

Cabinet – 24 October 2018

Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Portfolio: Councillor Mike Bird (Leader of the Council)

Related portfolios: All

Service: Council Wide

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

1.1 The report presents the final update on the delivery of the action plan in relation to the existing transformation programme, drafted in response to the recommendations and suggestions for improvement identified and reported by the LGA following the Corporate Peer Challenge. The report focuses on the independent evidence based work undertaken by PwC, the outcome of which is a proposed transformation programme (Walsall Proud Programme) that will be considered as a separate report on the agenda.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet note the successful and timely conclusion of the action plan in relation to the stocktake.

3. Report detail

3.1 The council participated in the LGA Peer Challenge process in September 2017. In addition to the core framework, the council requested that our approach to transformation was included within the remit.

3.2 An action plan to respond to the recommendations and suggestions for improvement was presented to Cabinet in February 2018. A progress report was presented to Cabinet in July. The majority of actions within the plan linked to the proposal that a full stocktake be undertaken to enable the council to better understand the demand on all services so that it can adapt to meet the needs of Walsall's growing population.

3.3 This report focuses on those actions relating to the stocktake. A further progress update will be presented to Cabinet in December relating to the full action plan.

- 3.4 Cabinet approved funding for external support to undertake the stocktake. Following a procurement process, PwC were awarded the contract. Their remit was to provide a comprehensive assessment of our current ways of working, both quantitatively and qualitatively to create an evidence base for change, to explore opportunities for new ways of working, and proposals for how to take this forward through a refreshed transformation programme.
- 3.5 An intensive ten-week programme of work was undertaken. A whole council assessment was carried out across current activity, ways of working, third party spend and income.
- 3.6 The current ways of working were analysed and assessed via a series of 1-to-1 interviews with the corporate management team, assistant directors, and heads' of service, tier 3 managers, and project managers. 1,635 staff completed an activity analysis survey, which covered 97% of all positions giving a view of how the council's effort is directed.
- 3.7 Current change initiatives and transformation data, as recognised by staff, was captured and mapped to business processes.
- 3.8 Service cost recovery was compared against other English authorities indicating a benchmark for revenue recovery that the council should aim for. Third party spend was examined to identify future potential efficiencies and IT analysis was undertaken capturing data on the IT applications with input from staff, and its criticality to their work.
- 3.9 Building on that, a series of crosscutting workshops, based on themes identified in the assessment phase, combined with a major event to explore digitally enabled ways of working and the skills and behaviours required to support this were completed.
- 3.10 These workshops and discussions opened up the opportunities that the council could take advantage of, leading to nine key themes and supporting enablers. Potential benefits in improving the customer experience and delivering financial benefits were assessed and suggested new ways of working and a refreshed transformation programme was proposed.
- 3.11 In summary, the findings of the stocktake, echoing some of the themes coming from the employee survey, showed that customer experience is, overall poor; significant effort is spent on administration and data entry; and there is fragmentation. As well as that, the evidence suggested that the transformation programme was not ambitious enough, and lacked traction and tangible benefits. Data could be used more effectively, digital technology needs to be exploited and the organisation's ambition could be more aspirational.
- 3.12 Based on these findings, the council has identified opportunities for change in nine key theme areas and supporting enablers. Transforming these areas will help the council free up capacity and refocus effort on service delivery; provide a better customer experience and outcome; improve staff satisfaction, and improve service delivery. Cabinet will consider this refreshed transformation programme, Walsall Proud Programme, in a separate report on tonight's agenda.

3.13 The completed stocktake is a positive response to the recommendations and suggestions made in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in relation to the transformation programme. The completed actions are shown in the table below.

