

REPORT: PORTFOLIO BRIEFING FOR AGENDA FOR CHANGE

1. Summary of report

1.1 The report sets out the achievements that have been made in the portfolio for Change; the main challenges facing the portfolio; and the activity that is planned for the next twelve months. The portfolio for change is set out at Article 7 of the Council's constitution as follows, "in collaboration with partner agencies, issues relating to proposals for new area arrangements. Cross portfolio issues that contribute to enlargement of opportunities for public involvement. Cross portfolio liaison on change programmes within the Council".

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Council consider the report.

3. Report detail

What activity and achievements have been made?

3.1 For clarity "Change" in the context of the portfolio covers change activity internally and externally so the relationship with the public, how we engage with them and how we deliver services to them is within the remit of the portfolio.

3.2 The focus for this year has been the delivering of the foundations for future success of change within the Authority. These key foundations are:

- A four-year financial plan.
- Embedding of the Marmot principles.
- A cohesion strategy that looks both internally and externally.
- Meaningful dialogue with our communities.
- The transformation programme which is designed to have an effect across all of our services.

The portfolio has no resources but influences other portfolios.

3.3 The **four-year financial plan** moves us away from the short-termism that has dogged previous administrations. Decisions can now be made within a long term framework giving more time and space for real strategic thinking and change. The council carried out wide scale consultation with our residents, businesses and partner agencies in relation to the budget proposals.

3.4 The **Marmot principles** are now a part of cabinet reports which ensures that the key principles are considered as part of every strategic decision. The principles are:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention

These principles are not tokenistic but are a key part of the Councils DNA. They will be further embedded next year.

3.5 Working towards a **cohesive society** with a workforce that truly represents the communities they serve will be a key part of our Cohesion Strategy which will shortly be debated at Council. The work was commenced through a scrutiny working group and has been taken on by Councillor Fitzpatrick supported by cabinet colleagues.

3.6 We must have a **meaningful dialogue** with our communities. The success of our engagement with the residents of Walsall will play a key part in how the Council is judged. This work is still ongoing.

What are the main challenges for the portfolio?

3.7 The main challenges for the portfolio are not new. We need to have good engagement with our residents, the business and voluntary sectors and our neighbours. Listening to residents and responding to local need is a characteristic that is in rare but is essential.

What activity is planned in the next 12 months?

3.8 The utilisation of Library space for the communities will be a major piece of work in the first part of the year. Each space is unique and will have different issues to overcome. The Council will approach each site differently, will apply the Marmot principles in solutions and ensure the community are involved.

3.9 New models of engagement both directly with customers and through partner organisations will play an ever-increasing part in the design and delivery of our services. The Council will listen more effectively and the portfolio will be at the heart of change activity going forward. Part of this review will be looking at the effectiveness of Area Committees. The council will be considering a new Locality Delivery Model, which will set out the justification for a revised approach to partnership working at a local level. Consideration will be given to a geographical configuration of a new four-area Locality Delivery Model, involving the key current models of partnership locality working in Walsall: notably Area Partnerships and Locality Partnership Panel (Early Help). This will assist with more effective engagement with the voluntary sector at a local level.

3.10 As stated the council will propose the endorsement of a four-area geographical footprint, and the elements required an effective delivery model at a local level. The council has already been engaging with its partners via the Walsall Strategic Partnership Group and Borough Management Team and will be looking to progress this work over the next twelve months.

3.11 Delivering on the budget is a key activity, many of the budget items require support for change. The transformation work underway will require support and drive. This portfolio will deliver both.

3.12 Linking our communities with the Combined Authority through democratic decision making and influence will be a major challenge. One aspect of this will be the role of the Overview and Scrutiny function and how this operates across the region in reviewing key decisions of the Mayoral CA, and assist in development of regional policies (see Background Paper). The CA will support the Agenda for Change across the region.

3.13 The refreshed Corporate Plan was approved at Council on 23 February 2017. During the drafting and approval process it was recognised that additional strategies were required to ensure the Council has the appropriate infrastructure to deliver the commitments detailed in the Corporate Plan.

The Strategies identified as supporting the Corporate Plan are:

- a. ICT Strategy
- b. Workforce Development Strategy
- c. Asset Management Strategy
- d. Medium Term Financial Strategy
- e. Communications Strategy


3.14 During the refreshing of the Corporate Plan, in addition to the strategies detailed above it was recognised that the priorities within the Corporate Plan relate to the Walsall Plan (Health and Well Being Strategy) as they are both based on the needs analysis intelligence for the borough. It was also recognised that the delivery of the Corporate Plan connects to the emerging transformation programme work being carried out by the council.

3.15 A commitment was given that the supporting strategies and plans would be developed by May 2017. The Council has previously had a Corporate Integrated Planning and Performance Framework (CIPPF) in place and is now reintroducing an integrated planning now relates to the development of strategies in a collaborative way with our partner agencies to support the delivery of the corporate plan.


