
Corporate Transformation Programme 2023-2025

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	21 September 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Jeff Brooks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	17 August 2023
Report Author:	Gabrielle Mancini, Service Director-Transformation
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4448

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Council established a new Service Director- Transformation post to lead on developing a new Corporate Transformation Programme for the Council in March 2023. The purpose of this paper is to give details of the projects to be included within this Programme over the coming two years, which will be a key workstream in the Council's efforts to ensure it delivers sustainable, efficient and customer focussed public services.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the report, which will be the first in a series of updates on the delivery of the programme.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>It is likely that delivery of the programme will have resourcing requirements, however these will be more than offset by the financial savings delivered by the programme.</p> <p>Individual projects within the programme are likely to have financial implications due to their strategic nature and pan-organisational reach. There will be Finance representation on individual project boards and the Section 151 Officer will have oversight of the wider Programme through line management of the Service Director- Transformation and through Corporate Board.</p>

Human Resource:	Individual projects within the programme are likely to have HR implications due to their strategic nature and pan-organisational reach. HR will be represented on individual project boards where this is the case in order to monitor impact.			
Legal:	Individual projects within the programme are likely to have legal implications due to their strategic nature and pan-organisational reach. There will be Legal representation on individual project boards and the Monitoring Officer will have oversight of the wider Programme through Corporate Board.			
Risk Management:	<p>It is likely that there will be risks associated with all of the projects, which will be monitored and managed through detailed, maintained risk registers and stringent project management.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Programme will not be successful in delivering the anticipated benefits if it does not receive the necessary corporate commitment or resource. This should be mitigated by robust oversight and ownership from Corporate Board and the Executive.</p>			
Property:	One of the proposed projects within the programme relates to the strategic management of the Council’s estate so it is likely that there will be significant property impact, although it is not yet possible to calculate this without conducting further analysis.			
Policy:	No, although the content of the Programme has been produced in direct response to the strategic objectives of the administration and the emerging financial position of the Council.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme.
Environmental Impact:	X			This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme, but some of these have significant environmental enhancements e.g. asset review.
Health Impact:		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme.
ICT Impact:		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme, although it is likely that significant IT implications which will be monitored through Resources Prioritisation Board.
Digital Services Impact:		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme, although it is likely that significant Digital implications which will be monitored through Resources Prioritisation Board.
Council Strategy Priorities:	x			It is likely that all of the projects within the Programme will have a positive impact on the delivery of the emerging Council Strategy's priorities as they have been developed in order to do precisely that.

Core Business:	x			It is likely that all of the projects within the Programme will have a positive impact on the delivery of the Council's core business as they have been developed in order to do precisely that.
Data Impact:		x		This will need to be assessed for each individual project contained within the Programme.
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Executive Member- Transformation and Governance</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>All Executive Directors</p> <p>Corporate Management Team</p> <p>Service Lead- HR</p> <p>Digital Services Manager</p> <p>Performance, Research & Consultation Manager</p> <p>Culture & Libraries Manager</p> <p>Building Communities Together Team Manager</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The Transformation Programme is to be based around six key projects; business support review, Strategic Asset and Locality Service Delivery Model Review, Place Service Improvement Plan, Corporate Review of Recruitment, Review of Care Home Provision and Review of Home to School Transport.
- 4.2 In March 2023, plans to recruit a new Service Director- Transformation for a two-year fixed period were approved at Full Council to facilitate the delivery of a pan-organisational change programme. This programme would enable the Council to deliver its services in the most efficient, cost effective way and to improve the experience of its customers. Key to these plans was the overarching principle that the content of this programme should be in addition to existing transformational activity being undertaken through the Council's Corporate Programme and that it should have a wider impact made possible by the additional strategic capacity provided by the new Service Director.
- 4.3 Following an internal recruitment process, this new role was recruited to, and the new Service Director started in post in late June 2023. The Service Director then began to undertake research and evidence-gathering in order to develop a long list of projects which might be included in the final Corporate Transformation Programme. This long

list was then reviewed by the Service Director- Transformation, the Executive Director- Resources and the Executive Member for Transformation and Governance before being prioritised based on the potential to impact on the following:

- Delivery of the objectives of the emerging Council Strategy 2023-27
- Improvement of customer experience
- Creation of capacity and maximisation of efficiencies
- Generation of income or capital receipts

4.4 Following this process, it was agreed that the programme should comprise two large corporate projects and four smaller service-based projects. The following projects are therefore proposed for inclusion:

- Business Support Review- *Consolidation and automation of manual and administrative functions into a central business support unit*
- Strategic Asset and Locality Service Delivery Model Review- *Rationalisation of corporate buildings and co-location of Council Services*
- Place Service Improvement Plan- *Implementation of a Service Improvement Plan to improve efficiency and customer satisfaction in the Council's Planning Service*
- Corporate Review of Recruitment- *considering ways to improve our recruitment processes whilst reducing agency costs*
- Review of Care Home Provision- *Development of in-depth business case for the future role of the Council in local residential care provision*
- Review of Home to School Transport- *Review of the service delivery model for home to school transport to identify efficiencies*

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 Following a wide-ranging data collection exercise, a proposed Corporate Transformation Programme has been compiled. The following sections and supporting appendices give details of how these were identified and the anticipated benefits they would provide.

