

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

**Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee
13 December 2021**

Report Title: One Council Programme Update

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: One Council, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee on work and achievements to date of the One Council Programme.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the progress to date of the One Council Programme against specific programme areas of:

- 1. One Front Door / Customer Hub**
- 2. Leadership and Management**
- 3. Information Advice and Guidance / Website**

Reasons

Programme remains on track in terms of timelines, budget and savings

1. Background

- 1.1 The One Council Programme was launched in February 2021 following Full Council approval of the budget in order to meet the changing needs of our residents by increasing our ability to provide flexible, efficient and customer driven services. The programme is designed to respond to the key lessons from the covid pandemic, how this impacted on how customers accessed Council services, and how services flexed in order to remain resilient. The programme focusses on reviewing customer need alongside modernising internal processes whilst developing our internal cultural transformation and ensuring we address financial demands.
- 1.2 The One Council programme facilitates a fundamental change in Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council's operating model and how we address our challenges. Significantly, it sets out to enable the Council to make better use of the resources available to it, ensuring both efficient and effective service delivery. Given the broad remit of the programme, overall aims have been considered by integrated workstreams aligned to core principles of delivery and achievement and the initial work has been supported by the delivery partner Ignite Consulting who have enabled the team to develop skills in management change and service redethsign. Whilst a significant aspect of the programme is to facilitate a move to customer self service via an enhanced website, traditional face to face and telephone access will remain available to those who need it.

1.3 The programme is a spend to save programme with an agreed investment of £1.2m. Recurrent benefits of £1m will be achieved moving forward. The savings are set to be staggered over the life of the 3 year programme. Achieved and intended benefits are detailed in section 2.8 of this report.

2. **Issues**

2.1 In order to build the programme and consider the areas for change and focus, the broad concepts of purpose were considered alongside a benchmarking exercise which placed the customer and delivery of services at centre stage.

2.2 This analysis supported the development of certain big ideas which have formulated the overall Future Operating Model design and have given a structure to the design of service change through the development of the “Big operating Model Building Blocks” of:

- Leadership and Management
- Information Advice and Guidance and Website
- One Front Door
- Internal Support
- Mobile Multifunction Team
- Strategy and Performance Team

An update on progress against each of these areas follows.

2.3 **Leadership and Management**

The programme realises the importance of cultural development, attitudes, behaviours and overall quality and consistency of leadership as a driver for success. As such a dedicated Culture work stream was initiated which considered our purpose as a Council and provider of services as well as the important people driven elements which would support the achievement of our goals.

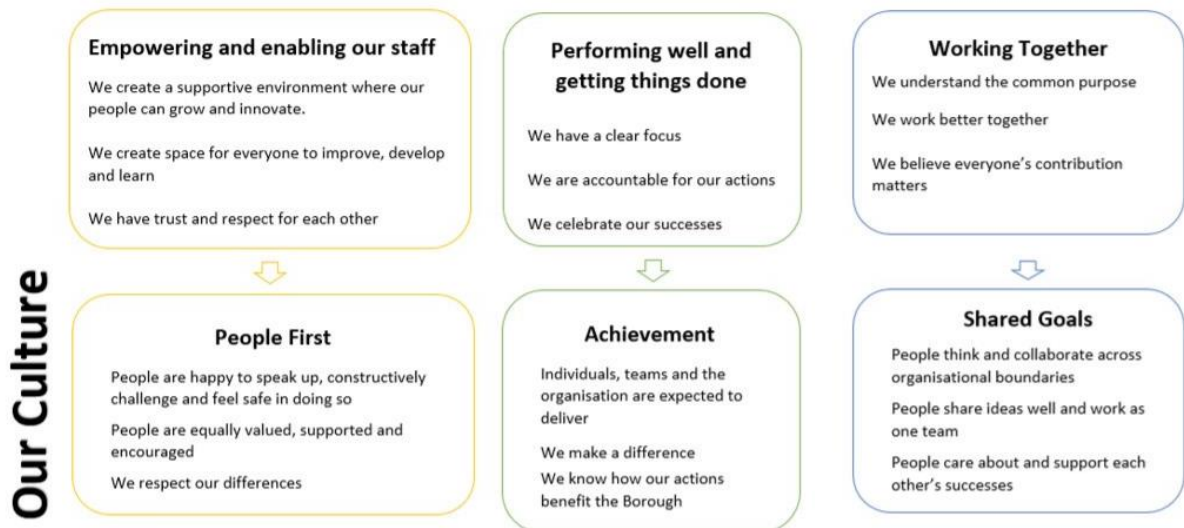
Focus groups across the council considered our purpose, strengths and weaknesses and contributed to the development of an overall mission statement and related values.



One Council, One Borough.

Our Mission: We meet the needs of our communities by empowering and enabling our people to deliver on shared goals

Our Values



From this a staff survey was launched in order to measure a baseline against adherence to this values as well as direction from staff to develop a set of behaviours that would bring these values to life.

