

11 December 2014		ITEM: 6
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Transformation Review		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: To note progress.	
Report of: Jackie Hinchliffe		
Accountable Head of Service: Jackie Hinchliffe (HR and Transformation)		
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant (Chief Executive)		
This report is Public		

Introduction

Over the last 24 months, the Transformation Programme has made significant progress in changing the way the Council delivers services and achieved a number of important outcomes. These are all centred on supporting the residents of Thurrock and enabling the Council to become more efficient and effective in the way it operates. It is a key component of shaping the Council and delivering future services. The Transformation Programme has been made up of a five major programmes of change activity. These are:

- Thurrock On-Line (now the Digital Programme)
- Community Hubs
- Civic Offices
- IT Connects
- Procurement

A clear governance framework exists for the Transformation Programme - each of the individual programmes is accountable to a Programme Board and the Transformation Board provides overall oversight and decision making.

This paper describes progress and the current status of the programmes and the role of the Transformation Board.

Recommendations:

1.1 To note the content and progress of the Transformation Programme.

The Programmes

1. Thurrock On-Line (now the Digital Programme)

The Thurrock On-Line programme brings the exciting potential to change the relationship between the Council and Thurrock residents. Its aim is simple – to provide residents with easy access to advice and information, and to make a series of services available online. Independent research carried out for the Council in 2012 demonstrated that a large percentage of the borough's residents are already online (84%) and using online services as part of their every day lives. They tend to do this because it is generally simple, easy and convenient to do so. The intention of the programme is to make services available online for those who can self serve, while providing assisted support to those who cannot. In March 2013 Cabinet approved an investment budget of £1,650,000 for the programme. This provided the necessary finance to acquire the technology solutions, and the support/re-design resources.

Since then significant progress has been made. In summary:

- A new web site has been designed, developed and implemented. The web site has recently been recognised as the fastest performing site in local government in the UK;
- The web site includes a “My Account” facility that enables residents, through a single sign on process, to access information directly related to them as an individual. To date 9,867 residents have signed up for an individual account;

A total of 15 services have been made available on line. This includes:

- Reporting environmental problems (e.g. dog fouling, graffiti, view incident and updates on progress)
- Checking your Council Tax balance
- Setting up a Council Tax direct debit
- Claiming a single person Council Tax discount
- Claiming an empty property Council Tax discount
- Claiming a Council Tax refund
- Claiming Housing Benefit
- Report changes to circumstances
- Claiming Council Tax support
- Checking benefit payments and dates
- Requesting a waste service

The Council's website also makes online provision for the following services outside of MyAccount: applying and bidding for council housing, applying for school admissions, tracking licensing and planning applications, making library reservations and renewals, and consultations and petitions.

The implementation of these new on line services has resulted in the re-

engineering of processes, and the necessary technology integrations with the line of business systems. All of this has achieved more efficient and effective services.

In order to influence more people to use the convenience of the on-line service provision the Council is now implementing a Channel shift plan. The key features of the plan include:

- A series of Quick Wins – for example, promotion of online services on all Council materials (such as letters, invoices and web pages), and reducing the prominence of other, more costly contact methods, such as face to face and telephone;
- Staff and Members as advocates and promoters of online services – raising awareness; reinforcing the benefits of online services; and by signing up for MyAccount;
- Campaigns and Marketing Activity – a “Do It Online” Campaign is planned to start early in the New Year. This will be a resident targeted campaign, raising awareness of the Council’s online service provision and the benefits of self service. An internal campaign “STOP Think Digital” is also scheduled to start in the January/February 2015. This will use a range of existing staff publications, Council noticeboards, intranet, lunchtime seminars, and the new Council Supports Innovation network to reinforce the benefits Council staff and Members of online services.

For those residents that cannot use on line facilities the existing contact channels remain in place – this includes phone and face to face. The Council is considering how it can develop its telephone service so that customers receive the same experience if they make contact by phone as they do online. Furthermore as part of the Civic Office Programme, plans are being drawn up to create a new customer service centre in Civic offices. This will build a different model of assisted self-service with staff available to help as people enter the building and less emphasis on being behind a desk. The one of aims of the Community Hubs, described below, is for face-to-face support to reach out into the community. The South Ockendon Hub has very successfully demonstrated how support for vulnerable people in the community can be delivered.

