Cabinet – 16 March 2021

Walsall Proud Programme: Next Stages of Proud

Portfolio: Councillor M Bird

Related portfolios: All

Service: Council Wide

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1 In October 2018 Cabinet approved the Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) framework with the aim of transforming the way the Council works; achieving better outcomes and customer experience; increasing staff satisfaction and engagement; and improving service efficiency and performance.

1.2 The Council made a commitment to update members and residents on the first three years of the Proud Programme, summarise the achievements to date, and to inform members on what the next stages of Proud are.

1.3 This also marks the end of the Core Team work-order with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) who have been providing ongoing strategic support and guidance to the Proud programme explains the Council's approach to transformation and change going forward.

2. Summary

2.1 The Proud programme was designed to be cross-cutting and focused on modernising the way the Council works, touching all services, delivering change in a managed, sustainable, and coordinated way across the organisation. A contract with the Council's strategic partner, PwC, to support and drive delivery of this programme was agreed by Cabinet in December 2018. There has been significant positive progress and achievements made over the past 3 years through the Council's Proud transformation journey.

2.2 This report:

- Reminds Cabinet of the successfully implemented 'ways of thinking' and 'ways of working';
- Sets out the approach that was taken to delivering the Proud programme;

- Sets out the benefits achieved so far against the three Proud promises and the investment made;

- Outlines the range of estimated benefit opportunities still to be achieved in the context of the new Council plan and the medium-term financial plan;

- Sets out the areas of work that are still in progress and how these will be taken forward; and

- Explains the approach to delivering future transformation and change and how the Council is supporting and enabling continuous improvement.

3 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

3.1 Note the achievements of the Proud programme to date and ongoing future milestones as set out in sections 4.1 – 4.15.

3.2 Note the position on benefit opportunity identification and investment to date as set out in sections 4.21 – 4.29.

3.3 Note delivery of current and forecast performance against the approved financial parameters and approve a revised approach to agreeing future investment as set out in sections 4.21 – 4.29.

3.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation, in consultation with the Leader, to subsequently authorise any extension and variation of PwC contractual arrangements or other related documents should this be required throughout the remaining duration of the contract as set out in sections 4.31 – 4.35.

4 Report detail – Know

Context

4.1 The Walsall Proud Programme (WPP) is a large-scale, whole Council, technology-enabled transformation programme. It began with a diagnostic review of the Council's services and structure and subsequent production of a high-level business case (stocktake). It assessed Walsall's ways of working – both quantitatively and qualitatively – and created an evidenced case for change focussed on customer service delivery. It explored opportunities for new ways of working and proposals for how to take this forward through a refreshed coordinated transformational change programme. A WPP framework for change was developed that incorporated 9 key themes, 8 enablers for change, and key benefit levers to deliver financial and non-financial benefits. These benefits became the Proud promises across three outcomes that directly support the Council's priorities and provide resilience in the face of increasing and future demand.

4.2 To support the achievement of this a "Ways of Thinking" and "Ways of Working" methodology was designed and implemented, providing the foundations for the high-level design of the Council's new ways of working. Ways of Thinking aligns to the Council's desire to be data driven in its decision making. This introduced the

framework as Aim, Know, Decide, Respond and Review which has been used to set the change approach across the Council. Ways of Working is the vision and model for how the council will operate in future – to enable the Ways of Thinking and deliver on the Proud promises and outcomes. This design defines the functions that are needed for the Council to operate effectively and to achieve measurable improvement against the three Proud Promises and constituted the Walsall Proud Programme.

4.3   The programme was constituted with workstreams which are set out below:

Work Stream Theme	Description
Customer and Access Management (CAM)	Addressing improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the way that customers can deal with the Council.
Outcomes and Service Transformation	Rethinking how outcomes in Walsall are met and the way services might be delivered to support those outcomes.
Service Productivity and Performance (Perform Plus)	Building up connected working and improving productivity through coaching and a focus on driving performance in day-to-day work.
Council Hub	Creating a renewed strategic focus for the Council, incorporating improved business intelligence, policy development and commissioning choices.
Enabling and Support Services	Developing efficient and effective internal support services to underpin customer facing service delivery
Corporate Landlord	A dedicated Landlord function for the Council with a consistent view across facilities and assets
Income Generation and Cost Recovery	Driving increased revenue and cost recovery with consistent fees and charges and a more commercial perspective.
Third Party Spend	Increased effectiveness of money spent with third parties to deliver outcomes for Walsall.

