

Division(s): all

Audit & Governance Committee – 18 March 2020

The Future of the Joint Audit & Governance and Performance Scrutiny (Transformation) Sub-Committee

Report by Corporate Director for Customer and Organisational Development

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) **agree, in conjunction with the Performance Scrutiny Committee, that the work of the Transformation Sub-Committee is complete in having overseen the start-up phase of the council's Transformation Programme and that future oversight now reverts back to its two parent committees; and**
 - b) **consider on an ongoing basis which specific change activities it wishes to include on its forward plan.**

Overall Programme Progress

2. At the Transformation Sub-Committee's previous meeting on 30 January 2020, it received the fourth quarterly report on the progress of the Transformation Programme (October to December 2019), during which time significant progress continues to have been made, including:
 - Improvements in the operation of the Customer Services Centre and our key processes when we first interact with residents when they make first contact;
 - implementation of new staffing structures in Finance, Performance Management, Communications, Consultation and Engagement, Strategy and Policy Development and Programme Management;
 - further developing the design and proposed structures of the council's Provision Cycle (which looks at the way we commission, procure and manage contracts with our supply chain) and our Support Services;
 - agreeing an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy for the organisation, as well as a Framework for Digital Service Delivery.

Refreshing the Council's Approach to Change 2020

3. As reported in the quarterly report, it has become increasingly clear that in order to maximise the impact of all the Council's improvement and development activity, its entire programme of change needs to be managed collectively. The current scope of the Transformation Programme, whilst vital initially to provide strong foundations for change, has become a limiting factor and created an unnecessary demarcation in planning and delivering improvement. The rolling Service and Resource Planning process has developed a new Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2020/21 to

23/24 (as approved by Full Council in February) and this has further emphasised the need to consider the Council's programme of change activity as a whole in order to maximise the chances of its success.

Next Phase of Activity

4. During the next phase of activity, work will continue to address improvements in the way we interact with residents when they first make contact with the Council (the so-called 'Front Office'), joining up services with partners where appropriate. Longer term plans include the development of a corporate customer strategy, charter and standards.
5. Much of the work that will be taken forward will be highly dependent on the Council's approach to technology. It is likely that vital technology decisions will need to be taken soon, as anticipated within the original business case.
6. Subsequent phases of work will also involve re-examining service areas, for example Communities, Adults and Children's, Education and Family Services, and redesigning elements of them to ensure that they best meet the needs of residents. Following the redesign of many of the Council's 'Back Office' services, and work to improve the 'Front Office', there will be opportunities to consolidate the structures present within services and improve efficiency. The Communities Directorate is at the early stages of its service redesign and is likely to be the first of the key service areas to go through this process.
7. The programme continues to recognise that there exist a number of emerging areas of opportunity (driven by both internal and external factors), which must be flexed and taken advantage of, in order to maximise impact and which need to be integrated into our Medium Term Financial Plans. We are already ensuring that our work on the Provision Cycle is 'future-proofed' to take account of developments towards an Integrated Care System where the Council will work even more closely with the Health sector. Directorates are also forging ahead with improvements such as the implementation of the Family Safeguarding Plus Model within Children, Education and Family Services and, more broadly, developing the council's work on climate action.

Implications for the Audit & Governance Committee

8. This next phase of activity provides an opportunity for the Audit & Governance Committee to continue to provide assurance and challenge on risk management, internal control and governance, including across a broader range of topics than the Sub-Committee's more narrowly defined remit and could choose to hold joint meetings with the Performance Scrutiny Committee when the chairs decide that individual topics or lines of enquiry lend themselves to a joint approach.

Background papers

The fourth quarterly review of the Transformation Programme:

<https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1075&MId=5888&Ver=4>

CLAIRE TAYLOR

Corporate Director, Customer and Organisational Development

March 2020

Contact details

claire.taylor@oxfordshire.gov.uk