The diagram below represents the proposed integrated planning framework.



The Walsall Plan – Health and Well Being Strategy, the overarching priorities for Walsall, delivered under partnership arrangements.



The Corporate Plan, the Council's key priorities. This is supported by arrangements to monitor delivery of the priorities both at the corporate level and planning and monitoring arrangements within directorates.



These form part of the infrastructure of the Council and support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Each strategy is supported by delivery plans and actions and deliverables may also be embedded within directorate and service plans. The strategies influence and are influenced by each other, leading to the integration of how their delivery plans are developed. The reference to 'Transformation Programme' will be updated once name is agreed.

Transformation Agenda

What activity and achievements have been made?

3.16 Over the last 6 months a significant amount of work has been carried out to develop a 4 year medium term financial plan. This has allowed the organisation to move its planning focus to a longer term approach. Alongside this work, another workstream around specifically planning change and transformation has been established. This has been led by CMT, and has involved a cross directorate staff group (the Transformation Group), members of core brief, subject matter experts and cabinet members. The purpose of this work was to identify what key opportunities for change and transformation there are across Walsall Council, which will enable us to improve service delivery and/or achieve savings. This work has not been driven by savings, it is about planning for the future and how we need to change. The aim of the work is to create a transformation programme, with a range of themes, that allow Walsall Council to become ready for the future. The programme will have a clear structure, be governed and monitored by CMT and resourced effectively to ensure it delivers.

3.17 At the moment, the current thinking is that the programme will include themes around, which has synergy with, and will support the corporate plan:

- Our workforce – getting them ready for the future and ensuring they have the right skills
- How we communicate with our customers, also known as 'channel shift', where we look to ensure we are communicating in the most effective way possible
- Our assets – review our property portfolio.
- Our insights – looking at what data and intelligence we have available to us, and how we use this.
- Our voluntary and community sector and how we work with our partners
- How we ensure that our policies and procedures across the council drive health for all

3.18 In particular the transformation programme will look at 2 service areas, how we manage demand in adults, and how we can safely reduce numbers and associated costs relating to looked after children. These themes are likely to change and evolve as time goes on, as all good change and transformation programme should. We are currently working through what we could achieve in each of these areas, and are part way through a consultation exercise with staff and managers.

3.19 It was clear that the successful delivery of the transformation workstreams would require additional resources. In recognition of this a £2million transformation fund was established as part of the 2017/18 budget.

What are the main challenges for the portfolio?

3.20 The main challenges for the Transformation workstream have been:

3.21 Being able to plan long term in an uncertain environment – our changing demand for service and cuts to external funding make long term sustainable planning difficult. The provision of a 4 year budget has made this easier, but it is important that we build a programme of change that it is flexible and adaptive to the environment we are in.

3.22 In local government, the services provided are rich and hugely varied, this can make it difficult to determine priorities for change. Over the last 6 months work has been carried out with CMT, Core Brief and Members to build a picture of what the future of the council will look and feel like, and to priorities where our efforts around change and transformation should be focused.

3.23 The time and resources required to effectively plan change are intensive. There has been an additional resource for a short period of time (9 months) to build the structure of the programme. Once the Interim Transformation Manager moves on it is crucial that we fill the gap to continue this work, as well as skilling up managers across the organisation in terms of leading change.

What activity is planned in the next 12 months?

3.24 The initial next steps are to finalise the programme, to be clear about what is in scope for transformation and what isn't. The structure of the programme and how it will be governed is also being established. Strategies and detailed plans will be produced so we know the key milestones that we are monitoring. This will happen over the next few weeks as consultation with senior managers, staff and members.

3.25 In order to establish the programme and keep it on track there will be a small investment in corporate resources, with skills and expertise around change, transformation, and programme delivery. A Transformation Fund has been established which will fund this, and other specific spend to progress the programme itself (for example in ICT software to enable better communication with customers).

3.26 Over the next 12 months the first year of the programme will be delivered. This will generate savings in children's and adult's as per the budget savings plan. There will also be a strong focus on communication and engagement with the workforce, and training for managers who will play a part in leading change.

4. Council priorities

4.1 These three elements of 'place', 'economy' and 'people' are intertwined and interdependent, meaning the delivery of services will continue to become more collaborative and joined up. The transformation and change agenda will improve and modernise our services, in collaboration with our partners, in helping the council achieve all of its priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan.

5. Financial implications

5.1 None arising from this report

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no resource or legal considerations attached to this specific report.

7. Equality Implications

7.1 No specific equality impact assessment is required in relation to the portfolio briefing. If any service specific proposals require Equality Impact Assessment they will be carried out as required.

8. Consultation

8.1 The relevant service areas have been consulted in the compilation of this report.

9. Background papers:

- Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 07.04.17
- Corporate Plan

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Portfolio holder for Agenda for Change

31 March 2017