

# New Ways of Working Phase 1

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Hilary Cole
<b>Date Head of Service agreed report:</b> <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Author:</b>	Melanie Best
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	n/a (OSMC)

## 1 Purpose of the Report

To provide background to the New Ways of Working (NWOW) programme and to outline the value that the programme has added to the Council.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

There are no specific recommendations as a result of this report, but OSMC are asked to note the content of the report and comment on the outcomes delivered through Phase 1. The organisation will continue to review the output from the programme in order to transform and improve services as part of the transformation programme of work, which will be led by the Transformation, Digital & Programme Team within the Customer Engagement and Transformation unit of Strategy & Governance.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	Cost of the programme £270,474
<b>Human Resource:</b>	The programme was supported by in house HR team.
<b>Legal:</b>	n/a.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	n/a

<b>Property:</b>	n/a			
<b>Policy:</b>	n/a			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		None
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		None
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		X		As above.
<b>Health Impact:</b>		X		As above.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		X		None of the programme but the outputs have a number of digital and ICT implications for improvements.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		X		As above.
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>		X		As above.

<b>Core Business:</b>		X		As above – many of the initiatives will impact the core business of the Council and its transformation activity.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		X		As above.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Chief Executive (and Sponsor) of the programme  All Executive Directors, All Heads of Service/Service Directors and remaining Review team.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report summarises the background and framework of the New Ways of Working programme which commenced in mid 2017 following the Financial Challenge programme of work when a deeper analysis was required around the day to day operation of Services with a view to improving service delivery and, where possible, consider the digitisation or streamlining of repetitive or time consuming processes to improve efficiency and avoid duplication.
- 4.2 Whilst the Financial Challenge process had already identified some areas of concern, it was felt appropriate to review all services in the same way to ensure a consistent and fair approach, providing opportunities for all services to offer feedback and improvement suggestions from all staff and teams through to Members, key stakeholders as well as the space to challenge data and performance. The New Ways of Working concept followed from observations of a neighbouring authority undertaking similar reviews under the banner of “21<sup>st</sup> Century Council” delivered by an external company.
- 4.2 This report sets out the detail around the programme of work, but predominantly focuses on the value added to the organisation from the initiatives identified. Fundamentally, these have been to;
- Inform management changes and service planning to achieve service improvements.
  - Provide the chance for decision makers to reflect and identify operational actions to be considered to positively impact (directly or indirectly) service users;
  - Highlight potential scope extension/outcome expansion to existing digital or transformation projects (e.g. solutions being considered for one service are in fact needed/applicable to other service areas), therefore breaking down silos and making those links.
  - Identify transformation and digitisation ideas that grouped together will have a higher level of impact and contribute to potential business cases for resource allocation and implementation.

- Inform a prioritisation process and resource allocation for transformation and digital projects which are in the process of being implemented or, at the pre-project brief stage to be considered to achieve further value from the NWOW initiative.
  - Identify opportunities for significant improvement.
- 4.3 The New Ways of Working programme is by no means the only source of transformation activity for the organisation but it has identified a number of areas where we could benefit most as an authority. It provided an opportunity for stakeholders, teams, managers and Members to contribute their ideas and feedback to inform the outcomes of the programme.
- 4.4 The outcomes of the programme are set out in more detail later in the report but there have been some fundamental interventions and changes as a result of the programme such as;
- The **Housing** Peer review which has led to huge improvements in service delivery.
  - Alignment and implementation of many of the Quincetree recommendations for the **Public Protection Partnership** – admittedly some of these are now in abeyance due to the fragmentation of PPP.
  - In **Finance & Property** – the need to clarify strategic direction and drive, more effective management accounting and improved communication.
  - **Customer Services** – concerns around communication, opportunities for digitisation and modernisation which will now be picked up through the move to Strategy & Governance.
  - **Countryside** – issues around the grounds maintenance contract and performance management issues and a further Internal Audit investigation has identified concerns with the grounds maintenance contract.
  - **Digitisation** – the NWOW programme has opened up the possibilities for major changes to the way we operate through digitisation of processes.
  - **ICT** – the lack of resource available to support transformation and how this needs to be addressed if we are going to take our transformation programme forward.
- 4.5 These are some of the more fundamental discoveries but as the report sets out, there are a large number of other management actions and smaller activities, all of which have made improvements to our services as a result of this process.
- 4.6 In terms of learning, it is fair to say that the process was not perfect and there were challenges along the way. This report examines those challenges alongside the learning. As with any programme of work, the overall success should be measured by the outcomes and the New Ways of Working programme has definitely delivered some fundamental benefits to the organisation, as well as setting out a potential transformation programme for years to come.

- 4.7 This, combined with the Council's focus on engaging with customers and transforming services, will undoubtedly ensure we continue to develop and improve services for residents through more imaginative and responsive ways in line with how the public now expect to interact with all organisations, not just Local Authorities.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 The concept of the New Ways of Working (NWOW) reviews initially came from observation of some of the activity being carried out at a neighbouring authority under its '21st Century Council' initiative being run by the company Ignite. It followed on from the Financial Challenge programme which highlighted the need to undertake deeper reviews into how we do things differently across every service with the intention of streamlining processes to combine or avoid process duplication.
- 5.2 The original intention for the NWOW programme [when it commenced in mid-2017], was that all services in the Council would be reviewed in the period to summer 2020. In order that all reviews could be completed within the allocated time, an approach was developed that met the requirement for relatively rapid action through comparatively modest research and analysis in the first stage of the reviews. Deeper examination of apparently problem areas, or those appearing to have the scope for significant improvements, would be carried out at the second stage.
- 5.3 It soon became evident during the course of the first reviews, (for Development & Planning and Education), that members of project boards did not feel that they had sufficient information to make informed decisions and as a result, the methodology and framework was amended.
- 5.4 The need to provide decision makers with more analysis at the beginning of the review process necessitated a change in approach, with the first stage taking much longer and making significantly increased demands on a number of support services than originally envisaged.
- 5.5 In February 2018, a proposal was put together to bid for transformation funding from the Corporate Programme Board for some dedicated resource to support the programme which was approved and NWOW proper commenced at that point and the schedule reset and the methodology revised.
- 5.6 The revised methodology was based on the collation of quantitative data, including comparators from other authorities (benchmarking), and the qualitative views of stakeholders through SWOT<sup>1</sup> analyses and workshops. Following detailed analysis, a report containing the data and feedback, along with comments and recommendations for each of the respective areas would be presented to the project board.
- 5.7 In addition to this initial concept, there was an additional requirement for services to undergo 'health checks' as part of the reviews with consideration given to a number of corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) and a strong examination of data around

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<sup>1</sup> Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

Measures of Volume (MOV), amongst other data (the latter also being used to explore the viability of specific improvement proposals).