Two additional enabling workstreams were created: **Enabling Technology** which is an overarching delivery workstream supporting the digital and technology requirements of Proud and **Enabling Communication and Culture** which focusses on the cultural changes the organisation need to deliver Proud aspirations through employee consultation, training, support, and coaching.

4.4   WPP has been developed and delivered through joint working with strategic partner, PwC. Whilst significant progress has been achieved, activity was disrupted in years 2 and 3 due to the Council's need to prioritise effort and resources to respond to Covid-19.

4.5   This report seeks Cabinet's acknowledgement of the progress and achievements delivered through the work delivered to date. The Council's transformation is not yet fully implemented, there is still more to do, but there is good traction and impetus through the application of Ways of Thinking and Ways of Working. It puts the Council in a good position to move to the next stages of Proud transformation and to exploit the investment in digital technology to improve customer services and achieve efficiencies.

4.6 Support for the delivery of the programme was provided by a PwC core team who have worked with the Council since the inception of the programme. PwC supported the Council whilst the internal corporate PMO team was recruited and established and assisted in skills and knowledge transfer to the team. Once the Council was able to take forward the transformation directly, it was agreed that there would no longer be a need for this core team support. This would require:

- A Programme Sponsor with 12 months experience of running the programme within the Walsall context leading on strategic aspects of the programme.

- A high performing Council side Programme Director translating strategy into action across the programme.

- A highly efficient and effective corporate internal PMO operating under clear leadership and driving delivery of the programme on a day-to-day basis; and

- A degree of comfort that the programme was delivering significant benefits across the organisation driven by successful delivery of both business change and enabling technology against the original timescales.

These arrangements are now in place within the Council and are discussed further in sections 4.16 and 4.17 below.

4.7 Excellent progress has been made in delivering the programme and associated benefits over the last three years, despite having to deal with the demands of a global pandemic. A highlight of progress is provided below, together with next steps.

4.8 Measurable benefits have been achieved against all three Proud Promises. Elected members and Council senior leadership are ambitious for the Council to continue its Proud journey. The Council Plan is the overarching Strategy with priorities to minimise inequality and maximise potential for all, measured through the three Proud Promises – helping to make Walsall a borough fit for its residents and businesses. Making services efficient and effective supports the aspiration for excellent customer service through digital self service capability and the exploitation of the significant investment in technology and skills within ICT. The journey does not end here. The next stages of Proud will focus on continuing to design, develop and deliver outstanding Council services supporting Proud benefits delivered through Directors owning Strategic Transformation Plans, enabled, and supported by the capabilities delivered through the enabling workstreams.

4.9 **Improve outcomes and customer experience**

Through the programme, four key levers to driving customer benefits were identified:

- Reducing avoidable contact;

- Channel shift to maximise use of digital channels where appropriate;

- Process improvement, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of each customer interaction; and,

- Better use of resources to create a centre of customer excellence and use this to embed a customer-centric culture and ways of working across the organisation.

The Customer Access Management (CAM) workstream was constituted to deliver on these levers and the enablers required to support this across the whole organisation.

