Cabinet Report

South Oxfordshire
District Council

Listening Learning Leading

Vale
of White Horse
District Council

Report of Deputy Chief Executive for Operations and Transformation

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To: CABINET

Dates:29 September 2022 (South) 30 September 2022 (Vale)

Update on the Corporate Transformation Programme, and the Technology and Customer Workstreams

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Recommendations

That Cabinet is requested to note the update on the transformation programme and progress to date on the technology and customer workstreams.

Purpose of report

1. To update Cabinet members on progress implementing the council's agreed transformation programme, including the proposed structure of the transformation team, and the further development of transformation outcomes linked to clear themes.

Corporate objectives

2. Future transformation activity at the Council is fundamental to our ability to enable our staff and services to meet and deliver our Corporate Objectives over the coming months and years in what will be an increasingly challenging financial environment.

3. The consistent approach (ensured by focusing on the clearly defined outcomes outlined in this paper), will drive a positive approach to transformation activity across the councils.

Background

4. South Oxfordshire Cabinet agreed the Technology Strategy and roadmap on 4 November 2021, and the Customer Transformation Strategy and Roadmap on 2 December 2021.

5. Vale of White Horse Cabinet agreed the Technology Strategy and roadmap on 29 October 2021, and the Customer Transformation Strategy and Roadmap on 3 December 2021

6. At the time of these decisions progressing through Cabinets, it was identified that these workstreams would form a significant part of our overall transformation activity.

7. This update sets out the progress made in the establishment of the target outcomes for the transformation programme and the team to support delivery, and what has been achieved on each of the roadmaps since the decisions were made.

Transformation Outcomes

8. The councils must ensure staff are enabled by systems and processes, to deliver the high standard of services expected by service users, be they residents, businesses or visitors.

9. The transformation outcomes identified below have been categorised into four key themes, "Customer", "Digital, Data and Technology", "People" and "Future Proof". With three overall outcomes of "Financially Stable", "Environmentally Positive" and "Open and Transparent" which apply to every area, and are driven by the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

10. When undertaking transformation activity, these key themes will be focused on to measure success.

South and Vale Transformation
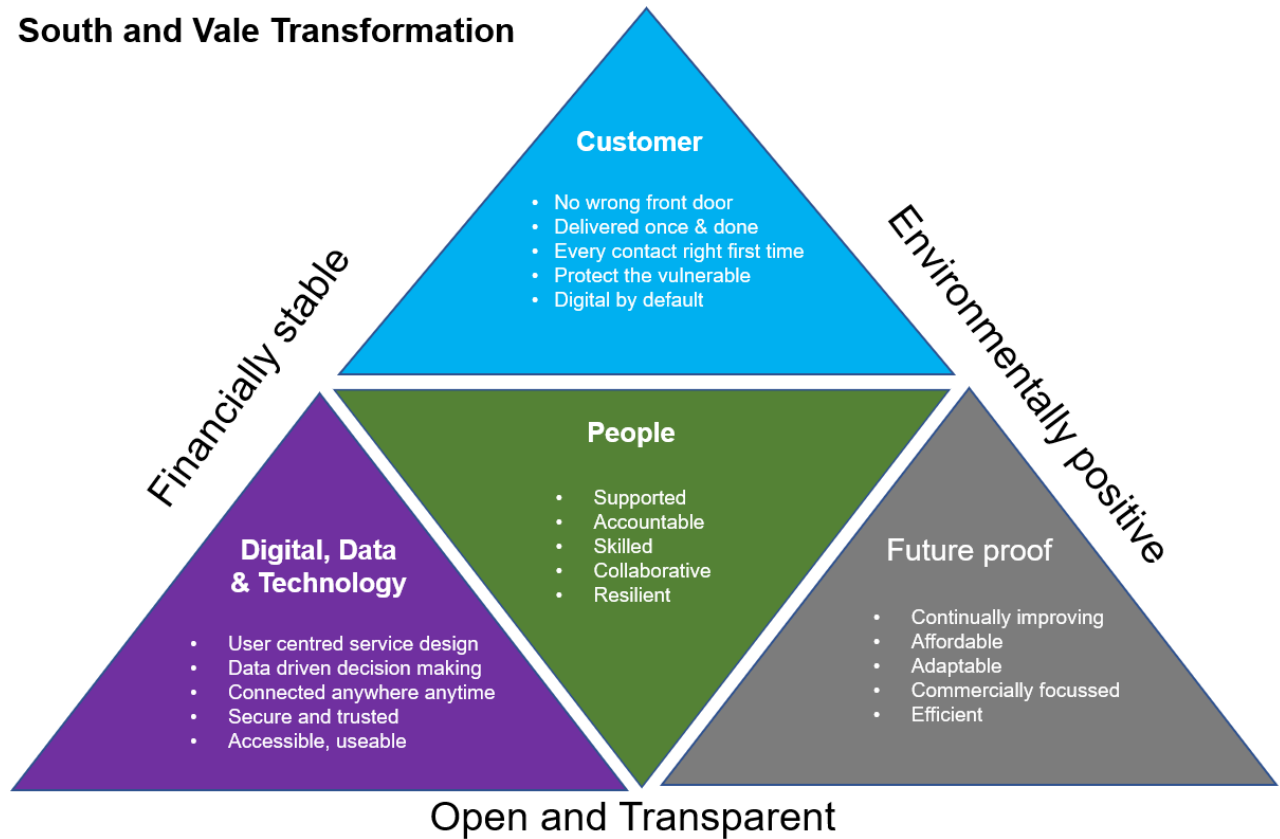
11. Customer Outcomes

