
Subject:	Dover District Council Transformation Programme (Dover 2024 – 50 years of service)
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 3rd October 2022
Report of:	Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Trevor Bartlett, Leader of the Council
Decision Type:	Non-Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To deliver a transformation/change programme across the Council, ensuring people (customers and staff) are at the heart of all we do, coinciding and building on 50 years of the council being in service in 2024.

Recommendation: To agree to the implementation of the proposed workstreams and project governance structure, to deliver the Transformation Programme

1. Summary

- 1.1 This Transformation Programme will implement a clear direction of travel for the council, to review and update the Council's practices and ways of working, ensuring an improved customer experience.
- 1.2 The programme will be delivered in phases, to recognise the scale of change, capacity and resources to deliver, alongside the need to maintain current service levels.
- 1.3 Phase 1, and the immediate issue, will seek to explore the current customer experience and improve our existing customer care and journey. This will largely be a training and performance management project and will deliver improved procedures, behaviours and expectations.
- 1.4 However, Phase 2 will be a larger piece of work and will explore software and digital solutions to enable improved data capture and analysis to target our activity, whilst continuing to invest in our website development and digital focus going forward.
- 1.5 Mechanisms will be developed to capture and monitor the impact of the outcomes and change.
- 1.6 As part of the programme, our training programmes, digital programme, working environment and practices will be re-invigorated to deliver the Council's ambitions. The programme will also recognise the need to build on, and evolve, the council's culture in a new working environment.
- 1.7 A full timescale and communication plan will be developed.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 It can be seen across the globe there are new approaches to how, when and where we work, following the Covid pandemic and progression of digital programmes. It is also widely acknowledged that DDC staff responded quickly and effectively to the unprecedented changes and demands that arose whilst the pandemic was active, supported by the, then newly, acquired MS365 programme.

3. It is no surprise the last couple of years have provided many challenges to organisations and individuals and post covid, the world has more agile working, changing and adaptive working spaces, greater emphasis on the use of technology and a renewed emphasis on work-life balance. Covid 19 has served to accelerate organisational changes to the Council's operations and services, with opportunities to further accelerate change and better understand the technology we already have, now greater than ever before. What must be at the heart of this new environment is the experience/journey of our customers when accessing our services. With these opportunities and access to technology we must deliver an improved customer experience.
- 3.1 Building on the decisions to introduce MS365, the introduction of a Remote Working Policy, a new telephony solution, the One Public Estate programme, and the current review of the management structure, including the appointment of a third Strategic Director, this report proposes a co-ordinated approach to our change/transformation programme.
- 3.2 The Council has not embarked on a change programme, or wider, collective, development of staff since the Leader as Coach programme in 2007. The Council is approaching its 50th birthday in 2024 and it is proposed the programme, supported by a number of workstreams, is launched in October 2022, with the training programme and changes to our working space and structures being implemented in Spring 2023, enabling us to be a 'renewed' Council for our 50th year. This will involve identifying the size, structure and skillset of our workforce and how it will operate to deliver the outcomes in our Corporate Plan, plus a transformed working environment to be as efficient and effective as possible.
- 3.3 The lifting of lockdown restrictions has created a challenge for us all between shifting workplace attendance, the move to an effective hybrid working model, a genuine desire to change and progress our ways of working and an awareness of the costs of office buildings.
- 3.4 This programme will take us on an exciting and challenging path to become a more adaptive and effective workforce, to take the best of both ways of working and create something even better than we had before and to make our decision making processes more nimble, whilst keeping our customer needs central to all that we do. The re-introduction of the PPR/Development Plan process with staff will help to define productivity outcomes and therefore, most importantly, will help to improve the customer experience. All these things together will help the Council on its journey to become a true employer of choice.

4. **Identification of Options**

- 4.1 Option 1 - The council can continue to operate in it's current capacity and format.
- 4.2 Option 2 - The outlined Transformation Programme can be adopted and changes implemented.

5. **Evaluation of Options**

- 5.1 Option 1 – The Council faces two major drivers for change. The first is to make significant financial savings in the face of the current levels of inflation, increasing demands and limited income and funding. The second is the new working environment following Covid and technological and social change.
- 5.2 Maintaining the current structure, size, processes and skillsets of the workforce will deliver marginal changes, but not the step change required in the current circumstances. For these reasons this is not the preferred option.

5.3 Option 2 - The Transformation Programme offers the opportunity to review and reflect new working practices, better trained and informed officers, and better use of technology to drive an efficient and effective council of the future. For these reasons this is the preferred option.

6. **Resource Implications**

6.1 Phase 1 of the programme: customer care and performance management training, will be funded from existing budgets

6.2 Phase 2 of the programme: changes to the business model and ongoing data capture/analysis, will require invest to transform funding and a subsequent report will be presented with budget implications.

7. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

8. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report. **Corporate Implications**

8.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no additional comments

8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

8.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

9. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Transformation Programme Workstreams

Appendix 2 – Transformation Programme Project Governance Structure

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