by the Programme Board and Digital Assurance Office. This marks the successful conclusion of a the procurement and cloud migration of SPPA Pension Administration System. Further phases of enhancement have been transitioned into standalone workstreams under Operational Change. This approach enables a structured and sustainable continuation enhancing existing processes through the chosen administration system. A robust governance framework has been established to provide ongoing strategic oversight and risk management. The inhouse ops transformation Project Board will oversee these workstreams, with additional reporting and engagement at key governance levels.

**Assurance update:** A Health check was conducted in September 2024. No further digital assurance activities are expected as the project moves into closure.

## 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 digital public services and new investments in technology. The Framework is made up of two main elements – major digital project reviews and Digital Scotland Service Standard assessments.

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.

### 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.

Major digital projects may also be assessed for compliance with the Digital Scotland Service Standard. These assessments take place at the end of the Discovery and Alpha phases and before entry in Public Beta or Live. We are currently reviewing our approach to these and will provide an update on this in the next report.

## **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**

### **– APRIL 2025**

#### **1. 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. This update provides an overview of assurance outcomes since 2017-18 and our continuous improvement work.

#### **2. Assurance review outcomes 2017-18 – 2024-25**

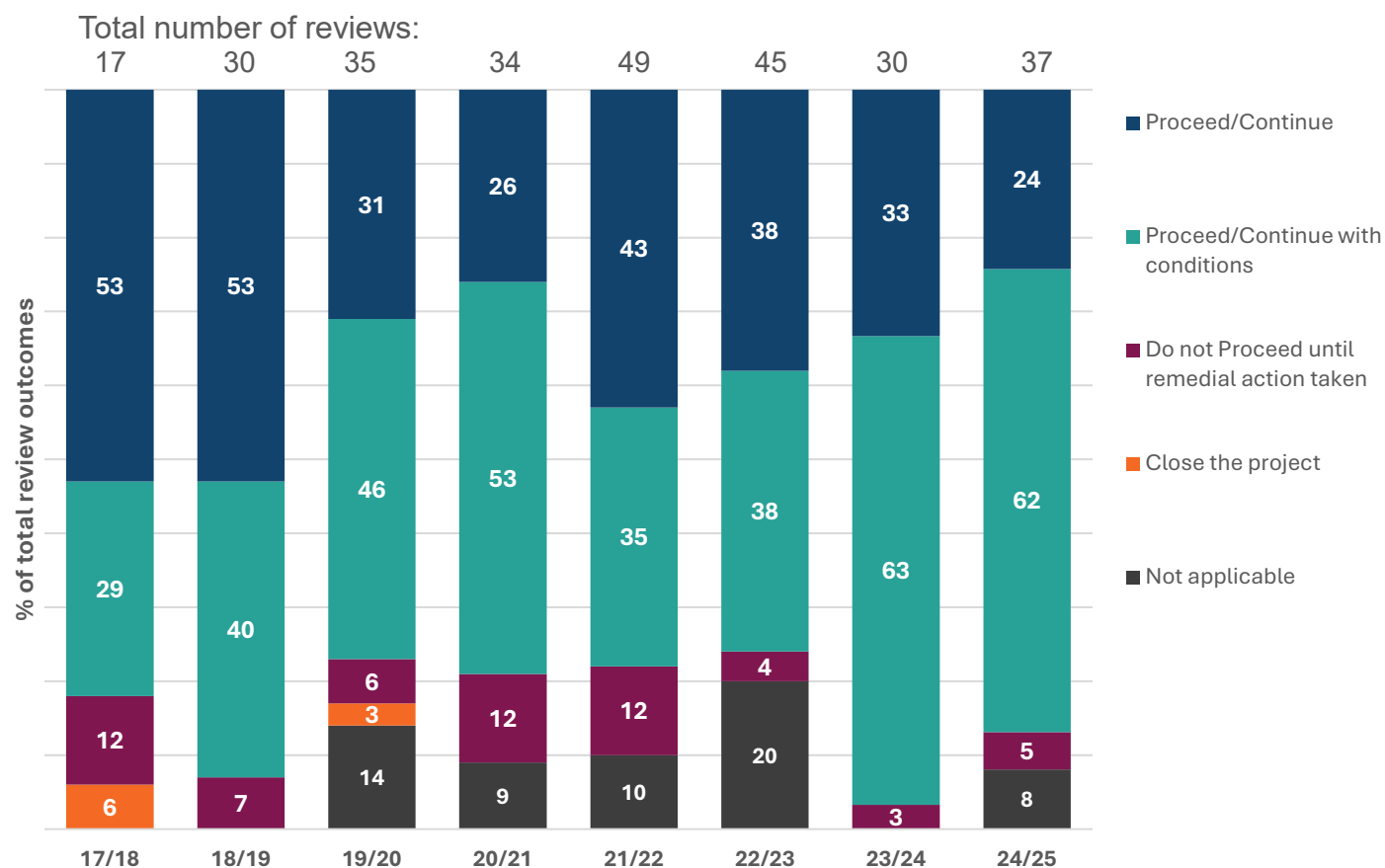
Technology Assurance Framework reviews result in an overarching recommendation to the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) or Service Owner on whether the project can proceed (with or without conditions), should pause to take remedial action or stop where the project is irrecoverable. There are some exceptions e.g. health checks or mid phase Digital Standard checkpoints where a recommendation on whether the project can proceed is not always required. Detailed recommendations will also be provided for areas requiring specific attention or opportunities to strengthen delivery practice and SROs/Service Owners are required to submit an action plan to the Digital Assurance Office and report on their progress against recommendations.

