



ONE COUNCIL

Review and Next Steps



NEWCASTLE·UNDER·LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

One Council Review and Next Steps

December 2024

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1. Executive Summary

The One Council Transformation Programme was Newcastle Borough Council's biggest ever change programme borne out of both future financial uncertainty and learning from the pandemic when the Borough Council was required to swiftly adapt and change.

The Programme aimed to fundamentally change the Council's operating model to better meet the needs and demands of our community, to become both more efficient and effective with the resources at our disposal and to provide enhanced customer journeys whilst bringing about annual financial savings of over £1.17m (amounting to 6% of the Council's net budget) year on year.

The overall budget for the Programme was set at £1.2m and included consultancy costs, cost of website and intranet review, additional staff resource and backfill, staff development and training and restructuring costs associated with change management. The programme was funded by a combination of capital receipts and the Borough Growth Fund.

Taking a systems led approach with a digital focus, the programme identified and delivered on efficiencies to processes, reduced waste demand and enhanced customer experience through mapping customer journeys across services.

Underpinning the process and change elements was a cultural workstream which has focussed values and behaviours of officers, wellbeing, inclusion, role clarity and leadership.

A principle of continuous improvement has been embedded across the Council and as such some models implemented through the programme have been and will continue to be reviewed as feedback and performance is considered. Implementation under this programme does not set things in stone and it would be naive to behave as if it did. Our environment and capability changes and we learn from our activity and continuously develop.

Key aspects of delivery were met as follows.

- **Timeline:** The project was completed on schedule, with all project deliverables achieved. Initial set up was 6th July 2020 with the official commencement being the start of financial year 2021 and the end date as March 2024.
- **Budget:** The project was delivered within the allocated budget of £1.2 million
- **Quality:** The Programme was audited in December 2023 by NULBC's external auditor and received a positive grade 4, out of a possible 5 meaning that the programme was satisfactory in the way it delivered the objectives.

Detailed review of achievements, outputs, benefits successes and lessons learned are contained in this report.

2. Intention

2.1 Programme Objectives

The Programme was established early in 2021 with consulting support from Ignite Consulting who were contracted to both support the executive team in developing a sound change management foundation to the Programme, and defining the overarching Programme Objectives. The objectives were set as:

- **Objective 1:** Develop and implement a new Target Operation Model (TOM) which was designed around the need to better meet the needs and demands of both the residents and customers of the Borough Council and fulfil our statutory and regulatory duties
- **Objective 2:** Enhance both the customer and staff journeys to improve satisfaction by designing better process interactions to pull the help and support needed from the Council
- **Objective 3:** Achieve year on year financial savings for the Council of £1m to ensure our financial sustainability is maintained by becoming as efficient and effective as possible within our resource envelope, primarily by seeking operational efficiencies.
- **Objective 4:** Create a culture of innovation and flexibility within the council where staff of all levels not only feel valued and cared for, but are also trusted to do their jobs and to make evidenced-based changes to improve how we work
- **Objective 5:** Embrace the digital ways of working and the tools at our disposal to deliver end-to-end digital customer journeys to create operational efficiencies, whilst guiding self-service when appropriate and

2.2 Principles

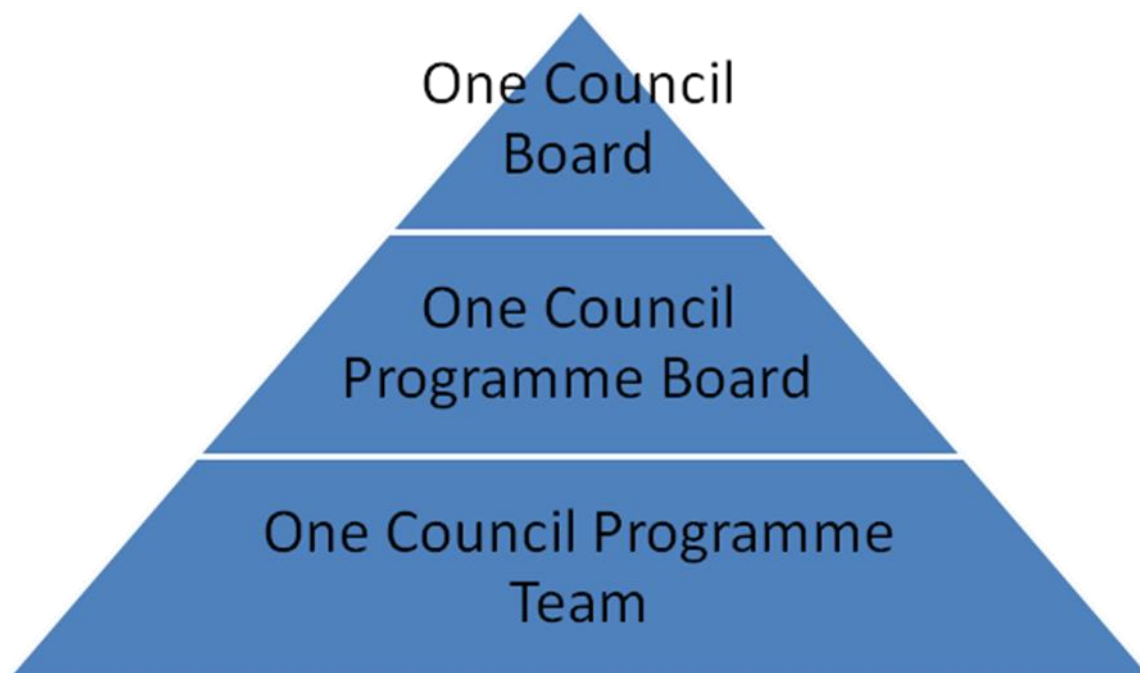
The deliverables were used to create a series of principles, developed through a series of engagement sessions with officer and members. These principles underpinned how outputs of the programme would impact on stakeholders and acted as the golden thread for decision making and scope.

