

Cabinet – 19 May 2020

Walsall Proud Programme – Managing the delivery of the Walsall Proud Programme during the period of disruption as a result of COVID-19.

Portfolio: Councillor Bird, Leader of the Council

Related portfolios: All

Service: All

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 Under the Council's response to COVID-19, the Council has reviewed the activities planned to take place within the Walsall Proud Programme over the next three months to determine those activities which can continue and those which should be delayed. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the Programme can continue to progress as best as practicable during the period of disruption.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Planned activities within the Walsall Proud Programme (the Programme) have been reviewed in order to determine those activities which can continue and those which should be delayed as the Council responds to the COVID-19 situation. Whilst it is possible to continue with some activity within the Programme, this review has also identified the potential impacts on the delivery of the Programme benefits, the most significant of these impacts being a reduction in the financial benefits to be delivered by the Programme in 2020/21.
- 2.2 The 2020/21 approved budget is predicated in delivery of £8.77m of cashable benefit from the Programme. As indicated above, it is anticipated that there will be a delay in the delivery of some of these savings. The minimum impact is expected to be c£2.15m with a monthly impact thereafter of £912k. It is important to note that the saving is still expected to be delivered, however it will now be delivered over two financial years, rather than one. The impact on 2021/22 is not yet clear, and will be dependent on both national and local factors.
- 2.3 The financial impact of Covid-19 is wider ranging than the delivery of 2020/21 savings, with significant additional costs predicted and loss of income from service and facility closures. A Covid-19 finance report is contained elsewhere on tonight's Cabinet agenda.

3. **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet note this update position in relation to the status of the Walsall Proud Programme that has arisen as a result of the Council's response to COVID-19 and its subsequent impact on Programme activities and benefits delivery.
- 3.2 That Cabinet note that this assessment is based on some key assumptions and that these will be monitored in the weeks and months ahead.
- 3.3 That Cabinet note that there will be a financial impact arising from this report, including a delay in delivery of programme benefits approved as part of the 2020/21 budget of £2.15m to June 2020 and £912k per month thereafter should the impact of lockdown continue. The implications of this and the Council's response to managing the financial impact is contained within a separate report on tonight's Cabinet agenda.

4. **Know**

Walsall Proud Programme

- 4.1 The Walsall Proud Programme is an extensive and ambitious programme of change designed to modernise the way the Council works and deliver improved services to customers. The launch of the programme in 2019 marked the beginning of a period of intensive activity designed to deliver sustainable improvements to the Council's existing ways of working and its long-term financial position.
- 4.2 The Proud Promise is a key feature of the Programme and is set out below:
 - Improve outcomes and customer experience
 - Improve employee satisfaction and engagement
 - Improve service efficiency and performance
- 4.3 A diverse range of activities have been completed in the first year of the Programme with transition to the second year of the Programme underway. For some projects this marks a transition into implementation requiring engagement with key stakeholders and the necessary capacity within service areas to implement change.

COVID-19

- 4.4 As with all public agencies, Walsall Council now has a key role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis on behalf of the residents of Walsall and in support of the NHS. In just a few short weeks, the Council has:
 - Issued over 300 IT items including tablets and mobile phones to enable more employees to work remotely to sustain front line services;
 - Introduced new software to support front line service delivery e.g. What's App for Business;
 - Designed new services to support the community response including providing access to the Government's business grant scheme, co-ordination of volunteers and working with community partners;

- Provided technology to enable call centre teams to work remotely ensuring continuity of service for customers answering 1000's of calls and responding to emails.
- 4.5 To achieve this, the Council has immediately redirected resources and prioritised the delivery of the crisis response activities. The Council is currently capturing examples of the changes made so far. Many of these are in line with the aspirations of the Programme, including introducing new ways of working, making the best use of technology, challenging existing processes and procedures, working in partnership and demonstrating the best of what our teams can achieve.
- 4.6 We are also finding new opportunities to support teams to work effectively in the current situation using tools and technology that we have brought forward and implemented as part of our new ways of working including MS Teams and Perform Plus.

