

Agenda Item No: 9.11

Report No: 133/17

Report Title: "Stronger Together" Joint Transformation Programme Update

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 27 September 2017

Cabinet Member: Councillor Andy Smith

Ward(s) Affected: All

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Purpose of Report:

To update Cabinet on the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme and key decisions taken by the Programme Board

Officers Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress made in developing the Phase Two proposals as well as the wider programme and notes the decisions made by the Programme Board.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In May 2016 the Cabinets of Eastbourne and Lewes councils approved the Joint Transformation Programme ('the Programme') to deliver the majority of council services via shared teams adopting new ways of working.

This is a major change programme for both councils and a significant contributor to our medium term financial strategy savings targets.

- 1.2 In October Cabinet approved the three phase delivery of the programme, with Phase One lasting from September 2016 to March 2017 and Phase Two from April 2017 to March 2018. This update outlines the progress made from June to August 2017, looks ahead to the work happening in the next four months and outlines key decisions made by the Programme Board.
- 1.3 The Programme has a clear governance structure led by the Programme Board. The Programme Board meets bi-monthly and consists of the leaders and deputy leaders, the leaders of the main opposition groups, the Chief Executive and three other Corporate Management Team (CMT) members.

2.0 Programme Activity June 2017 – August 2017

2.1 Phase One

The transition process for the new teams recruited in Phase One is complete. There are four roles which are still vacant and will be subject to further rounds of recruitment.

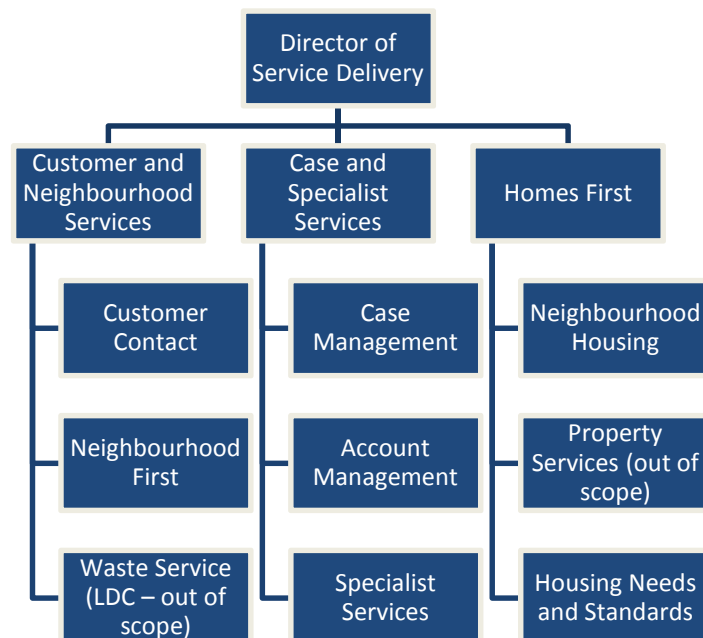
2.2 Phase Two Design Proposals

Phase One involved the design of joint strategy, planning, regeneration and democracy teams.

Phase Two involves the design of joint teams to deliver the majority of public-facing services, such as planning, environmental health, housing, licensing, council tax, business rates, benefits and parks and open spaces. Some services are out of scope and subject to separate reviews or programmes:

- Waste services
- Tourism and leisure services
- Building control services
- Property services (Homes First)

The new Phase Two teams are shown below, with a brief description of the purpose and activity of each team:



- **Customer Contact** – the first point of contact for customers by phone, face to face and online across the full range of council services, including Homes First, resolving as many customer enquiries and requests as possible first time and creating cases where appropriate for other teams to process.
- **Neighbourhood First** – a proactive, multi-skilled mobile team that carries out monitoring and inspection activity across the council areas and works with local communities to significantly improve their neighbourhoods, towns and parishes.
- **Case Management** - a multi-skilled team which will focus on managing a range of routine processes and applications across a wide range of council functions (see paragraph 2.2 above) as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- **Account Management** - a multi-skilled team which will focus on managing a range of accounts and records, including collection and arrears management of council tax, housing benefit overpayments, business rates (NNDR), rents and leaseholders.

- **Specialist Services** - a highly knowledgeable and motivated team of specialists covering a wide range of council functions (see paragraph 2.2 above) who use their qualifications, knowledge and professional judgement to determine cases and applications, assess standards and successfully implement the strategic aspirations of the councils.
- **Neighbourhood Housing** – a team providing a unified housing service across the councils that reflects the special relationship between tenant and landlord, including managing council tenancies, managing sheltered housing and tenant involvement and engagement.
- **Housing Needs and Standards** – a team providing a unified housing service across the councils that provides high quality support and advice and drives up housing standards across tenures to ensure that all residents have a home that meets their needs.

