North Yorkshire Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd December 2024

Update on Transformation Portfolio

Report of the Corporate Director for Resources

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| **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Transformation Portfolio activities. |

2.0 Summary/Introduction

2.1 The Transformation Portfolio of activity has been making significant progress in moving forward the activities needed to bring teams together to operate as unified services, building the core capabilities needed for the future operation of the council and supporting the delivery of savings set out in the MTFS. Alongside this cross-cutting themes of change have begun with the objective to deliver the council's aims and ambitions for its customers and staff.

2.2 The volume of work within the portfolio is large and will continue to be in the short-medium term as new processes and systems are embedded. To date the majority of this work has been carried out by NYC staff and as such negated the need for spend on consultants and retained vital knowledge within the organisation.

2.3 As a large amount of the activity required to deliver the current portfolio of activity is planned or in the process of being planned (albeit not yet delivered) there is a need to look at the future transformation activity that will ensure that the council can stay ahead of the curve in its skills, processes, use of technology and culture to ensure that it is well placed to take full advantage of LGR, innovation and contribute to the delivery of savings.

2.3 As the portfolio has matured and the resources and work needed has become clearer there is now an opportunity to review the governance arrangements to ensure that this activity can be delivered at pace and with clear prioritisation.

3.0 Transformation Portfolio Update

3.1 The Transformation Portfolio is made up of a broad range of activities that support council wide transformation, these are broken down into three key areas:

- Cross Cutting themes – programmes of work that affect the whole organisation and require fundamental changes
- Delivering the Target Operating Model – projects and activities to make sure we have the right processes, technology and skills in place to support how the council will operate now and, in the future
- Service specific programmes – where a number of linked projects are required to deliver significant change to a service.

3.1.1 In addition to these areas of work there are a number of projects and activities that are stand alone in nature but contribute to service improvement, efficiency gains or the delivery of savings.
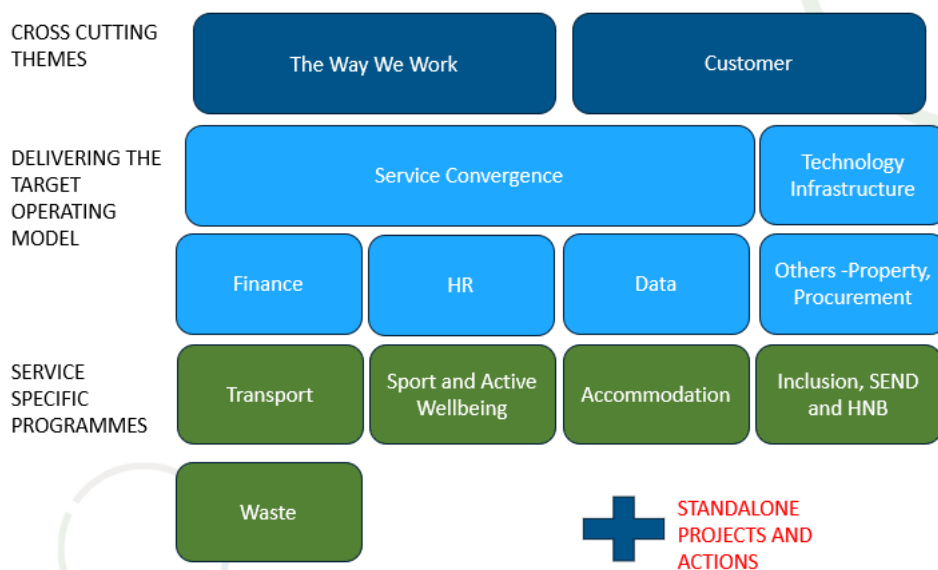
The paragraphs below set out what each of these programmes of work are seeking to achieve and an update on current progress, this is by no means an exhaustive list of work within the programmes or the transformation portfolio but gives a flavour of the breadth and scale of the change that is already underway.

