

SSDC Transformation Programme – Progress Report

Executive Portfolio Holder: Tony Lock, *Protecting Core Services incl Transformation*
Director: Alex Parmley, *Chief Executive*
Lead Officer: Netta Meadows, *Director – Strategy & Support Services*
Report Author: Toffer Beattie, *Transformation Lead*
Contact Details: toffer.beattie@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462302

Purpose of the Report

1. This progress report has been prepared in accordance with the Transformation Programme Governance arrangements agreed by Full Council in April 2017 where it was agreed that the District Executive would receive quarterly updates on the progress of the council's Transformation Programme.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of November 2019.

Public Interest

3. The Council has been delivering an ambitious programme to totally transform the way it operates to ensure an improved experience for the customers and communities it serves, whilst at the same time reducing the cost to the tax payer. The programme is transforming the Council into a modern, more efficient, effective and commercially minded organisation. We have radically changed the way our services are structured to support service delivery and we are making more use of digital technology to support new ways of working and delivery.

Implementation of the agreed business case has delivered;

- Recurring net annual savings of £2,483,925 from an investment of up to £7,698,155
- A 'fit for purpose' organisation that will be in a position not only to drive continuous improvement but also to generate additional income to fund and support the council's future priorities.

Recommendations

4. The District Executive is asked to note and comment on the report.

Overview

5. The Transformation Programme (TP) aims to deliver on South Somerset District Council's strategic objectives, encapsulated in its vision statement: *One Team, Ambitious for South Somerset "Great to work for. Excellent to work with. Leading the way. Delivering for our communities"*.
6. The July 2019 Transformation Programme report highlighted many areas of success across the programme, but also reported delays in the Service Redesign work stream which was impacting on the standard of service to our customers in some areas. The report invited the District Executive to approve a one off additional resource allocation to support Service Delivery during the extended period of transition. An update on Service Delivery is included in this report at paragraphs 32-43.

Technology

7. Much of our transformation goals are dependent on new, digital technologies. Legacy systems that have been used for many years in areas such as Revenues, Benefits, and Environmental Health, third party systems like the one used by Somerset Waste Partnership and the national Planning Portal, and newly developed systems such as Street Scene reporting are being linked together by a Council wide digital workflow architecture – Civica’s Digital 360.
8. The Civica platform is an inherently complicated toolset, but that delivers a wide and vast amount of capabilities to us as an organisation. The unprecedented extent to which we are exploiting it has further compounded its complexity, unfortunately exposing shortfalls and issues that were previously unseen and often unknown even to the provider. The demands of our transformation programme have at times meant that we have needed a lot of support from Civica, and more recently this has meant a major software update was identified as the only way forward. Release 28 (R28) is being installed and tested at the time of writing and promises to fix a number of issues that have become blocks to progress to date. This has in effect meant delays to some key lines of development and successful implementation of R28 has emerged as a key programme milestone. This in turn has meant a delay to delivery of some of the benefits and efficiencies targeted by the Transformation Programme.
9. Though technology underpins and supports much of our transformation activity, an exclusive focus on technology would give a skewed representation of such a wide ranging and holistic programme, one that depends on a great many mutually supporting work streams for success. To give a comprehensive and balanced view, progress will be reported against the main benefits and benefit drivers.

Financial Benefits and Drivers

10. The headline cashable financial benefit is the net annual saving of £2,483,925. This coupled with tight management and establishment controls ensure we hold the line on this. To make this economic benefit sustainable, the programme aims to deliver effectiveness and efficiency benefits through a number of benefit drivers:
 - Customer Self-Serve/Channel Shift¹.
 - Customer Enabling/Demand Management².
 - Service Redesign³.
 - Internal Remodeling and Agile Ways of Working⁴.

Channel Shift.

11. There continues to be a steady ‘channel shift’ as more customers opt to transact online. As at end September 2019 over 5000⁵ accounts had been activated and in the period July-September 2019 approximately 70% of services were completed by self-service via our website. That this has been achieved before the full roll-out of our ground breaking Customer Relationship Management System

¹ Channel Shift. Enabling those customers who want and are able to, to do more for themselves and reducing council workload in the process.

