

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 6 DECEMBER 2022
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION)

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The council has been on a journey of modernisation, supported by the strategies put in place previously including the Customer Services Strategy (now expired), the Digital Strategy (expiring December 2022) and the Workforce Development Strategy (expiring in 2023).
- 1.2 Building on the momentum of the previous modernisation programme, along with the opportunities of a new Senior Management Team and feedback from staff and members, it is considered the right time to bring strategies together under one umbrella of Transformation.
- 1.3 A new transformation programme will be launched following the approval of the strategy, which will seek to empower services to drive change, embedding a culture of continual improvement and putting our customers at the heart of what we do.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Transformation Strategy.
- 2.2 That the Modernisation Reserve be amended to the Transformation Reserve, and that delegated authority be amended from the Modernisation Board to the Transformation Board, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Resources and Planning.

3 Background

- 3.1 The council has been on a modernisation journey since 2019, which has led to improvements in services, efficiency savings and a number of digital enhancements.
- 3.2 There have been some lessons learned from the previous modernisation approach, which have been taken into account for the planning of a new strategy.
- 3.3 This includes the separating of programme strands. Whilst some strands will continue be led by central teams, with other projects will be led by services themselves, with support from the central teams. It is important that those teams which have the contact with customers, are at the forefront of designing and implementing change, supported by central teams, and with the oversight of the Senior Management Team to ensure consistency in approach.

- 3.4 Other lessons learned include improving communications both with Members and employees on ongoing activities and upcoming changes.
- 3.5 In drafting a new strategy, it was identified that there should be a clear direction and that the stand alone strategies (digital, customer and workforce), should be combined to ensure that all aspects of the programme are driving the council and its services in the same direction.
- 3.6 Importantly, the strategy has been designed to put the tools and governance in place which will empower services to come forward with change proposals, and lead change and improvement for their service users. By the time the strategy has expired, the council's culture, governance and approach should be one which enables continual change and improvement, in which ongoing transformation is considered to be part of employees' roles.
- 3.7 In designing the strategy, a number of workshops have been held with staff on Customer Services and ICT. Input has been obtained from the Customer Service Cross Party Board, along with a demonstration being provided on the customer experience platform which will underpin the channel shift element of the programme. It is important to note, that while channel shift is a key priority of the strategy to support those who wish to access services online, all access routes to the council will remain open, and channel shift will provide officers with better tools to support those that need more support through traditional means (face to face and telephone).
- 3.8 There are five key strands to the strategy, which with an aligned direction, will come together to enable transformation to take place and embed the culture of continual improvement within service teams. These are:
- Customer experience and channel shift
 - Technology and automation
 - Culture and workforce
 - Project management and service improvement
 - Data and performance.
- 3.9 Each strand will have a central lead, and the service led projects will form part of the Project management and service improvement strand overseen by the Transformation Board. The membership of the board will include SLT, theme leads and project sponsors.
- 3.10 The strategy is contained within Appendix A, and an action plan will be developed by the Transformation Board to set out the key actions to deliver the strategy.
- 3.11 An annual update to progress against the strategy, will be presented to Cabinet on an annual basis.

Implications

5 Legal Implication(s)

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. Any actions which impact on legal or governance arrangements will be considered as part of future decisions.

6 Financial Implication(s)

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations in the report.
- 6.2 However, the Transformation Strategy will be a key driver in meeting the financial challenges over the next Medium Term Financial Strategy period. It will help ensure that our services are delivering value for money and will drive efficiency through improved use of data and technology.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 The key risks related to this proposal are:
- 7.2 The programme is not adequately resourced or managed:
Through identifying key lead officers for programme strands will ensure there is ownership and oversight of those strands. The new senior management structure has clear links to the themes identified. Where a specific project may identify a need for additional resources, this would be considered as part of the project business case. The programme will be overseen by the Transformation Board which is made up of senior officers, with regular updates at performance clinic and annual updates to Cabinet:
Inherent risk: Likelihood Medium / Impact Medium
Managed risk: Likelihood Low / Impact Medium
- 7.3 That staff do not understand the programme and embrace the new approach:
Without staff support, the strategy could not be fully delivered. Communication and engagement with staff is seen as key to the delivery of the new approach. Staff will be updated a series of all staff briefings on the new strategy and how it will help them to drive change and improvements for them and the customers they support. Regular updates and engagement sessions are planned, and the employee forum will be reviewed and relaunched to ensure the approach is embraced.
Inherent risk: Likelihood High / Impact Medium
Managed risk: Likelihood Low / Impact Medium

8 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no security and terrorism implications associated with this report.

9 Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no direct procurement implications associated with this report.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

11 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 11.1 This report links to the priority of being a well-run council which puts our customers first, and delivery of the strategy will be one of the key ways in which this priority is delivered.

12 Health and Wellbeing

- 12.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.

13 Human Resources

- 13.1 One of the key strands of the strategy is around our culture and workforce. This will be led by the Human Resources Manager. The strategy aims to ensure continual improvement becomes part of the day-to-day activities of staff and so it will be crucial to obtain buy in from staff and bring them on the journey of change. The strategy will be launched at all staff briefings, and where required, there will be ongoing communication and engagement with staff and unions.

14 Communications and Engagement

- 14.1 The strategy contains detailed commitments on communication with Members and staff on the Transformation programme.
- 14.2 Where actions from the plan, or projects arising from the programme, directly impact on the services provided to customers, appropriate communication and engagement will be undertaken with service users.

16 Equality and Diversity

- 16.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies. However, as projects arise through the programme which may impact on service-related policies or service provision, equalities impact assessments will be carried out in relation to those changes.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Transformation Strategy