Action	Status of Action
<p>Make best use of newly appointed Chief and Executive Director roles:</p> <p>Strengthen corporate oversight and drive transformation change at pace through the newly appointed Chief Executive and new role of the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation.</p>	<p>Identify a provider to assist the delivery of an independent stocktake against vision principles. Consistent with a whole council approach.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p>
<p>Transformation is a means of achieving the 'future Council':</p> <p>Currently the transformation programme has a narrow focus in terms of putting in place corporate enablers, attempting to leverage the asset base and dealing with growing demand in adults and children's services. It is not broadly perceived as the mechanism that will achieve the whole organisation change required to take the organisation forward.</p>	<p>Procure and appoint provider to deliver stocktake. With option to deliver phased actions.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p>
<p>Commerce development of strategic transformation intentions for next phase:</p>	<p>Conduct an independent stocktake of all change activity.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p>
<p>The next phase of transformation will have a deeper and broader reach than currently and the appetite is for this phase to occur at an accelerated rate. To achieve this, planning for the next phase needs to commence before the turn of the year, which is timely given the introduction of the new Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services. Initial soundings suggest that this is already a key deliverable.</p>	<p>Stocktake is completed and provides options for moving council to where it wants to be.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p> <p>Assess the outcomes of the stocktake and re-evaluate the scope of the Transformation Programme (including the refreshed Corporate Plan). Redesign and reinvigorate transformation programme.</p> <p><i>Delivered – see Walsall Proud Programme (separate item on tonight's agenda).</i></p> <p>Decide which options are done in house, which go to provider.</p> <p><i>This will be determined and reported to Cabinet in December.</i></p>

Action	Status of Action
<p><i>The Transformation programme has to be set within the context of the vision for the Council and strategic priorities:</i></p> <p>Given the challenging financial environment, the necessary shrinkage of available resources and the appetite to take the organisation forward it is clear that the organisation needs to undertake a visioning exercise to establish its strategic direction and key priorities for the medium to longer term. Resource alignment should follow facilitated by the transformation programme that should be the vehicle used to transition the organisation from its current to future state, as opposed to being an ‘add on’ as it is currently.</p>	<p>Complete a full stocktake and analysis of all change or project activity to capture breadth of change activity.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Evaluate the outcomes from the stocktake against the vision to ensure there is alignment (if appropriate refresh the vision).</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p>
<p><i>Establish clear accountability for the programme at a senior level:</i></p> <p>Given the transitional arrangements in place for the leadership team, it is understandable that when the peer challenge was undertaken the lines of accountability were not clear. There were some assurances provided that the programme will be located under the remit of the new Executive Director for Resources and Transformation; this would seem a sensible fit going forward.</p>	<p>Transformation Programme to be located under the remit of the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation.</p> <p><i>Delivered.</i></p> <p>Executive Directors to be sponsors of each of the projects in refreshed transformation programme.</p> <p><i>This will be determined and reported to Cabinet in December.</i></p>
<p><i>Embed appropriate levels of programme and project management and performance management:</i></p> <p>Although there were some initial examples of a programme and project, management approach there did not appear to be consistency across each of the programme elements. There was also a marked absence of any consolidated approach to performance management. This is a key weakness in the current delivery system, which needs to be addressed as a priority.</p>	<p>CMT Transformation Board to agree minimum requirements for all Transformation Programme work streams pre and post stocktake and refreshed programme.</p> <p><i>Delivered – The programme will be subject to the revised Performance Management approach (separate item on tonight’s agenda) and full programme and project management.</i></p>

4. Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.1 The action plan was developed at the same time as the current Corporate Plan. Many of the actions completed will be fundamental to the successful delivery of all the priorities now and in years to come.

5. Risk management

5.1 Due to the plan of action being taken, the risks have been mitigated.

6. Financial implications

6.1 The stocktake was delivered within the budget approved by Cabinet.

7. Legal implications

7.1 There is no legal requirement to take action following a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, however to do so promotes good governance and transparency.

8. Property implications

8.1 There are no direct property implications associated with the plan itself.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

9.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications from the action plan.

10. Staffing implications

10.1 There are no direct implications arising.

11. Reducing inequalities

11.1 One of the key actions from the Corporate Peer Challenge was to agree a new Vision for the Council. This has been incorporated into the updated Corporate Plan as "Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised". The Plan has fully adopted the Marmot principles which are reflected in the vision and priorities. The Marmot Review clearly identifies the role of councils in supporting individuals, families and communities and reducing health inequalities.

12. Consultation

12.1 The progress report has been informed by evidence gathered and submitted during the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process and via consultation with Cabinet members and senior managers.

Background papers

LGA Corporate Peer Review Action Plan Cabinet report - 14 February 2018

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Cabinet report - 11 July 2018

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24 October 2018



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