5.8 The Terms of Reference went through a number of iterations and the final simplified version was settled as;

### **Aim**

*To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's business processes.*

### **Objectives**

1. *To identify activities for process improvement*
2. *To quantify the business benefit of these improvements*
3. *To implement improvement solutions*
4. *To obtain a broad overview of each of the authority's services*

### **Method**

*Continuation of the team by team approach taken to date.*

5.9 The Terms of Reference (v14.1) are set out in Appendix A for reference.

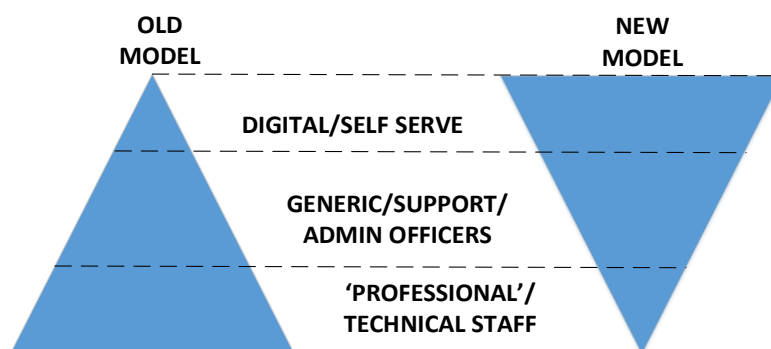
5.10 Although NWOW was separate and unrelated to the Financial Challenge review process, the requirement for supporting financial and performance data was heavily influenced by the use of it for the latter, which was in train as NWOW was in its infancy.

5.11 At the team level, the initial reports contained sections on:

- Stakeholder feedback
- Human Resources / staffing matters
- Alternative models of service delivery (ASD)
- Finance and efficiency
- Demand, activity and performance
- Information and Communications / digital
- 3Tier (3T)

5.12 For West Berkshire Council's improvement and transformation purposes the original focus was on the introduction of the Three Tier Model of work allocation (3T) shown in the diagram below, which suggests that, through making more use of digital technology (for self-service by the public and automating some decision making) and training generalist or support officers to deal with high volume/low complexity transactions, technical or 'professional' officers can be freed to work on those tasks that require the application of their specialist knowledge. This is, in effect, reversing or inverting the traditional model of workload distribution, allowing efficiencies to be realised.

### Workload Distribution Model



5.13 However, the ASD and 3T sections were removed from the later reports due to lack of availability of the information needed to inform such recommendations which would have made it inequitable across services.

#### Resourcing

5.14 The review team was based on a mixed model with number of officers specifically allocated to this piece of work but in some areas, where resource was an issue, the work was split across the teams as was the case in Finance.

5.15 The original review team comprised officers and managers as follows;

- Chief Executive (Sponsor)
- The Corporate Programme Office (lead) – Corporate Programme Manager & Principal Policy Officer as Project Manager
- Performance, Research & Consultation Team Officers (analysts) (led by Performance, Research and Consultation Manager.
- Head of HR (subsequently departed)
- Head of ICT & Customer Services
- Human Resources Officer
- Finance & Property Officers
- Digital Services Team Officers and Manager

5.16 The approach taken was to conduct reviews service-by-service and team-by-team; a 'team' being based on activities being overseen by the management tier below Service Director/Head of Service.

5.17 The NWOW programme has been an excellent example of cross service working. Expectations of the team were clear and each had their element to contribute. As a result, the team delivered to the schedules agreed. The challenge and scrutiny brought to the process meant issues could be fully explored and relationships with services remained positive throughout.

#### Timescale

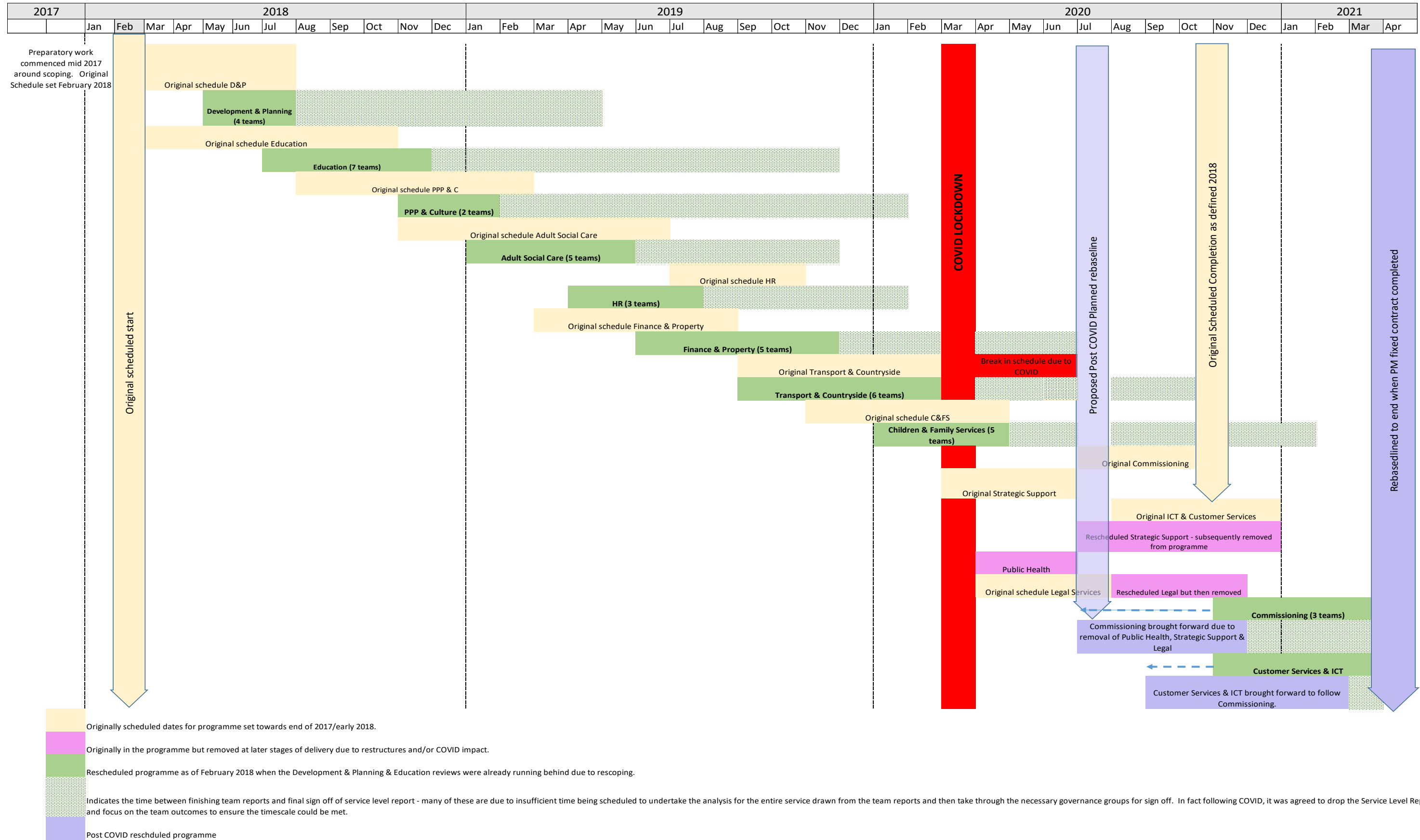
5.18 The diagram on page 10 sets out the timeline of the original schedule which has been rebaselined twice during the course of the programme. As mentioned earlier, once the scope of the programme was amended, it was clear that the original timescale could