Achievements since the programme began:

Over the last three years of transformation, **customer satisfaction has risen from 67% to 73%.** In part, this is due to achievements in the following areas:

Current position 73%
Customer target 77%
April 2023

Up 6%
Improvement of Customer Satisfaction measure from 67% baseline recorded in April 2019

- Launch of the **customer experience Strategy** setting out the Council's vision and commitment to improving customer experience;

- Centralising customer focussed activity through the implementation of the **Customer Experience Centre** (phase 1) and a new telephone contact service which enabled increased and standardised management information such as caller ID's and call volume rates;

- **All staff are accessible** via Teams chat, telephony, e-mail and in person in accordance with the "presence with a purpose" principles;

- **Customer service standards** and Customer Experience Centre call answering standards have been introduced with the roll out of Teams Telephony for services dealing directly with customers – this ensures a standardised, consistent approach for residents;

- Customers have **improved access to services via the Council's website**, which now has a new compliant, modern design system accessible on mobile phones;

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system** has been launched, modernising the experience for residents – customers can now register for a personal account (MyWalsall), which will enable them to track, book or pay for services at times which are convenient to them, and which may be outside of normal working hours;

- Customers can now **easily log** compliments, comments and complaints providing feedback and measures that helps us to assess customer service delivery.

4.10 **Customer outcomes and experience milestones for future delivery:**

Milestone	Target milestone date
Continued drive to improve customer service levels and satisfaction: **target of 77% customer satisfaction scores.**	April 2023
Complete delivery of the digital customer platform with Agilisys, including CRM implementation, use of chat bots, robotics and self-serve capabilities, integration through the web site and portals for customers to apply, book, report and pay for services.	April 2023

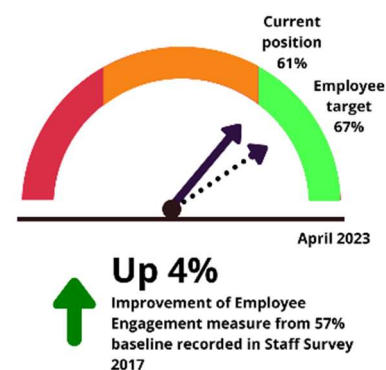|	
Complete delivery of the full Customer Experience Centre model, taking on board more customer facing services building the Council's 'single front door' for customer contact both telephony, self-service and mediated assistance for residents who are unable to access technology.	December 2022
Continued delivery of rapid service improvements (quick wins), driving efficiency and improved customer experience. Service redesigns will ensure that customer contact is embedded within the new ways of working and are streamlined to be efficient and effective.	April 2023
Achieve an embedded customer centric culture within the Customer Experience Centre and across the whole Council, ensuring that the customer voice is at the heart of what the Council does.	April 2023

4.11 **Improve employee satisfaction and engagement**

Service delivery can take advantage of technology improvements and digital processes but the Council's employees and the skills, knowledge, and relationships they bring to work are critical. Employees are key to delivery of service transformation and have adapted incredibly well to the changing business landscape.

This proud promise focuses on the satisfaction and level of engagement which staff feel they have. These figures are particularly encouraging given that they have been working through a pandemic for the past 21 months.

Achievements since the programme began:

Levels of employee engagement (top-line measure) are up from 57% (2017) to 61% as demonstrated in the latest employee survey (Nov 2021), which gathered the views of over 1300 employees. A breakdown of the supporting measures figures is shown in the table below.

Current position 61%

Employee target 67%

April 2023

Up 4%

Improvement of Employee Engagement measure from 57% baseline recorded in Staff Survey 2017

Contributing measures and questions	**2017 scores** (Strongly agree / agree)	**2020 scores** (Strongly agree / agree)	**2021 scores** (Strongly agree / agree)	**Change** (2017 to 2021)
Walsall Council inspires me to do the best in my job	42%	77%	80%	**+38**
I feel valued and recognised for the work I do	41%	63%	66%	**+25**
I have the tools (physical resources, equipment, technology) I need to do my job effectively	53%	68%	75%	**+22**

I am proud when I tell others I work for Walsall Council	49%	57%	60%	**+11**
In my job, I am clear what is expected of me	74%	82%	85%	**+11**

The Council has achieved this through the following initiatives:

- The **Enabling Communications and Culture workstream** has been pivotal in delivering the future culture and behaviours which the organisation aspires to have in place to support Proud. Fully aligned to the Council Plan priorities, this workstream has developed an **Organisational Development Strategy** with action plans to deliver career pathways and establish talent attraction and retention plans;

- Development and coaching of managers and directors driving **increased collaboration and leadership alignment**, as demonstrated by Directors Group and Senior Management Group;

- To support the Council's customer focused ways of working the technology investment made over the past 3 years has delivered a highly adaptable infrastructure and modern workspace capabilities, supporting **agile ways of working** and providing staff with the tools and applications to do their jobs effectively;

- The newly implemented OneSource system has delivered an **integrated solution for finance, payroll and HR activities,** providing staff with one stop shop access to their personal and payroll details, annual performance conversations and recruitment and training materials;

- **Improved communications** through Proud newsletters, a revamped Inside Walsall intranet providing positive news stories about achievements and deliveries.