Review of planned activities within the Walsall Proud Programme

- 4.7 The Programme is a medium-term commitment for the Council designed to deliver the Council's future financial sustainability and to enable the Council to deliver the priorities set within the Corporate Plan. As such, it is essential that over the term of the Programme we can still deliver the benefits aligned to it.
- 4.8 As part of the Council's response to COVID-19, we have undertaken a review of the activities planned in the next three months of the Programme to identify those activities which can continue (in particular where these support our response to COVID-19) and where activities need to be delayed. By conducting this review, we are seeking to adapt the Programme to the current circumstances whilst maintaining progress, even though reduced, towards realising the benefits as set out within the Proud Promise.
- 4.9 The following criteria have been used to conduct this review:
- **Care** - Employees and residents are already experiencing disruption to their lives and significant amounts of uncertainty. Therefore, the Council will identify and monitor the commencement and delivery of all programme engagement activities.
 - **Manage disruption** – The Programme leadership team will identify those activities which can continue over the coming months so that these can continue to progress towards delivering the Programme benefits where possible.
 - **Working remotely** – The Council and partner teams will work remotely and use the technology available to collaborate on projects and deliver outputs. Exceptions to this will be managed and the impact on progress monitored.
- 4.10 Given the dynamic and evolving nature of the response to COVID-19, this review has focussed on the period of the next three months. The Council will continue to monitor the situation and if there is a requirement to curtail or extend this period of changed activity, then this will be identified. The outcome of this review is set out in Section 5 of this report.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.11 The implementation of the Programme seeks to secure an operationally and financially robust future for the Council. This will enable the Council to continue to progress and achieve the priorities set out within the Corporate Plan.

Risk management

- 4.12 The Programme has an associated risk management approach. Risk is captured at Programme level and within individual work streams. This review seeks to identify and address the risk to the Programme and its associated benefits during the current period of disruption.

Financial implications

- 4.13 The 2020/21 budget is predicated on delivery of £8.77m from the Proud Programme, with a further £38.36m required to be delivered over the following two years from adopting new ways of working across the council, significantly enhancing our enabling technology capabilities, and improving our service efficiency and performance.
- 4.14 Following the review set out in section 4.7 onwards, an assessment of the financial impact has also been undertaken, the preliminary results of which are set out in Table 1 overleaf in relation to those work streams due to deliver savings in 2020/21 alone. It is important to note that these savings are still expected to be delivered, however they do have a one-off impact in relation to 2020/21. The overall impact is anticipated to be at minimum £2.15m, although clearly should the current Covid-19 situation last longer than the initial forecast, then this could increase by £912k per month.
- 4.15 In addition to the savings impact, there may be cost implications arising from the review of the Programme, for example in relation to costs of specialist interim support costs. A review of this is being undertaken by the PMO, supported by Finance, and any impact will be reported in the next update to Cabinet.
- 4.16 A full Covid-19 financial impact assessment and proposed response plan will be included within the Covid-19 and Corporate Financial Performance 2019/20 to 2021/22 report.

Table 1

Benefit Work Stream / Activity	Approved Saving 2020/21 £	Covid-19 Impact Delay in Delivery	Potential Impact / Delay £	Comments	Decisions Required
Adult Social Care					
Income Generation / Cost Recovery – Fee Collection & Debt Recovery	998,522	3 months	(249,631)	Current focus is on immediate Covid-19 response as opposed to debt recovery, however ensuring we have proper records in place so that when we do start to refocus on collection and recovery arrangements, we are able to do so, is a priority	N/A
Children's Services					
Customer Access Management Hub – Contact Centre	711,000	3 Months	(213,300)	Assumes consultation arrangements are delayed whilst a plan to re-engage with a primarily working from home workforce is put in place, resulting in an September go-live	Decision on timing of and consultation method
Economy and Environment					
Service redesign - Planning	476,000	Initial 2 months	(79,333)	as CAM	as CAM
Income Generation / Cost Recovery – review of existing fees and charges directorate wide (annual planned uplift)	249,040	3 months	(62,260)	This assumes closures of current facilities i.e. leisure centres continues for several months and that a decision to increase charges is not taken on immediate opening of these	Decision needed on timing of increases in fees and charges in consideration of impact of Covid-19 on users ability to pay
Income Generation – New Fee – Registrars change of name deed	10,890	Assumed None			N/A
Third Party Spend – Waste treatment and disposal	161,017	Assumed None			