not have been met and therefore the revised timetable set in February 2018 offered a more realistic, although still challenging, timetable.

- 5.19 Whilst longer time was proposed for the reviews, the schedule unfortunately had still not factored in the time required to draw together the Service Level Report. This, it transpired, required further analysis and the broader strategic view of the service and once written, had to be taken through the governance structure of the authority before finally being presented at Corporate Programme Board for ratification. This lag may have given false impression that the programme was behind schedule when in actual fact the work had been completed but not been formally signed off.
- 5.20 The programme was progressing well when the Coronavirus hit in early 2020. Naturally the focus of the authority turned to critical activities and the resource supporting the reviews, both in the Programme Office (as it was at the time) and also within the services, was redirected to support critical frontline services. In April 2020, Gold agreed that the programme should be paused and then rebaselined once the immediate crisis had passed.
- 5.21 The second iteration of the timeline was then put forward in June 2020 following a three month pause in the programme. It was also during this period that the restructure in Strategic Support and Legal had commenced (subsequently Strategy and Governance) and it was agreed to remove Legal, Strategic Support and Public Health (due to their commitment to the pandemic) from the programme altogether. Similarly the Building Communities Together Team had also been removed due to an internal restructure and other priorities.
- 5.22 It should be noted that whilst these teams were removed from the NWOW process, it did not preclude them from being provided with the opportunity to offer their views as the preparatory work for the reviews had already commenced with stakeholder and team workshops taking place. In addition, staff were also encouraged to contribute ideas and process improvement suggestions as part of the consultation process during the restructure.
- 5.23 The revised timetable was produced and approved by Corporate Programme Board who agreed the programme would recommence in July 2020. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to simplify the process further by removing the need for the Service Level Reports and focus on the Team reports, thereby enabling the output to proceed through the governance process more quickly.
- 5.24 Since the programme commenced, 42 Team reviews have been undertaken across 10 services and concluded at the end of March 2021 as planned to coincide with the end of the fixed term contract of the resource supporting the programme.



NEW WAYS OF WORK TIMELINE



## 6 Outcomes

6.1 As referred to earlier, the success of any programme can be measured by the outcomes and achievements and for NWOW these have can be categorised into four key headings.

### **Fundamental Findings**

- 6.2 The most fundamental findings, as mentioned in the Executive Summary, have had the most significant impact on the organisation. One of the more tangible examples being the Housing Service LGA Peer Review, the need for which emerged through the early meetings of the New Ways of Working reviews. Following the workshops with staff in the Housing Service, it became clear there were deeper issues which required investigation and resolution. The Council commissioned the peer review (June 2019) via the LGA to consider the current delivery of housing services and these two elements combined to form the Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.3 The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) Delivery plan clearly set out an initial 155 tasks that were realigned to 124 strategic and operational tasks and these were prioritised as short, medium and long term targets. The top four complex tasks on the SIP were;
1. A Housing Service Restructure
  2. A new Housing integrated ICT system
  3. Developing and adopting a new Housing Allocations Policy and;
  4. Developing and adopting a Housing Strategy.
- 6.4 These four complex tasks along with the other tasks, transformed the Housing Service as it enabled the correct level of resources to deliver this frontline service. It resulted in a highly skilled workforce (through comprehensive training and training needs assessments). The Housing Service can truly be considered as 'Good' due to reductions in complaints, reviews, back logs and an increase in satisfaction taken from the customer satisfaction survey.
- 6.5 The integrated Housing ICT System has seen a step change in true digitalisation moving from a manual, paper based system to an integrated system that will enable service delivery end to end starting with the customer journey in terms of applying for social housing or presenting as homeless to receiving assistance with accommodation and paying rent that will no longer go through three different systems separately and manually with spread sheets. Customers now have an Allocations Policy that is Plain English, with a Banding priority of A –D instead of a complex points system and the Housing Strategy is now our strategic framework for how the Housing Service will deliver services for the local residents up to 2036.

- 6.6 The Housing SIP has eliminated risk e.g. Housing Benefit subsidy claims were being processed manually and could have resulted in losses of up to £1 million in subsidy due to risk of high human error rate. SIP delivered both efficiency and cash savings overall and benefits realisation as set out in the Project Closure report<sup>2</sup>.
- 6.7 Whilst the Housing Team have worked extremely hard to achieve this and credit must go to them for delivery, it is this kind of activity which has been instigated through the New Ways of Working process and can be directly attributed to those initial workshop conversations with staff which started the ball rolling on how we can improve the service delivery.
- 6.8 In Public Protection & Culture, the findings and recommendations of the Quincetree report were reviewed. The NWOW review noted that an action plan should be put in place and closely monitored to ensure that the recommendations are actioned. This has been delivered with joint management board meetings established weekly and monthly scrutiny meetings also taking place to ensure the implementation of the recommendations is achieved. As mentioned earlier though this has taken somewhat of a back seat since the fragmentation of the Partnership.
- 6.9 In Education, NWOW identified the underlying causes of dissatisfaction from Schools consistently expressed in surveys and as a result regular reviews are now in place with Schools, relationships have improved and processes have been amended.
- 6.10 In Finance & Property, indications already existed that there was a lack of strategic clarity as well as poor communication. Equally, the NWOW reviews provided an opportunity to really challenge the management accounting service in terms of analysing their role in the organisation and providing them with the time and opportunity to change their perceptions of management accounting and provide the more strategic oversight required.
- 6.11 Major concerns were highlighted following an Internal Audit review (instigated following the NWOW reviews) in Countryside with the grounds maintenance contract. This is now under review and improvements will be made. NWOW also highlighted concerns around performance management, now subsequently addressed.
- 6.12 Essentially the NWOW programme provided the opportunity to review all of our processes with a view to digitising as many as possible. Obviously there is a long way to go but this level of review has never been undertaken before and staff welcomed the opportunity to look at streamlining the way they work and, in turn, improve the services we offer to residents of West Berkshire.