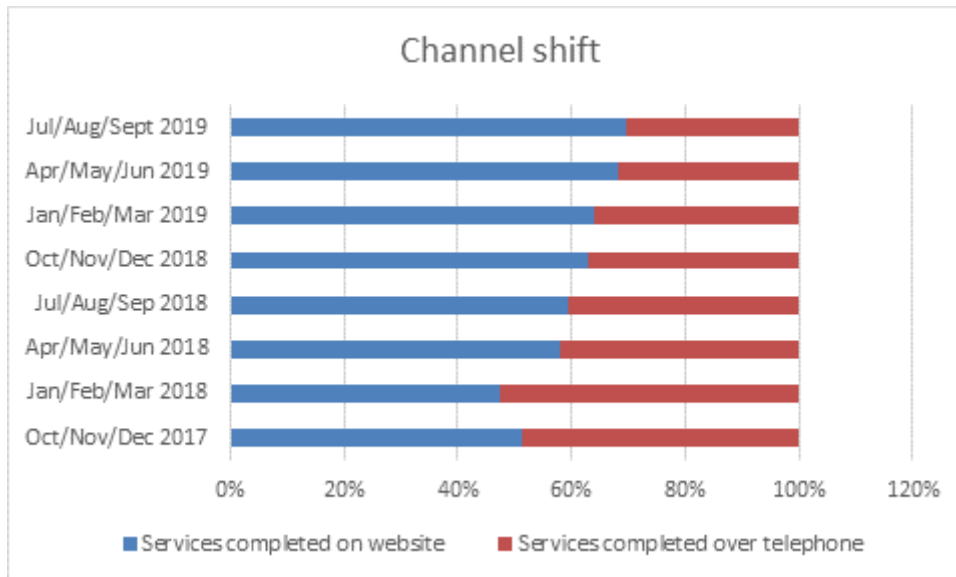
² Demand management - Reducing or shaping demand to reduce the level of service required by customers.

³ Service Redesign – Ensuring efficient processes that maximise the benefits of technology and strip out non-value added activity from customer journeys and processes.

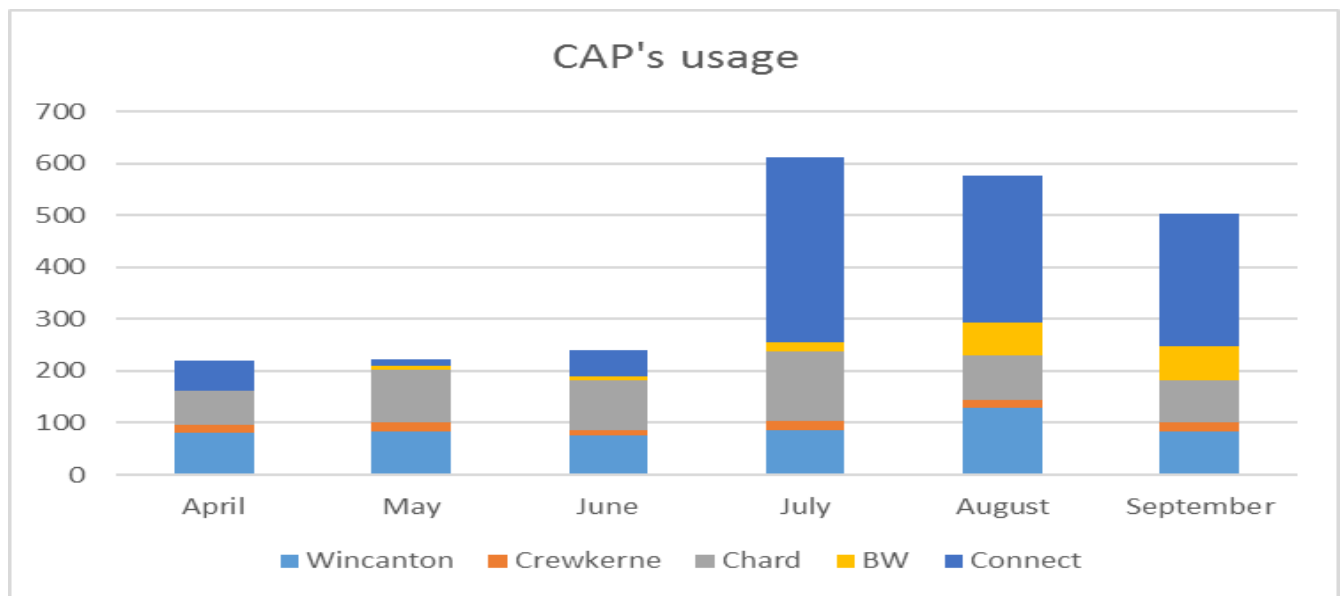
⁴ Internal Remodelling and Agile - Improving productivity and releasing capacity in the organisation through the reallocation of work, workforce optimisation and better workforce practices

⁵ 5132

(Connect 360) and ahead of many of the redesigned online services, augurs well for future customer behaviour.