<p>Establish line of sight to strategic outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is a clear sense of purpose and alignment at all levels across the organisation and everyone understands their role in that purpose • Ensure that we make evidence-based decisions that will have the greatest impact on our strategic ambitions for our community and track quality of service delivery and organisational productivity • Ensure that we set out clear lines of accountability to empower decision making at the right levels within the Council
<p>Delivery in Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internally we work better together, focussing on the needs of our customers to deliver efficient and appropriate service to our community • Externally we work with our communities to understand and address their needs, as well as recognising that we need to work with others to achieve this • We need to trust our partners and work together to achieve the outcomes for our community
<p>Proactively Manage Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to use intelligence and insight, including understanding our customer journeys, to identify where better public information, advice and guidance will stop unnecessary contact • Additionally use the insight to look forward and manage peaks and troughs of demand, freeing capacity to refocus on priorities • Recognising that changing the way we work (i.e. more digitally) will not itself reduce demand, but we need to work with the community to build resilience and support them to do more for themselves
<p>Efficient and Effective ways of working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that being commercial as an organisation means the ability to create income from the services we deliver but also about the mind-set of providing value for money • Developing a learning culture to always challenge why things are done the way they are • Build on the experience of agile working to recognise that change is constant and the Council will need to evolve • Create greater opportunities for staff to grow and play to their strengths • Embed a culture of trust ensuring employees have the confidence to be creative and explore options to get things done
<p>Digital Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure we can personalise the service for our most vulnerable residents and those that need help • Continuously explore how developments such as AI and automation can improve both service delivery and cost to deliver • Use digital workflow and processing to help provide end to end solutions where possible, break down the silos, share knowledge and respond to customer needs • Ensure consistency of approach across the Council.
<p>Customer Focussed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand our communities and customers better • Engagement is continuous to develop analysis and insight into trends • Ensure we have consistent customer journeys across the Council so customers know what to expect, and from whom. Use the insight to manage customer expectations and have clarity on what the Council does and does not do
<p>Empowering People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower the community to help themselves and build resilience • Recognise that there are different perspectives to be considered that are valid and informative • Build an employer brand that is focussed on being flexible, adaptable and business friendly • Recognise that change is constant and managing this change both internally and externally is a core competence for the Council

3. Design and Delivery

3.1 Programme Governance

The One Council programme had a 3 tier governance structure as follows:



The One Council Board was the decision-making group that drove the transformation programme and ensured that benefits were delivered and costs managed in line with the business case. The board was strategic in that it was concerned with overall programme effectiveness and delivery. It was not concerned with the full detail of the individual workstreams.

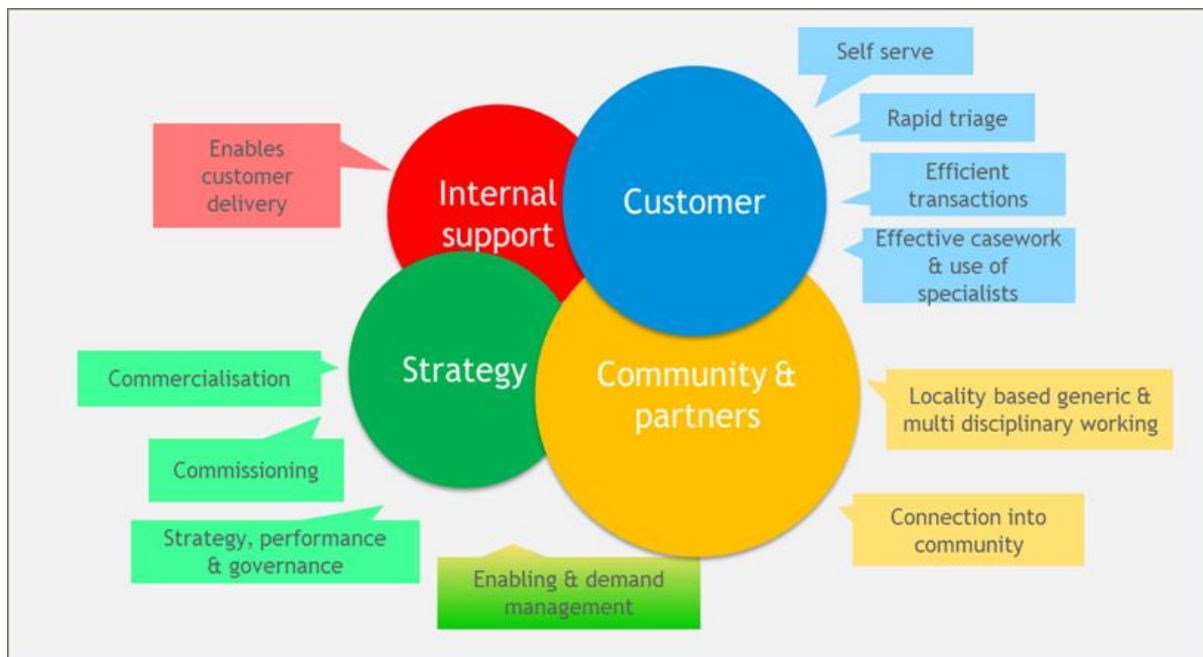
The One Council Programme Board made decisions and agreed actions that related to the delivery of the agreed programme within the agreed budget. Any decisions that involve a change to programme milestones, benefits or the overall programme budget were escalated to the One Council Board.

The One Council Programme Team Meeting was the operational group that monitored and drove the operational transformation programme activity. The board made decisions and agreed actions that related to the delivery of the agreed programme within the agreed budget. Any decisions that involve a change to programme milestones, benefits or the overall programme budget were escalated to the Programme Board.

Workstream leads attended this meeting and reported progress against key deliverables, providing a RAG rating against deliverables and raising any emerging risks and issues.

3.2 Operating Model Intention (Building Blocks of Design)

The structural intention for the programme was to develop an 'operating model' which reflected the activity of the Council and gave priority where needed to deliver the Council Plan. The below figure shows the elements present as we deliver services.



A series of 'Building Blocks' were identified which acted as the foundation of the target operating model and gave a shape to the overall delivery of service and informed the alignment to strategy and vision. These building blocks; *Customer*, *Community Strategy and Internal Support*, impacted both internally and externally to varying degrees.