The new teams represent a significant change from traditional council structures, as highlighted in the original business case that Cabinet approved in May 2016. The new model moves away from organising the council around service specialisms to a more customer-focussed, multi-skilled approach where it is easy to contact the council, as much gets resolved for the customer as early as possible, and specialist staff only get involved in genuinely specialist or complex work.

2.3 Staff Impact and Consultation

300 full time equivalent (FTE) roles were in scope for the Phase Two design work, and 320 staff in total are affected (the number of staff being higher because of part-time working). The proposals see a phased reduction to around 237 FTE roles.

The consultation on the proposals was launched in a series of six face to face staff briefings on 3-5 July 2017. Briefings were also held with the Staff Consultative Forum and with the trade union (Unison). During the first part of consultation nearly 400 responses were received and a significantly revised set of proposals was issued on 7 August 2017 reflecting the feedback. Key teams around the council also received letters summarising the response to feedback for their area.

At the time of writing consultation is still open and the proposals may change further prior to publication of the final proposals on 15 September 2017.

2.4 New Technology

In order to achieve the efficiencies and service improvements, the programme needs to deliver a huge amount of technology change to move the councils from separate to joint systems.

In the last three months we have:

- Identified, procured and started to implement the key technologies joint teams will need (joint network, new standard laptops, mobile technology).
- Made significant progress in building the joint website, with the design approved and around 500 pages completed.
- Continued with the work to implement joint housing, finance and customer relationship management systems.

Although significant progress has been made, there have been some challenges which

caused some projects to fall behind schedule:

- One Network – at the time of writing 85 staff have been migrated to the new network, but overall the project is two months behind schedule. The project is complex and there are differences between the Lewes and Eastbourne networks that have led to technical issues which have proved difficult and time-consuming to resolve. We believe that we have overcome most significant issues and we are working to catch up.
- One Website – the new joint website was originally due to launch in August but we had too many high priority pages still to complete. The Programme Board approved a new launch date of the end of October on 18 July. This will allow the key pages to be completed and some testing with customers to be completed before we launch.
- New tools for councillors – due to the problems with the One Network project, we have not had the time to complete the configuration of new mobile technology for councillors. We aim to have some devices ready for testing by the end of September but we will not be able to introduce these for councillors until all staff have been migrated to the new network.

2.5 Equality and Fairness Analyses

Equality and fairness analyses have been completed for all relevant projects, and have been reviewed and signed off by the Equality and Fairness Forum, which will now monitor the implementation of actions detailed in the analyses.

2.6 Key Decisions by the Programme Board

In the most recent Programme Board meeting, the Board approved the new joint branding for shared services, based on a revised version of the Customer First brand already known in Eastbourne, adapted to incorporate elements of Lewes visual identity (as highlighted in the previous Cabinet update). The Board also approved the change of launch date for the website.

3.0 Looking Ahead

The next update to Cabinet will be after the completion of the Phase Two recruitment. Between now and then we will:

- Provide training and support for staff to assist them with writing job applications and on interview technique.
- Review applications for voluntary redundancy and discuss and agree arrangements with individuals.
- Complete the internal recruitment process and launch external recruitment for any vacant roles.
- Plan the transition period for the Phase Two teams, which will run from January to April 2018.
- Launch the new website.
- Complete the migration of all staff to the new network.
- Make key strategic decisions about future ICT solutions to improve our resilience and provide a standard, flexible computer desktop that can be accessed from anywhere.
- Roll out new technology to councillors to support them to carry out their council work efficiently using their council email addresses.

4.0 Consultation

As summarised at paragraph 2.3, we have formally consulted with staff and staff representative groups on the Phase Two proposals. This has been done both face to face and via email and Intranets.

We also held interactive JTP Ways of Working events for staff and councillors in July to help everyone understand better the proposals, how they would work in practice and the principles and ideas that sit behind them. These events received very positive feedback.

The Joint Transformation Programme Staff Consultative Forum will continue to meet on a bimonthly basis, involving a range of staff representatives including UNISON representatives.

5.0 Financial Appraisal

The programme is operating within the budget approved by Cabinet in May 2016, there are no variances to report. The benefits realisation programme is materially in line with the business case overall and will be confirmed once phase two is finalised.

6.0 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report.

7.0 Risk Management Implications

Risk management is a standard part of managing a programme of this scale. Risks are assessed regularly and significant issues reported to the Programme Board.

8.0 Equality and Diversity

As highlighted at 2.5, the JTP Equality and Fairness Forum has reviewed all the equality and fairness analyses and was very satisfied that appropriate consideration had been given to equality and fairness considerations.

9.0 Conclusion

The Programme is on budget and key Phase Two milestones are on track, with some pressures around some technology deliverables. There will be a need to strictly prioritise delivery of the most important technologies and business processes that enable the new teams to go live in early 2018. We will then work to further improve and develop them through 2018 and 2019 to fully deliver the planned improvements and efficiencies.

Background Papers

None