12. Customer Access Points (CAPs) are now fully functional, including the ability to scan and upload evidence to support claims. They are deployed in Crewkerne, Wincanton, Chard, Brympton Way and Connect (Peters House). The uptake of this service has been excellent. In the first 10 weeks 444 uploads relating to Benefits claims alone were uploaded via CAPs. With every self-serve upload being a saving on officer time, the benefits are clear.



13. **Customer Relationship Management (CRM).** Fundamental to delivering high levels of customer service, encouraging further channel shift, and improving demand management, is the planned efficiencies in our CRM capability, which in turn depends on three interrelated tools: the Customer Golden Record (CGR), Connect 360, and My Account.

- The **CGR** builds up a detailed profile of individual customers so that we can offer them better targeted and more appropriate assistance, and so that the customer can better help him/herself and keep a track of ongoing issues.

- **Connect 360** is the system that allows Customer Focussed Officers to deal with customers over the phone or face to face. Connect 360 allows the Customer Focussed Officers access to the CGR allowing him/her to better assist the customer. The interaction that the CFO has with the customer also feeds back into the CGR – making it a richer, more detailed profile to allow better future service. Connect 360 will also feature an “**upsell**” function. Following a transaction over the phone or face to face, the customer will be made aware of the benefits of signing up for an account and will be offered fast track assistance to do so. This targeted promotion and active assistance for account sign up promises a step change in channel shift.
- **My Account** allows customers to access the full range of digital services. Like Connect 360 for the phone in/walk in customer, My Account both draws on information from the CGR to provide a better service, and populates the CGR with information to allow a more bespoke service in future transactions.

This ambitious approach to CRM, and in particular the Connect 360 system, has never been attempted before. Consequently our testing and development has exposed a number of unforeseen system issues. R28 is largely aimed at fixing Connect 360 issues. Assuming this software upgrade is successful we will roll out Connect 360, completing the full suite of CRM systems. Successful delivery of this capability is currently the highest priority for our technical team and we anticipate delivery of the capability early November.

Demand Management

14. **Web Information.** The July 2019 report highlighted the benefits delivered to our customers by the new website, both in terms of content and functionality allowing them to access key information for themselves. Improvements continue to be made to the look and feel of the website and more relevant information is available. Our BREXIT pages, which give a wealth of information and guidance to communities and businesses, is a prime example of the value that can be delivered simply by posting timely and relevant information on a well-designed and easily navigable website. When interacting with a customer using Connect 360, the Customer Connect Officer uses the SSDC web pages to give the caller information. If the website information is insufficient for the enquiry to be dealt with, the business area responsible for that service is automatically informed, ensuring that the web content is dynamically updated in line with the customer experience.
15. **My Account.** Significant improvements have been made to the account registration and authentication process. Visibility of council tax and benefits accounts continue to be available as is the ability to report issues and interact with the council online. Though a number of redesigned processes have yet to be fully rolled out, meaning some of the back office efficiencies have yet to be fully realised in terms of reduced work volumes, our digital offer to the customer has not reduced. Everything that a customer could do on line previously, can still be done today. Further service redesign and process roll out will contribute to the delivery of more efficiencies upon which many of the staff savings were predicated.
16. **Petters House - Connect.** Petters House has completed its physical transformation and digital upgrade to create a brand new technology enabled customer hub. Now known as ‘Connect’ the space is an inviting, vibrant and flexible go to place for our customers to access our services. With self-service customer access points, self-scanner for uploading document evidence, interview booths, open plan seating and private consultation rooms, it offers customers a choice of spaces and methods to get the best out of our services. Some have said it has a café feel, which the Customer Connect team are taking as a positive, as this is the atmosphere they want to create - a welcoming open environment where customers can drop in and connect with everything SSDC.