- **Customer:** Our customer focus block deals with most transactional & rules-based cases at the point of contact, pulling support from specialist resources where the customers transaction exceeds rules-based activity to deliver a joined up, consistent customer experience for your residents, businesses & visitors.

The concept deals with a wide array of queries, anything from looking for information, wanting to report a problem, needing a progress update on their case or starting an application on a range of council services.

- **Community and Partners:** This building block focused on creating a visible and connected presence on the ground incorporating community engagement, proactive prevention, education and enforcement, as well as inspections, monitoring activity and tactical mobile tasks that are delivered 'in the field'.

Teams in this block work seamlessly with those in the Customer block to prevent avoidable demand and increase channel shift.

An integral part of this block focus on combining the enforcement activity across the Council, ranging from administering parking charge notices to handling more complicated fly tipping penalties and prosecutions with a balance between enforcement and education.

- **Strategy:** This building block creates 'single brain' to translate political will and ambition into evidence-based strategy and planned services, actions and projects. It is focused on ensuring

- That there is clear line of sight between the strategic outcomes required and the activities being delivered by the services
- That the Council can be proactive in looking forward in linking the external environment to the delivery of services, rather than responding reactively at an operational level
- There is a focus in the development of strategies and policies to deliver the political will, whilst ensuring efficient and effective use of resources

This block consolidates these disparate elements that exist within the Council but are spread out across the organisation. The design needs to bring clarity regarding requirements, capacity and capability, accountabilities and responsibilities to ensure that strategic outcomes and objectives are delivered. It will also identify where strategic activity sits in the appropriate part of the organizational efficiency benefit and targeted use of resources.

- **Internal Support:** This building block considers how internal services an support can facilitate the smooth running of external facing teams.
-

The 4 building blocks translated into 4 key aspects of the programme which were delivered 'top down' almost as projects in their own right:

- Customer Hub (from *customer*)
- Neighbourhood Delivery (from *Community and Partners*)
- Strategic hub (from *Strategy*)
- Resources and Support Services (*from Internal Support*)

Further to these building blocks were elements of the programme which facilitated high performing services aligned to the programme principles

3.3 Project workstreams and governance.

In order to deliver the Objectives, the One Council Programme was split out into a series of workstreams , each with an assigned Lead Officer who had responsibility for delivery in line with a set of agreed Design Principles to ensure a consistency of design & architecture across the Council. The 4 building blocks referenced above each had their own dedicated workstream with other integral schemes addressing supportive and transformative aspects of delivery.

Across the phases of the programme, the workstreams were reviewed

The workstreams were agreed as:

1. OFD / Customer Hub
2. Resource & Support Services
3. Strategy Hub 'strategic brain
4. Mobile-Multi Function
5. Leadership & Development (*became business as usual on delivery of the leadership workshops*)
6. Benefits Realisation & Reporting
7. Culture & Change
8. Digital Delivery
9. Service Delivery (*added in later phases of the programme to reflect ongoing scrum activity*)

As the programme progressed, these workstreams were reviewed and Service Delivery Workstream was added following the closure of Resource & Support Services, the successful

delivery of the Strategic Brain and the transfer of Leadership & Development to business as usual (BAU).

4. Outcomes

4.1 Big Building Blocks

4.1.1 OFD / Customer Hub Workstream

Following extensive activity mapping and demand studies of forward-facing services, the Customer Hub (working title One Front Door) design was agreed to include Customer Services, Revenue & Benefits and Reception staff from across the organisation.

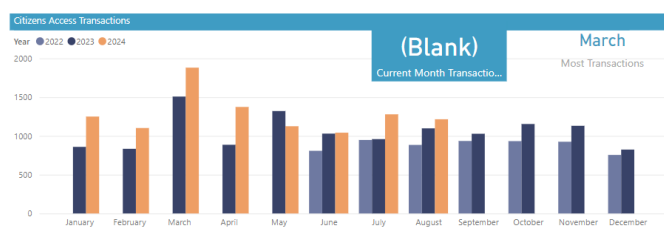
Following a formal consultation period, the OFD team launched in October 2021 followed by the customer engagement elements of the Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA) team joining in January 2022.

An extensive programme of cross-skilling and training occurred throughout 2022 to allow the OFD team to confidently deal a wide range of customer enquiries with a matrix of officers being able to undertake more complex processing work to both broaden the service offer and deepen the level of work handled at the first point of contact, thus moving the processing work further forward in the system.

This work package redesigned the Revenue & Benefits business processes, pulled heavily on the Digital Delivery Workstream to maximise the use of processing & self-service technology and made significant enhancements to the way telephone demand is routed through to the OFD staff.

Since the creation of the Customer Hub, some key performance improvements have been achieved in addition to the financial savings. Of note are:

- Number of phone calls reduced; Ignite benchmarking identified 137,225 phone calls between July 20 to July '21. For this period in '23/24, the figure is 101,921. This is a 26% reduction in call volumes from the benchmarked period.
- Wait times & abandonments improved
- The number of self-service digital transactions for Council Tax, Benefits and NNDR have increased month on month (by maximising Citizen Access module)



- The percentage of service requests raised by Hub Officers in Jadu on behalf of customers has reduced demonstrating a migration to self-service. Falling from 28% in 2021, to 17% in 2022, 15% in 2023 and 13% at the time of writing.

4.1.2 Neighbourhood Delivery 'Mobile-Multi Function' Workstream

The Neighbourhood Delivery Team was created through systemic review of activity and demand across teams including Environmental Services, Community Development and Parking Performance.

Following the alignment of resources to form the Neighbourhood Delivery Team, a detailed period of service redesign followed to review all the core customer journeys relating to this

new service area in order to not only optimise the flow of work but to improve the quality of the service delivery. In total thirteen core customer Journeys were redesigned during the delivery of this workstream, making 48 improvements to the business processes along the way.