Benefit Work Stream / Activity	Approved Saving 2020/21 £	Covid-19 Impact Delay in Delivery	Potential Impact / Delay £	Comments	Decisions Required
Resources and Transformation					
Enabling Support Services (Administration)	1,100,000	1 month	(275,000)	Assumes consultation arrangements are delayed whilst a plan to re-engage with a primarily working from home workforce is put in place, resulting in a January 2021 go-live (as opposed to December 2020)	Decision on timing of and consultation method
Income Generation / Cost Recovery – review of existing fees and charges	1,244	3 months	(311)		Decision needed on timing of increases in fees and charges in consideration of impact of Covid-19 on users ability to pay
Central					
Outcomes, Service Levels and Delivery Models – Service Transformation and linked to Customer Access Management Contact Centre, Rapid Process Improvement and Web work; and Resilient Communities	1,713,000	3 months	(428,250)		
Third Party Spend – Procurement and Contract Control	3,340,760	3 months	(835,190)		Decision needed on timing of start of any renegotiation of contracts in consideration of impact of Covid-19 on suppliers financial viability
Total Benefits / Savings	8,761,473		(2,145,998)		

Legal implications

- 4.17 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. If the reassessment of the project is agreed the council may need to consider if any contractual variations are required as a consequence. Where any changes to the programme have an impact on service delivery the council will have to consult in accordance with legal requirements and comply with its public sector equality duty through carrying out equality impact assessments.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.18 General advice has been sought from the Procurement Team, however at the time of reporting the exact procurement and contractual implications are unknown. Detailed procurement advice will however be sought when there is further understanding of the proposed changes. Any procurement and/or contractual matters associated with this report will be addressed in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules, Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Social Value Policy.

Property implications

- 4.19 None directly arising from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.20 None directly arising from this report.

Staffing implications

- 4.21 None directly arising from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.22 None arising directly from this report. Each Work stream is required to undertake appropriate Equality Impact Assessments as part of the development of relevant projects and associated activities.

Consultation

- 4.23 Consultation and engagement both internally with employees and externally with stakeholders and residents, are key activities within the Programme. Such activities must be carefully designed and implemented. The Council's ability to conduct these activities is constrained by the current circumstances and this has been considered during the review process. The Programme team will continue to keep this situation under review and will identify when such activities are required to be progressed in order to maintain progress within the Programme. Where it is not considered appropriate to progress, the impact of such decisions will be identified.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Using the criteria set out in Section 4 of this report, the Programme and each of its work streams have been reviewed. This review has sought to identify activities which it is anticipated will continue and those which will be delayed. This position together with the anticipated impact on delivery and benefit realisation is shown by work stream in Appendix A.
- 5.2 During the period ahead, work stream teams are working together to continue to progress planned activities where feasible. The completion of these activities will be monitored throughout the period together with the on-going impact of the period of disruption. The initial assessment set out in Appendix A suggests the following:
- 5.3 A medium to high impact on the anticipated financial benefits for 2020/21 due to constraints on planned activity in the following areas, as set out under the financial implications section above.
- Outcomes and service transformation
 - Customer access and management
 - Third Party Spend
 - Income generation and cost recovery
 - Enabling Support Services – Administration

6. Respond

- 6.1 Seeking to adjust the planned activity is a prudent response to ensure the continuity of the Programme during the COVID-19 period.
- 6.2 A further update is anticipated when the impact of the Council's response to COVID-19 and its implications on the Programme become clearer over the coming months. The Walsall Proud Programme Board will continue to meet virtually to monitor progress of the Programme.

