

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Witnesses:

Michael Coughlin, Executive Director, TPP

Marie Snelling, Director of Transformation

Overall Questions

Question (1): What is the role of the 'Transformation Assurance Board'? Mention is made of benefits models and document templates – could we see those documents, please?

Response:

The Transformation Assurance Board is a senior office level board, chaired by Marie Snelling (Director for Transformation) which drives and assures key transformation programmes, ensuring that planned benefits (financial and operational) are tracked and delivered.

The Board meets monthly to review progress across the transformation portfolio, providing support, challenge and assurance, drawing in relevant officers as required in order to unblock risks and issues. It escalates any significant issues or decisions to CLT. The headline performance and progress the Board tracks is then featured in the regular monthly budget reports (financial benefits position) and corporate performance report (overall progress of programmes).

The other templates referenced are operational and are used to ensure projects are delivered in a consistent manner.

Question (2): In the Organisation Portfolio there are costs of £6.6m and savings of £8.5m – £7m of this is in Land & Property. What does this saving of £7m in property consist of? Are the savings at risk because of COVID-19?

Response:

The £7m is a forecast of savings that can be made over the medium-term period in relation to land and property transformation, based on the investment of seed funding to pursue key projects. We currently still expect to achieve these particular efficiencies over the medium term in spite of the disruption from Covid-19. We will review this further as part of the overall work to develop a refreshed MTFs and transformation programme for 2021/22 onwards over the autumn and winter.

Individual Programmes

Agile Workforce, £2.2m investment

Question (3): How is the money to be spent? Is it for hardware or software or is it people rolling out projects, or is there property expenditure included as well? How much would this be on top of existing expenditure?

Response:

The investment is in a combination of all three; hardware, software and people rolling projects out. This will provide the right devices, common systems and skills to ensure the successful delivery and adoption of the programme. This investment is to enable and enhance the way we use technology in the future, so is on top of existing expenditure.

Question (4): Presumably, the programme has been accelerated by COVID-19 - how has this been taken on board and the programme updated?

Response:

Yes, the programme has been accelerated by Covid-19. This has been managed and overseen by connecting the Agile Programme to the council's Covid-19 Operations Board. Key activities were prioritised to meet Covid-19 related needs. We established a laptop workstream to prioritise and distribute approx. 700 laptops in 10 weeks. We also accelerated the rollout of Microsoft Team increasing user numbers to approx. 7,000.

Question (5): As a lot more staff will be working from home for the foreseeable future. As a responsible employer what measures have we put in place to ensure they are supplied with proper equipment (e.g. comfortable office chair, fast WiFi) to cope with video and audio meetings, and an appropriate work environment? Are staff able to claim expenses on certain spends, such as phone minutes and reasonable costs?

Response:

In the initial stages of the pandemic and in response to the Government's instruction that people should work from home unless they were unable to, we made available to staff the use of council equipment (monitors, chairs, desks) for use in their homes where needed. We have maintained the ability to work from council buildings for any member of staff experiencing difficulties working from home as a result of their personal circumstances. Staff working from home will in many cases realise savings from commuting and so there is no plan to reimburse the cost of utility bills. Staff are however able to make use of

HRMC's tax relief available to people who have to work from home on a regular basis and we have promoted this, signposting staff to the relevant section of the HMRC website.

Digital, £2.3m investment

Question (6): How is the money to be spent? Is it for hardware or software or for people rolling out projects?

Response:

It's a combination of all three. This will provide the right devices, systems and skills to ensure the successful delivery and adoption of the programme.

Question (7): The Digital Strategy approved by the Cabinet includes many projects which would appear to be beyond the digital programme costings as such, and presumably included in other IT budgets. How are the priorities for each area assessed, approved and monitored?

Response:

In order to assess, approve and monitor the progress against the Digital Strategy the Digital Board has been established. This is to enable all workstreams that contribute towards the Digital Strategy to report progress, request support and manage risk. All assessments are made against the strategic priorities set out in the Digital Strategy, which itself supports the goals in the council's organisation strategy and vision for 2030.

Question (8): The Cabinet report discussed a refresh of the Digital Transformation Programme after the approval of the Strategy; is this now available and can we see a full list of projects within the programme?

Response:

The revised set of projects within the programme is being finalised, with work currently taking place to assign the resources across key priorities. This will be completed in the coming weeks so can be shared after the summer recess.

Question (9): Why do remote care at home and the Single Point of Contact sit under the digital portfolio? It might be expected that they sit under ASC and Children’s services, respectively

Response:

Although the technology for these opportunities sits within the Digital Programme, the operations, processes and service users that benefit from these technologies are of course within the realm of the frontline services.

Digital technologies are most effective when a collaborative approach to solving a problem is taken. Consequently, the Digital programme will build strong relationships and work with services to understand the key problems that need to be solved. This will include the processes, practices and operations that need to be changed and the digital technologies that can best enable these new ways of working such as “single point of contact”.

Moving Closer to Residents, £0.3m investment, benefits £0.6m

Question (10): This seems very modest - how is the disposal of County Hall and the capital investment for the new civic centre in Surrey is treated? Can this be explained?

Response:

As set out in the report to the Committee, due to Covid-19 the Moving Closer to Residents programme is now paused.

The numbers referenced reflected plans as they existed prior to Covid-19 and set out in the [report to Cabinet](#) in late 2019 (noting that the £0.3m was a specific revenue investment component allocated from the council’s transformation fund to support change management, not the full capital business case)