4.12 **Employee satisfaction and engagement milestones for future delivery:**

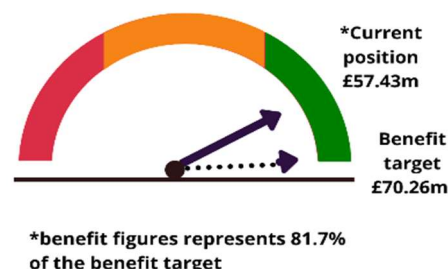| Milestone	Target milestone date
Achieve increased staff satisfaction target of 67%, supported by regular staff surveys, focus groups, employee feedback, and action changes / initiatives in direct response to staff survey.	April 2024
Deliver on organisation development strategy, its five key pillars and the supporting action plan: • Set up for success • Live the Council's values • Maximise leadership capability • Maximise organisational capability • Create positive customer experiences	Phase 1 – December 2022 Full delivery – December 2023
Become an Employer of Choice, attracting the best talent through roll out and delivery of the organisational development strategy.	April 2025

Create and embed a consistent approach to change, through the Transformation and Change Centre of Excellence, maturing the Change Champions network and the benefits of applying connected working coaching and support across the Council.	April 2023
Establish a Council wide corporate Wellbeing Framework to ensure the Council continue to take care of employees, and provide appropriate tools to manage wellbeing.	December 2022
Embed cross directorate working and collaboration to improve on processes and service delivery through Senior Manager Group and Director Group meetings and initiatives.	April 2023
Share case studies of successful change – by continuing to embrace opportunities to transform, reinforcing new cultural approaches and working practices, encouraging continuous improvements through use of data and technology.	April 2023

4.13 **Improve service efficiency and performance**

The third of the Proud Promises focuses on efficiencies and performance. The Council had a challenging savings target and has also considered efficiencies around the money it spends and the income it can generate. This Promise takes into account all of these facets.

Achievements since the programme began:

From 2019/20 £57.4m of savings have been defined, of which £54.7m have been included in the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP). This accounts for £2.7m of benefits proposals that were rejected by Cabinet.

*Current position £57.43m

Benefit target £70.26m

*benefit figures represents 81.7% of the benefit target

These savings have been identified through:

- **the design and delivery of efficiencies from new Proud ways of working**, generated through the implementation of blueprints for service restructures, improved demand management and customer contact, centralisation of support functions, and digital process/service transformations;

- **Capitalising on income generating activities** to ensure the Council is leveraging its assets and operating an increasingly commercialised approach to income generation and cost recovery;

- **Managing, monitoring, and reducing third party spend**.

The following table shows the most significant Proud benefits identified and counted within the 2019/20 to 2021/22 budgets:

Benefits	£m
Children's Services Rights4Children Services transformation - strengthening families; protecting children; Mother and Baby Daisy Project; Reducing the number of adolescents coming into care: Foster carer support; and bringing back 'change, grow, live' contract in house.	4.58
Adult Social Care - review of placement costs and day care.	4.41
Adult Social Care – controlling third party spend costs and income maximisation including joint funding approach, benefits maximisation and review of use of grants.	7.86
Public Health new operating model.	0.55
Cross Cutting efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management.	0.50
Redesign and Restructure within Money, Home, Job.	0.92
Implementation of Resilient Communities model.	0.76
Income generation, cost recovery and increased commercialisation approach.	0.91
Maximising external / capital / grant funding within Economy, Environment and Communities and Children's Services.	0.97
Redesign of function and efficiencies from review of transactional activity within Resources and Transformation and cross Council administrative and business support functions.	1.41
Implementation of Corporate Landlord model - consolidation of facilities and asset management and traded services review.	0.74