17. **Localities.** At the same time as improving customer service, active intervention and preventative action by locality workers is seen as an important contributor to Demand Management. The Locality Team is now fully established and operational. Mobile 360 is the platform that will allow officers to access workflow away from the office, a key feature of agile working. The offline access that the system should provide is not functional, so for the time being Mobile 360 will not be useable in areas without 4G or Wi-Fi coverage, but simple workarounds are being developed to overcome this until the full roll out of this functionality in early in 2020.
18. **Members Portal.** The Members Portal is intended to give additional capability to Members and to enable officers to assist and respond to Member requests more efficiently. Whilst this is operational, it does not have the full functionality yet that is planned. The portal's specific demands, for example making an enquiry on behalf of someone else (which doesn't happen elsewhere in the Civica system) has made mapping and then implementing the processes difficult. Ongoing testing points to these issues having been solved and the Members Portal is now being implemented. As with many of technical capabilities under development, the full capability will not be realised until Connect 360 is live, so for this reason, and to allow full and thorough testing, a launch date of 20 November 2019 has been set.

Service Redesign

19. Service Redesign is the benefit driver most impacted by the prolonged transition period caused by the delay in delivering technical capabilities. Integration with legacy back office systems, the need to create stable live and development environments, and the requirement for thorough and comprehensive testing have all proved far more resource intensive than we had previously anticipated. Furthermore, new processes depend on an effective customer interface, so priority has been given to Connect 360, My Account and the Customer Golden Record (see para 13), where the greatest customer impact can be made.
20. Redesigned Street Scene processes (which allow account holders to track the progress of reports they have made, and which include the ability to 'drop a pin' to mark the location of an incident) were rolled out in May 2019, along with Somerset Waste Partnership enquiries and reporting.
21. As well the Customer Relationship Management suite, the Service Redesign team are currently working on Revenues, Benefits, Environmental Health and Planning processes. Integration of these with Connect 360 will be key to delivering an optimum customer experience, and some of the technical challenges we are experiencing should be remedied by the ongoing software upgrade. We anticipate delivery of these capabilities in Q3.
22. Even without integration of back office systems, use of Civica's Electronic Document Management (EDM) can provide significant efficiencies and should have applicability across a great many areas of the Council. EDM allows improved monitoring, reporting and management visibility and better hand-off between colleagues and between teams. In effect it offers a tech-lite solution as an interim step towards full service redesign. Using EDM also helps officers get used to working on the Civica system, easing the transition when fuller integration and process redesign is delivered. To prove the feasibility of wider EDM usage, a pilot scheme is well underway. The basic process maps required to optimise use of EDM have been developed by the service redesign team and are being tested by Housing. Initial indications from this trial are very promising and, subject to the final trial report, it is intended roll EDM out to other parts of the council.

Internal Remodeling and Agile Ways of Working

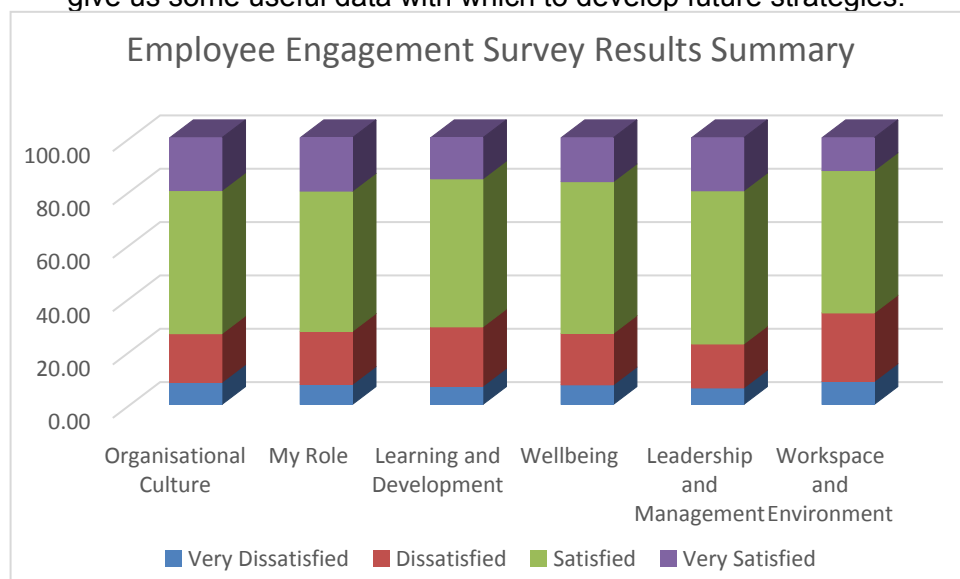
23. As well as 'tech-lite' approaches, opportunities for benefits from non-technical service redesign is being readdressed through remodelling and agile behaviour – "...*improving productivity and*

releasing capacity in the organisation through the reallocation of work, workforce optimisation and better workforce practices, e.g. shifting work and knowledge closer to the customer by embedding rule based 'knowledge' into processes and scripts, developing agile working and genuinely customer centric attitudes and behaviours".