Charts 1 and 2 show the total number of reviews and recommendations made, from 2017-18 to 2024-25.

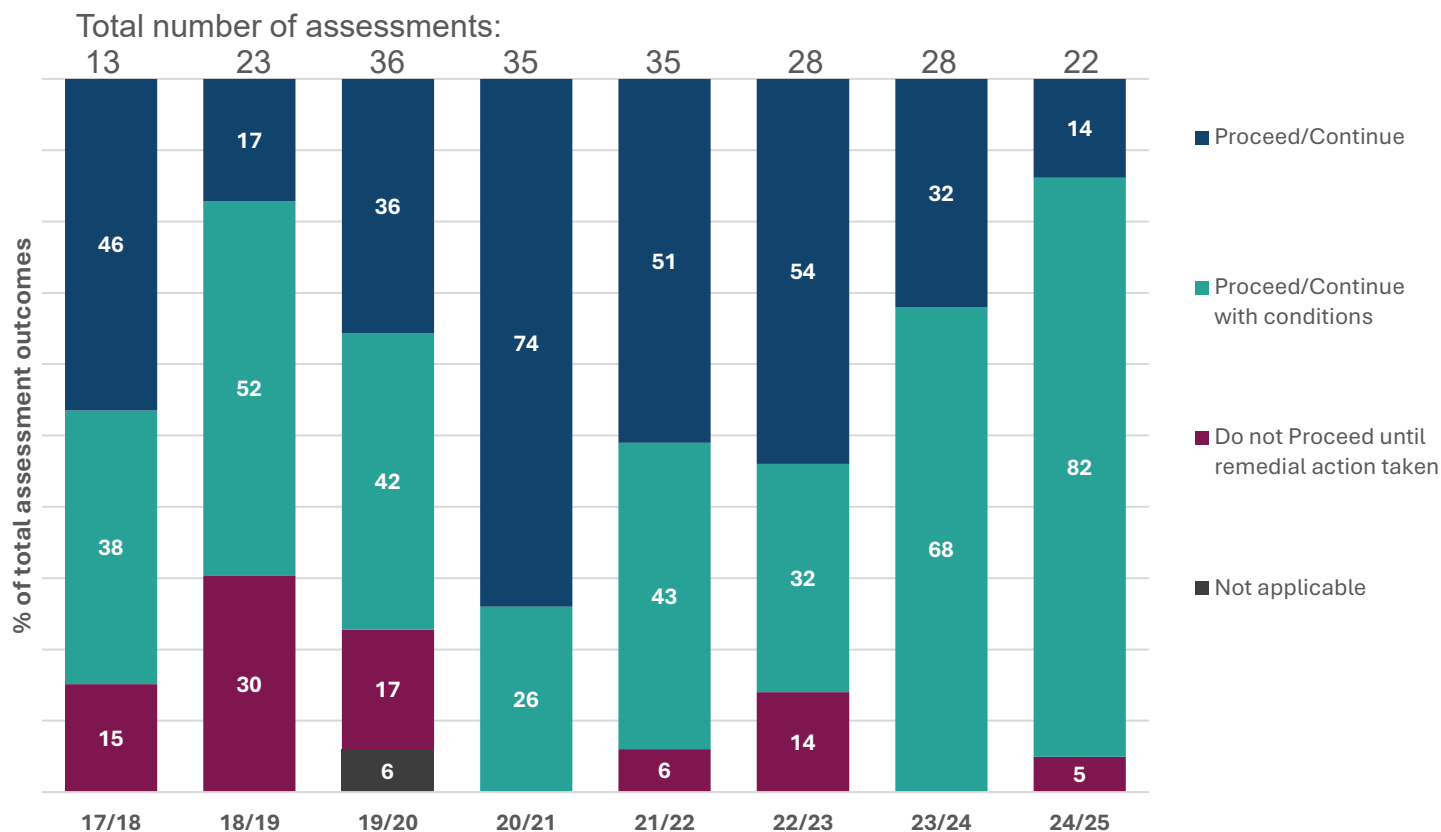
In each year since 2019-20 less than half of the major digital project reviews conducted result in an outcome where the project may proceed without any conditions. It is a similar picture for Digital Standard assessments. In chart 2 the 2020-21 and 2021-22 outcomes are not comparable with other years as the DAO did not have access to assessors to carry out Digital Standard assessments particularly during the early part of the Covid pandemic. This required alternative assurance approaches, including desk-based assessments, to be deployed.

