

TITLE	21st Century Council - Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 20 March 2019
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Committee has considered regular updates on the implementation and reporting of the 21st Century Council change programme. This transformation of the way the Council operates is intended to achieve the following benefits:

- Improved availability of, and access to, Council services through digital channels
- Swifter resolution of issues and queries
- Ability for residents to track the progress of their issue as it is resolved by the Council
- Greater focus on problem-solving and customer responsiveness
- A leaner, more efficient Council costing significantly less to run.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) consider the 21CC update submitted to the Executive in February 2019 (Annex A);
- 2) consider progress of the 21CC programme against the original 2016 Business Case (Annex B);
- 3) scrutinise the responses made to the Committee's Key Lines of Enquiry (Annex C);
- 4) determine any issues requiring further information and/or clarification;
- 5) consider appropriate recommendations/feedback to the Executive on the implementation and reporting of the 21CC programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Committee has received regular updates on the implementation of the 21st Century Council change programme since its commencement in September 2016. The report includes a copy of the update submitted to the Executive in February 2019 (Annex A). Also attached is the original 21CC Business Case approved by the Executive in September 2016;

In order to structure the Scrutiny session, the Chairman has agreed a number of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) which are set out at Annex C. Members are asked to consider progress of the 21CC programme against its original Business Case and to scrutinise the overall impact of the programme.

BACKGROUND

The 21st Century Council Change Programme has formed an essential element of the savings targets contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan. The programme involves the implementation of a new model of working and organisation for the Council. It is underpinned by an extensive IT programme and is intended to extend to all parts of the organisation over the implementation period. When complete, the programme will contribute ongoing annual savings in staff costs of c£4m. Implementation commenced following Executive approval of the Business Case in September 2016.

Implementation of the programme was initially phased into two parts, to ensure transition to the new model of working is safe and effective.

Phase 1 ran from October 2016 to Spring 2017 and included the establishment of the reconfigured senior leadership team and the reconfiguration of the Council's support services together with Strategy and Commissioning.

Phase 2 was designed to be implemented in two phases. The first phase involved the establishment of the Council's Customer and Localities functions encompassing the following service areas:

- Environment
- Income and Assessments
- Housing
- Customer Services

The business cases for the remaining services areas Adults and Children's (former People Services) is being considered alongside the current financial and service challenges faced by these two demand led areas.

Scrutiny to Date

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee's previous consideration of progress on the 21CC programme took place at the meeting held in March 2018. A summary of the issues raised by the Committee at that meeting is set out below:

- In relation to the 21st Century Council IT improvements, were the changes achieved through the purchase of new systems or through achieving greater functionality from existing hardware and software? It was confirmed that the improvements were a combination of the two. Some improvements, such as the improved mapping system were the result of new investment.
- Did the new IT systems improve linkages to contractors and third parties? It was confirmed that this approach was a key part of the new systems. For example, Veolia (the waste contractor) was using the Council's portals and software. The aim was to promote a "one Council" approach for the benefit of residents and customers.
- In relation to the delay in the People Services were the team confident that the projected savings would be achieved? It was confirmed that the Interim Director of People Services, Paul Senior, was committed to delivering the savings within the

amended timeframe. Recruitment of a permanent Director was being organised in the context of the process for recruiting a permanent Chief Executive. Graham Ebers confirmed that the underachievement of savings in 2018/19 was balanced by a new savings target for 2019/20. The slippage was factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

- In relation to the Change Readiness data in the papers, were there any key trends? What was the data indicating about the state of staff morale? It was confirmed that the Change Readiness surveys were undertaken before the start of consultation on new phases of the programme and after structure changes had been completed. So, for example, the December 2017 responses were made up of nearly 50% staff from People Services at a time when the previous Director had left and the Interim Director had just arrived. It was important to understand the organisational context within which each survey was undertaken. It was accepted that delays in the programme had increased uncertainty and impacted on staff morale.
- In relation to constant changes in the local government landscape, such as the changes to health and social care, did the 21st Century Council model have the flexibility to adapt to the changing environment? It was confirmed that the model was developed within the context of a changing landscape. So, for example, part of the reason for the pause in People Services was to ensure that the Council and its partners were maximising the potential for partnership working.
- How was the Audit Committee monitoring the financial elements of the 21st Century Council programme? It was confirmed that the Audit Committee had considered various aspects of the programme such as the mitigation of risk and governance. The Audit Committee would receive further updates in due course.
- In relation to the new service delivery channels, were service pressures emerging which required additional resources? It was confirmed that a strength of the new organisational model was the involvement of services in designing and owning the new ways of working. Where service pressures were identified, such as Highways, additional capacity was delivered.

Key Lines of Enquiry

In order to facilitate the Committee's discussions the Chairman has agreed a set of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) relating to the 21CC programme. The KLOEs are set out at Annex C.

The KLOEs are designed to focus on key elements of the 21CC programme. However, Members may also wish to ask questions about other elements of the programme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

Other Financial Information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Set out in the attached Annexes

List of Background Papers	
None	
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