Background

5.2 The content of the proposed Corporate Transformation Programme has been developed using a wide range of information and inputs including:

- Regular Portfolio Holder meetings with the Executive Member for Transformation and Governance
- The Council's budget monitoring reports
- Detailed individual interviews with senior officers
- The evidence base for the emerging Council Strategy 2023-27
- The output of the most recent Residents Survey
- Benchmarking spend and performance data from similar local authorities

5.3 This has enabled the Service Director- Transformation to develop first a long list of potential projects for inclusion in the Corporate Transformation Programme before finalising a proposed shortlist. The section below gives a brief overview of why each of the six projects selected for inclusion have been chosen.

Business Support Review

Business Support, also known as administrative services, is fundamental to supporting the delivery of our back-office and front-line services. The Council's current model of providing these services, which sees them undertaken within individual service areas, has led to an uneven position whereby some services have little to no administrative support while others have multiple officers providing such a function, albeit with different job descriptions despite commonality of duties. This can lead to both gaps in resource and duplication of effort as well as diminished resilience, poor organisational understanding among officers, silo working and a lack of flexibility.

It is proposed that these functions should be absorbed into a central business support function based on the nature of duties and volume of transactions being carried out rather than the service area being supported. This should maximise the use of existing skills and capacity within the organisation, realise efficiencies, build resilience, and make use of new and existing digital technologies to standardise our way of working.

Comparable authorities have undertaken reviews of this nature and have been able to realise significant resourcing savings through minimising the use of temporary staff and deleting vacant posts due to enhanced efficiency. They have also seen improvements in customer experience for both internal and external customers as transactions and processes are performed more quickly and with a greater accuracy.

Should this concept of this review have merit, it is considered that its operating principles whereby similar functions are identified and consistently centralised. Examples of relevant professional disciplines in this regard include Communications, Legal and Web Development.

Accommodation and Locality Working Review

As a unitary authority operating across a large geographical area, West Berkshire Council delivers almost 800 services to its residents. Although many of these are delivered within the community, the Council delivers services in a wide variety of corporate buildings as well as 8 libraries and over 50 schools. Its main corporate office at Market Street is reaching the end of its useful life and the buildings it formerly inhabited in Newbury Town Centre have been vacated as part of the Timelord 2 project. The Council's most recent LGA Peer Review suggested the Council should take a stronger place leadership role, which could include making better use of its estate to drive regeneration, and the Council also has clear objectives to become carbon neutral by 2030. The impact of the pandemic has shifted the way in which customers wish to receive Council services with current data suggesting that most customers wish to, and do, access services online and decreased customer footfall to corporate offices. That said, it is important to maintain a universal service offering for all customers, regardless of how they choose to access services.

It is proposed that a fundamental review of the Council's accommodation needs and the way in which it delivers face-to-face services is undertaken with the aim of developing a value-for-money solution that enables the Council to realise capital receipts, operate more efficiently, co-locate with other public sector partners, minimise the carbon impact of its operations and continue to provide a good level of customer service to all residents and businesses across a smaller footprint.

Place Service Improvement Plan

Improving customer service and the way in which the Council engages the community through its Planning Service is a clear priority of the new administration. A significant review of the service has already been undertaken and several opportunities for improvement have already been identified. The Council has also recently been awarded funding to implement digital improvements to its Planning Service, so it is suggested there is significant potential to enhance the customer experience, make best use of automation and realise efficiencies.

It is suggested that drawing together these existing opportunities and this new investment under the strategic umbrella of the Corporate Transformation Programme will provide the necessary oversight and momentum to ensure their benefits are fully realised for both the Council and its customers.

Corporate Review of Recruitment

The Council's HR Service has undergone significant changes since it became part of the Strategy & Governance department in 2021 under a new Service Lead. This has included improvements to policies and processes, the adoption of a Behaviour Framework, the addition of a Wellbeing Officer and the procurement of a new HR and Payroll System; all of which have been well-received by the organisation.

In recent years, the Council has relied heavily on agency staff which can represent poor value for money and instability within the establishment. At present, approximately 207 roles are fulfilled by temporary workers, representing circa 14% of the establishment and a revenue cost of circa £9.5m.