4.14 **Service efficiency and performance milestones for future delivery:**

Milestone	Target milestone date
Delivery of identified financial benefits as below: £18.86m £6.89m £1.15m	Financial year 2022/23 Financial year 2023/24 Financial year 2024/25
Identification of **further savings** to close the MTFP budget gap	2023/24 Budget
Embed the new Council Hub and leverage the strategic insight available from **improved business intelligence and data insight** to improve services.	December 2022
Deliver further efficiencies across the organisation by expanding application of Connected Working and Rapid Process Improvement approaches / teams. Enhancing transformation, and business as usual, capacity and capability further across the Council.	April 2023
Streamlining and centralising enabling and support services to ensure internal processes are as efficient as possible and support service delivery.	April 2023

Finalise and implement **further income generating and commercial options** to increase Council revenues further.	April 2024

4.15 **Value for Money**

The Council's arrangements for delivering value for money in its service provision are annually audited by the Council's external auditors. Grant Thornton's latest audit findings confirmed that:

- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is very clearly aligned to Walsall's corporate objectives and the achievement of the transformational Proud Programme.

- The Council use a key priority framework to set the strategic intent to deliver outcomes and help inform key decisions.

- The (performance) reporting was clear and succinct and allowed for Cabinet to accurately assess the current levels of performance in delivery of services and to ensure these continued to be aligned to the Council's corporate priorities and outcomes.

- One area where the Council is particularly proactive is through using reports from government, regulators, or other bodies to conduct compliance reviews or lessons learned reporting in order to ensure 'best practice' where possible.

- Walsall Council has a good track record of sound financial management.

- The Council had appropriate arrangements in place to manage the risks it faces in relation to financial sustainability.

- The Council has good arrangements for making properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence whilst also allowing for challenge and transparency.

- It is clear that Walsall Council has effectively planned and responded to Covid-19.

Supporting the Next Stages of Proud Transformation

4.16 Since the inception of the programme, the Council has been developing its own capabilities and growing talent internally to maintain the Council's ability to sustain the transformation achieved and continue to drive forward change sustainably for the future. These capabilities put us in good stead to move to the next stages of Proud, building a strong platform of successes and transformation skills, capabilities, and culture – to achieve the next wave of Proud milestones and outcomes. These include the following areas:

- **Strategic focus and alignment –** The Council has strengthened the strategic alignment between the decisions it makes, where it invests its resources, and the direct connection to achieving its outcomes. The Proud programme has set a strong strategic framework for this prioritisation and decision making that is well understood and practised by leaders, senior managers, and officers alike across the organisation. This is upheld through various fora, including the Directors and Senior Managers Groups, Business Design Authority, Transformation and Change

Working Group, as well as work streams, project teams and groups across the Council: a real cultural shift from being able to focus only the immediate operational priorities in front of us.

- **Technology and digital –**the Council has significantly matured the approach to technology delivery across the organisation, with a stronger (though still evolving) understanding of the role and importance of technology in achieving the Council's outcomes across the organisation. The Council have a well-recognised set of technology principles, upheld through Technical Design Authority; and a maturing home-grown technology team who are developing the capabilities for a future-focused, technology-forward Council.

- **High performing teams via Connected Working –** staff and leaders have developed key operational excellence skills and techniques via the Connected Working programme. Teams have built, tested, role-modelled, and continue to embody new skills and behaviours day-to-day, such as: problem solving, cross-team collaboration, coaching, effective performance management. This coaching methodology has been transferred from PwC to the Council, and the Council has built its own digital application to support this, to be able to sustain and expand this across the organisation in the future with the recent appointments to Connected Working coaches.

- **Programme management – T**he Council has built up its core transformation management and coordination capabilities through co-development of key approaches, governance, templates, management techniques etc., supported by regular coaching and ad hoc guidance and support. These responsibilities fully transferred to the Council in 2020 and since then the Council has been developing live reporting of progress, benefits, plans and risk management through Microsoft Project and PowerBI – demonstrating the ability not only sustain but also build on the skills developed.

