

Cabinet Member Education and Transformation: Annual Report

Cabinet Member: Cllr Faye Purbrick, Cabinet Member for Education and Council Transformation

Division and Local Member: All

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Transformation

1. Summary

- 1.1 Somerset County Council continues to transform its services and methods of working within the context of rising demand, a changing demography, economic uncertainty and budget reduction and in order to remain relevant and engaging within an increasingly digitally enabled world.

Transformation continues to be realised through our service delivery, but it is the corporate support to services and the transformation expertise that is deployed to our services that secures meaningful and lasting efficiencies and improvement. Our Core Council Programme is the governing 'glue' that ensures improvement across the organisation and our achievements, as set out within this report, are considerable and wide ranging.

- 1.2 Our focus over the last year has been adjusted significantly to ensure that this authority is financially fit for the future and able to live within its financial means. The Financial Imperative Programme (FIP) was established to reset our budget mid-year, to ensure better assurance that budget decisions are actioned and delivered and to ensure that the council is better able to deliver its core services and responsibilities going forward. To date, this turnaround of our budgets has been impressive and we are better able to look forward than we have been for a considerable period of time.

- 1.3 Other notable achievements are considered in this report, although specific attention is drawn to our digital transformation. This is setting very solid foundations in the post-SouthWest One world to ensure:
- that we achieve digital security
 - that we can deploy a flexible workforce that can work at any time and from any place
 - that in the future we can offer a comprehensive digital customer services relationship with the people of Somerset.

2. Recommendations

Council is requested to note the report of the Cabinet Member Education and Transformation and the considerable achievements secured this year.

3. Core Council Programme

During 2017 and 2018 the Core Council Programme (CCP) has continued to successfully transform and deliver financial benefits to SCC. The key aims of the programme have been to improve and transform services, secure efficiency and cost savings by focusing on areas of high spend, and to modernise the organisation. In June 2018, the primary focus of the CCP shifted in response to the Council's in-year financial position, initiating a Financial Imperative Programme (FIP) to focus resources on those activities that will deliver financial sustainability both in-year and in future years.

The active projects and programmes making up the Core Council Programme prior to the financial imperative in June 2018, have achieved £10.306 million of savings to date, the majority of which are outlined below. This brings the total savings achieved by the Core Council Programme since 2012 to £35.087 million. Targeted benefits for activity remaining within the CCP are now being reset alongside the financial imperative work and will also feed the MTFP process. In addition to delivering financial benefits the key achievements of these CCP Programmes are set out below.

3.1 Financial Imperative Programme (FIP):

The financial imperative approach has supported, co-ordinated and monitored the activity to drive through the delivery of financial savings, enabling a close level of scrutiny of the Council's financial position and providing assurance and confidence of delivery through managing exceptions proactively and risk mitigation. The approach has enabled the delivery of a balanced budget for 2019/20.

- £12.81m of additional in-year savings for 18/19 were approved by Cabinet in September 2018.
- 96% of this saving value has either been delivered or is on track for delivery by 1st April 2019.
- 74% of original 18/19 MTFP savings approved by Full Council in February 2018 (£9.92m) have also been delivered or are on track to be achieved by 1st April.
- A further £15.4m of savings have been identified for 2019/20 as part of the 2019-22 Medium Term Financial Plan.

3.2 Family Support Services

Planning continues to ensure the safe transfer of the Public Health Nursing (PHN) service into Somerset County Council as of the 1st April 2019. Work has been ongoing to develop staff accommodation bases, ensure that staff have access to reliable ICT connections and ensure a smooth transfer. A Cabinet decision was taken 15th September 2018 to reduce the scope of the project to ensure it is focused and committed to implementing a 0-19 specialised Public Health Nursing offer across Somerset. This programme will now move to a business as usual initiative and the delivery supported through Public Health and support services. To date the original programme scope has delivered £2.072m of savings.

3.3 Libraries Redesign

The Libraries Service Redesign commenced in 2017 by conducting a wide scale review of the library network and analysis of the need (including

deprivation), demand for and access to library services throughout the county. Draft proposals for a redesign of the network were prepared and put out for Public Consultation January - June 2018. There were 6,410 consultation questionnaires completed, plus a further 604 responses to the consultation in other formats. Responses informed the Cabinet decision taken on 5 November regarding the future of the service.