    a. No wrong front door – Service users will be dealt with at the first point of contact or directed/transferred to the right place for each contact, resulting in a seamless, single contact experience.

    b. Delivered once and done – For 'single transaction' contacts, each will result in the correct action being taken, reducing failure demand and the need for service users to undertake multiple, unnecessary contacts.

    c. Every contact right first time – Every contact along the entire customer journey should be clear and accurate, delivering the required information at the right time.

    d. Protect the vulnerable – Our service and system design must ensure vulnerable service users are identified and are supported to the fullest extent possible.

    e. Digital by default – Our systems and processes should be undertaken in the simplest, quickest and most efficient manner possible, using the most appropriate system available.

12. Digital, Data and Technology Outcomes

    a. User centred service design – Processes and systems should be designed and implemented in a way which ensures the user experience is at the heart of our decision making.

    b. Data driven decision making – We will utilise the data we hold and are able to collect to ensure we make the right decisions each time, every time.

c. Connected anywhere anytime – Our systems will be accessible when they are needed where they are needed.

d. Secure and trusted – Our systems, data and processes are safe, secure in the face of an ever-changing digital landscape.

e. Accessible,– Services and processes are accessible in the ways that service users need to use them, ensuring that people can access our services using the means of contact/channel most appropriate for them.

13. People Outcomes

a. Supported – Our staff are supported by the processes and systems they work with, to deliver the outcomes required by our service users.

b. Accountable – The systems and policies we have in place will ensure that our staff are accountable for their actions and decision making.

c. Skilled – The training, and recruitment practices will ensure that our staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to deliver the right outcomes for residents.

d. Collaborative – The systems and processes we put in place should enable opportunities for collaboration and cross service working; we expect our staff to collaborate where appropriate to achieve the best outcomes.

e. Resilient – We want to work in a way which encourages and enables resilience at individual, team and council-wide levels.

14. Future Proof Outcomes

a. Continually improving – The systems, processes and supporting policies we implement must be open to continuous improvement and designed with that in mind.

b. Affordable – In an ever more challenging financial environment, we must implement solutions which will ensure that council operations are affordable now and into the future.

c. Adaptable – Solutions must be able to flex to meet needs as they arise, no matter how unforeseeable they are today.

d. Commercially focused – Systems and processes we implement must be open to seizing opportunities as they arise, with an entrepreneurial mindset and a solution focused approach.

e. Efficient – activity will be focused on delivering solutions which are lean and deliver the best value for money for our residents, business and visitors.

Establishment of the Transformation Team and Governance

15. To support the delivery of transformation activities (both planned and underway), we must ensure that we must put in place a structure which can drive progress and delivery at pace. Recruitment is currently underway for the team shown below which is funded from existing, agreed budgets.