- **Benefits management –** The Council now has a mature and defined approach to benefits management and realisation across the three Proud promise outcomes. This approach was developed with support from the Council's strategic partner. Full responsibility for tracking benefits and embedding the benefits realisation approach is now owned by the Council, driven by the Transformation and Change team, working in close collaboration with Finance. This has formed the basis for a robust approach to benefits management and strong strategic focus of the programme towards delivering these benefits.

- **Business analysis and change –** business analysis and change capability has evolved over the course of the programme, recognising the importance of how effective change can be implemented and sustained. The Council has a Proud Programme Management Office (PMO) with a growing cadre of programme and project officers supporting the current work streams, a developing business analysis capacity, currently delivered through a hybrid of permanent and temporary resource which will transition to a permanent resource over the coming months. The PMO provides quality analytical capacity with skills in process mapping, opportunity identification and development, requirements mapping, and delivering rapid changes to support transformational change; and delivering this in a collaborative way, bringing together different teams and directorates.

4.17 Effective governance arrangements have been key to the successful delivery of the Walsall Proud Programme and the achievement of its associated benefits. A robust

governance structure was introduced to support the strategic consideration and approval of business change activity, including business cases outlining new organisational structures and new technology solutions supporting new ways of working. Governance will be important for the next activities and will be adapted where necessary to remain applicable and agile decision making.

4.18 The Walsall Proud Programme Board has been pivotal as the key approval and decision-making forum, with membership comprising of Corporate Management Team members and PwC as strategic partner and supported by the Council's programme management office.

Council Plan priorities

4.19 The Walsall Proud Programme has been fundamental to the successful delivery of the Council's priorities. The new ways of working and new ways of thinking will support the development and delivery of the new Council plan moving forward. There are also a number of refreshed strategies which are aligned, and which support the Council Plan. The Customer Experience Strategy, The Organisational Development Strategy and Digital Strategy have action plans which support the Council Plan outcomes and markers of success.

Risk management

4.20 All risks are being proactively managed through the Council's risk management framework, with each work stream maintaining its own Risk, Assumption, Issue and Dependency register, reviewed at each meeting. Escalated risks are presented to the Walsall Proud Programme Board on a monthly basis. This escalation and transparent view of risks and issues will remain as part of ongoing governance arrangements.

Financial implications

4.21 In December 2018, Cabinet agreed a range of benefits and a number of financial parameters in relation to the making of investment and delivery of benefits to the Programme. The original business case identified that by transforming ways of working, the Council could achieve between £39.2m low-level to £80.9m high-level of recurring benefit (saving), this being dependent on the level of ambition and appetite for change in each of the identified opportunity areas. The high-level benefit was subsequently amended to £70.3m by Cabinet in September 2020 following a review of addressable spend which resulted in spend on PFI's and schools being marked as out of scope. The low-level benefit was unadjusted.

4.22 In order to deliver these financial savings of the potential identified above, there was a need to incur one-off revenue and capital investment. In December 2018, Cabinet approved the following two financial parameters:

- A total investment cost to benefit ratio of 1:3 (i.e. for every one-off £1 invested - inclusive of contract value and all other investment - at least £3 recurring benefit would be delivered which could be used to support the Council's financial position or be reinvested into services).

- In year financial benefits will exceed the in-year investment and therefore finance itself, without placing any strain in any particular year on the medium-term financial plan.

4.23 Within the above total investment cost ratio, total one-off revenue and capital investment was therefore capped at £26.1m. Because the baseline opportunities had changed, an amended ratio of 1:2.5 was agreed in September 2020 i.e., for every £1 invested, savings of £2.50 would accrue, resulting in a revised cap of £28.1m (against the revised baseline high level benefit of £70.3m).

4.24 To date, £57.4m of savings have been identified, of which £54.7m have been included within the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP), the remaining £2.7m relate to proposals which Cabinet have decided not to implement. This leaves £12.8m of benefit opportunities to be identified from the original scope of the programme, which will contribute to closing the remaining four-year MTFP funding gap of £26.7m.

