

Oracle Implementation Update

Audit Committee Sub-Group

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Programme delivery principles

Oracle is currently being implemented based on a phased roll out of functionality as follows:

- Phase 1 EPM (Enterprise Performance Management) – further split into multiple small roll outs. c. 125 staff affected
- Phase 2 Finance (with dependant HR processes), Procurement, Recruitment and Helpdesk modules. c. 1,500 staff affected
- Phase 3 Payroll and all remaining HR processes. c. 10,000 staff affected

And to take an 'adopt not adapt' approach

Phase 1 - EPM

- The first release of EPM (Workforce Planning and Revenue Monitoring) successfully went live on 4 September as planned with Budgeting, Capital and Virements to follow in Q3 and Q4 24/25.
- EPM only affects 130 users, contained largely within the Finance team. This will become more challenging as the system is more widely rolled out and the number of users affected increases to c. 1,500.
- It is therefore important to take the lessons learned from EPM as part of the Phase 2 roll out. These align to the implementation risks set out later and are most notably around the level of resistance to changes in working practices and the need for extensive communication and engagement in support of this.
- In mitigation, the level of comms, engagement and change management required cannot be underestimated.

Phase 2 - Go live options

Phase 2 Finance (with dependant HR processes), Procurement, Recruitment and Helpdesk modules. c. 1,500 staff affected

Decision on go-live timing balances conflicting challenges:

- Organisational readiness and context:
 - RPPR challenge
 - CQC inspection
 - Day to day increasing demand
 - Elections
- Programme team capacity
- Overall cost

April 2025 Go Live

- April 2025 represents the earliest go-live date that is within reach subject to programme and organisational capacity, and is therefore the most cost effective and preferred option.
- A go-live at the start of a financial year is often the preferred approach for programmes such as this as it avoids a mid-year data migration, simplifying the process and time required.
- Simplifies the production and audit of the annual accounts.
- It reduces the risk of approaching the 2027 deadline for replacing SAP, after which it goes out of support.

April 2025 Go Live

The achievability is dependent on:

- The programme will require key finance resources to work on the programme full time rather than business as usual (BAU).
- Senior leaders will need to support top-down key messaging such as the need to change working practices and the need to attend training.
- Users will be required to engage with the changes and to attend training, and managers will need to support in this.
- Sufficient programme capacity will be required to support both the technical implementation and the changes in working practices through comms, engagement and training.
- Whilst compromises may be required in terms of technical scope, essential deliverables will still need to be met.
- A system/user support model will need to be in place to respond to queries and issues.

April 2025 Go Live

- The main resources impacted for phase 2 will be the Finance Team, budget managers, hiring managers and requisitioners, totalling c. 1,500 staff. Senior managers will also be impacted in support of those users.
- The predominant organisational impact will be through training, engagement and through process changes.
- The programme team impact will be:
 1. The necessary technical delivery
 2. Support for the wider organisation in general through considerable communication and engagement.
 3. The implementation of a system support model
 4. Plus the necessary governance

Technical delivery

- In addition to the organisational impact and support thereof, a 1 April 2025 go live is dependent on the completion of the technical delivery. This includes data migration, user acceptance testing (UAT) and cut-over.
- Whilst compromises may be required in terms of technical scope (e.g. in 'desirable' functionality), essential deliverables will still need to be met. These are:
 - All planned test cases run at least once in line with the UAT test plan and if unable to be run, agreement must be reached by all stakeholders and appropriate status appended to test cases.
 - Defect Acceptance Criteria (Business Severity): Sev1 =0; S2 = 0; S3 <=30; S4 <=60
 - Any outstanding S1 and S2 defects will need agreement from the business on any mitigation plan
 - Test Completion Report produced and signed off

Communications and Engagement

- As recognised in the independent assessment of the programme, it is critical to take an 'adopt not adapt' approach and that the associated necessary activity around organisational readiness and managing change is as important as the technical delivery of the programme.
- This is supported by focused communications and engagement activity which will be highly visible and people-focused, using existing channels, with particular importance on engaging and training managers and evidencing early wins that will help build momentum and highlight the benefits of the system.
- This activity also acknowledges the importance and context of key organisational events such as the significant financial constraints, financial year-end, May 25 elections, CQC inspection and how these may impact staff capacity and capability and therefore will be considered in implementation planning.
- Organisational readiness is a key enabler to achieving an April 2025 go live date and communication and engagement activity will continue to highlight system benefits, beyond the ability to move away from SAP.

System benefits

Whilst there is an imperative to deliver on this implementation due to SAP going out of support at the end of 2027, it is worth noting that the Oracle system brings with it certain benefits such as:

- **Enhanced User Interface and Usability:** Oracle systems have an intuitive, user-friendly interface that simplifies daily tasks, along with Single Sign-On. The use of Oracle Guided learning giving real-time guidance as staff use the system reduces the learning curve.
- **Employee Self-Service Portal:** Staff can manage their personal details, benefits, and HR-related requests autonomously. This increases transparency and control over personal information.
- **Automation of Routine Tasks:** The automation of repetitive tasks, such as data entry and report generation, can free up staff time for other, more value adding activities.
- **Mobile Accessibility:** Some elements of the Oracle system will be available via mobile devices, allowing staff to manage some tasks and access important information on the go. This is particularly helpful for hard-to-reach groups and ESCC staff who are out in the communities.