### **Summary**

- 6.13 In total from the 42 reviews, 618 recommendations were recorded. Aside from the Fundamental Findings demonstrated above, it is important to categorise the recommendations to make them more manageable going forward. Each of the recommendations therefore fall into one of three remaining categories as follows;

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<sup>2</sup> Available on request from Janet Weekes.

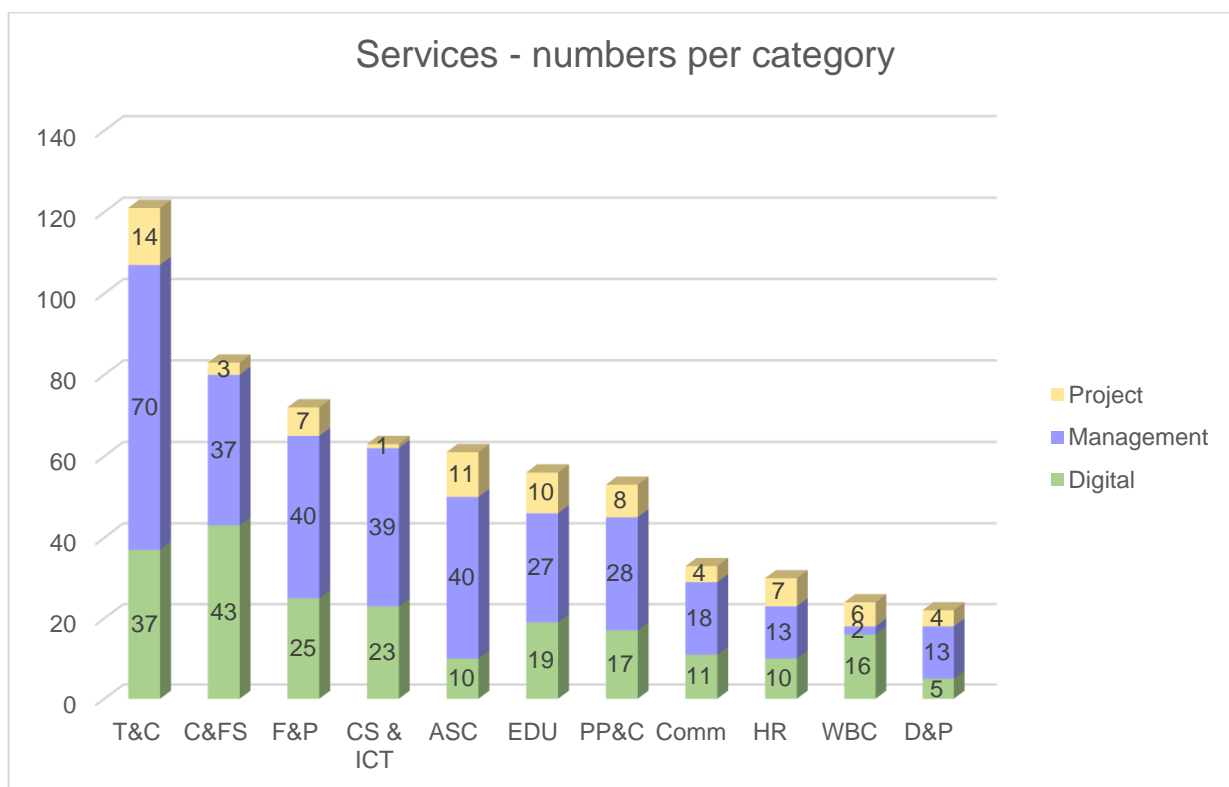
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- **Management Action** (that being something which should/could be handled within the senior management team for that service or Directorate) or;
- **Project** (non ICT/Digital) potentially could become a project if a business case is developed and approved or;
- **Digital** (transformational activity including ICT), as above. If, once investigated, a viable business case can be prepared, it will be approved.

6.14 The table below shows the current status of these recommendations.

Status	Management	Project	Digital
Active	150	28	138
Closed	18	13	24
Completed	93	16	13
On hold	56	20	49
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>224</b>

6.15 The graph below shows how those categories are split across the services. It should be noted that some of the services who were reviewed early in the process will have had significantly more time to complete their management actions than those most recently reviewed.



## Management Actions

- 6.16 Since the reviews were undertaken, progress has been made against the initiatives. The table below shows that over 35% of the Management Actions have already been completed, leaving 150 initiatives open/active. As mentioned above, these will range in size and importance from considering restructuring whole teams within a service to ensuring appraisals are up to date.
- 6.17 In terms of achievements in this category, in Development & Planning, it was recommended that discussions take place with officers in the Transport and Countryside service to ensure that the purpose and operation of each of their respective pre-planning advice services are appropriately integrated to ensure the customer receives the best and consistent service. This activity is now reviewed quarterly and the systems are now completely aligned.
- 6.18 In Adult Social Care, inconsistencies in charging in the Reablement Service were identified. This was simply due to a lack of understanding around the process. This has subsequently been rectified thereby improving efficiency, income and clarity for everyone.
- 6.19 The recommendation in HR that consideration should be given to further developing the authority's application of, and engagement with, the Apprenticeship Levy by becoming an employer/provider has now been achieved and focus also given to those hard to recruit to roles and support for succession planning. We are actively promoting the use of apprentices and have subsequently taken them on. The benefit of this being increased capacity and increased opportunities as well as the 'grow our own' culture.
- 6.20 In Commissioning a recommendation was made that operational improvements could be made to the interface between Maximising Independence and the Care Placement Team. This has now been addressed through regular liaison meetings resulting in improved team working, transparency and cross service communications.
- 6.21 These are just some of the examples of improvements that have been made which may not have been identified without the NWOV process posing the relevant questions.
- 6.22 An additional benefit of the process is that staff were able to express ideas of how improvements could be made, and Heads of Service/Service Directors<sup>3</sup> have reported that they valued the opportunity to stand back and reflect on the practices of their service. It also gave time to consideration and debate around issues and potential improvements.
- 6.23 In addition to any transformation work, there has been value in carrying out a health check on the services and many simple operational solutions have been recommended to the Senior Management Team. The findings have also been used to inform wider management changes and service planning.

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<sup>3</sup> Following the restructure, there are a combination of Heads of Service and Service Directors in the current management structure.