As part of an ongoing process the effectiveness of all the activity to promote online services will be next reviewed in April/May 2015.

Moving more services online and the associated marketing and promotion activity is now incorporated into the Digital Programme. A Cabinet report setting out the next areas for developing Digital Council was approved in September 2014. Work is now underway to progress each of the next phases of the Digital projects. A particular focus for the next stage is to bring together online services and strengthen the IT infrastructure. Specific proposals to achieve this will be brought forward in the New Year.

2. Community Hub Programme

The core purpose of the Community Hub Programme has been to support the strengthening of local communities and managing demand by:

- Helping people to solve problems and manage their risks without needing to rely on statutory support;
- Providing the co-ordinating vehicle for mobilising and channelling local plans and resources.

The South Ockendon Pathfinder has proved to be a successful community based focal point and conduit for:

- Engaging with local people to learn what they need to become more self-sufficient
- Providing a range of integrated service offers (open access as well as targeted and tailored for specific priority client groups)
- Bringing together information, advice, learning resources and support from different places into one place
- Developing and sustaining volunteers and local support networks
- Connecting people to this support both within the Centre building and out in the Community.

Since the South Ockendon Centre opened there have been a series of discussions with various Community groups in other localities within the borough. There has been a variable level of support and capacity demonstrated in the community and a paper proposing the way forward was considered and agreed at Cabinet in August this year.

A request for external funding to support the programme has been submitted and a decision is expected in January 2015. At this point along with an assessment of the community capacity to support Hubs in other areas will be considered and specific proposals brought forward as appropriate.

3. IT Connects Programme

The Council refreshed it's IS/IT Strategy in February 2013. Approved by Cabinet, this strategy has steered the approach to, and the sequencing of, IT transformation projects since then.

The focus to date has been on:

- modernising the end user computing and telephony estate
- creating a virtual desktop infrastructure to enable flexible and remote working
- moving the website to a transactional Web 2.0 model

- closing access channels and migrating customers to do their business online

In order to achieve these immediate objectives, an investment budget of £1,800,000 was approved by Cabinet in March 2013. This investment has delivered a substantial update to the basic IT operating infrastructure for staff and members. This includes:

- As of November 2014, 70% of the Civic Offices has been enabled to work flexibly
- 550 staff have been equipped and are able to work remotely in the field without needing to return to the Civic Offices
- Half a dozen buildings are in the process of being exited as a result of enabling transformation

Furthermore the end user computing solutions now in place enable strategic and operational choices about service delivery. This includes the location of work, creating integrated delivery teams, and the potential for shared service models.

The next step in the transformation of IT, and the use of IT to support the Council's strategic objectives will be to bring forward proposals that address the core IT infrastructure. Whilst existing ICT services provided by Serco are being delivered in line with the existing contract, as the Council has progressed with its transformation it has become clear that the ICT service does not match up to current public sector or industry best practice. In particular today's model of operation is not optimised to meet the Council's future anticipated ICT needs. Work is now underway to develop proposals for a modern, flexible ICT model that enables the delivery of the Council's future ambitions.

4. Civic Offices Programme

The aim of the Civic Offices Programme is to deliver the Council's strategic ambition to create a recognised centralised hub for the Council. Specifically the intention is that majority of Council staff will use the Civic Offices as a base - the Programme is in the process of implementing all refurbishment and office moves and coordinating associated ICT, HR, Change and other relevant works to enable the Council's vision for how people will work in Thurrock.

The ambition is therefore to create for the Council:

- **A connected workplace** - The Civic Offices will no longer simply be a static place where employees travel to their desk in the morning and leave in the evening. The new offices are moving to an attractive shared space for services and staff to use as a base, enabling complete flexibility and subsequent increased productivity
- **A working environment where any employee can work at any time, in any place** – thereby supporting the rationalisation of the operational

estate

- **Maximum space in the Civic Offices and a modern flexible workspace** -Modern, open-plan spaces are being designed to create a lighter, airy, flexible feel and more professional but relaxed working environment.