The customer journeys redesigned during this implementation are wide ranging by the very nature of this building block, covering fly-tip enforcement, ASB reports, abandoned vehicle investigations, parking enforcement to name but a few. As a result of the redesign to these journeys, it is estimated that 2,738 hours of efficiency was released back into the business, equivalent to 2.16FTE.

In addition to efficiency improvements, the Neighbourhood Delivery team has seen an increase in the number of fly-tip FPNs issued, a dramatic reduction in the end-to-end time taken to resolve abandoned vehicle reports.

4.1.3 Strategy Hub ‘Strategic Brain’ Workstream

The Strategic Hub was created through use of savings from the HR restructure and Business Improvement and repurposing a position from the communications team. Fundamental to the principle of strategic decision making, this team consider and support the use of data led and evidence based decision making to ensure that all teams across the council are working to deliver our strategic aims.

This team developed a framework to map measure and report on progress against internal and external facing strategies. Using Power BI the team have created focussed dashboards providing clear and interrogable data to aid decision making and assurance.

4.1.4 Resource & Support Services Workstream

The initial model devised by Ignite Consulting proposed a single support series function which mirrored the externally facing Customer Hub. In this model, transactional services were to be performed by multiskilled officers who could answer and perform basic queries in scope of IT, legal, finance and HR.

One review of the activity in these teams however it became clear that what initially appeared to be transactional in nature was more specialist to the different services and the combined services were not large enough to accommodate this broad model design. As a result, it was decided that each specialism would review business processes to ensure that officers were supported to self serve as much as possible (using a similar framework to that of the customer hub demand management review) and that efficiencies would be made through improved processes and digital improvements.

The Legal Services restructure was completed in 2023 which included a review of scope to incorporating the Corporate Complaints, Contracts, Procurement & Risk management.

The Finance structure brought in debtors which had previously been part of customer services, and undertook vacancy review and improved self service capability to improve processes.

The Human Resources Team reviewed customer journeys resulting in an efficiency which enabled a restructure with savings to staffing budget.

It must be noted that review of the legal provision is now underway.

4.2 Supportive and Service Workstreams

4.2.1 Leadership & Development

The programme initiated a programme of leadership development across the organisation. This included a structured programme delivered by an external facilitator which aimed to create a cohesive vision and equip our leaders with the tools to deliver this with their teams.

Initial sessions were held with CLT to create and sustain a strong, cohesive, and supportive performance culture with the following principles modelled in behaviours:

- Owning and Driving Outcomes
- Embracing Innovation and Change
- Partnership and Connectivity Ethos
- Encouraging inclusion of different experiences and bias to add value to the whole
- Support and Challenge

The sessions were based around the values and vision which emerged from the Culture and Change workstream. The senior tier of leaders undertook a 360 feedback process to benchmark their own skill set and competence.

Further to this, Business Managers joined CLT to create 3 cohorts in which 3 workshops were delivered:

1. The benefits of focusing on performance.
2. Coaching for performance
3. 'Crunchy' conversations for performance

Each member of the cohort was assigned a coaching partner to practise and consolidate coaching skills.

In total, 52 officers undertook this training in Spring 2022.

The next phase of the leadership and development team saw the creation of the cluster leadership model which formed CLT from the previous model of EMT and Heads of Service. This model has allowed senior leaders to consider the wider corporate experience and strategy, enabling wider opportunities for development and growth.

A further phase of leadership development is planned for 2025.

4.2.2 Benefits Realisation & Reporting

A detailed log of activity was diligently kept throughout the programme which considered projected savings against those realised over time.

Benefits were considered either in monetary terms or in time saved by officers (FTE) and could be either fixed or variable.

All savings were captured on a central log and tracked over time to ensure that benefits were not double counted or lost. Progress against target was tracked across the life of the programme with regular updates provided to the member led Programme Board and the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix 2 shows the final set of benefits as targets were reached.

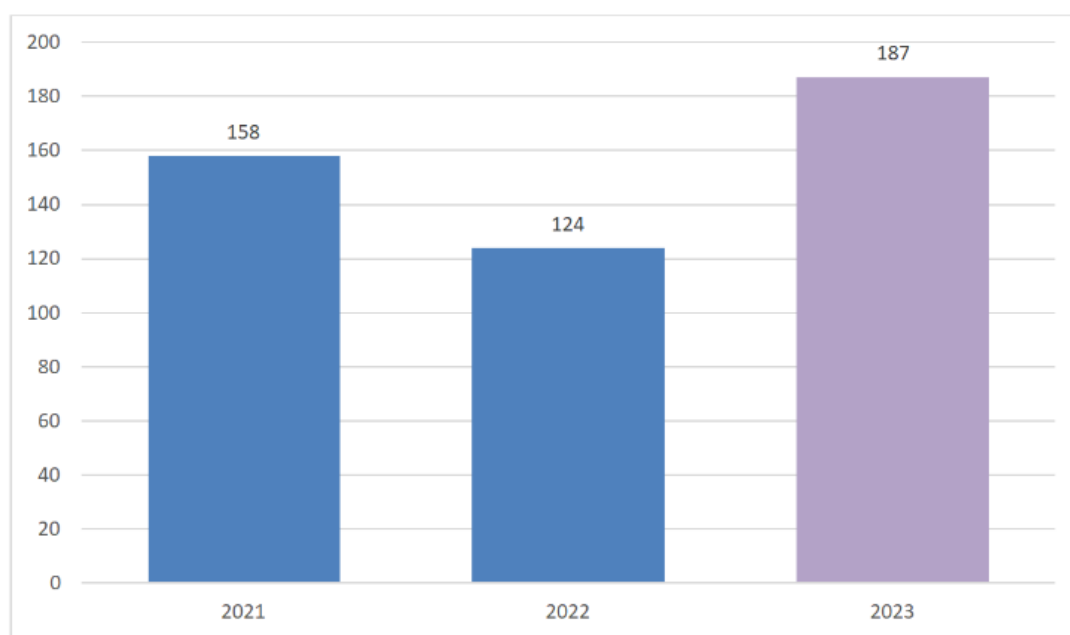
4.2.3 Culture & Change

The Culture and Change workstream had 2 key areas of focus. 1 was to effectively, safely and compassionately deliver any formal change in the organisation. This included the restructures of the Customer Hub, the People Team and Neighbourhood Delivery.