## Project recommendations

- 6.24 This category contains the recommendations which could, with further investigation and development, result in a business case. These are primarily items which are larger than the management actions identified above, but do not involve any ICT or digital transformation activity.
- 6.25 Of the Project recommendations first identified, 38% of those have also been closed or completed since the programme commenced. 28 of the initiatives are still actively being worked on leaving 20 requiring further investigation and resource. The range within this category is equally varied in terms of cost, potential benefit and scale.
- 6.26 In Adult Social Care, the recommendation to explore joint working between the Localities and Specialist Mental Health Team (SMHT) and local GPs was developed and picked up by the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) as a flagship project. The latest update from the service is that they are looking to expand the multi-disciplinary teams across West Berkshire with Primary Care Networks.
- 6.27 Finance & Property the opportunity for sharing the delivery of services through the One Public Estate initiative (OPE) (or alone) was recommended. Obviously the OPE is no longer progressing however, this has prompted the project around establishing ourselves as a Corporate Landlord.
- 6.28 There was a corporate suggestion that perhaps provision of 'key worker' accommodation could assist in alleviating the recruitment issues for care workers. This has now been picked up through the Housing Strategy work.
- 6.29 Naturally, there is some duplication and similarity in some recommendations from services. Some of the most common themes include the possibility of generating efficiencies through the provision of more online training for carers and other areas as well as equality training improvements. Some also overlap with the 'Digital' category such as the roll out of Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom for meetings.
- 6.30 These have now all subsequently been picked up over the course of 2020. Many of the 'themed' ideas around workforce, training and accommodation have now been picked up through the Timelord 2 project which is a major project for the organisation. This will address a high proportion of the 'project' recommendations category and those which touch on some digital improvements.

## Digital Recommendations

- 6.31 By far the largest category is Digital with 138 active initiatives and 49 pending. In terms of governance, these sit within the Customer First Projects' Group (CFPG) who have already undertaken a first filter of the recommendations. This has sifted out those already attributed to existing projects and are therefore already being delivered.
- 6.32 In terms of current progress against the digital initiatives in particular, the diagram overleaf shows that 62% of the digital initiatives can be attributed to this group of projects already underway or being scoped. 16% have already been delivered and closed off since the reviews commenced leaving 22% for the focus of the transformation team to develop and prepare business cases, if appropriate.

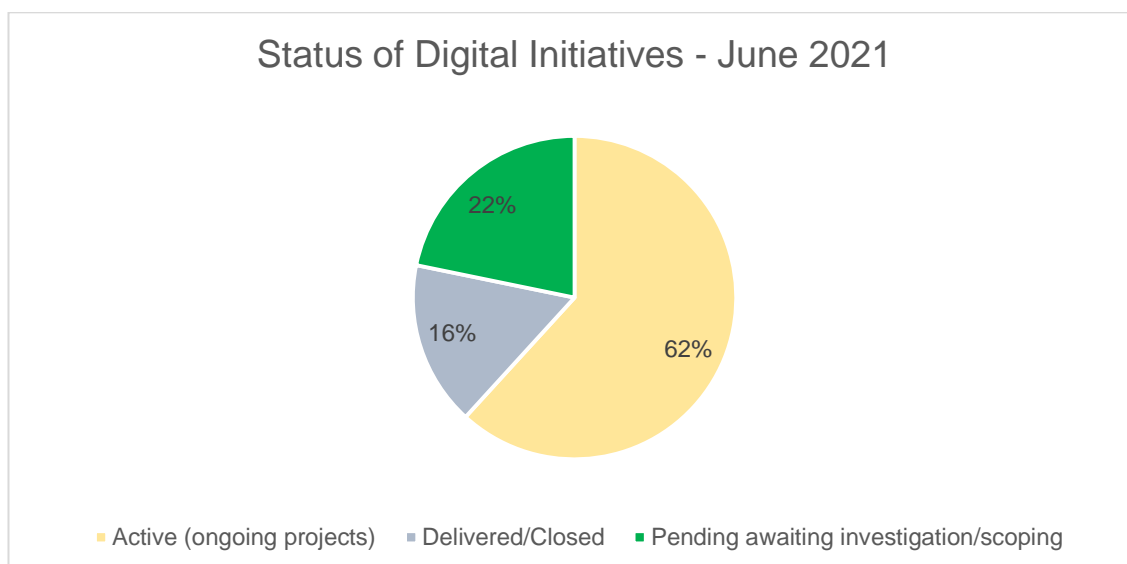
6.33 One considerable benefit of the programme is that it has enabled the organisation to look at the benefits of implementing digital solutions on a wider scale. For instance, the creation of a Bookings System - whilst there was already a Bookings project underway, the additional suggestions which came from NWOW have helped broaden the scope and ensure that the facility can be implemented across other services to benefit more service users. A number of digital projects have already been implemented and some notable achievements include;

- Zoom/Teams
- Chatbot (implemented and now onto Phase 2)
- CareDirector upgrade (ongoing)
- Agresso Upgrade (ongoing)
- Website content review (ongoing)
- Waste
- Timelord 2 (due for sign off at Executive in July)

6.34 Having a central team look at how we may roll out applications across more than one team or service will ultimately help us to reduce the number of different applications in use, some of which are only used by one or two teams but all requiring support and maintenance from ICT or Digital Teams. These streamlining opportunities are now clearer as a result of the New Ways of Working recommendations.