3.2 Cross Cutting Themes

3.2.1 **The Way We Work theme** will ensure that the council's working practices and procedures enable the delivery of high-quality services, whilst creating a positive working environment for staff. This programme is still being developed but progress to date includes:

- Staff survey completed and results being analysed to inform future work.
- Webinars held with staff to help engage staff with the programme and start the conversation about improvements that it could bring to staff.
- Dealing with the immediate issues people have faced as part of coming together as single organisation, e.g. ensuring door access to different buildings, ability to print at multiple locations.
- Begun drafting the vison and principles of what the council looks and feels like to work for in 2030.

3.2.2 **Customer theme** focussing on how the council ensures that the customer experience is paramount in how we operate and what the customer can expect from the council in meeting their need. The programme will develop the actions required for the council to achieve this objective and set in place the high-level principles, processes, and mechanisms of how this will be achieved. Progress to date includes:

- Development of a Customer Engagement Strategy.
- Consolidating approach to Emergency Response Out of Hours calls through the customer service centre.
- Developed requirements for a new Customer Engagement platform to improve how we join up our customer contact.

- Preparation for a new-style customer access point at the Treadmills site in Northallerton, using technology to help ensure our customers have access to speak to specialist to answer their queries.
- Procured software to pilot a new complaints and compliments system in the new year.
- New customer portal functionality for parish councils to report highways issues.

3.3 Delivering the Target Operating Model

3.3.1 **Service Convergence** provides a structured approach to help services ensure they consider all the relevant elements that make strong teams that work well together. This includes considering finance (align budgets, monitor savings/benefits), policy and process alignment (single set of processes/policies with opportunities for streamlining/automation), data and performance (understand performance levels and data needs to report this in the future), customer and digital (optimise customer journey and improve), technology (ensure technology solutions support service need) and people issues (training and development requirements).

3.3.2 Overall good progress has been made but as expected there is a large amount of work to be undertaken aligning up to 8 different ways of working, along with combining technology systems and data in a managed way whilst not impacting on delivering the current services. Since April 2023 there have been 71 restructures carried out across the council, affecting over 4500 staff. Progress to date includes:

- Completed convergence onto single Property Asset Management system, Legal case management system, homelessness database, and committee management system as well moving all Accounts Receivable and Direct Debits into the council onto the council's finance system.
- Work underway to converge onto single printer contracts and devices.
- Working on convergence around Housing Asset Management (Council homes), Housing Allocations, Homelessness, Revenues and Benefits, Planning, Environmental health/licensing/trading standards, Car Parking and fleet telematics.

3.3.3 **Technology Infrastructure programme** brings together the technology infrastructure to support the council. This work includes rolling out Windows 11, rationalising and decommissioning legacy technology and equipment, and making sure that the councils' systems, networks and technology safety features are up to date. Progress to date includes:

- Rollout of Windows 11 progressing well, with well over 2000 devices now rolled out to staff.
- Good progress with server migrations, with Selby and Scarborough migrations now completed, with Craven underway and due to complete by Christmas. This will ultimately allow decommissioning of older equipment that will result in savings and carbon reduction.
- Work is now also underway with the identification of early candidate systems to be decommissioned and systems to be onboarded into the central Technology team.

3.3.4 **Finance programme** focusses on delivering a finance function that meets the needs of the new council. This work includes a wide range of activities such as a new finance system, a single income management system, consolidation of budgets and closing down legacy systems. Progress to date includes:

- The procurement process for a new finance system has now concluded and discussions are underway with the supplier regarding the implementation timeline,

with April 2026 being the target date to be in place for the start of the 2026/27 financial year.

- The Income Management Strategy has been developed and work is underway to consolidate onto a single Income Management System, this will be particularly beneficial in simplifying processes for the flow of income through the various customer facing systems.
- The automation of the Procure to Pay process has been implemented, further work is now needed to improve the adoption rate of this methodology.