The redesign includes a focus on providing a service fit for the future, workforce redevelopment, roles for the new service have been redesigned and will be recruited to during February 2019. This programme of work will continue to be delivered through the Library Service and following the Cabinet decision will be de-scoped from the Core Council Programme.

3.4 Adult's Transformation

2018 saw a refreshed roadmap of transformation for the Adults service activity in action. This gave clarity on the key transformational shifts required to achieve the intended outcomes:

3.41 Promoting Independence - We have published our Promoting Independence strategy this year which focuses on maximising people's independence by supporting them to remain in their homes and communities without formal care support wherever possible.

3.42 Managing Capacity and Demand - This year has seen a significant shift in the customer experience as the pathway into the Adult's service has developed. Work has been focussed on improving the conversation with people and developing a stronger community resource to support them.

Developing our strength-based conversation and community resource has transformed the workforce's practice. Between April and November, 1435 reviews were delivered. This resulted in an increased percentage of people using self-directed support from 60% to 80% and reduced the number of people in existing residential care and nursing care placements.

Another huge success this year has been the implementation of the HomeFirst model. A clear set of arrangements have been developed between the Council, NHS and Partners to enable a speedy discharge of patients from hospitals whilst achieving the best possible outcomes for those people.

The Learning Disability service is undergoing significant changes, with a continued reduction on the reliance on residential care, and an increase in people having their own homes and front doors, whilst receiving care in their communities.

3.43 Creating the Environment and Infrastructure – engaging with the TAP Programme this year has meant we have successfully embedded the use of new technology, whilst using it to transform the way that we work. We delivered a wider selection of collaborative tools, created technology focussed solutions to existing problems, and managed to increase productivity.

3.5 Improving Children's Services

The Children's Improvement Programme achieved its aim of improving the Authority's Ofsted rating for Children's services from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires

Improvement', closing the programme in March 2018. Work has been ongoing with the service, undertaking a whole system review to shape the next stage of the improvement journey for Children's Services in support of getting to an Ofsted rating of 'Good'. This aimed to take a holistic view of the challenges facing the service and helped to improve the understanding of the technology, process and cultural transformation that the teams would need in order to achieve the possible transformational savings highlighted by the Peopletoo review.

3.6 High Priority Themes

The Core Council Board approved the following high-priority workstreams to be de-scoped from the CCP in summer 2018. They transitioned to individual service areas to either take forward to realise targeted benefits or pause and review in the context of the new strategic priorities and organisational redesign.

- **Commercial and Third Party Spend** achieved on-going procurement savings of £1.256m through collectively steering the review of spend, commissioning and contract arrangement across the authority as well as income opportunities, with the overall objective to reduce inefficiency, drive improved ways of working and ultimately focus on cost savings.
- **Corporate and Business Support Review** achieved £1m of savings through changes to Corporate Support Services structures and closed in October 2017.
- **Transport** achieved £2.113m of savings through reductions in subsidies and discretionary spend and improving policies, procedures and processes to ensure decision making on home to school transport solutions is better and more consistent.
- **Reviewing to Improve Lives** undertook targeted reviews of individual care packages resulting in improved outcomes for individuals as well as achieving £765k of savings so far in 2018/19.
- **The Children's Placements project** delivered £2.31m of savings whilst aiming to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children. This was achieved through enhancing the mechanisms at the edge of care to prevent children from becoming looked after, securing stability in placements for those looked after (within affordable settings), and redesigning fees and allowances for foster carers to better reflect the skills and work that they do.

3.7 Future Core Council Programme

The Financial Imperative will continue to remain a core part of the CCP going forward. Alongside it, two new strategically important programmes are being mobilised, the Organisational Redesign Programme and Children's Services Transformation Programme. These are in the early stages of formation and more detail will follow through the normal governance reporting process as part of the quarterly Finance & Performance updates to Cabinet.

4. Local Government Reorganisation

In May 2018 the Leader of the Council initiated a discussion to explore the future of local government in Somerset. Subsequently, all Somerset district councils have positively engaged with this discussion. Clearly there are many options and views on this matter and the partnership of authorities sought in the summer / autumn period to engage independent support to further develop our thinking.