Support model

- A support model will need to be in place to support the system and users in time for the go live of phase 2 given the need to support incident management, queries and the quarterly Oracle version updates.
- It is also important to demonstrate to the organisation that there will be easy and effective sources of support available when (not if) issues arise given the likely nervousness around the potential for such issues.
- Learning from other authorities is that this model needs to be able to flex and adjust in response to learning from the first 12-24 months of ESCC using Oracle.
- The approach ESCC is adopting is to utilise a blend of internal resource and third-party resource to support the system and business. To help us understand the support ask, as well as what the user experience will be, work is currently ongoing in a dedicated workstream.

Other sources of support

- **Super Users:** Technically proficient staff who will provide in-depth support, including technical guidance and more advanced system knowledge. They will play a more hands-on role in resolving issues.
- **Oracle Advocates:** General champions who will focus on promoting the system, assisting with user adoption, and supporting their peers with day-to-day use of Oracle ERP.
- **Dedicated Support Email Address:** A monitored email address for feedback and support questions.
- **Dedicated Teams Channels:** Worked well pre and post go-live for EPM. Used for questions, announcements and 'community' support
- **Viva Engage:** A role specific Viva Engage Channel (similar to Facebook). Support documents can be pinned at the top, along with hosting live Q&A sessions.

Other sources of support

Continued...

- **Roadshows:** In-person or virtual events where staff can learn more about the Oracle system, ask questions, and engage with the programme team.
- **Online Show-and-Tell Sessions:** Demonstrations of the system, where staff can see the system in action and gain a better understanding of its features.
- **Lunch-and-Learn Sessions:** Informal learning sessions designed to give staff an opportunity to explore specific aspects of the system and its benefits.
- **Oracle Guided Learning (OGL):** An assistance tool built into the Live Oracle system to provide instruction to complete a task in real time and guidance to saved materials. Can also be used to provide Business messaging.

Technical System support

- Alongside the business support referenced in the previous slide, a new Helpdesk will be rolled out within Oracle for users to log tickets for technical support.
- The Oracle Helpdesk will provide forms in a similar way to Cherwell, the existing ICT Service Desk. These tickets will be actioned by an internal Oracle Business Support Team.
- Business Impact Assessments are being conducted for all Oracle processes to determine the changes in process and ownership and to highlight all impact technically and organisationally. These will be finalised alongside User Acceptance Testing and used to input to training and beyond.

Governance

- Continued governance is critical in ensuring effective ongoing programme delivery.
- Governance documentation has recently been updated and subject to internal audit with some areas being bolstered such as:
 - An additional governance level in the form of a fortnightly ‘exceptions report’ to CMT to unblock issues in real time, and using CMT as an escalation route on any necessary key decisions
 - The frequency of key meetings such as the Oracle Programme Board being increased and Internal Audit continuing to have a critical role in the run up to, and beyond, go live.
 - More frequent Audit Committee Sub-Group meetings

April 2025 Go Live - Risks

Risks to hitting go live:

- Sufficient programme resource being available due to the conflict between working on BAU and working on the programme and due to risk of single points of failure being absent
- Organisational capacity and readiness at a time where there are significant other organisational priorities and pressures
- Organisational resistance to change causing delay
- Change requests causing technical scope creep and delay
- Potential for technical issues to arise 'unknown unknowns'

Overall implementation risks

Confidence in Oracle as the system solution

- There is a risk that the delay to go-live creates a challenge in the wider organisation to the acceptance of Oracle as the solution which impacts take up and willingness to engage with the solution post go-live. This can be mitigated by a continued focus on communication and engagement.

Financial risk

- Future costs will need to be considered alongside other council pressures through the RPPR process and MTFP but that they will also need to be considered alongside the financial and reputational implications of not incurring them.

Overall delivery viability and effective post implementation support

- There is a risk that people won't culturally be willing to adopt new working practices. Detailed engagement and training plans will be produced but organisational buy in will be required to ensure adoption. A robust support model will be put in place to support users.

Overall implementation risks

Reputation

- There is a risk that the delay in go-live is perceived as being a negative reason and impacts ESCC's external reputation, rather than a positive focus on learning from other implementations and maintaining a quality focus as opposed to go-live driven by time. This can be mitigated by careful communication.

Legacy System

- Our SAP version goes out of support in 2027. This could also leave the council open to ransom charges in the short term with a full system replacement the only option. The impact of this is likely to be more significant than a poor go live of Oracle.

System change requests (i.e. changes to specification)

- There is a risk that further changes are approved which impact the whole Oracle delivery plan. Whilst it is almost impossible to stop change altogether due to statutory changes, to mitigate this risk it is necessary to limit the Oracle system/build to those that are critical for Day 1 go-live delivery.