The cultural aspects delivered were done so with the intention of fundamentally shifting '*how we do things*'. Initially centred around the creation of a set of Organisational Values and associated behaviours, these values then formed the basis of leadership development, people policy development, appraisal, recruitment and performance management.

Since 2021 we have used the values framework to gauge our cultural position through use of a staff survey which seeks to measure staff experience against these themes. The results of the surveys influence further interventions designed to improve our adherence to these underpinning values. Each year the survey has seen greater participation and an increase in alignment to our target values.

Figure 1: Responses to surveys 2021-2023



Examples of interventions have been:

- Leadership Development workshops and coaching tools delivery
- Creation of the staff led 'Thrive' group which suggest ideas for policy and improvement
- Participation in externally accredited 'Thrive' scheme aimed to improve wellbeing and health
- People policy review and implementation (e.g. volunteering policy, fostering policy)
- Enhanced staff discount to Jubilee 2
- Annual Staff Health checks and health advice

4.2.4 Digital Delivery

The One Council Programme set out the clear aim that, where possible, information should be available and accessed on-line and would be an integral channel strategy to reduce the volume of avoidable calls; where contact is needed, it would be via digital solutions as far as possible, as these solutions operate at a much lower cost base than face-to-face or traditional 'phone calls.

Given the digital aspirations, this workstream was a core enabler to the Programme, tasked with not only replacing the website platform, but rewriting all the content on every page and

developing over 140 integrated digital forms to make all customer journeys as user friendly as possible. This workstream has allowed digital channels to become a credible option for our customers through a modern website containing quality information, advice & guidance to allow customers to find the information they need and to log the service requests without having to call the OFD team.

In addition to re-writing the website and designing over 140 digital forms, this workstream has further developed the MyAccount portal by configuring the Citizen Access modules in Council Tax and Business Rates to maximise the technology already available. MyAccount has seen consistent growth in both the number of registered users and the volume of successful transactions month on month as discussed in the OFD section above.

It is important to note that an ever-increasing number of completed forms is not necessarily a positive outcome for this Programme; the Service Delivery Workstream identified that many digitally raised contacts were demands that could have been avoided with better information advice and guidance at the point of contact, and forms that dynamically advise customers based upon the information entered. This workstream has underpinned some significant demand reductions across the business – See below and put the council in to a fantastic position to continue our digital transformation with the One Digital Council Programme.

4.2.5 Service Delivery Workstream

With the big building blocks of the operating model delivered in distinct packages, ‘top down’, a ‘bottom-up’ approach was taken across the service areas not directly affected by the operating model delivery to bring about operational efficiencies whilst aligning to the Design Principles and meeting the wider Programme Objectives.

The main achievements delivered across the organisation are shown in Appendix 1

5. Achievements

5.1 Recurrent cost reduction

At the close of the One Council Programme, the savings profile, is recorded in the Statement of Accounts as achieving £1.173m worth of ongoing savings to the Borough Council. The savings profile is as follows:

- £0.196m achieved in 2021/22
- £0.601m achieved in 2022/23
- £0.376m in 2023/24

5.2 Operational Efficiency

At the closure of the Programme, the corporate benefits tracker has recorded 41.06FTE of efficiency savings spread across the organisation, not exclusively limited to the workstreams discussed in section 5a above. This has enabled officer to ensure focus is on areas of work which add value to residents and customers.

In addition, an estimated 3.16 tCO₂e had been reported to the One Green Council Programme for inclusion towards NULBCs net zero pledge.

5.3 Staff Engagement

Throughout the Programme, there has been a constant and sustained focus upon improving the working culture here at NULBC, this has been monitored via the annual staff survey to track

At the time of writing the 2024 survey remained open to staff, however the available data from the 2023 survey showed significant progress had been made in virtually all areas assessed.

The 2024 staff survey has also included a section specific to how people have experienced One Council so we can continue to learn and develop our approach.

6. Lessons Learned

In line with the values of the Programme, it is important to acknowledge and learn from the elements that did not work out as expected to ensure that changes to our approach can be made in the future.

This section is subdivided into specific elements that were implemented differently from the original design as well as general learning:

6.1 What could have been better

6.1.1 Sequencing

The Customer Hub model was the first building block to be developed and implemented and important lessons were learned from this piece of work. Based on benchmarking and activity mapping a model was designed which, it was anticipated, met the demand of activity in a scenario in which processes were efficient and teams were multi skilled. The restructure took place in advance of the skills development to ensure that key posts were filled and savings were released as quickly as possible.

However, on reflection this left some officers in the teams initially unsure of their remit and who required additional support and development to be able to function in the newly designed teams.

Although the model has proved effective over time now it is embedded; officers were undeniably unsettled by the change to a degree that it had an impact on wellbeing. This result in additional support being sourced from agency teams to ensure the right skills were in the teams for key areas of work such as revenues and benefits.

Learning from this situation, subsequent changes and restructure through the programme happened only when process redesign had been embedded and skills development undertaken. This resulted in a longer lead time for the financial benefit to be realised but saved in backfilling of resource and improved staff engagement.

6.1.2 Receptions

Front of house resource was transferred to the Customer Hub as per the Target Operating Model where it was envisaged that staff would become cross skilled to enhance the customer experience. Whilst this model is still in place, it has proven particularly difficult to implement, especially at J2 and the Museum where conflict has occurred between supporting the business

area with tasks traditionally performed by the reception and the wider OFD need to take calls, process digital enquiries and transaction rules-based activities.

This element of delivery is currently under review and the model may alter from that implemented during the programme to ensure optimum customer experience and staff engagement.

