

Agenda Item 9.

TITLE	21st Century Council - Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 31 May 2018
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Director of Customer and Localities Services - Heather Thwaites
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance - Julian McGhee- Sumner

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The transformation of the way the Council operates will 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 Executive is recommended to note the progress in implementing the 21st Century Council programme.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of progress over the last quarter in the implementation of the 21st Century Council programme. The Executive receives quarterly reports during the implementation period reporting on progress of implementation and revenue return on investment.

The key highlights are set out in the report. These include the significant progress in preparation for the new Customer and Localities functions and the implementation of a raft of IT improvements for the public and staff.

Background

The C21 Change Programme forms an essential element of the savings 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 will 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. The implementation was 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:

- Establishment of the reconfigured senior leadership team (Directors and the management tiers below)
- Establishment of the reconfigured Strategy and Commissioning and Support Services
- Implementation of the key IT improvements and integration

Phase 2 was planned to be delivered in two tranches

Tranche 1:

- Environment
- Income and Assessments
- Customer Services
- Children's Social Care

Tranche 2:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Education
- Integrated Mental Health
- Housing
- Public Health

As reported in the last quarterly update progress in the areas within People Services was delayed whilst the incoming Director undertook a thorough appraisal of the service areas particularly to understand resilience, to benchmark and to understand changes in demand.

Analysis of Issues

Customer and Localities

The creation of the new Customer and Localities Directorate is well advanced and on schedule. This will see the transitioning of the existing service areas of Environment; Income and Payments, Customer Services and Housing into the new functions lead by:

- Clare Lawrence – AD Place (Development Management, Highways and Transport Management; Contract Management of Shared Services, Waste, Grounds Maintenance, the Countryside Service etc.)
- Mark Cupit – AD Delivery and Infrastructure (Strategic Development Locations; Major Highway and Infrastructure schemes, Specialist Highway and Drainage advice: CIL and Infrastructure funding; and Heritage and Green Infrastructure)

- Josie Wragg – AD Customer and Localities (the new roles of Customer Management; Case Management and Locality Services)
- AD Housing, Income and Assessment Staff consultation is currently underway to migrate the existing Housing Services into Customer and Localities as per the Council's new operating model.

Members will be aware that the move to customer management, case management and locality delivery is key to the implementation of the new operating model. Each of the service areas transitioning is now entering a period of intense activity and pressure. Mobilisation will commence in June and is expected to take 6-9 months before new ways of working and new systems are fully embedded. Over 60% of the staff involved will have new and different roles, they will be in new teams reporting to new or different managers. All will have new processes to become familiar with together with new or improved IT systems and so an intense period of familiarisation and training will be required. In addition whilst this happens we will be asking staff to keep existing tasks going until they can be safely transitioned into the new arrangements. The ask to our staff should not be underestimated.

The elements of the services transitioning into Customer and Localities will go live in a sequenced programme over the summer period. Each area has identified the key IT changes necessary to enable it to go live and development of these is ongoing. For each element in addition to the staff changes there will be the introduction and testing of these new IT systems; the review of information available, usability and functionality of the service's web presence; the preparation of scripts, the setting of handoff thresholds and the preparation of instruction notes and how to do guidelines.

Design work is underway for Leisure and Communications and Engagement. It is hoped this will be completed shortly allowing the services to transition into Customer and Localities and Corporate Services during the summer.

Customer Enhancements

A whole raft of improvements to enable the customer to interact more easily and successfully with the Council have been implemented over recent months with many more to come.

Those implemented and planned include:

- New modern mapping software
- School admissions online
- Blue badges online
- New planning Search and planning map search facility
- Improved customer account facility
- New online payment system including contactless and app pay facilities across the borough
- Council Tax online service
- Benefit online service
- Housing online service
- Ability to manage and track planning applications online
- Online booking for services e.g registrars
- Improved online highways reporting, tracking and information
- Members Intranet

Adults and Children's

The programme has restarted in these two remaining service areas. The C21 programme is being considered alongside the current financial and service challenges faced by these two demand led areas. Members will be aware that demand continues to grow in adult social care as the population ages, eg the local population aged 85+ is projected to increase by 131% by 2035, outstripping both SE and national increases. The complexity increases as pathways for adults extend across a number of partners and a number of allied initiatives, such as the emerging local health and social care integration 2020 plans. In Children's the national rise in child referrals is being mirrored locally. The number of children subject to child protection plans has increased by 132% since June 2017. These challenges are being considered in the round to determine the optimum way forward to secure the C21 objectives.

Member update and involvement

The cross party Member Group continues to meet regularly receiving progress updates and IT previews for comment and involvement. The group has been involved in the development of the intranet for Members and has been road-testing the site. The group is also particularly involved in steering the communication activity for Members and our residents and public. Regular briefings for Members are published and the group has agreed a communication plan for the public which is currently being implemented. Members continue to be involved in the emerging design of our locality service.

The progress of the programme was also discussed at Management Overview and Scrutiny in March. The committee requested further quarterly updates be provided to it on an ongoing basis.

Risk mitigation

As we enter the period of mobilisation and go live for Customer and Localities the risk that existing service levels may be temporarily impacted becomes more likely. As described above the degree of change both for individuals and teams, coupled with the significant IT and process changes will make this period extremely challenging. Managers will be closely monitoring performance and where necessary will bring in additional staff resource to help during the period of intense change. This may temporarily impact on agency staffing budgets.

Members will also be aware that the Customer and Localities Director is currently seconded to the programme. Interim arrangements have been in place to cover the Environment operations however as we move to implementation of this new resident facing service area having the Director and a significant AD post being covered by only one person will place inevitable risk on the success of this transition.

The financial risk of a delay in securing the programme's financial benefits from People Services reported last time has been mitigated within the MTFP agreed by Council in February. As reported above the detailed planning is underway to ensure that the savings as now planned for 2019/2020 are delivered.

Financial update

Phase 1 (Corporate Services) and the creation of Customer and Localities remain on track to provide the savings as per the business plan and the MTFP as set out below.

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.

	£'000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total
Business Case	Revenue	710	2,180	1,500	0	4,390
	Capital	2,752	1,577	0	0	4,329
	Saving	0	(2,000)	(2,000)	0	(4,000)
Actual/Forecast	Revenue	591	2,079	1,720	0	4,390
	Capital	939	2,045	1,345	0	4,329
	Saving	0	(2,000)	(750)	(1250)	(4,000)
Variance	Revenue	119	101	(220)	0	0
	Capital	1,813	(468)	(1,345)	0	0
	Saving	0	0	(1250)	1250	0

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
As set out in the report.

List of Background Papers
None

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