An organisation called Ignite led a consortium to support the Somerset Councils and their work is ongoing. The commission has been run under the direction of the Somerset Councils' CEO group with regular reports to the Somerset Leaders group. To date they have begun the process of exploring the various options, both wholly within Somerset and with adjacent geographies. Throughout, we have been clear that any such work needs to be evidence led and Ignite have undertaken a thorough review of councils' service levels, staffing numbers and structures and financial position.

Engagement has been secured with key stakeholders and Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government has been appraised of our progress. In due course a suite of strategic options will be developed which will then be assessed to see if there is consensus as to which options will be developed to a full business case. Any shortlisting and further development of options is likely to take place after the district elections in May 2019.

5. Business Strategy

The SCC County Vision was approved by Full Council in May 2018 and sets a clear vision for Somerset focused on Improving Lives.

The SCC Business Plan was developed during 2018 for the period 2018/19. It is an overarching strategic document that states what the County Council will aim to achieve with partners and communities over the coming year to deliver the County Council Vision in the most efficient way possible for Somerset's taxpayers. The Business Plan is available here:

<http://www.somerset.digital/businessplan/>

The Business Plan provides a 'golden thread' from the Vision to Service Planning to focus the Council's work and ensure that everything we do reflects the Vision, adds value and delivers stronger outcomes for Somerset's residents and businesses.

A review of the Business Plan is now underway to develop the 2019/20 version, the refresh will, in particular, need to reflect the ongoing Financial Imperative work and the revised core offer of the council as a result.

6. ICT Transformation:

6.1 Fit for purpose modern ICT services

Through the Technology and People Programme, the significant laptop refresh and upgrade to Windows 10 and Office 365 services was completed in November 2018. This has delivered all SCC staff with devices and tools that are fit for the future and enable new ways of working that improve productivity and collaboration.

6.2 Cloud first ICT services

Progress continues with migrating ICT services and data to the cloud to increase resilience and reduce the risk related to a single point of failure at the County Hall site. During 2018 35% of the network drive data was migrated to Intranet solution. Disaster recovery data and back-ups have been moved to the cloud and new ICT services designed in the cloud itself. These programmes continue through 2019/20.

Investment and critical improvements in our on-site network infrastructure, has been delivered on a rolling basis and supports the performance and stability of this infrastructure, whilst delivering contract savings.

End of life on-site storage and network infrastructure has also been replaced to provide sustainable services whilst continuing to progress migration to the cloud.

As well as the projects reported on previously including technology and people – TAP – and the roll out of Windows 10 and Cloud based data storage, it is also worth noting the hard work carried out by the various teams in ICT to improve our security and resilience across our networks. Many staff gave up a weekend to come in and oversee a major overhaul of areas of our network which resulted in a seamless and highly appreciated improvement.

ICT are often only referred to when things go wrong, so it is worth highlighting the huge amount of proactive work that takes place across teams throughout the whole year. Examples include:

- The vital support given to the transfer of public health nurses to the Council.
- The work to help community involvement in our libraries going forward
- The digital strategy and leadership currently under development towards a digital transformation programme that I am confident will provide much of the narrative for next year's annual report.

6.3 Partnership working

Good progress has been made with partnership working, with multiple instances now in place, hosted by SCC, for sharing data and collaborating with partner organisations.

SCC is the only local authority in the region represented on the Local Health Care Record Exemplar (LHCRE) multi agency board that is designing an integrated approach and standards for health and social care integration across the South West region.

6.4 Information Governance/Compliance

- A replacement solution has been implemented for secure email of official and official sensitive messages over the internet.
- Data sharing agreements have been updated to enable the return of the Adults Mental Health and Public Health nursing services to SCC.
- The Information Governance team has undergone an overhaul with new management bringing in extra resources to increase team numbers and lead an improvement in performance against statutory guidance response levels.

6.5 Transformation focus for 2019/20

A refresh of the digital strategy for the organisation and investment in Digital Customer capabilities. These will meet the future needs of customers, provide digital solutions to mitigate the pressure of increasing demand and efficiencies that achieve value for money.