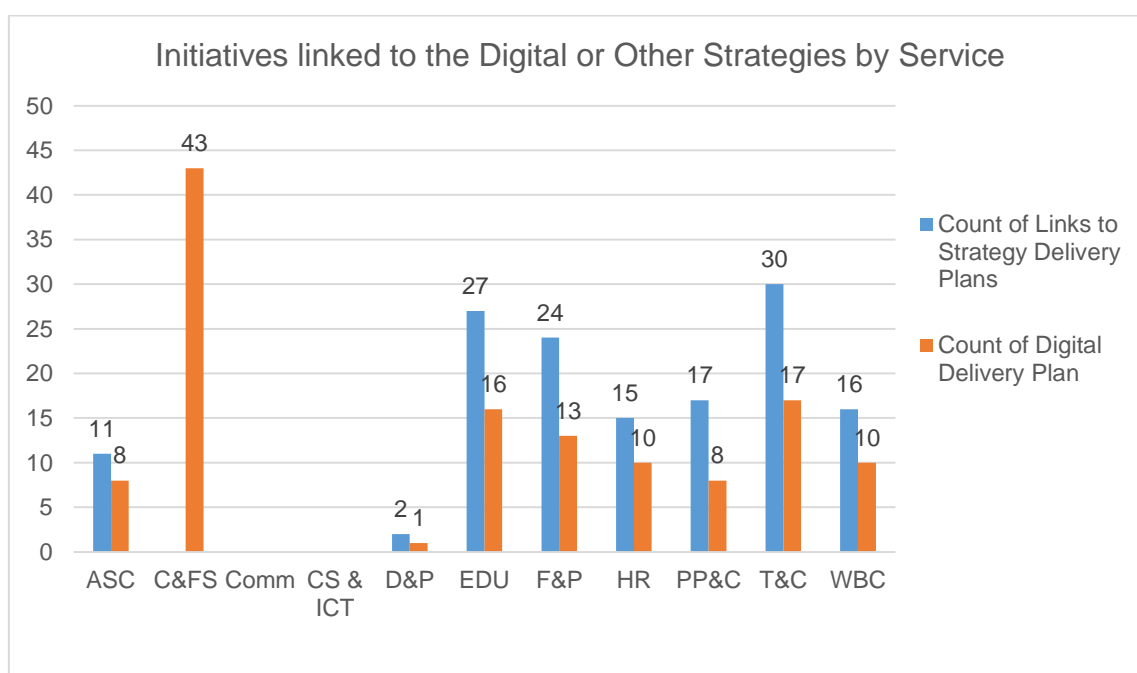
6.35 Another distinct advantage of reviewing the recommendations is to identify whether the organisation has systemic issues across management or whether they are more localised and can be easily addressed. Thankfully the findings do not identify any such widespread concerns, largely due to the performance mechanisms in place monitoring indicators and Measures of Volume (MOVs) through Corporate Board.

6.36 There are of course many 'active' or 'on hold' initiatives under both the 'Project' and 'Digital' categories which will require analysis and if appropriate, development into full business cases to be prioritised against the Council's strategies and resources. This is part of the remit of the Transformation, Digital and Programme Team going forward when the business analysis can be fully undertaken and the initiatives are properly resourced. The diagram below shows the current status of these initiatives.



## New Ways of Working Phase 1 v1.2

- 6.37 Prioritisation of the initiatives requires greater detail and in summer of 2020 the Corporate Programme Board approved a process around filtering the initiatives designed by the Programme Office. This was termed Phase 2 of NWOW and was carried out concurrently with Phase 1 as the recommendations were published.
- 6.38 Obviously it is for Heads of Service/Service Directors and Executive Directors to prioritise their own management actions and in-service activity but this prioritisation process is applied to the Digital initiatives. The approach to prioritisation is threefold.
- 6.39 Firstly the original prioritisation score given at the time of the review is considered (this is done by looking at the Priority + Impact which was allocated to all recommendations). Secondly, we have cross referenced these recommendations with the Council's Digital Strategy and Delivery Plan as well as Customer and Engagement Strategy and Delivery Plan. The graph below shows the split across the services in relation to their alignment with the Digital and other strategies;



*Please note at the time of writing, this mapping exercise against Commissioning and Customer Services & ICT has yet to be completed.*

- 6.40 A more sophisticated prioritisation tool has been designed by the Transformation, Digital and Programme Team which can only be applied once more detailed work has been undertaken and the recommendation has been developed into a more refined business case. At that point, alongside the sizing calculator and project brief, the prioritisation tool will provide greater challenge to the business case around the following criteria;
- REACH** – There are two elements to measuring Reach. The first being *how many people/customers/residents will this project affect (in terms of % of will it impact the marginalised or disadvantaged customers/residents)*. The second relates to *the number of strategic or council delivery plans the project contributes to*.



- **IMPACT** – we then consider the impact, will it enable us to deliver things *better, faster, cheaper or more together (i.e empowering customers, partner organisations etc).*
- **CONFIDENCE** – the third part of the equation relates to confidence levels around delivery. *Is it realistic? Is it achievable? Does it require specialist ICT skills etc.*
- **EFFORT** – finally the negative element of the equation considers the effort required to implement the project.

6.41 These questions help to inform the outcome and provide a prioritisation score by using this well tested project prioritisation methodology called RICE;

$$\frac{\text{REACH} \times \text{IMPACT} \times \text{CONFIDENCE}}{\text{EFFORT}} = \text{RICE SCORE}$$

6.42 More information on this process is available upon request but this is a high level overview for the purposes of this report.

**Cost**

6.43 The table below sets out the actual project costs against the estimated/defined costs at the various points in the project lifecycle;

Project Budget/Cost	Amount
Project Brief	n/a
Project Initiation Document	£215,605
Approved Amendment additional transformation funding approved for a Principal Policy Officer	£52,930
Actual Cost	£270,474
Cost Variation at Project End (Approved Budget – Actual Cost)	£0

6.44 It was clearly stated at the start, that the New Ways of Working programme was not about financial savings; this was addressed through the Financial Challenge which took place just prior to the commencement of NWOW. The process was focused on improving efficiencies resulting from transformation of processes, alongside a health check of the service.

6.45 Financial monitoring was fundamentally around the resource supporting the project and therefore there were no more allocated costs to track. However, the

transformation funding allocated has been used fully and it can be stated that the bid has met the 'definition of use' as intended.

- 6.46 It is also worth noting the sizeable benefits brought to the organisation following the fundamental findings and subsequent improvements set out in section 6.2 and the Executive Summary which may not have been specified but undoubtedly have improved services. These could be viewed more as cost avoidance particularly in terms of the new Housing Benefit system and the risk around potentially high losses due to human error.
- 6.47 It is anticipated that over time, some of these initiatives will result in projects which will yield savings and efficiencies which will offset the expenditure which was predominantly for the resource required to deliver the project. This will be monitored through project delivery mechanisms supported by the Transformation, Digital and Programme Team.

## 7 Lessons Learned

7.1 As with all projects and programmes, there are lessons to be learned and for this programme in particular, the key issues to note are;

- **Changing scope** – as set out in the Background section, there was a realisation after the first few that scale of programme became clearly unrealistic with the data and team size available and therefore, the scope was reviewed to something more akin to a Service Review. In addition, with each report produced, additional requirements were asked of the team and this accounted for some delays in the early months until the set report format was agreed and accepted.
- **Limitations of the Team** - when the programme was first launched, it included two Heads of Service/Service Directors and two Service Managers. Over time, as priorities evolved and staff left (Head of HR and Corporate Programme Manager), the senior representation diminished and the project team included only one Service Manager. This change in seniority of the team impacted in two ways; the corporate overview was reduced resulting in a lack of awareness of current initiatives and priorities across the organisation but this was counter balanced by the continued involvement of the Chief Executive, Portfolio Holders and the relevant Heads of Service/Service Directors and Service Managers being reviewed, to mitigate the impact on the quality of the analysis.

