

A Better Council

Cabinet Member for Innovation & Corporate Services



Date: 09/11/2021
Agenda Item: 5
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Key Decision? YES
Local Ward All
Members

CABINET

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report introduces a proposal for an organisational change programme called 'Being A Better Council'. The programme (strategy) is designed to help us become the council we recognise we need, and want to be, to respond to the changing needs and expectations of our residents. It recognises the need to do so based on our 'invisible competition', the organisations against whom our residents compare and benchmark the way our services are organised and provided.
- 1.2 This organisational change programme will be implemented between December 2021 and March 2023, with improvements to services and measures of success realised between April 2022 and March 2025. It is an ambitious programme; it seeks to plan and implement substantial and sustainable change to our organisational structures, performance and culture to better deliver our Strategic Plan and meet our aspirations to be a modern, well-run council.
- 1.3 Successful implementation of the programme will result in new operating models for our services, delivered by more of our employees who are skilled and confident; able to provide services that are resident centric, commercially minded and data and performance driven. This in turn will drive increased satisfaction with our performance and increased trust in us.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the organisational change programme, Being a Better Council 2021 – 2024.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves a capital budget of £750,000 over the period of the programme (2021/22 – 2023/24) with funding provided by reallocating existing capital projects already identified within the MTFS, to implement the programme.

3. Background

- 3.1 The need for this organisational change programme has arisen from a recognition that, while there are examples of well performing services and pockets of strong management practice, overall satisfaction with our services and trust in us as a local council is not where we wish it to be.

- 3.2 We also recognise that increasing demand for our services alongside some cultural, management and quality challenges, at a time when our finances remain uncertain, creates an environment in which we are not set up to deliver the place making ambitions of our residents.
- 3.3 In February 2021, both Cabinet and Council reviewed our medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) which identified £5.2m - £6.7m of savings requirements for the period 2021/22 – 2024/25, with further savings of £2.2m - £2.7m required by March 2026. In September 2021, the government announced there will be a three-year financial settlement provided as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October this year. At the time of drafting this report, while we do welcome the certainty a multi-year funding guarantee will provide, we still do not know how ‘good’ or otherwise our future funding will be.
- 3.4 These financial pressures added to the challenges articulated in paragraph 3.2 show the council is operating in challenging times where ‘doing nothing’ is not a realistic option. The organisational change programme proposed through this report sets out how we intend to change as a council. We will rethink our traditional structures, increase the use of digital technologies, create a stronger resident centric approach to service provision and engender a commercial mind set in the use of data, performance management and through our organisational culture.
- 3.3 The ‘Being a Better Council’ programme deliver this change. It will focus on three key areas, enabling us to be:
- **Better equipped** – realigning service structures and rethinking how our services are delivered, and by whom. We will bring all residents’ facing services together and support them with better use of digital technologies that are second nature to our invisible competition. Where sensible, we will merge the functional elements of services (e.g. assessment and processing) and underpin their management and delivery with stronger performance management and greater clarity over what is expected of them.
 - **Better led** – creating a strong ‘can do’ culture across the organisation and equipping all our managers with the right skills to do their jobs.
 - **Better performing** – investing in the core capacity and capabilities of our workforce, to create an officer cohort capable of increased growth and performance.
- 3.4 It is envisaged these key areas (work streams) will be delivered through 15 complimentary projects over the length of the programme. Some are existing and known projects (e.g. Transformation Programme, Digital Strategy and Community Engagement Strategy). Others are new (e.g. Organisation Design / Target Operating Model, Customer Centricity Training). All are identified as key to shifting the way the organisation works and thinks. A full list of work streams is set out in section 6 of the programme documentation.

Alternative Options	<p>Do nothing – This would not enable us to systematically challenge what we do and how we do it. It would not tackle known concerns over the performance and culture of some of our services. It would not enable us to respond to financial pressures we are facing.</p> <p>Other structural models have been considered but would not yield the necessary efficiencies required.</p>
Consultation	<p>Consultation has been carried out with the relevant officers and members. Consultation on the further stages of the programme will be undertaken as per the requirements of our constitution and our employment policies with input from customers and residents at relevant stages of the programme.</p>
Financial Implications	<p>It is assumed that any revenue implications from this programme will be managed through existing budgets.</p>

The Approved Capital Programme includes the following related capital budgets:

	Approved Capital Programme				
	2021/22 Budget £000	2022/23 Budget £000	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	Total £000
Property Planned Maintenance	390	180	215	0	785
IT Hardware	165	160	174	0	499
IT Infrastructure	123	15	0	0	138
IT Innovation	143	50	0	0	193
Approved Budgets	821	405	389	0	1,615