This will focus on empowering customers to:

- Access online self-help, information and guidance.
- Increase online transactions and the ability to request and report services independently.
- improve signposting, connecting customers to partner and community support.

7. Education

At a strategic level officers will continue to develop the Local Authority's systems and processes that enable it to effectively monitor the performance of all schools, irrespective of status, across a range of measures so that is able to identify early any potential causes of concern and raise challenges where appropriate.

We will continue to work with early years providers, head teachers, teaching school, multi academy trusts and the Office of the RSC to build on the work already in place and further develop a system led approach to early years and school improvement based around local and regional networks of early years and school leaders. We will seek to maximise the opportunities that this will create to draw down funding and other resource that we may not otherwise have had access to. The development of these partnerships will be key to enabling us to address the key education priorities we have around improving outcomes across the piece and narrowing the performance gap between disadvantaged groups and their peers.

7.1 School Improvement

2018 The national assessment results

In headline terms in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the key measure is the percentage of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) for which they need to achieve Expected or Exceeding in all prime Learning Goals (including Literacy and Mathematics). In Somerset 71.8% of children achieved a GLD in 2018. This is 0.8% higher than in 2017 and in line with the national average of 71.5%.

At Key Stage One the combined Reading, Writing, Mathematics (RWM) Expected Standard for Somerset was 66.9% against a national average of 65.4%. Those children gaining the Higher Standard were 13.1% against a national average of 12.0%. We are therefore above the national performance in this measure.

At Key Stage Two the combined Reading, Writing, Maths Expected Standard for Somerset was 61.5% against a national average of 64%. Those children gaining the Higher Standard were 8.1% in Somerset against 9.9% nationally. In 2017 the NA was 9.0% and Somerset achieved 8.1%, so a difference of 0.9%.

GCSE results in 2018 saw some small drops in performance outcomes from 2017 to 2018. e.g.

- Attainment 8 has fallen from 45.7 in 2017 to 44.7 in 2018;
- Pupils with GCSE English & Maths graded 9-5 has fallen from 40.2% in 2017 to 39.1% in 2018;
- Pupils with GCSE English & Maths graded 9-4 has fallen from 63.5% in 2017 to 62.7% in 2018;
- Performance 8 score has fallen from -0.12 in 2017 to -0.14 in 2018.

These are not significant decreases in themselves and are the sort of fluctuation that is often seen between years but combined with slight increases in the national average for state-funded schools means that our schools' performance is slightly below the national average on all measures.

The gap in performance between disadvantaged learners and their peers remains a concern particularly at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

7.2 School Ofsted Inspections

In terms of Ofsted inspections, 86% of Somerset's primary and secondary schools are currently judged as being Good or better compared to 85.3% of schools in the South West and 87.9% of schools in England. All of our special schools and pupil referral units are judged as Good or better.

7.3 Academy Conversions

Whilst the Government has moved back from its previously stated position of requiring all schools to become academies, there is a requirement for any school judged by Ofsted as being Inadequate to join a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) on a sponsored basis (schools judged Good or better can choose to join an existing MAT). At the time of writing, 37.8% of all schools are either standalone academies or part of a MAT with 76.8% of secondary schools being an academy. This will increase to 89.2% by the end of this academic year as several secondary schools are currently in the process of converting.

8. School Build Programme

13 projects were completed in the course of this year. Amongst these were four major projects each valued in excess of £900k. These were:

- A new 14-class primary school in Yeovil.
- A 150-place expansion of a Taunton secondary school.
- A 90-place expansion of a Wellington secondary school.
- A new Pupil Referral Unit in Glastonbury.

A further 12 projects were commissioned or commenced, with a total estimated cost of £64.738m. These included 7 major projects as follows:

- Three 14 class primary schools – one each in Taunton, Somerton and Highbridge.
- A 285-pupil expansion of a secondary school in Taunton.
- A 300-pupil expansion of a secondary school in Bridgwater.
- A new build expansion of a special school in Taunton to accommodate secondary aged pupils.
- A 160 place SEN provision in Bridgwater.

Our adoption of a framework approach to developing standard designs means that we are now delivering very high-quality school environments for both mainstream and special needs. These provide outstanding places for future generations of children in Somerset to develop, learn and thrive. We should all be very proud of our ongoing achievements in this area.