In addition, some officers may not have been particularly confident at analysing the data and making suggestions for improvements to more senior officers. This was further compounded by the fact some team members changed and with each change, a slightly different perspective and approach was taken, this was certainly the case in Finance. Whilst this is not necessarily a negative point and in some cases, 'fresh eyes' brought a different view - it could have impacted the consistency and the rhythm of the process. In general, the team seemed to work most effectively when a dedicated resource remained in place for all reviews. This also meant quality remained high and the process became quicker as individuals understood their roles.

- **Limited Challenge** – In addition to the team composition, it was also apparent that some officers were less confident at challenging Heads of Service/Service Directors which, with hindsight, may have affected the output. Having said that, this was not the case with the Digital Services Team who were extremely proactive and confident in their knowledge and recommendations. This is no criticism of the wider team but is an honest reflection on the process and in future, there would need to be sufficient seniority across the team to ensure consistency in approach. That having been said, the challenge was provided at the appropriate stages through the Chief Executive and Member involvement at the meetings where the reports were presented for discussion.
- **Scheduling** – Another key lesson relates to the initial scheduling which was optimistic where reviews which took 6 to 8 weeks often overlapped, resulting in up to 6 active reports underway at one time (on occasion). There was no contingency around holiday or sickness throughout the period, creating additional pressure. Add to this the fact that all team reports were then drawn into a service level report which was not been built into the timetable, this resulted in a significant time lag between the completion of the team reviews, particularly the earlier ones, and the presentation of the final report as shown on the timeline on page 10. This was rectified in latter reports post COVID when further adjustments were made and the service level report was dropped from the process and the schedule revised, thereby creating a much quicker turnaround. However, this initial scheduling issue may have led to frustration on the part of stakeholders, teams, senior management and Members.

7.2 One important point is that not all lessons learned are negative. The following examples demonstrate some the positive lessons learned from the programme;

- **Teamwork** - The review team demonstrated excellent cross service working and relationships between officers, Members and those making the recommendations and the review team, remained largely positive and constructive, despite some challenging conversations around service delivery.
- **Communication** - Another strength of this programme was the communication, not only between the project managers and the review team in challenging and drawing out through analysis the key focal points, but also between the review team and senior stakeholders and service managers. The outcomes and objectives were well understood by all involved and regular updates to the governance boards, particularly Corporate Programme Board, ensured progress was understood.
- **Innovation** – the process elicited a new approach for the organisation where no idea or suggestion was too extreme. All things were considered and this allowed people to look at their roles differently and think of innovative solutions. Whilst this may have set expectations quite high that every suggestion will be implemented, it has encouraged people to think about possibilities on every level to improve their job and their service.
- **Collaboration** – the process encouraged feedback from every level of the organisation and the workshops proved a popular and successful way of coaxing

staff to come forward with their suggestions. Staff felt fully involved, listened to and empowered to make changes to their own roles. It is particularly important that this engagement is not lost going forward and that they have the opportunity to see their suggestions come to fruition, wherever possible. It also helped to reflect on the perceptions of their service from external third parties and Members' perspectives. Whilst perceptions are not always correct, understanding different perspectives on the same service helped to improve communication and learning for everyone involved and in some cases, change those perceptions.

- 7.3 Overall, as stated in the objectives of the Terms of Reference, data has been used to identify potential service improvements through structures, systems and processes, exploiting the use of digital technologies and increasing financial astuteness. The extent to which these have been developed differs for each service, depending on their current state and service requirements, but the objectives have been central to the analysis. The programme was a key piece of work for the Council and involved research and analysis of 10 services and 42 teams which despite the challenges, delivered the requirements.

## 8 Next Steps

- 8.1 The closure of the New Ways of Working programme now enables us to focus on continuing to deliver real change as has happened in the Housing Team and other areas outlined earlier in this report.
- 8.2 The restructure of Strategy & Governance and the newly appointed Team within the Customer Engagement and Transformation unit has brought together the Digital and Programme Office teams to work together more closely which in turn will provide opportunities for synergy and business analysis to be undertaken collaboratively.
- 8.3 New permanent Project/Programme managers will be assigned to further investigate these active and pending recommendations, working with the originating service, business analysts and the team will develop business cases for those with the highest priority to come forward to the Customer First Projects' Group (CFPG) for further prioritisation. Ultimately the CFPG will allocate resource if the business case is proven and Corporate Programme Board will be able to allocate transformation funding, with support from the Transformation, Digital and Programme Team.
- 8.4 The intention is to develop a transformation programme for the next 3 to 4 years, incorporating as many of these relevant NWOW initiatives as possible whilst retaining focus on the priorities for West Berkshire Council such as the Many Channels, One Service goal redesigning our front line services and working on data integration and rationalisation which is key to moving forward.

- 8.5 In terms of managing expectations, it is fair to say that the 49 pending initiatives in the Digital category are unlikely to translate into 49 projects as we move to the business development phase. Equally the 138 initiatives already underway will not all be incorporated into the existing projects, particularly where scope has already been agreed. However, they may well form additional phases to these projects. These are essentially suggestions and will require further work, research and development to assess their viability. Inevitably some will be discarded if no business case can be proven - this has already happened in some cases after a service has further investigated a recommendation and found it to be unworkable.
- 8.6 It is also important, and linked to managing expectations, to feedback to all teams who took part in the process and provide them with an update on progress to date. Some Heads of Service have been actively communicating this but we need to ensure a consistent approach to communicating these messages so that teams feel they have been listened to and can see the positive changes which have been implemented as a direct result of the process, even if it is not their own suggestion. This may be more apparent in some services than others.
- 8.7 The benefit of having this central team helping to develop these initiatives means services cannot 'cherry pick' their favourite or simplest solutions and digital and transformation projects will benefit many services and many residents. Development will involve the whole organisation as we implement our Digital and Customer & Engagement Strategies, focusing on the relevant themes such as;
- Making Better Use of existing systems
  - Making Better Use of Data
  - Creating a Modern workplace and workforce
  - Transforming Council Services
  - Creating a digital district as well as work streams such as;
    - *Payment Channels (online, telephone, direct debit, contactless card etc)*
    - *Wifi coverage*
    - *Website spatial data*
    - *Address Rationalisation*
    - *Single Sign on*
    - *Corporate Replacement*