6.1.3 Internal Services

The Internal Support Services model as proposed in the original design, was explored at considerable length but ultimately it was felt that the small size of the teams and the specialisms contained meant that this model was felt not appropriate for NULBC. It is believed that this demonstrated a confidence of leadership by not simply following the design but having the strength of mind to do what is right for NULBC.

6.1.4 Understanding the MMF building Block

This building block represented a very different way of working for NULBC and this was borne out during the delivery stage; staff, officers and members struggled to understand how this concept would operate given the very diverse customer journeys within the remit and therefore the range of skill sets required to be effective.

In hindsight, more preparatory work could have been undertaken here to enable people to see the direction and end result.

6.1.5 Trade Union Engagement

Relationships with Trade Unions were strained throughout the programme to the regret of all concerned.

6.2 Generic lessons learned

6.2.1 Change management: The Programme highlighted that when change is undertaken in a structured manner, then it can and does bring about lasting transformational change.

Agile delivery worked well in conjunction with Lean Systems Thinking principles, especially when the principles of Value and Preventable demand and work are applied, along with an evidence-based approach to iterative design.

6.2.2 Nudge Theory: The 'EAST' principles as designed by the Behavioural Insight Team proved to be very effective when redesigning business processes to either encourage or discourage particular behaviours. The principles also proved to be effective when applied to the language of our website, digital forms and IVR 'phone messages.

6.2.3 Benefits Realisation: This is proved to be a critical element of the Programme and absolutely key in ensuring the objectives were being met whilst following the Agile approach. The Benefits Tracker used throughout the Programme has received positive attention from the LGA resulting in the sharing with other authorities who have previously struggled with this problem. We have also worked with the LGA to host dedicated learning events helping other organisations to track their benefits.

6.2.4 Culture Change: Baking in a dedicated workstream to facilitate the culture change piece has been a significant to the programme success; culture change is notoriously difficult to achieve, and whilst we acknowledge that we are still on that path we celebrate the successes the workstream has made to date.

6.2.5 Digital: Whilst significant steps have been achieved to digitise the way that NULBC works, the Programme has also demonstrated that our technology landscape is preventing us from developing too much further; this has provided us with a solid spring-board to the next stage of the transformation journey by underpinning the One Digital Council Programme to ensure we remain a digital focussed authority, providing the experience that customers and residents experience in other key service areas.

6.2.6 Contracts: The Programme, when reviewing how the organisation works, identified some significant contract opportunities that were not being maximised for the benefit of the organisation. Some notable examples include:

- Citizen Access portals not being configured to automate Revenue & Benefit actions
- Contract with IEG4 for the provision of online benefit applications despite that functionality existing within the core NEC Northgate application
- S.106 monitoring software included with the Uniform IDOX suite but not being utilised, or even known about.
- A full repairs and maintenance contract for the car parking meters across the Borough that was not being used as it was not known about

As a result of these discoveries, it has been decided that a review of the Contracts Register will be a key part of the One Commercial Council Programme to ensure not only the contracts in existence are maximised but are reviewed to ensure they are both relevant and offer value for money.

7. Recommendations

- a) That Agile becomes the espoused project methodology across NULBC, along with knowledge of the tools used to deliver the One Council Programme – Refresher training be offered to Business Managers to ensure the required adoption.
- b) The Benefits Tracker continues to capture opportunities organisation wide to ensure their delivery and inclusion into succession programmes and Efficiency Boards
- c) The Programme governance & approach is emulated in the Green, Digital and Commercial follow-on Programmes.

8. Conclusion

The One Council Transformation Programme successfully achieved its objectives, delivering significant improvements in service delivery, improved customer journeys, and operational efficiency. The lessons learned and recommendations provided will help sustain these improvements and guide future projects.

Appendix 1. Service Delivery scope and outputs.

Team	Context	Aims	Outputs
Environmental Services	<p>This service area was receiving significant levels of demand aside from that caused by the ever present situation with Walleys Quarry; demand studies illustrated that IRO 1000 service requests were received annually covering barking dogs, noise nuisance and so forth.</p> <p>The processes were mapped and it was discovered that significant portions of received demand was not of the nature that NUL could add any value to; investigations were being started in full knowledge that the outcome would be that the customer would be offered information, advice and guidance in relation to the issue as it was not a statutory nuisance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the customer expectations of how NULBC can help before the report was made by adding the IAG to the webpage and webform • to encourage customers to resolve issues amicably between themselves • to cease sending letters to the offending party until evidence is received of the concerning behaviour • Not to chase reporting parties who fail to submit requested diary sheets / evidence 	<p>The service saw a drop in demand from an average of 82 reports per month to 29 per month.</p> <p>The time saved is estimated to be IRO 1483 hours annually, equating to 1.17FTE in additional capacity for the team to focus upon the cases requiring intervention from Council staff.</p> <p>In addition, the team designed process improvements for private water supplies and industrial process which are still in the process of being implemented.</p>
Jubilee 2	<p>Significant levels of manual processing were highlighted which adversely affected customer journey; concerning given the level of competition in this market segment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of process for booking Swimming lessons, both sign-up and ongoing subscriptions • Improvement of process for booking General swim sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two self-service portals were installed into the reception area allow high volume/low complexity transactions to be channel shifted, such as parking permits, class bookings, swim classes etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of process for booking Membership sign-ups • Improvement of process for booking Class bookings, including payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mobile app was also launched allowing a digital Lyme Card to ease entry, easier digital bookings instead of the traditional book at reception or via our website and push notifications for essential communications. • Reception iPads to digitally enrol customers who walk into J2 seeking either a gym membership or swimming lessons, ending the reliance upon carbon paper forms and manual Direct Debits • Migration to Direct Debits for swimming lessons to avoid subscriptions dropping out, and frustrated customers presenting at reception • Introduction of swim level descriptors to allow the removal of dedicated tutor assessments • Introduce Essendex SMS messaging for unforeseen lesson & class cancellations to members, instead of individual calls to each affected person. • General swim sessions are in the progress of being included on the kiosks and app for e-booking, following classes such as Parent & Toddler, Adult Swims, Aqua Blast etc. which are already available.
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			<p>The above changes are estimated to have created an additional 3253 hours (2.57 FTE) of capacity, predominantly, but not exclusively, within the reception function.</p> <p>At the time of writing, there is an additional 2288 hours (1.81FTE) of improvements in progress.</p> <p>In addition to the above, memberships numbers have steadily grown to approx. 4000 and 82% of new members sign up digitally (not all memberships can be handled by our sign-up portal, such as internal staff discounts & corporate members). Over 8800 downloads of the J2 App, with over 2500 regular monthly users. 80% of class bookings are now made digitally meaning approx. 1000 fewer reception visits each month.</p>
Streetscene	<p>This area was one of the first to review their business processes via the Programme and engaged with enthusiasm; the customer journeys covered were wide ranging but included fly tipping removal and investigations, graffiti removal, litter bin emptying and reports of issues such as overflowing or damaged, inspections for playground equipment, pavements, culverts and vehicles, the reporting of issues with trees and the general enquires received by the service area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving the quality of the information received from the customers at the point of contact, especially in relation to the location of the issue, and its size / scale to reduce the time wasted searching for the issue or not having the correct 	<p>These changes made some significant efficiency savings in the team, of particular note is that route planning for the emptying of litter bins saved an estimated 499 hours (0.39FTE), £1500 in fuel costs and 3.14 tCO2e saved; whilst the improvement of location, size & scale information for fly tips saw time savings IRO 390 hours (0.31FTE).</p>