Our working practice also means that we are delivering new and expanded schools in a cost-effective manner. The programme of activity continues to be delivered on time and within budget and the Department of education have recently commended us on our cost effectiveness in delivering new school places.

However, the future delivery of the school places programme is not without considerable risk. Population growth and the rapid expansion of our towns means that we are scheduled to deliver a considerable lift in our school population. At present, neither our basic need funding from government nor funding secured through the local planning process provides the funding necessary to implement the programme in the medium to long term. This represents a potential risk in terms of continuing to secure high quality school estate and a related funding risk for the Council. We will continue to work hard to secure fairer funding from government, appropriate funding through the local planning system and to explore all other funding opportunities.

9. Support Services for Education (SSE)

A wide range of educational support services continue to be available through SSE to support schools and other educational establishments – whether delivered directly by SCC or other third-party providers. The one-stop-shop website continues to be developed to make service offerings clearer and easier to access. SSE services remain valued and well regarded and buy back of traded services has remained relatively consistent; with some reductions experienced as schools become Academies or part of Multi-Academy Trusts.

Services such as School Improvement, Welfare, Safeguarding and the SEN support services also continued to support the delivery of SCC's statutory education responsibilities. The Educational Psychology Service came under enormous pressure during the year as a result of a significant increase in the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), reflecting a national increase in the number of statutory requests. Within this calendar year there has been a 34% increase from 16/17 to 17/18 with a 78% increase since the implementation of the Children and Families Act in 2014. To respond to these increases it was necessary to amend the balance between statutory and partnership allocations.

A review of other SEN support services also started this year with the intention of aligning and streamlining support from these services to schools, such that overall SEN support is more effective and supportive for schools. The views of parent/carers continue to be sought and very much valued in helping to determine this area of work. There has also been some evidence that Core Standards are becoming more embedded as more appropriate service referrals are received, demonstrating a graduated approach to meeting children's needs.

During the year there have been some great examples of successful partnership working including language support for Syrian refugees through liaison with Public Health, a successful bid to be a delivery partner with the Education Autism Trust providing training and support across Somerset and the expansion of our contract to deliver National Citizenship Service (NCS) places through our outdoor residential and learning centres. Other achievements worth highlighting include the successful moderation process across Early Years, KS1 and KS2 as well as the Ofsted inspection of our Initial Teacher Training service, assessed as 'Outstanding'.

Sept 2018 saw the culmination of almost 2 years work with North Somerset Council to transfer a number of their educational support services and associated staff over to SSE; with a contract to provide services back to North Somerset Council and an opportunity to provide traded services to schools, academies and trusts within the area.

Finally, as a result of the restructuring of the Senior Leadership team within the Council during the last year, SSE moved from Commercial and Business Services into Childrens Services. This transfer removed the internal commissioning arrangements for the statutory education services and has provided an opportunity to strengthen links and optimise the strategic direction for services. Work is now underway to realign the SSE services and implement a new structure within Childrens Services.

10. Dillington

The previous few years have been challenging for Dillington House due to reviews over its future. The uncertainty has resulted in the loss of some experienced staff and difficulties replacing them.

In April 2018 a new General Manager was appointed with much needed hospitality experience and fresh ideas for improving the occupancy and financial sustainability of Dillington. The business plan is being updated with the following key developments underway.

- Open Dillington House up to the public, with more regular social events such as Sunday lunches, cream teas and events at key times of year, such as Christmas, Easter, New Year, Valentines, etc.
- Raise interest in the conference facilities – particularly with the private sector, to replace a drop off income from SCC.
- Repackage the wedding offering and increased promotion through external and internal Wedding fairs/events.
- Review the Adult Education offering, to address the decline in numbers.
- Promote Dillington's Bed & Breakfast offer to increase occupancy of the 43 rooms available across the House.
- Acquire a new management system to improve information on occupancy and operations.
- Create a partnership with SSE SCIL to become its main venue for its training programme including the 'outstanding' Initial Teacher Training.

It will take time to see the impact of some these such as the wedding bookings and Bed and Breakfast income, but these changes will help to increase the use of Dillington House and raise its profile across the Southwest