24. Support Services and Strategy & Commissioning have both undertaken a review of all working practices, examining process for efficiencies and whether there are interim non-technical measures which can be implemented to improve outcomes. This work is now in implementation phase, and the exercise is now being undertaken within Service Delivery.
25. The Digital Mailroom, crucial to a range of potential future efficiencies, has been reinforced and is now being used far more widely both to index incoming documentation and to carry out batch printing and bulk mailing – clerical tasks that otherwise consume valuable case officer and specialist time.
26. Lufton Depot has undergone an important technical upgrade in recent months. Thin client PCs are now available for all members of staff meaning that all HR tasks can be completed by the individuals digitally. When one considers that up until now about 50 Lufton based employees had to fill in paper copies of forms such as leave requests, which managers would then need to re-enter by hand into the HR system, one can see the considerable efficiencies that this seemingly small enhancement to the workplace has delivered.

Non-Financial Benefits

27. Non-financial benefits are every bit as important as the financial benefits. It is these that bring about crucial elements of cultural and behavioural change that will future proof the organisation.
28. **Great to Work For.** The recently conducted Employee Engagement Survey asked questions under the headings; organisational culture; my role; learning and development, wellbeing, leadership and management, and workplace and environment. Correspondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with a total of 46 positively biased statements. A detailed report of the results has been produced, which shows that across the 6 categories, of respondents that expressed an opinion, on average over 72% were either satisfied or very satisfied compared to 28% who were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Though only a snap shot, given the enormous challenges that the work force has had to contend with, these are very encouraging results which give us some useful data with which to develop future strategies.



29. **Leading the Way.** SSDC's transformation is as radical as any undertaken by other local authorities. The development of a CRM capability using My Account, Connect 360 and the Customer Golden Record is ground breaking and unprecedented. But we lead the way in other important areas. Our Somerset Local Government Graduate Scheme (SLGGS) we believe, is the first of its kind to be offered within local government, offering graduates the opportunity to work in 5 different authorities at 2 levels (District and County). From proposal to implementation in just under 6 months, SSDC formed a partnership group – consisting of all 5 local authorities within Somerset – and led them through the design, recruitment of graduates and delivery of the scheme. Five exceptional graduates have been recruited and they join each Council on a rotational basis spending four months in each placement. Feedback so far has been superb and we hope to continue the scheme in the coming years to ensure continuous development opportunities for young people within Somerset and local government
30. **Excellent to Work With.** Key to being excellent to work with is the development of a commercial mindset and great strides have been made working with commercial agents, other councils and businesses establishing ourselves as an investor or partner of choice

Internally we have:

- Ensured that all commercial services teams now work to a business plan, with commercial objectives to deliver year on year.
- Commenced building a managers toolkit and using the above business plan template from Commercial Services to start working with other services to move them onto a similar approach for their services.
- Set up SSDC Business Solutions Ltd a Holding Company to be able to trade out services to the private and commercial markets moving forward where there is a viable business case to do so.
- Set up the first trading company is now registered and should be trading before year end. Elleston Services Ltd – landscape and maintenance services.
- Have trained and will train more officers into Company Director and Company Secretary roles to sit on the SSDC wholly owned company boards – investing in its staff development, and helping them to understand the commercial trading world.
- Fully staffed the Commercial Property team, which has now invested the originally approved investment fund under the Commercial Strategy 2017 to deliver £2m plus of additional annual revenue - on target and ahead of schedule.

In light of this, an interim update to the Commercial Strategy and additional investment fund was approved in Sept to enable further investment over the next 2 years to achieve an additional £1.35m income shortfall per annum, which has now been identified, in addition to the original 2m which has now been committed/achieved.

Externally we have:

- Worked with a number of business partners and local contractors/suppliers from Somerset on our Marlborough housing development, which is now on the market.
- Retained our ongoing Joint Venture on Lufton 2000 with Abbey Manor Development, taking a more active and commercial approach in working with them, undertaking joint marketing and operational decisions; and have sold two development plots in the last year to enable new inward investment for Builders Merchant and a business expansion for a local company.
- Worked with national and international suppliers, along with local subcontractors on the Battery Energy Storage Site near Taunton.