The survey outcome showed a positive baseline of our cultural aspirations and sets a mandate to focus on areas of empowering peoples and working together. The Behaviour Framework has been agreed and shared with staff and will be used to support teams and individuals to understand and live the values in their work and relationships with colleagues, members and residents.

A Leadership Development programme has been commissioned relating to and building on the behaviours and culture work in order to support leaders within the organisation to develop the strategic and performance led culture that we aim for.

2.4 Information, Advice and Guidance / website

A core aim of the overall programme is to enable residents and local business to self-serve wherever possible, thereby freeing up expertise and staff time to support delivery of complex tasks and innovative services in a more efficient model.

The Digital workstream have been engaging services to consider the changes needed to enable this transition for users of our site and have contracted with Jadu to develop the new website which launched on 27th October.

The site is cleaner and more modern than our previous site and has been developed with a focus on functionality and ease of use to support the customer. The website developments integrate directly with the new One Front Door (or Customer Hub) and will drive traffic away from resource heavy phone lines enabling a deeper and broader remit and function to develop within our customer facing team.

The new site will be compliant to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 which defines how to make Web content more accessible to people with disabilities. The accessibility regulations

came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018. They say you must make your website or mobile app more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'.

The new platform is built to support accessible design principles and is used by organisations that rank highly in independent accessibility indexes such as the SilkTide Accessibility Rankings, where Jadu sites regularly account for the majority of the 'Top 20' accessible sites.

Another aim of One Council is to make our site more commercial. Using the new tools and techniques in Jadu we will be able to sell our services more effectively to increase revenue. Examples include J2, Bereavement Services and Garden Waste.

2.5 One Front Door

The One Front Door, now known as the Customer Hub, is the customer facing function designed to offer end to end service, advice and transactional support to customers to the Council. Overtime this will sit across all outward facing services and by contacting the team, our customers will be able to undertake a range of tasks from planning related queries, to questions around waste collection. A strong feature of this service is providing the team with training and development across a range of services, as well as giving them access to in service technology to allow them to have up to date information and ability to transact specific elements of queries easily and efficiently.

Work has initially focussed on the previous teams for Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits and the two areas have now been consolidated. Pulling the teams together, along with focussed work on processes alongside the website development has enabled the team to be resourced more efficiently. This has allowed the team to release members of staff who wish to seek opportunities elsewhere through our Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) which has driven a recurrent annual saving of £196k for the first phase of One Front Door.

The next steps will be, as we embed the learning and knowledge in the team, for the service to look across the rest of the organisation and start to consider how this concept and model can grow to incorporate further processes and support our customers across a wider range of matters.

2.6 Internal Support

Work is commencing on developing efficiencies within our Internal services and will progress in the image of One Front Door. This will again provide services with streamlined support and guidance whilst releasing those with technical expertise to focus on value added delivery.

Much like the One Front Door, there are anticipate efficiencies of scale to be identified here as well as process and technology developments which will enable a reduction in Whole Time Equivalents (WTE) assigned to the teams which is planned to be delivered through MARS as well as natural turnover.

2.7 Mobile Multi Function Team (MMF)

The Mobile Multi Functional Team (MMF) is an exciting proposition which enables an agile and diverse team of operatives to be dispatched where there is immediate need. Linked to a preventative delivery arm and the One Front Door, the impact on the Borough and residents will be significant and positive.

2.8 Strategy and Performance Team

The Strategy and Performance Team will support services in their strategic aims as well as becoming a critical friend and challenging function in terms of performance and delivery. This function will enable the Council to better use data and performance indicators to drive outcomes against the Council Plan and other strategic aims.

In addition this service will look outward to strengthen relationships with our partners, consider policy and strategy development and ensure effort and activity drive us closer to our overall aims and vision.

2.9 Benefits Realisation

Over the life of the programme the following savings are estimated:

	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	TOTAL
Annual Savings	£0.196m	£0.601m	£0.126m	£0.923m

2021/22 Q2 benefit estimates have been achieved to date with the design and implementation of the Customer Hub.

The programme is on track to achieve the ongoing savings and this has been considered in the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 Overall, the Programme is on track to achieve the anticipated financial benefits through digital improvement and reduction of resources.

3.2 It is proposed that FAPS recognise the achievements and progress to date.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 Benefits and outcomes remain on track as proposed.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Report for information and assurance. No remedial action required

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 None at this stage.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The programme is designed to ensure that all citizens have equal access to Council services, and that the website in particular is being specifically designed to be fully accessible. All transition processes are undertaken in line with equalities legislation, and the Mission and Values promote an overall increased focus on inclusivity.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 As outlined above, the Programme is spend to save with an investment of £1.2m but which will deliver recurrent savings of £1m annually.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 The Programme has a dedicated RAID log which is reviewed weekly. No elements have been identified as major risks to delivery.

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Not a Key Decision

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Programme approved February 2021 Council.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 n/a

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 n/a