

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 9 JANUARY 2024
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION)

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY (YEAR 1)

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the Council's progress against the Transformation Strategy for Year 1.
- 1.2 It also highlights the key areas of focus for Year 2 (2024/25).

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet notes the content of this report.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The Council's Transformation Strategy was agreed in December 2022 following a senior management restructure where a new Executive Director post was created to lead the Transformation programme. The strategy sets out how the council will transform services between 2022 to 2025.
- 3.2 There are five key themes to the strategy which focus on delivering direct change and improvements as well as tools and support for the council's workforce.

Key themes and Achievements

3.3 Technology and Automation

The overall objective is to improve ICT to support services and customer interactions by:

- improving strategy direction and co-ordination
- supporting the organisation
- improving our applications estate
- having a skilled team and flexible contracts.

- 3.4 Key achievements in Year 1 are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Technology and Automation Achievements in Year 1

Project	Summary	What difference has this project made
New ICT and digital strategy and service model	The Council has transitioned from its long-term outsourced ICT support partner to a hybrid model. A new in-house ICT & Digital structure is in place, combining existing officers, TUPE transferred staff and new roles.	This model allows the Council to develop its service, retain knowledge and expertise and work with a wider range of subject specialist suppliers.
Roadmaps for cloud, technology and architecture	A cloud readiness review is under way and roadmap for cloud migrations is in development, including the HR/Payroll system (completed), payments system and Accounting Software. Core elements of the Council's data centre hardware will be renewed in Q4.	Established roadmaps will enable the Council to retain control of its technical plans. Moving to cloud, where practical, increases resilience, eases remote or mobile working, and presents opportunities for improved customer experience.
Mobilisation of new contract with XMA for IT support	The contract with XMA for End User Support was fully mobilised in April 2023. Performance since the transition has been consistently good and opportunities for continuous improvement are identified and actioned.	Concerted procurement effort allowed the Council to source best value in the market. XMA's experience and expertise in the field is enabling the steady optimisation of standard processes, improving the Service Desk experience for staff.

3.5 Areas of focus for this theme in 2024-25 will include further hardware and application reviews, as well as developing systems for improved customer self-serve.

3.6 Data and Performance

The overall objective is to ensure the council officers make good decisions based on high quality data by:

- Ensuring the council holds high quality data
- Making sure data is used well
- Use data to improve and manage service performance.

3.7 Key Achievements in Year 1 are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Data and Performance Achievements in Year 1

Project	Summary	What difference has this project made
Review of risk management policy, strategy and framework.	A new policy and strategy is now in place to manage different risks across the council. A new framework is now in place, with risk being reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	There is now increased transparency and consistency around the council's approach to risk management. Changes to corporate risks are regularly reviewed by the Senior Leadership team and reported to Cabinet regularly.
Improved reporting of projects and KPIs	A new framework is now in place, with project updates and KPIs being reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	There is now increased transparency and consistency around the council's approach to reporting of projects and risks. Changes to projects and KPIs are reviewed by the Senior Leadership team and reported to Cabinet regularly.
Improved management and reporting of complaints	The council's complaints policy was reviewed and refreshed this year. Complaints performance is reviewed weekly, with additional support being provided in areas where improvement is needed.	Regular reporting allows teams to understand their performance against the policy. Complaints performance is gradually improving.

3.8 Areas of focus for this theme in 2024-25 will include enhancing and further embedding data reporting and performance management.

3.9 Culture and Workforce

The overall objective is to ensure the council has the right values and culture in place to support change by:

- Driving culture change
- Embracing new ways of working
- Ensuring staff have the skills they need
- Improving staff recruitment and retention.

3.10 Key achievements in Year 1 are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Culture and Workforce Achievements in Year 1

Project	Summary	What difference has this project made
Review of council vision and priorities and staff values and behaviours	<p>Following a borough-wide community survey in September, a new council vision and priorities has been agreed by Full Council for the next three years (2024-2027).</p> <p>Following consultation with staff, a new set of CORE values have now been agreed, with new branding in place.</p>	A new set of CORE values along with the new vision and council priorities are all key ingredients required to bring some positive cultural changes across the council. This will also lead to better delivery of services to our community.
Embed new senior management structure	A new Senior Management structure was implemented in Autumn 2022 and an enhanced development programme has been put in place to embed the new team and develop strong working relationships.	<p>Service teams were better aligned to improve service delivery.</p> <p>Creating a culture where staff proactively use data to drive service improvement and build a culture of high performance.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team continue to lead by example, demonstrating the values and behaviours that are expected of all teams across the council.</p>
Review of recruitment and retention	<p>New recruitment policy is in draft, with new job application website and applicant tracker system now live.</p> <p>Recruitment microsite to go live in the new year with new branding and regular media activity on LinkedIn.</p>	The changes and rebranding will emphasise the council's CORE values, vision and priorities and highlight the benefits of working for the council, to support recruitment and retention.
Develop graduate training programme	The council has joined the National Graduate programme.	The council has been successful in appointing two graduates as part of the National Graduate Development programme in 2023/24.

Learning and Development programme	A new learning and development system for all staff is now live.	Regular training is available for all staff to help them achieve their best work through course events, e-learning, and workshops. Each member of staff has their own training account so they can track their progress. Mandatory training can also be assigned to staff as needed.
Upgrade HR and payroll system	The system is now hosted in the cloud. With improvements to approval processes e.g. annual leave and single sign-on.	User experience for staff accessing the system has improved with single-sign-on, reducing the burden on system administration. There is also improved resolution with the supplier for any system errors that occur.

3.11 Areas of focus for this theme in 2024-25 will include embedding the new values and behaviours endorsed by Full Council and refreshing recruitment branding.