4.25 Investment to 31 March 2023 is forecast at £26.1m, leaving a further £2m of headroom to deliver savings identified for delivery in 2023/24 and the remaining £12.8m of high-level opportunities. Based on known current assumptions, it is considered that overall investment requirements will be within the current cap. Investment includes:

- Capital expenditure to fund the technology roadmap, including delivering the core enabling digital platforms to support customer access management improvements, enabling a single view of the customer, improve their experience, and introduce efficiencies in ways of interacting with them such as customer query workflow; a telephony platform; a business intelligence platform, with configuration and integration of the technology stack to pull data from multiple sources and make accessible dash-boarding visualisations etc.

- Working with the Council's strategic partner PwC, including provision of support for the programme by a PwC core team; joint development of blueprints for service redesigns; income generation and cost recovery and commercialisation opportunities; development of the Hub; reducing third party spend and improving the 'Procure to Pay' process and systems; support to the developing technology roadmap, etc.

- Investment on other one-off costs such as external support to provide additional capacity and specialist capability to support service transformation plans, with appropriate knowledge transfer to ensure sustainability of provision – such as business analysts, coaching services, etc – and additional internal and backfilling costs in support services to the programme and work streams.

4.26 Moving forward, the Council will need to continue to identify savings beyond the scope of the current transformation programme, as Government funding changes and increasing demand and cost pressures will continue to put pressure on Council finances. As such, it is acknowledged that further one-off investment will be also required to deliver future change in ways of working. These investment requirements will become clearer as the next stages of transformation develop.

4.27 For any new investment beyond the scope of the current programme, it is proposed to remove the existing financial parameters and replace with an indicator that better reflects the returns delivered on that investment. For instance, payback of the

investment is secured within a certain number of years, the exact payback period being dependent on the project. A positive return on investment would of course be required for the programme as a whole. This return-on-investment principle will be built into investment business cases and approved through the Proud governance arrangements.

4.28   Opportunities for income generation and cost recovery will also be further explored and incorporated into business cases for approval through the same Proud governance arrangements.

4.29   As stated above, there are £12.8m of benefit opportunities to be identified from the original scope of the programme. These will be identified through the new way of budget modelling being developed for the 2023/24 budget process and beyond, whereby the Council's approach and ways of thinking will have an increased emphasis on corporate outcomes and strategic commissioning. This will help to drive increasing value for money in how the Council is achieving and improving its corporate and strategic performance and objectives, aligned to the Proud promises of improving outcomes and customer experience, improving employee satisfaction and engagement, and improving service efficiency and performance.

Legal Implications

4.30   There are no direct legal implications arising from this report – where applicable, all processes and procedures have been adhered to throughout the delivery of the Proud programme.

Procurement Implications / Social Value

4.31   The PwC contract was signed on 11 Sept 2019 for an initial term of 39 months from this commencement date (running to December 2022), with the option to extend by a period or periods up to a maximum of 12 months in aggregate, and to operate within a spending cap of £10.7m. Whilst there is no current requirement to continue with the core team or issue new work orders as the Council has built it's own transformation and change capability, it may be useful to be able to commission specific pieces of work where continuity would be beneficial, subject to individual work orders to be agreed by Proud Board.

4.32   Cabinet is asked to approve delegation of authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation for:

- Any extension and variation of PwC contractual arrangements (or other related documents) should this be required throughout the remaining duration of the contract;

- The removal of the specific cap on the original PwC contract as that programme of work has now been completed and associated benefits are being realised. Any further commissions from PwC will adhere to procurement guidance and must be less than 50% of the total contract value. (Any increase of the contract value is permitted under Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.)

4.33   PwC has invested in the Council and the programme, over and above the contracted work orders, throughout the 39-month period. For example, PwC supported the

Council whilst the internal corporate programme management team was recruited and established and assisted in skills and knowledge transfer to the team with additional investment to the value of £469,000. This was critical to maintaining progress towards achieving the benefits that have subsequently been delivered.