31. **Delivering for our Communities.** Much of the preceding report deals with how we are developing resilient, customer focussed services. The Transformation Programme includes a customer insight workstream which is beginning to develop the knowledge base that will guide our future business development. Once again, the feedback loop at the heart of our CRM approach will ensure rich and detailed customer information going forward.

Service Delivery Improvement – Update

32. The July District Executive Committee, in recognition of the delays in securing the benefits of technology and service redesign, agreed to additional funding to relieve the pressures and reduce service waiting and processing times. Funding was agreed for £494,990 in 2019/20 and £240,230 in 2020/21 to be funded from additional business rate income existing reserves, increased income targets, and a commitment against the 2020/21 budget.
33. The majority of the plan provides for additional staffing capacity for a temporary period utilising a mixture of existing staff and where necessary, external staff.
34. Since approval in July recruitment has been underway for fixed term and agency resource to support the Specialist, Case and Customer Focussed teams. The Case and Customer Focussed teams has now completed recruitment. This has taken some time due to recruitment and selection process. The full impact of this resource will not be felt until training and familiarisation of new staff is completed in quarter two which will be reported in January. In some teams such as planning we are relying on agency staff until we successfully recruit permanent staff.
35. Some funding was reserved for outsourcing Revenues and Benefits work and this is working well when supported by additional internal resource. Discussions are at an advanced stage on commissioning an external company to undertake some of the simpler householder planning applications.
36. As well as the pure performance aspects one of the aims of the exercise was to improve staff morale and there is evidence that this has improved in areas where we have been able to demonstrate an improving trajectory.
37. In this quarter the following service delivery improvements have taken place:
38. Planning
- Validation time now reduced from baseline of 29 days to 10 days.
 - The backlog of applications in the system over 8/13 weeks without an extension of time has reduced from 309 to 285 since August.
 - The overall number of application in the system has been reduced from a baseline of 558 to 522.
 - Enforcement cases have increased from 563 to 580. This is because resource has been directed at closing older cases.
 - A new online form for complaints has been launched.
 - Extensions of Time have gone down from 90 in August to 43 in the first week of October.
 - Planning agents' forum held on the 26th September.
 - Parish Clerks training held on the 24th September to assist with website navigation and weekly lists.
 - All current planning approval procedures are being reviewed in order to yield efficiencies

39. Benefits

- 3000 items of backlogged benefit work have been outsourced. This plus additional case capacity has cleared the backlog of new Housing Benefit forms.
- New claims and are now being looked at within 5 days.

40. Revenues

- 3000 items of backlogged revenues work outsourced and we expect to clear the backlog of council tax reminders and summons during the 2nd half of October.

41. Connect (Customer Focused) Team

- Average call wait time still remains around 5 mins with our longest wait time of 36 mins during September. There is no improvement in this area yet as we have had 7 new staff receiving training during Aug/Sept/Oct. Training enables staff to help shift customers to self-service which will reduce future service demand as customers self-serve. 28% of our calls are still failure demand.
- Enquiries we are able to deal with at the first point of contact has risen to 70% due to the time being invested in training.
- We received over 1200 call back request this quarter and we have seen improvements in returning call backs which are now been turned around within 2 days.
- The Connect space at Petters House and Community Access Points at Chard and Crewkerne continues to thrive with the self-serve scanner used 336 times during the month of September.
- Channel shift has reached a high with 71% of customers using our digital channels for transactions instead of the telephone.

42. Housing

- Our waiting times for housing registering applications have been reduced and is now 29 days (1 day longer than target).
- For changes of circumstances the wait time is now 15 days against a target of 28 days. In Q2 the average length of stay in temporary accommodation is now 3 days against a target of 7 days or less.
- In Q2 the number of instances where we prevented homelessness was 74 against a target of a minimum of 30.

43. Land Charges

- Length of time taken to process searches which has reduced from 28 to 19 days Additional resources started on 14/10/19, and we should then see a further significant improvement.

Council Plan Implications

44. Our Council Plan 2016/21 includes an annual action plan for 2019/20 identifying 5 key themes and areas of focus. The theme most relevant to the transformation programme is;

- Protecting core services

Within this, priority project 1 is to complete and fully realise the benefits of Transformation and implement the Commercial Strategy.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

45. There are no implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

46. There are no implications arising from this report.

47. An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2017 prior to commencing the selection process for the repositioning of roles in the organisation. This deemed there was no inequitable impact for any group as a result of the reorganisation proposals as sufficient measures had been taken to address any potential areas of risk.

Privacy Impact Assessment

48. There are no implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Quarterly reports to District Executive.