Transformation Programme Structure
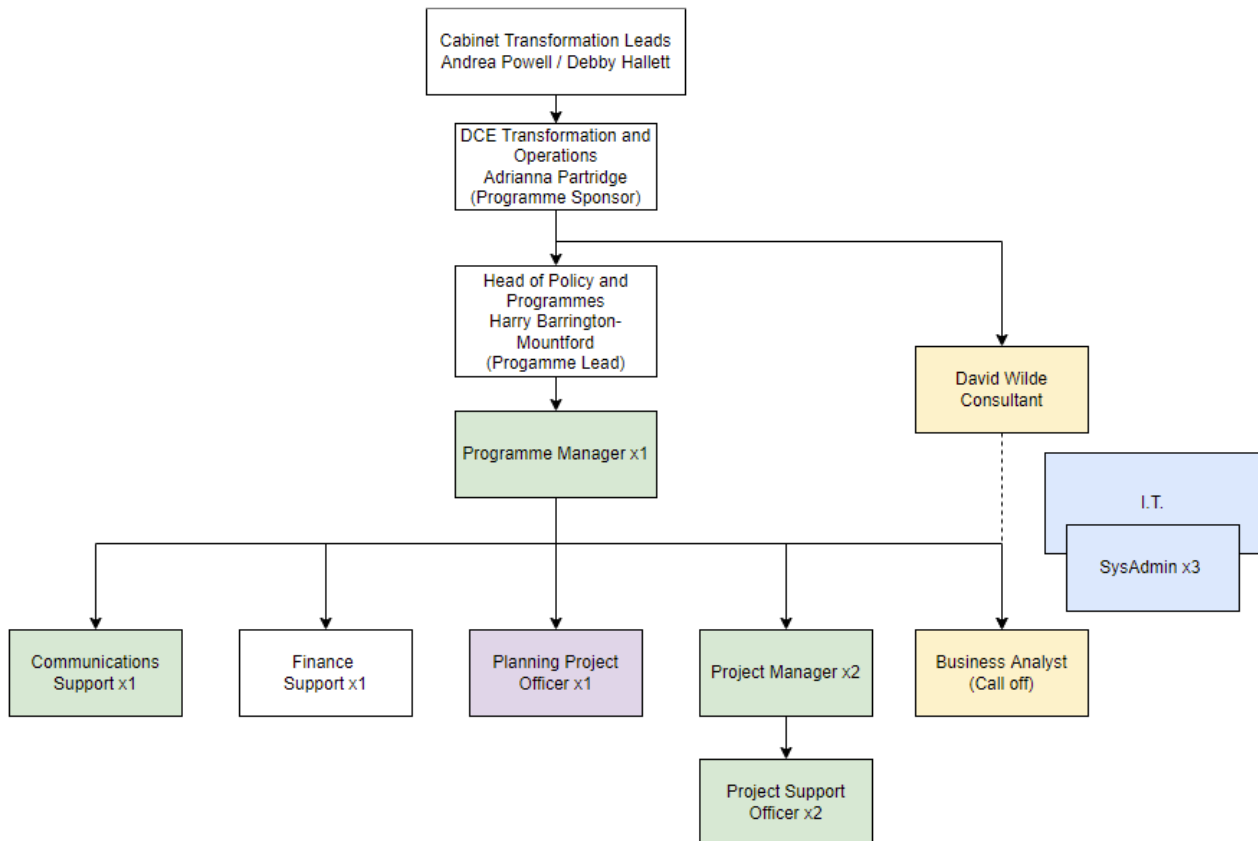
16. This team will have oversight of all transformation activity, and will both manage projects/programmes directly and support transformation being managed at a service level.

17. Whilst operational decision making relating to transformation activities rests at an officer level, members will be briefed and consulted through a newly established member and officer group consisting of the Cabinet Transformation Leads, Deputy Chief Executive Operations and Transformation, Head of Policy and Programmes and Council Leaders/Officers as required.

Progress on the Technology Roadmap

18. The Technology Roadmap is at Annex A and this update focusses on five areas of progress:

- Finance systems (Unit 4, Pay360 and Bottomline)
- Property Systems (Concerto, Confirm and Mapinfo)

- Housing Management system (Abritas)
- Customer Relationship Management system
- Planning and Environmental Health System (Ocella)

19. The core General Ledger and Accounts Payable system (Unit 4) was one of the first to be migrated to the Cloud under the roadmap, with full implementation completed on time and on budget in April 2021. Since then the system has performed very well and in fact has undergone three major upgrades without any additional cost or negative impact to normal business. Since taking the system management back in-house there have been significant developments in useability and functionality, which have reduced manual effort across the councils and improved visibility of data for financial management. Support to increase use of the system will continue.