The business case for Flexible Working and investment in the Civic Offices was approved in June 2013. Since then:

- Over 1,000 staff have been enabled to work flexibly using Civic Offices as a base
- Nearly all front line services have been enabled to work flexibly (Housing; Environment; Planning and Transport; Children's Services and Adults, Health and Commissioning);
- A total of three floors have been refurbished within Civic offices 2 with new light, open plan space offices
- Approximately 50 new meeting and one to one rooms have been installed
- Filing and storage has been reduced by over 50%
- Staff from ten outlining operational buildings have been consolidated into Civic Offices
- Over 20 schools and local organisations have benefited from recycled furniture

Work is now underway to assess the options and requirements for the Ground Floor of Civic Offices. The guiding principles that are being developed to shape the potential solutions include:

- Open plan – with a natural flow and progression around the space
- A community space – potentially including a library facility
- Increase in self service – to support the provision of online service
- Interview facilities for complex cases and sensitive circumstances
- A training, meeting room and business suite
- Enhancements to the Council chamber

It is intended that further consultation will take place throughout December and January, and a paper will be brought to Cabinet in February 2015.

5. Procurement Programme

The Procurement Programme started in February 2013, and its specific goals were:

- To include every aspect of a commissioning and procurement operation, including supporting IT systems and skills programmes
- To redefine the service schedule for Procurement Services which is delivered by Serco
- To be delivered in twelve months without disrupting business as usual
- To start delivering cashable savings immediately

- To deliver a lasting legacy of skills transfer, streamlined systems and processes to support on-going improvement

Since then it has:

- Strengthened Governance Structure with new Commercial Services client department
- Revised the service agreement with Serco for Procurement Services – team strengthened at no cost, founding member of the UK Serco User Group
- Enabled Thurrock to become only the 2nd UK council to implement full e-invoices, re-implemented P2P system (underpinning best practice and financial control), this includes e-quotations, providing a significant increase in central registration of contracts
- Introduced a new integrated commissioning and procurement strategy, streamlined governance processes, updated constitution, cross departmental advisory group established
- Implemented a cascading reporting systems, introduced ProClass analysis of all categories of expenditure and provided a 3 year comparative expenditure database
- Delivered over £200k of savings, run the Council's first e-Auction and first multi-lotting competition
- Developed a full commercial skills programme – along with accreditation from University of East Anglia. In particular, learning programmes have been run on commercial skills, buying consultancy and ICT and contract and relationship management.

The Procurement programme formally closed in July 2014, when procurement activity was assimilated into the new Commercial Services team.

5. Governance and the Transformation Board

The Transformation Board is responsible for the overall governance of the Transformation Programme. It provides leadership, reviews progress, and is ultimately responsible for key strategic decisions.

The Transformation Board regularly reviews the overall shape and nature of Transformation activity and the programmes needed to support major change. To support this role, the Transformation Board also considers the Council's Shaping the Future Council strategy.

The Transformation Board is chaired by the Chief Executive and its membership comprises all Directors, the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Transformation, the head of Serco, and other Heads of Service as required. It meets on a monthly basis and/or around key decision points.

The Transformation Board delegates responsibility and accountability to a Programme Board and a Programme Sponsor (Director level) for each of the major programmes.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Principal Finance Officer

Specific Financial implications are detailed in the Cabinet papers for each component transformation programme. Compliance to the Council's financial rules is maintained by the well-established governance structure detailed above. Additionally Transformation Board membership includes the Head of Corporate Finance providing high level financial oversight.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Deputy Head of Legal Services

Specific Legal implications are detailed in the Cabinet papers for each component transformation programme. Membership of the Transformation Board includes the Head of Legal Services providing high level Legal oversight.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development Officer

Diversity and Equality implications are detailed in the Cabinet papers for each component transformation programme. As programmes progress Diversity and Equality challenge is undertaken through the relevant boards, project teams and user groups. Ongoing adjustment and modification to design is a priority for the programmes and occurs in response to D&E issues highlighted to ensure maximum accessibility to residents and staff. Key areas of focus are ability to transact online and physical access requirements to Council buildings.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Staff implications are managed through the Making Change Happen programme, HR & OD interventions to ensure policy meets the needs of the organisational change and staff are adequately trained and developed.

Membership of the Transformation Board includes the Head of HR/OD providing high level oversight of staff implications.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Martin Whiteley

Programme Manager

Corporate Programmes Team – HR/OD & Transformation