It is recommended that these Approved Budgets are repurposed to fund the Better Council Budget:

	Recommended Capital Programme				
	2021/22 Budget £000	2022/23 Budget £000	2023/24 Budget £000	2024/25 Budget £000	Total £000
Property Planned Maintenance	362	180	215	0	757
IT Hardware	0	0	0	0	0
IT Infrastructure	108	0	0	0	108
IT Innovation	0	0	0	0	0
A Better Council	150	600	0	0	750
Recommended Budgets	620	780	215	0	1,615

Approved by Section
151 Officer

Yes

Legal
Implications

The change programme will need to manage key risks around potential changes to roles and contracts of employment for staff, the statutory framework in which we operate and ensuring that all obligations can still be met using new mechanisms and processes.

A standard project and programme management approach will need to be developed to ensure these are captured and resolved as the project develops.

Governance obligations will form part of our core capacity.

Approved by
Monitoring Officer

Yes

Contribution to
the Delivery of
the Strategic Plan

1. Enables achievement of our objective to be A Good Council that is – financially sound, transparent, and accountable and responsive and customer focussed
2. Becoming A Good Council will in turn enable us to deliver the other strands of our Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024:
 - a. Enable people to
 - i. Help themselves and others
 - ii. Collaborate and engage with us
 - iii. Live healthy and active lives
 - b. Shape place to
 - i. Keep it clean, green, and safe
 - ii. Preserve the characteristics
 - iii. Make sure sustainability and infrastructure needs are balanced
 - c. Develop prosperity to
 - i. Encourage economic growth

	<p>ii. Enhance the district for all</p> <p>iii. Invest in the future</p>
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	An Equality impact assessment has been completed which shows that there may be support needs for some residents to access services. This can be mitigated by extensive user testing and additional support from our own staff and 3 rd sector providers.
Crime & Safety Issues	None identified.
Environmental Impact	One of the key aims of this Council is to maintain a clear focus on the clearly stated carbon reduction ambitions. This proposed approach will allow clarity of focus. Increase in digital capacity will enable a reduction in more carbon intensive mechanisms – such as reducing visits to the Council, use of paper and energy etc. Improvements in efficiency will help provide organisational capacity to tackle sustainability.
GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	None, though DPIA's will be undertaken for all new processes and services as they are introduced to ensure customer and resident data is secure at all times.

	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	Financial – that the costs of delivering the programme exceed the capital funding available - AT	Likelihood: Y Impact: Y Severity: Y	Ensure a robust project methodology is employed to manage costs.	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G
B	Legal – those changes proposed do not jeopardise delivery of our statutory obligations - CT	Likelihood: Y Impact: Y Severity: Y	Ensure a robust project methodology is employed to manage risk and legal obligations.	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G
C	People – that employment implications are managed effectively to ensure staff are developed and have capacity to deliver - CT	Likelihood: Y Impact: Y Severity: Y	Ensure a robust project methodology is employed to manage programme and identify culture, behaviours and skills requires. Ensure all current applicable policies are followed and new policies to support transition are developed and consulted effectively.	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G
D	Customers – that key processes and services remain available and operational throughout the programme - TT	Likelihood: Y Impact: Y Severity: Y	Ensure a robust project methodology is employed to capture data, demand, and expectations. Clear engagement in place along with robust user testing and suitable mechanisms to deal with additional needs.	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G
E	Outcomes – that the programme supports the delivery of our Strategic Plan - SF	Likelihood: Y Impact: R Severity: R	Map roll out of programme to tackle largest strategic issues. Ensure baseline and robust tracking mechanisms exist to monitor progress and evidence deliver – deal with what matters most.	Likelihood: G Impact: R Severity: Y
F	Programme and project delivery resilience – reputation risk if we did not deliver. Leadership Team	Likelihood: Y Impact: R Severity: R	Ensure the correct skills and resources are identified to deliver the programme and projects.	Likelihood: G Impact: R Severity: Y
G	Change management not managed – the ability and capacity to make the change internally. Leadership Team	Likelihood: Y Impact: R Severity: Y	Programme delivery approach designed to change the culture as well as the individual projects.	Likelihood: Y Impact: Y Severity: Y

H	Potential of service failure in relation to BAU. Leadership Team	Likelihood: Y Impact: R Severity: Y	Capacity built within the programme and projects to ensure that colleagues are allowed to carry out BAU	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G
I	IT infrastructure and IT systems to deliver the changes required TT	Likelihood: Y Impact: R Severity: Y	IT infrastructure and IT systems designed around the transformed organisation.	Likelihood: G Impact: Y Severity: G

None	Background documents Any previous reports or decisions linked to this item
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None	Relevant web links Any links for background information which may be useful to understand the context of the report
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