20. On the Property Systems, the councils have successfully upgraded the main IT system Concerto to the latest version, again on time and on budget, and enabled the decommissioning of two other systems used for Technical Services. For the first time the councils have full visibility of all property assets and land parcels in one place, using standardised datasets. The move to the latest cloud based platform has also enabled the use of Single Sign-On, reducing IT security risks. The full capabilities of the new solution will be realised over the next 2 years by providing a single spatial view of property and other assets for better decision making across technical services, facilities and real estate management.

21. For the Housing Management Systems, the procurement has been successfully concluded with the establishment of a new contract for Abritas as a Cloud hosted service. Unfortunately, the supplier has a waiting list for implementation due to huge demand across the housing and local government sectors, meaning the implementation for South and Vale councils will be between January and March 2023.

22. The Customer Relationship Management system, Goss Interactive, has now been procured and the implementation project has been mobilised. The expected go-live date is the start of November 2022.

23. Moving on to the next key step, officers are currently working on the full business case for replacement of systems used by Planning and Environmental Services which will support workflow and enhanced automation– this is the subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Progress on the Customer Transformation and Roadmap

Outcome of the baseline review

24. Officers have completed a review of each of our customer transactions against the Local Government Association's (LGA) published list of 495 District Council services. This baseline review has been used to help revise the roadmap and will provide evidence to inform the business case for change as we review each service.

25. A significant number on the LGA list referred to transactions which were the responsibility of other agencies or were internally focused, once these were stripped out 176 were examined further. Of those services examined:

- 129 services fit the 'right first time' definition

- 47 services fit the 'once and done' definition

26. The number of services delivered through each channel is as follows:

- 22 are fully or in part provided through the councils' (or are partners) points of presence (currently Milton Park, Leisure Centres, Cornerstone or Beacon)

- 79 are available digitally through the web sites

- 47 services are fully or in part provided through contact centres (Capita, Biffa, GLL or in house)

27. Completion of processes involves being handed off to other organisations (including contractors) for 47 of these services

28. The main areas for transformation identified in the review are:

- a significant number of digital services not being fully digital – they still contain various analogue and manual steps to complete delivery (e.g. pdf forms, providing paper evidence)

- many services are available through only one channel

- many of the once and done services are not digital but should be

- many services are delivered outside the councils but remain the councils' responsibility

29. In addition to these, a further 73 services on the LGA list are for provision of information/advice only with no other customer transaction and a number are discretionary, and we have chosen not to include them in this baseline assessment.

30. Some transactional services are very high volume - revenues and benefits, planning, elections, and waste and street cleaning (inc. garden waste) – and any process improvements are likely to have the widest impact on our residents. Beacon, Cornerstone and community centre bookings are also high-volume services, along with housing allocations. Owing to the current systems and processes, much routine work is undertaken by higher cost 'expert' domains, and not enough routine work is resolved at the front end of customer contact.

The revised roadmap

31. Conversations with teams around the baseline review and preliminary discussions with suppliers, has revealed opportunities to revise the original road map for greatest impact and to avoid duplication with other projects. The full revised roadmap is attached at Annex B. In summary revisions are:

- Planning operations and regulatory services has been brought forward to June 2022 - July 2023, aligned across the technology and customer roadmaps to address the limitations on change by current IT solutions. The full business case is well under way and is subject to a separate item on this agenda.

- Mobile homes and housing systems procurement completed with implementation, is now in January - March 2023 due to supplier congestion in their delivery programme.

- Contact centre service design and telephony solutions has been split into a two-stage approach: contact centre design in 2022 and telephony procurement in 2023 .

- Democratic services moved to June 2023 (post the planned local elections).

- Economic services moved to April 2024.

- Review of Member IT provision added for January - March 2023 in preparation for services required following the 2023 local government election.

Procurement of the CRM solution

32. The CRM is a critical part of the councils' technology provision which will support the delivery of the Customer Strategy. Without it the councils will be unable to join the dots between services around our residents and businesses.