## 9 Conclusion

- 9.1 As previously stated, you can trace the origins of the New Ways of Working programme to the Council's earlier Financial Challenge programme that took place during 2017 and 2018. There was a desire from the Financial Challenge Panel to undertake deeper reviews so that there could be a greater understanding of how services were operating with the aim of identifying improvements and reducing duplication. The start of the programme also coincided with a neighbouring authority commencing its own transformation programme which internally here became badged initially as the Three Tier Workforce.
- 9.2 The neighbouring authority invested large amounts of resource into their work employing consultants to undertake a fundamental redesign of the Organisation. This was followed by extensive restructuring.
- 9.3 West Berkshire Council took a different approach. Internal resources were seconded from across the Authority and a project manager was appointed to coordinate the programme. It is testament to the review team that they were able to achieve so much without external consultants.
- 9.4 It became clear at an early stage that it would be difficult to progress with the work on the Three Tier Workforce without a significant injection of external resource and expertise. Given the work in the neighbouring authority was still experimental and therefore carried a degree of risk, it was decided instead to reshape the approach here to something more akin to a service review, thereby reflecting the earlier intentions of the Financial Challenge Panel. This change of approach led in part to a delay in completing the programme.
- 9.5 In terms of outputs, as outlined previously, the NWOW process has identified a number of areas where significant improvement has been seen as necessary. Much of this work has now been addressed as set out previously and the improvements either realised, or are on their way to being delivered.
- 9.6 It should also be highlighted that the NWOW Reviews also revealed a great deal of good practice and as such provided assurance to the wider organisation that service delivery was sound and in many cases, that there was a strong and effective programme of transformation in place.
- 9.7 Aside from these key areas of improvement, the NWOW process has also shone a particularly strong light on the potential benefits of further digitisation both within services, and more widely across the Council. The result is that around 50% of all NWOW recommendations cover this area of activity.
- 9.8 A number of the NWOW recommendations have already been implemented but it has also been necessary to sift them to ensure those that will bring greatest benefit and also have a greater corporate impact, are given priority in the Council's Corporate Programme.

- 9.9 It is possible to see something of a pattern in terms of where the improvement focus has fallen during the NWOW process. It has been on those services and functions that generally had already been highlighted as facing challenges. The point could be made that the Council already knew there were issues in these areas. In some cases this may be true but there is no doubt that the corporate and independent focus of the NWOW programme has helped clarify what was needed and driven the subsequent pace of change.
- 9.10 There should always be a place for challenge, evaluation and review in any organisation. The NWOW programme has sought to bring an 'independent' perspective to this work, something that had rarely been done previously at the Council outside of internal programmes set up to find savings, and external inspections and peer challenges that will often have a particular focus.
- 9.11 Bringing together an internal team to provide that independent review and challenge has been very cost effective but it has not been without its challenges. Analytical skills have been patchy and not all staff feel comfortable challenging senior colleagues from another part of the Council. That said, the approach has worked particularly well for digitisation where in the main services saw the engagement and challenge as helpful in terms of identifying future opportunities for investment. If a similar approach was to be adopted in the future then the selection of the Team needs to be given greater consideration. In particular the Team needs to have the requisite skills and experience to undertake the task and have credibility with those who are the subject of the review.
- 9.12 The focus of the NWOW programme is now on Phase 2 – prioritisation and implementation. Many recommendations have already been implemented as outlined in this Report. It will be important that the impetus with reviewing and implementing the recommendations is not lost. Some will be superseded by events such as Timelord 2 and the introduction of remote and hybrid meetings. Others may not create a viable business case. Others will however deliver further improvement and therefore need to be pursued. This work will be picked up through the Transformation, Digital & Programme Team within the Customer Engagement and Transformation Unit.
- 9.13 The global pandemic has forced many organisations to revisit the way in which they deliver services to customers and local authorities are no exception. Many have seen their digital and transformation plans accelerated in the past 12 months and West Berkshire Council has also had to reconsider and adapt appropriately to ensure we can keep in touch with our service users during this period.
- 9.14 This 'revolution' in the way the world communicates will only continue to grow and develop and West Berkshire Council has demonstrated the willingness to embrace this change with the growing agendas in the Customer First Projects' Group and Customer First Programme Board and the transformation work arising from the NWOW process will help guide us in transforming our service delivery for years to come.

## 10 Appendices

### 10.1 Appendix A – Terms of Reference 14.1

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#### Corporate Board's recommendation

Accepted

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#### Background Papers:

Full list of 618 Recommendations (available on request - large document)

#### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

#### Wards affected:

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Owning Service	Strategy & Governance		



## Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1	24.05.21	First draft circulated to Gabrielle Mancini, Phil Rumens, Catalin Bogos	
2	28.05.21	Circulated to all Heads of Service, Service Directors, Executive Directors, Portfolio Holder, CEO and review team.	
3	15.06.21	Corporate Board sign off. Slight amendments.	

## Terms of Reference – NWOW v14.1

### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR NEW WAYS OF WORKING REVIEWS

#### Aim

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's business processes.

#### Objectives

5. To identify activities for process improvement
6. To quantify the business benefit of these improvements
7. To implement improvement solutions
8. To obtain a broad overview of each of the authority's services

#### Method

Continuation of the team by team approach taken to date, following the process steps outlined below.

#### Step 1     Information gathering and longlisting

- Activity: obtaining
  - The views of the service's management team
  - The views of staff (workshops and brainstorming)
  - Clients / customer
  - A broad but shallow understanding of systems (including technological) and processes in operation
  - A broad over view of the service:
    - Activity demand and volume
    - The revenue budget and comparative Value for Money information (where it exists)
    - The service structure chart
    - Existing performance targets and attainment against them in year and historically
- Outputs:
  - A longlist of candidates for process improvement
  - A view of the wider perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the team under review
  - Data on the team's wider performance and use of financial and staffing resources

#### Step 2     Analysis and shortlisting

- Activity: Undertake a high level process review, with stakeholders, of the highest value activities as determined by customer demand

- Outputs:
  - A report showing
    - The shortlist of areas for process improvement and re-engineering
    - Areas that require further efficiency review
    - Where interactions with other services and systems can be improved
    - A health check of the unit under review

Decision Viability assessment [PMM Gate 1]

- Activity: Project Board [EM, CEO, ED, HOS / SD, team manager] decision on release of business analysis resources for in-depth analysis [matches with Gate 1 PMM]

Step 3 Business analysis

- Activity: determination of the viability of improvement projects based on
  - Process improvement
  - Identified solutions
- Outputs:
  - Project Briefs [as per the PMM] for business improvement projects

Decision Corporate Priority / Use of Resources [PMM Gate 2]

- Activity: Project Board [EM, CEO, ED, HOS / SD, team manager] decision on match with corporate priorities and approval on the release of corporate resources for implementation