	<p>The overarching theme in this area was one of manual processing and antiquated ways of working; the demand here is predominantly out of the service area's control but the way that demand is services was with scope to change.</p>	<p>equipment or staffing as the issue was poorly described.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitisation of routes and data capture; litter bin routes have now been plotted using route optimisation software and staff have access to data enabled tablets containing the service requests allowing them to update as they go about their work. • Simplifying the ways on reporting with the team; such as making forms easier and cleaner to use whilst removing confusing journeys such as 'general enquiries' 	<p>Overall an estimates 1803 hours (1.42FTE) of efficiency has already been created with an additional 841 hours (0.66 FTE) still in the process of being delivered.</p>
Planning	<p>The service redesign in Development Management focussed heavily upon using technology to improve the way we work and smoothing out the customer journey.</p>	<p>The scrum team looked end-to-end, from the pre-application advice stage all the way through to S106 payments and enforcement. 29 improvement areas were identified, 25 of which have been delivered, with the remaining 4 being 'in-progress' at the time of writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of tablet devices for site visits to improve the access to pertinent information & plans, along with the auto indexing of images • Migration away from Information@Work to SharePoint; I@W caused significant manual re-work of document indexing • Improvements to the website information, advice & guidance to improve the quality of submissions and remove unnecessary questions,

			<p>particularly in relation to smaller householder applications, enforcement situations and conservation areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digitised pre-application route to make this a seamless process for the customer • A redesigned S106 process, including the configuration of previously purchased monitoring software, along with invoicing for legacy agreements totalling up to £4.2m • A conscious push towards use of the Planning Portal for all applications allowing customers real-time updates and significant operational efficiency for officers. <p>The results of this strand was 2059 hours (1.62FTE) of efficiency created, of which 1510 (1.19FTE) has already been delivered.</p> <p>In addition to the above process improvements, the scrum team undertook benchmarking of Fees & Charges which illustrated that NULBC are between 30 & 50% cheaper than neighbouring authorities for services such as pre-application advice and validation checking resulting in lost income. This has since been partially addressed in the proposed fee scales for FY '25/26.</p>
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Bereavement Care	This service, as a major income generator for NULBC, undertook a review of its processes with the primary focus being upon the internal processing undertaken by staff and enhancing our offer to bereaved families.	The team identified 13 key improvements, 4 of which have been delivered and 9 are in progress now that the core Bereavement Care IT system, BACAS, is about to be moved to the Microsoft Azure cloud server.	865 hours (0.68FTE), 728 hours (0.57 FYE) pending With areas of projected income of £13,899 additional annual income coming from upsell items, such as memorials, genealogy research and so on.
Licensing	This was the first service area to be scoped as a part of the Ignite discover; this scrum work identified that the business was incredibly reliant upon manual processing which consumed significant amounts of time across not only Taxi licences but also event notices, premise licenses, lottery licenses and betting & gambling applications.	The initial scrum work resulted in 29 improvement opportunities being identified, many of which were dependant upon the replacement of the Civica APP IT system and digitisation of customer applications. Unfortunately the APP system is now scheduled for replacement in 2025, therefore significant opportunities are still outstanding in this area.	To date, despite the service remaining on Civica APP, 1172 hours (0.93 FTE) of efficiency has been released. A further 2010 hours (1.59 FTE) will be released when Microsoft Dynamics, Civica APP replacement, is released into the business in 2025. The Dynamics solution, at the time of writing, was in build with our Microsoft partner.
Newcastle Housing Advice	This service area was reviewed as a part of the widening and deepening of the OFD concept as the initial Activity Mapping exercise identified significant proportions of several roles that better aligned to the Customer Hub building block.	The customer journey mapping identified that there were also areas to improve the customer experience when interacting with the service; the main improvement opportunities were identified as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting the resource closer to the customer to enable advice to be offered at the point of contact and not behind a call-back system 	As a result of the service redesign, 2 FTE transferred into the Customer Hub to provide the initial point of contacts advice to residents in need of support; additionally, the above improvements opportunities delivered 1570 hours (1.24FTE) of efficiency spilt across both the NHA and OFD teams with an additional 250 hours (0.20 FTE) outstanding.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing a Duty Officer role to act as a single point of contact where the customer facing officer required greater expertise to help the customer• Streamlining the process for allocating cases, where appropriate, to a named Housing Advisor to prevent• Improving the information, advice and guidance available on the website to allow customers to receive self-service advice tailored to their circumstance• Improving the digital application journey for customers with some level of housing need within the Borough	
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Appendix 2 Benefit Outturn