7. Review

- 7.1 Progress against the revised work plans for each work stream will be monitored throughout and reported to Corporate Management Team and the Walsall Proud Programme Board monthly. This monitoring function is essential as it is unknown at this time how long the period of disruption will continue for. As well as routine monitoring, a fuller, periodic review will be completed in 3 months' time.
- 7.2 As part of the monitoring process, as well as identifying any issues with completing the tasks specified in each work stream, the Programme Team working with GOLD and SILVER Commands will also seek to capture, embed, and promote the positive changes in how teams work which have been delivered through the Council's response to the COVID-19 crisis. This will help to ensure that such changes continue to support the delivery of customer experience, employee engagement, and financial benefits.

- 7.3 Routine corporate financial performance monitoring and reporting will continue to be undertaken monthly to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet, including the impact of Covid-19 on savings delivery, and the wider financial impact of our response.

Background papers

None.

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19 May 2020



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19 May 2020

APPENDIX A

Work stream	Summary of tasks to continue	Summary of tasks to be delayed	Estimated delay	Estimated impact
Outcomes and service transformation – all projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of project documentation. 2. Internal and external consultation planning 3. Some service transformation planning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation activities 2. Some service deep dive analysis and engagement activities 	Up to 3 months	Medium
Customer access and management – developing the customer experience centre project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete business process mapping, operational scripts writing and development of training materials. 2. Planning for delivery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business process mapping and scripting for some service areas due to COVID-19 response requirements. 2. Organisational change process. 	Up to 3 months	Medium
Customer access and management – rapid process improvement (RPI) projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete delivery of existing RPI projects and document approach. 2. Continue with project team skills development and transfer. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start of new RPI projects where resources are not available in service areas. 	1 month and then review	Low
Customer access and management – web development project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete content sprints. 2. Complete COVID-19 activities. 3. Complete website information architecture and design specification. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further content sprints. 	1 month and then review	Low
Enabling and support services – all projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of project documentation. 2. Continue with design activities in administration and IT. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross directorate workshops and other engagement activities if these cannot be done virtually. 2. Approvals 	Up to 2 months	Medium

APPENDIX A Continued

Work stream	Summary of tasks to continue	Summary of tasks to be delayed	Estimated delay	Estimated impact
Corporate landlord – all projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of project documentation. 2. Continue with strategy development including capturing lessons learned during the COVID-19 period. 3. Continue with design activities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation and engagement activities. 	Less than 1 month	Low to medium
Third Party Spend – all projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of project documentation 2. Identify savings due to building closures etc. 4. Continue with Contracts Oversight Committee and payment audit initiative. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Curtailment of opportunities to implement quick wins. 2. Development and implementation of future Wave 2 and Wave 3 opportunities. 	Up to 3 months	High
Income generation and cost recovery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production of project documentation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of new policy. 2. Implementation of some business cases. 3. Development of further income generation and cost recovery opportunities. 4. Current income generation as some services have been suspended or curtailed. 	Up to 3 months	High
Service productivity and performance – Perform Plus	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll out of Perform Plus technology to support prioritised services in remote working. 2. Continue to develop roll out plans. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wave 3 roll out. 	Up to 3 months	Low

APPENDIX A Continued

Work stream	Summary of tasks to continue	Summary of tasks to be delayed	Estimated delay	Estimated impact
Enabling Technology – all projects	1. Approval to enact review recommendations in key technology areas including payment systems.	1. Consultation and engagement activities.	Up to 2 months	Low-medium
Culture, Change and Communication – all projects	1. Complete project documentation. 2. Continue with Programme communications 3. Continue with Support and Challenge Groups. 4. Capture lessons learned and best practice examples as a result of rapid deployment of new ways of working.	1. Employee survey 2020. 2. Thrive accreditation.	Up to 3 months	Low-Medium