It is considered that a review of the Council's recruitment processes, with more strategic oversight located within the HR Service, better use of automation and an improved Employer Value Proposition, could represent better value for money and employee experience. It is for this reason that it should be included in the Corporate Transformation Programme.

Review of Care Home Provision

The Council is one of a number of local authorities nationally which maintains its own older people care homes. It currently operates 3 care homes with a total of 115 beds. This represents 17% of the local older people residential care market. These homes are currently at 75 % capacity and cost over £8m in revenue each year with further capital funding aside for building and maintenance works over the lifetime of the medium-term financial strategy.

The Adult Social Care Department is currently undertaking a strategic review of the care market and this includes a review of its options and how the Council wishes to deliver residential care going forward. This review is to be undertaken from an agnostic position to allow for all provision models to be considered and for the best, most value-for-money future operating model to be proposed and subsequently adopted.

Home to School Transport

West Berkshire Council provides home to school transport for almost 2000 local young people at a revenue cost of over £3m each year. Whilst a small percentage of this provision is undertaken in house and by schools, the vast majority of it is contracted out to external companies.

After analysis suggested that the Council was an outlier in terms of level of spend, a consultant was appointed to undertake a review of the service to identify opportunities to realise efficiencies. The consultant in question has now produced a report detailing avenues for consideration and it is recommended that the ongoing work relating to the review is placed within the Corporate Transformation Programme to ensure it has a high profile and that its benefits are realised.

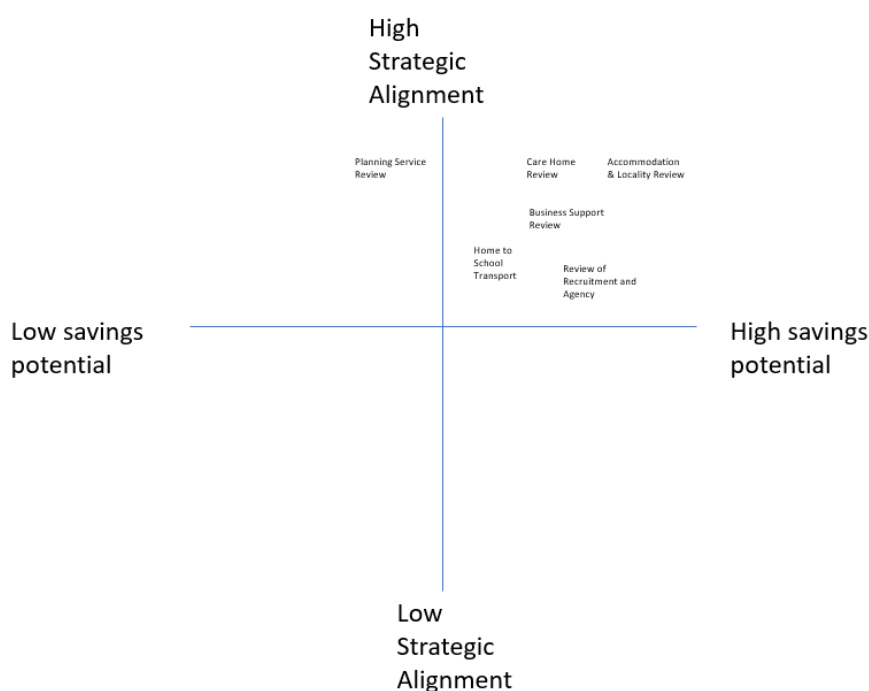


Figure 1: Matrix demonstrating the benefits of the projects proposed for inclusion in the Corporate Transformation Programme.

Proposals

5.4 It is proposed that the following projects should be endorsed for inclusion in the Corporate Transformation Programme in light of their significant potential impact on the organisation’s finances, the experience of its customers and the successful delivery of its strategic priorities:

- Business Support Review
- Strategic Asset and Locality Service Delivery Model Review
- Place Service Improvement Plan
- Corporate Review of Recruitment
- Review of Care Home Provision
- Review of Home to School Transport

- 5.5 It is proposed that Executive should receive quarterly reports regarding the progress made on the projects contained within the programme.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 A number of other projects were considered for inclusion within the Corporate Transformation Programme. However, they were discounted as they did not align with the administration's priorities and organisational need to the same degree as those which have been included.
- 6.2 Doing nothing is an option but this is not recommended given the proposed programme's clear links to the Council's strategic objectives and need to address its budgetary position.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The importance of implementing a wide-ranging, impactful Corporate Transformation Programme has been agreed by Full Council. In doing so, the Council will ensure it is able to deliver its services in the most efficient way whilst also improving the experience of its customers.
- 7.2 The projects proposed for inclusion in the programme as outlined in this report have the potential to realise significant benefits for the authority, so it is recommended that Executive notes this paper and agrees to receive regular reports on the progress being made on delivering the programme.

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 Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

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