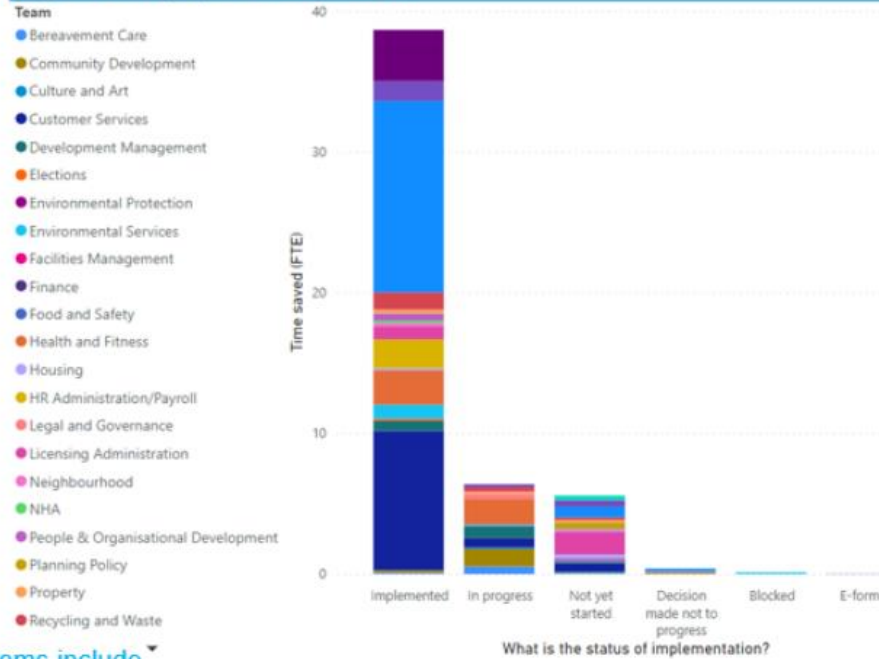
Financial Benefits for One Council



Variable Benefit Saving Status



Weighted Benefit by Implementation Status (FTE)



Status

- Blocked
- Decision made not to progress
- E-forms
- Implemented
- In progress

Team	Weighted estimated saving (£)	Saving type	Time saved (FTE)
Revenues and Benefits	£340,938.32	Variable	14.53
Customer Services	£261,225.15	Variable	11.19
Health and Fitness	£82,053.89	Variable	4.26
Whole Council	£85,296.03	Variable	3.62
Licensing Administration	£53,083.59	Variable	2.48
Streetscene	£53,823.84	Variable	2.11
HR Administration/Payroll	£53,364.31	Variable	2.05
Recycling and Waste	£40,263.13	Variable	1.74
Development Management	£46,486.75	Variable	1.67
Community Development	£35,371.24	Variable	1.54
Environmental Services	£36,775.42	Variable	1.21
Bereavement Care	£15,388.87	Variable	0.69
Property	£17,003.83	Variable	0.59
People &	£16,154.22	Variable	0.55
Total	£1,200,490.44		51.14

In progress items include

Fixed Saving Benefit Breakdown

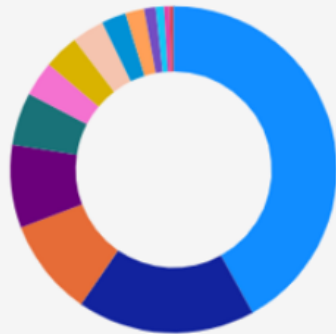


NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

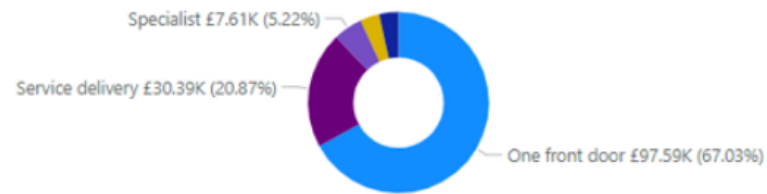
Fixed/Cashable Saving

Total Fixed Benefit (Cashable) Found "As is" Team

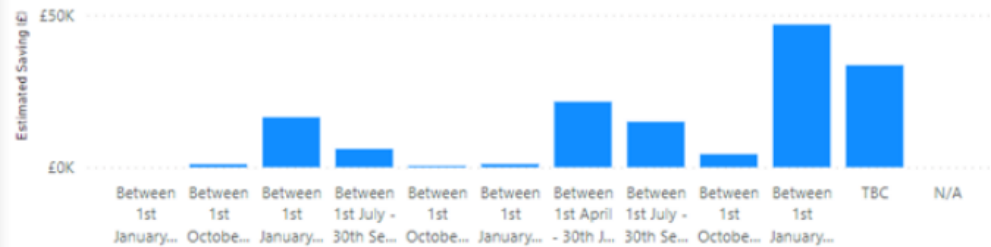
- Revenues and Be...
- Customer Services
- Bereavement Care
- Whole Council
- Development M...
- Neighbourhood
- HR Administrati...
- Health and Fitness
- Culture and Art
- Property
- Streetscene
- Environmental S...
- Licensing Admin...
- Recycling and W...
- Food and Safety
- Administration S...
- Finance
- Leisure & Culture



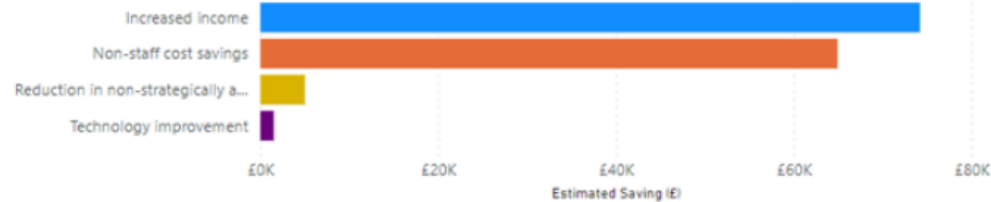
Total Fixed Benefit Found Operation Model



Implementation Profile



Total Fixed Benefit Saving by Benefit Type





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