3.3.4 **Human Resources** programme is looking to upgrade and improve the HR systems that the council uses on a daily basis, such as the MyView system, recruitment system, learning management system, DBS and identity checking. Progress to date includes:

- Upgrade completed to the HR/Payroll system, including a MyView app being launched to over 6,000 users to allow staff to book leave, access payslips etc. using their own smartphones, thus reducing the need for managers to do this on their behalf and a to reduce printing etc
- Options are being reviewed for HR case management solutions to replace the current system which is reaching the end of life.
- Re-procurement process underway for the staff benefit programme.

3.3.5 **Data** programme brings together work around the council's approach to data and how the council can make best us of this to inform decisions, deliver targeted early intervention and preventative services. Progress to date includes:

- Successfully rolled out Robotic Process Automation (RPA) in pilot areas and now rolling this out further.
- Data Strategy drafted and an options appraisal is being developed for data architecture that would enable implementation to the strategy to ensure that the council can make informed decisions, join up information and improve the services we offer by better use of data.
- Election maps have now been digitised.
- GIS architecture in project delivery phase to provide a centralised way of managing map-based data layers for the whole council.
- Data mining pilot in Children and Young People Service, which uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to extract entities (e.g. people, places, etc.) from documents and case notes has been completed. This gives the opportunity to significantly reduce the admin burden on social workers as well as supporting more informed decision making.

3.4 Service Specific Programmes

3.4.1 Sport & Active Wellbeing programme focussing on moving towards consolidating sport and active wellbeing activity into a single in-house function under the Active North Yorkshire banner. This will see a number of existing arrangements for how we deliver services such as leisure, community centres and community wellbeing work brought together as a single service across the whole county. Work on this has already begun with services already transferred in Selby and the Harrogate based service moves underway. This will be supported by the development of a Leisure Investment Strategy to ensure that our facilities and services continue to meet the needs of our customers.

3.4.2 **SEND and inclusion programme** - given the key performance and financial issues in this area the transformation team is working with colleagues with more work to follow.

3.4.3 **Transport programme** is looking at how we make the most of our resource related to fleet and transport, including ensuring that we are making the best use of resources, policies and tools to ensure children get to school safely.

3.4.4 **Waste programme** aims to position its service as a top performer in waste management across the country. This includes excelling in recycling, bin collections, and vehicle emissions. A programme of activity is in place to take place between 2024 and 2029 to provide a high-quality, reliable, and cost-effective service that is easy for customers to access, whether they need to request services or report issues like missed collections.

3.4.5 **Accommodation** work is at an early stage to bring together a vision for how the council can develop a more joined up approach to providing accommodation for people within the county. For example, how the council can meet the future needs of unaccompanied asylum seeker children, temporary accommodation for homelessness and developing supported living arrangements.

3.5 Other Work

3.5.1 Other work is also underway within the transformation portfolio to support services in delivering the change needed to help deliver the savings set out in the MTFS and service improvements. Some examples include:

- Implementation of national policies for wraparound childcare and expanded entitlements.
- Improving online options for care needs assessments and financial assessments in Adult Social Care.
- Development and the procurement of a new Destination Management system with colleagues in Economic Development.
- Developing an e-brokerage system and process for care packages.

4.0 Governance and future proofing of portfolio

4.1 Following the resignation and subsequent departure of the Director of Transformation an interim Director of Transformation has joined the council in recent weeks, in order to support a smooth transition and ensure that the portfolio continues to deliver the objectives. Although it is early days in their tenure some suggested improvements have already been made and a review of the governance structure is underway, and which will involve the creation of a communication and engagement plan for the programme.

14.0 REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

14.1 The Committee are asked to note the report and:

   i) Progress of the Transformation Portfolio of work

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27 November 2024

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Presenter of Report – *Brigette Giles, Director of Transformation and Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources*

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:
N/A

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

REPORT AUTHORS TO NOTE:
- *If reports or appendices include signatures, these must be removed from the documents before they are sent to Democratic Services.*
- *Appendices should include an Equality Impact Assessment and a Climate Impact Assessment where appropriate.*