3.12 Customer Experience and Channel Shift

The overall objective is to ensure that the customer is at the heart of everything we do by:

- Making every contact count
- Providing accessible services
- Meeting Customer Service Standards
- Using feedback to make improvements.

3.13 Key achievements under this theme are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Customer Experience and Channel Shift Achievements in Year 1

Project	Summary	What difference has this project made
Customer experience improvements	The contact centre successfully transitioned back in house in December 2022. Telephony improvements	The changes so far have focussed on trialling services to support self-service, channel shift and achieving first time-right results for

	and online booking of appointments (to meet the duty planner) have been trialled this year.	residents.
Website accessibility	The council has continued to review and improve website accessibility.	Accessibility of services online continues to improve, and the council's main website currently ranks number two of most accessible local authority websites across the UK.
Decommissioning of legacy customer management system (Lagan)	The old system has now been fully decommissioned, with all case types built in the new system, Jadu.	<p>Customers can now access more services 24/7 online.</p> <p>Residents can now create their own MyAccount, which includes options to receive a response, case status updates, and track their cases in their online MyAccount.</p> <p>The workflows created in Jadu include automated checks and communications with customers and service teams, reducing administration for staff and a seamless experience for the customer.</p> <p>Service Team staff have improved oversight of case management and performance.</p>
Development of Member Casework process	New case type has been built within Jadu to support Members with their case work. An initial trial with groups of Members has successfully completed and will be rolled out to all Members in January 2024.	Members can track the status of their cases and have their own MemberMyAccount.
Selection of chatbot provider and project	Supplier ICS.AI have been selected as the council's supplier and	The chatbot will support channel shift through enhanced website searches

implementation	project implementation is underway, with the Chatbot due to go live in 2024.	and the ability to chat to the contact centre team in real time.
Online consultation system upgrades	The system has been upgraded and is now embedded into the council's website for planning consultations.	This is fully accessible from any device for residents, improving accessibility of engagement. This system will be rolled out to other teams as appropriate next year.

3.14 Areas of focus for this theme in 2024-25 will include continuing to improve customer services across the council through telephony and self-sever enhancements and developing a framework for effective engagement with communities.

3.15 Project Management and Service Improvement

The overall objective is to ensure the council deliver better outcomes for residents and becoming more efficient by:

- Ensuring projects are managed well
- Monitoring project delivery and performance
- Ensuring the council deliver the best outcomes
- Supporting teams to deliver projects
- Improving oversight and change adoption

3.16 Key Achievements under this theme are summaries in Table 5.

Table 5: Project Management and Service Improvement Achievements in Year 1

Project	Summary	What difference has this project made
Community Buses	Provides transport for residents either aged over 60 or who have a disability, who wish to attend lunch club provided by Jimmy Macs, or shopping trips to different supermarkets/centres across the borough. The service transitioned to Communities 1 st on the 1 st April 2023.	The service's primary focus is to enhance the independence, wellbeing, and connectivity within the community. Since being delivered in this new way, the service has continued to improve, with new members subscribing, the return of day trips, which are often fully booked and expansion of trips for Jimmy Mac's lunch club.

Revenues and Benefits Transition	The council's Revenue and Benefits service has successfully transitioned to new provider, Liberata on the 1 st April 2023.	A transformation plan is in place to review and develop new systems, automation, and self-service to improve efficiency and the overall customer experience for residents.
Out of Hours and Lifeline	The council's out of hours and Lifeline services have successfully transitioned to The Answering Service and Taking Care, respectively.	This has significantly enhanced the resilience of these services.
Fraud Service	The council joined the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS), a partnership of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Council in April 2023.	Since April 2023, more regular and pro-active measures have been introduced (including Herts Fraud Hub), which will not only increase the detection of fraud, but also enable the earlier detection of fraud which in turn will limit/decrease the value of fraudulent activity.
Crematorium Service	<p>Oak Hill Crematorium officially opened in September.</p> <p>Welcome to Oak Hill Lawn Cemetery and Crematorium – Oak Hill Lawn Cemetery and Crematorium (welhat.gov.uk)</p> <p>As part of the project, a new accessible website and booking system was introduced and a new on-site team successfully trained and recruited.</p>	The new state of the art crematorium is the first of its kind in the borough for local communities to use.
Community Lottery	<p>The ONE Welwyn Hatfield Community Lottery was launched in September.</p> <p>Community Lottery – One Welwyn Hatfield (welhat.gov.uk)</p>	At least 60% of every ticket goes to support good causes in the local communities.

- 3.17 Area of focus for this theme in 2024-25 will include review of service areas as appropriate and oversight of the Social Housing Regulation Act.

Implications

4 Legal Implication

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation.

5 Financial Implication

- 5.1 Failure to deliver key projects and key performance indicators may have a financial impact for the council. Financial implications will be reviewed as part of the Council's project management and risk management frames.

6 Risk Management Implication

- 6.1 Risks are associated with the delivery of key projects and service performance. Risk management implications will be reviewed as part of the Council's project management and risk management frameworks.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications directly arising from the recommendation.

8 Procurement Implication

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications directly arising from the recommendation.

9 Climate Change Implication

- 9.1 There are no direct climate change implications directly arising from the recommendation. However, a number of themes and projects in the Transformation programme will contribute to the priority: Action on Climate Change.

10 Human Resources Implication

- 10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications directly arising from the recommendation.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication

- 11.1 Regular update will be provided to officers and Members, as appropriate throughout the year. In addition, information, and access to new systems etc is available on the intranet and will continue to be regularly updated.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication

- 12.1 There are no human resources implications directly arising from the recommendation.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 This report is linked to all the council's priorities. The Transformation Strategy is aligned to the council's new vision and priorities for 2024-25.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because the recommendation does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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