There were 37 major digital project reviews and 22 Digital Standard assessments in 2024-25. In 2024-25 of the 37 major digital project reviews conducted, 24% resulted in a recommendation to proceed or continue in their current stage with no conditions. 62% of

### Chart 1: major digital project review outcomes



### Chart 2: Digital Standard assessment outcomes



<sup>1</sup> Due to rounding not all of the bar charts above sum to 100%

### 3. Continuous Improvement

The DAO catalogues and codes the recommendations from assurance reviews to draw out insights around common challenges for project and service teams.

These insights are reported to Scottish Government and other public sector senior leaders, acting as a prompt to ensure steps are being taken to mitigate against these common challenges. They are also 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.

Through the [digital blog](#)<sup>2</sup>, insights are being shared with project and service teams. They are also being actively promoted through various forums that support digital project and service delivery. Through promoting the insights, those delivering digital projects and services are encouraged to consider if they are taking action to mitigate these common challenges.

The common challenges surfaced through major digital project reviews and Digital Standard Assessments have been published for the 22-23 and 23-24 financial years. Insights from 24-25 will be published in the coming months and will be included in our next update. Four deep dives into dominant themes, drawing on reviews and assessments across the years have also been prepared, the last published insight was on [planning](#).

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. Overall, 18 case studies have been published, working with 5 organisations. In recent months, through collaboration with colleagues in the Scottish Government, Registers of Scotland, Historic Scotland and SEPA, case studies on the [Social Security Programme](#), [Future Flood and Incident Messaging Service Programme](#), [trove.scot](#), and the [Moveable Transactions Project](#) have been published. A number of the published case studies have focused on the value of assurance and how to maximise the benefits from the process.

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<sup>2</sup> The digital blog is available on the Scottish Government website and you can subscribe [here](#) for updates.