4.34 In addition to the considerable amount of additional value outlined above, PwC have also contributed to a number of Walsall Council's Social Value Priorities as part of the contract This covered the following areas:

- Consider the benefits of engaging with the third sector and private sector firms;

- Look at how the Council's customers will be enabled to transact with it, including the most vulnerable in the community;

- Consider how the third sector could represent and advocate for communities where appropriate and;

- Use volunteer time to support social value commitments in the local community.

4.35 In support of these aims PwC worked with the Council in the following areas:

- Resilient Communities Blueprint, High Street Data Analysis, Customer Personas and Customer Research - all of this work, including some investment on behalf of PwC, looked at different ways in which the third sector could help with engagement between the Council, the community and particularly the most vulnerable people within it.

- Connected Performance - PwC invested free licensing for a Connected Performance platform to assist with the Council's response to COVID and to assist with remote working in support of the most vulnerable in the local area.

- Increased local volunteering - Members of the WPP team have been involved twice with the Council's homeless night count to support rough sleepers.

Property implications

4.36 During the pandemic, the Council established new ways of working which focussed on keeping people safe and ensuring the Council's buildings are safe. The corporate landlord workstream has now transitioned into business as usual with a focus on ensuring the Council's estate is set up for hybrid working and maximising the Council's assets through the Strategic Investment Board through the implementation of the Strategic Asset Plan.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.37 Achieving the Proud promises of increasing customer satisfaction and increasing staff engagement has a direct positive impact on the health and wellbeing of both employees and residents. Any implications on resident or staff health and wellbeing has been considered during formal approval for implementation of the Proud workstreams and will continue to be considered through ongoing monitoring and governance.

Staffing implications

4.38   There will be direct implications for staff numbers in relation to ongoing WPP delivery. Consultation with employees and unions has been undertaken in accordance with legislative requirements and the Council's required procedures. 14 restructures have been completed, 22 are in progress. Of the restructures completed, this has resulted in 19 voluntary redundancies, 10 compulsory redundancies and 6 redeployments.

4.39   The Council implemented an authorisation to recruit process in May 2021 – the aim of this process was to proactively manage vacancies to ensure that Walsall Council proactively avoids and mitigates redundancies where possible.

4.40   There are wider positive staffing implications arising from the Walsall Proud Programme, in terms of opportunity to deliver better customer experiences and a better working environment for staff; with new ways of working to allow capacity to be freed up and the focus to shift more to service delivery and other value adding activities including skills development.

Reducing inequalities

4.41   Equalities impact assessments have been produced and adhered to where applicable during the delivery of the programme and workstreams. The programme aims to enable delivery of the Council's vision to ensure inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised through initiatives such as increasing options for customers to access Council services or increasing digital literacy amongst residents.

Consultation

4.42   Consultations with both employees and residents have been undertaken in line with appropriate legislation and processes. Consultations have been meaningful, and adjustments made to take into feedback such as the restructure of the Council's admin and business support function or resident consultation on the customer experience strategy. The next stages of Proud will ensure adherence to fair and meaningful consultation continues.

5.   **Decide**

5.1   Cabinet is asked to Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation, in consultation with the Leader, to subsequently authorise any extension and variation of PwC contractual arrangements or other related documents should this be required throughout the remaining duration of the contract as set out in sections 4.31 – 4.35 which includes a rationale and options considered.

5.2   Cabinet is asked to approve a revised approach and rationale to agreeing future investment as set out in section 4.26 – 4.29.

6. Respond

6.1 To capitalise on the significant progress already achieved throughout the previous three years, the corporate PMO and change team will continue to work with directors and senior managers to realise benefits and achieve proud promise targets.

7. Review

7.1 Regular progress updates will be provided to Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on the ongoing progress of Proud and benefits realisation and will remain in line with Walsall Proud governance monitoring.

Background papers
24 October 2018 Cabinet - Walsall Proud Programme
12 December 2018 Cabinet - Walsall Proud Programme Contract Award
16 June 2021 Cabinet – Resetting the Council through Proud

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16 March 2022

Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council

16 March 2022