33. As part of the IT Strategy, Cabinet agreed an indicative budget of £36,200 per council one off implementation costs; and £20,000 per council for annual revenue costs, to be funded from savings released from the wider customer transformation review. Discussion with our preferred supplier has revealed further opportunities to review current working and fill identified needs, by purchasing additional functionality:

- API connectors to the 'Whitespace' system and to GIS will enable us to fully automate garden waste processes, including links to Biffa; and to review how customer service elements of the waste service are handled in future.

- The GIS Connector and 'report it' functions available with the CRM provide us with the opportunity to replace some functions no longer supported by Oxfordshire County Council's 'Fix My Street,' enabling residents to be able to digitally report issues with map references and via mobile devices

- The Bookings functionality will avoid the cost of procuring an alternative booking system for community centre bookings which is an identified need.

34. With these additions actual costs are £78,100 (one off capital); £74,159 revenue (year 1) and £85,560 (year 2). Funding was approved by ICMDs in July and August, this included identified cost efficiencies of £97,300 per annum. Work on implementation of the CRM began in September and we expect the garden waste service to be migrated across in late 2022.

Customer Service Centre

35. Based on best practice contact centre models, the new Customer Service Centre (CSC) will evolve to become the first point of contact for all council services. It is vital to the success of the transformation programme that the new structure and council-wide ways of working are established before we begin to migrate services, to minimise risks and ensure a smooth transfer, whilst maintaining a positive customer experience.

36. The new model is an invest to save project; up front funding will allow us to progress the transformation of services in line with the agreed roadmap and unlock productivity

gains, any savings being realised by a reduction in support staff. Additional costs of the new model will be funded through current year underspends.

37. Staff consultation and recruitment to the CSC is scheduled for early Autumn 2022.

Project launch and Engagement

38. The project has been launched to all staff through the recent staff get togethers, an all staff email, and a dedicated Jarvis page with key documents supported by frequently asked questions. Feedback from staff has been positive so far with many recognising the positive impacts this transformation programme will bring to our residents and staff alike.

39. An all councillor briefing and further staff sessions are scheduled for October.

Options

40. This report is provided as an update only. The strategies and roadmaps have been approved by Cabinet and are the councils' agreed policy direction for the transformation programme.

Climate and ecological impact implications

41. The transformation activity supported by the activities in this paper will support the councils' carbon reduction ambitions by reducing the reliance on paper and postage, avoiding unnecessary travel and by delivering increased self-service.

Financial implications

42. Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the councils' overarching financial position. For South, the position reflected in the Council's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to Full Council in February 2022 showed that it is due to receive £2.1 million less in revenue funding than it plans to spend in 2022/23. For Vale, a balanced budget was set in 2022/23 but there is expected to be a budget gap in future years.

43. The funding gap at both councils is predicted to increase to over £3 million by 2026/27. As there remains no certainty on future local government funding, following the announcement of a one-year spending review by government, and as the long-term financial consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic remain unknown, this gap could increase further. Every financial decision made needs to be cognisant of the need to address the funding gap in future years.

44. The effort required to deliver the end-to-end service transformations, underpinned by fit for future IT systems, which will deliver against the core principles will be significant, challenging longstanding operational practices and cultures, and as such needs investment. For each service this will include the formulation of the full business case in advance of transformation to set out the investment required and expected return which will help close the funding gap.

45. These programmes are being driven by the Transformation Outcomes, which will reduce cost created by duplication, failure demand and overly complicated routes for residents and businesses to engage with council services. As such the projects

delivered under this programme will deliver cost efficiencies over the course of the programme and beyond, thereby helping to address the funding gap.

Legal implications

46. As individual projects are progressed, legal advice is being sought on terms of existing contracts, procurement of new systems and software including approval and preparation of contracts.

Risks

47. The main risks to delivery of the transformation programme are:

- Lack of co-operation from outsourced delivery partners and their capacity to meet our timelines. This will be mitigated as part of contract reviews and by including the core principles in future contracts as part of mandatory requirements.

- Customers do not take up the revised service models as digital by default. This will be mitigated by including customers in the service design process to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets their needs, and by wide-ranging communication of the changes the councils are enacting.

- Efficiencies from streamlining services, increasing self-service and removing duplication are not realised. The service review and redesign process will include the creation of full business cases to ensure efficiencies are identified and delivered.

Background papers

- Adopted IT Strategy (Cabinet decision, October 2021)
- Revised IT Roadmap
- Adopted Customer Transformation Strategy and Roadmap (Cabinet decision, December 2021)