

Transformation Board held on Thursday 16 May 2024 - minutes

Present:

Attendees:

Commissioners:

Chair, Gerard Curran, Commissioner

Members:

Cllr Dexter Smith, Leader, with responsibility for Improvement and Recovery

Cllr Wal Chahal, Deputy Leader, and Lead for Financial Oversight and Council Assets

Officers:

Will Tuckley – Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services

Sue Butcher, Executive Director, Children's Services, Chief Executive Slough Children's Services

Annabel Scholes, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer

Marc Gadsby, Director Social Care, Adults

Stephen Menzies, Interim Director Digital and Technology

Jane Senior, Strategic Commissioning Change

Sarah Wilson, Assistant Director, Legal & Governance, HB Law

Dave McNamara, Interim Director of Financial Management

Secretariat:

Mandy Brown, Chief of Staff to the Commissioners

MHCLG representative, (minutes)

Also Present:

Dave Hounsell, Acting Head of Service – Recovery, Strategy, Programmes, Insight, Performance

Andrew Merritt-Morling, Recovery Programme Manager

Deemple Brain, Programme Manager

Stephanie Clark, Recovery Programme Manager

Alex Polak, Head of Governance and Scrutiny

Not In Attendance:

Gavin Jones, Lead Commissioner

Denise Murray, Finance Commissioner

Mandy Brown (Chief of Staff)

Cllr Pavitar Mann - Leader of the Opposition,

Patrick Hayes - Executive Director Housing, Property and Planning

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 1.1 Introductions made.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest expressed.

3. Minutes and Actions from Board held on 18 April 2024

3.1 Minutes from the meeting held on 18 April 2024 were approved.

4. Workstream Update: Culture Change (Sue Butcher)

4.1 Sue reflected this is difficult (challenging) . A previous culture change project was in place from 2022-2024. Wanted to see this as a reset rather than a restart as information from previous projects had been used. Have used feedback from the previous Recovery Champions. Consulted with members of previous culture change group to inform future action. Baseline for phase two project informed by staff survey conducted in June 23, FITT workshops from December23 and feedback from Commissioners and new SRO. Phase Two launched in April 2024.

Progress to date included project structure established, draft terms of reference for culture change core group produced for approval and draft PID being reviewed by culture change core group. The core group will meet weekly to drive this forward and will have four members in total to review the FITT workshop feedback. A mind map has also been developed as a map for the project based on FITT recommendations and is a live document.

During the first meeting of the Culture Club words like tragic, trauma, victim were used frequently. A small group of people were present in the first session with representation from HR, Comms, Receptionist from the front desk and the Unions. The session was sad, and riotous and people spoke of the trauma they had experienced. An issue covered within the session was taken outside that sphere which presented a further initial challenge.

4.2 Working aims were whether staff felt that SBC would become an employer of choice, recruiting, and retaining excellent staff. Working outcome was: would staff recommend working at SBC to family and friends.

4.3 Key objectives:

- i. Develop and promote an inclusive culture which was important to everyone
- ii. Culture to be acknowledged and accepted as everyone's business
- iii. All colleagues have and know they have a voice by being invested in the future of the Council and residents
- iv. Promote a working environment that attracts the best people to work within the Council, and retain and grow their contribution
- v. Promote cross-agency and cross-silo working as a means of improving resident outcomes

4.4 Key lessons learned from previous culture change project:

- i. Previous CEx was not the sponsor for the previous culture change project, which resulted in it not having sufficient visibility or oversight. It was recommended consideration be given to how the CEx should be involved in the revised Culture Change project, with a suggestion of CEx being Chair of Culture Club.
- ii. Project support didn't adhere to governance structure, leading to delays in paper submission and lack of action follow up. It was recommended the new PMO team put in place a meeting structure with defined and reporting procedures clarified.

- iii. Broad scope of the project led to a lack of clarity, with stakeholders unsure as to how to make effective change. Need clear objectives for revised culture change project and narrowed focus.
- iv. Results and subsequent actions from the staff survey in 2023 were not actioned. Comments received from the CEx 'Getting to know you' sessions were not actioned. This led to a reduction in staff trust regarding the Culture Change project. Need to undertake new staff survey to create a baseline picture of staff satisfaction. Need to follow through with actions to show staff that we have 'listened' as part of project plan.

One of the emerging priorities for staff was that appraisals were the priority where staff wanted to see change, and not hybrid working. At a high level, staff wanted to feel valued, which would lead to better engagement and presence in the office.

4.5 Culture Change Risks:

- i. Development of target operating model: The Target Operating Model was still in the development stages. This may result in having to redefine the outcomes of the Culture Change project once the TOM has been established; potentially leading to delays and rework. Andrew Merritt-Morling was developing the TOM and sits on the Culture Change core group linking the two areas of work.
- ii. Staff morale: Staff may be reluctant to get involved in the culture change activities, caused by a lack of positive action from previous culture change initiatives. This may result in it being challenging gaining staff buy-in and trust for the project. Will need to monitor workforce stability through regular surveys and focus groups.
- iii. Stability of the organisation and senior management team: There had been churn in staffing at senior leadership level creating a level of uncertainty, instability and knowledge loss which could prove challenging to engage with staff. Senior management appointments would mostly be in post by early summer, creating greater organisational stability.

4.6 Mark Gadsby expressed gratitude to Sue for picking this up as the base was a difficult one to build from. Marc wanted to know whether was a good mixture of staff that did not need to go through the healing process because they were new. There was also the risk that some of the newer staff could be influenced by legacy staff.

4.7 Appraisals: Staff weren't having more engagement throughout the year. There was general recognition that there was a huge amount of work to do in this area. Needed to have good comms and a good diversity of people engaged in the process. The new CEx was much more centrally focused on this which had provided a more positive feeling amongst staff.

Cllr Chahal reflected that staff seeking appraisals showed a broken system. It was better practice to have shorter, regular weekly one to ones rather than annually or bi-annually. Cllr Chahal wondered whether the managers currently employed were capable enough. Managers 'driving licence' required, and one option was to adapt the one used in Slough Children's First. The change needed to be driven forward and set the process for the appraisals. Workforce development programme would also play a part. Needed to get some quick wins to show initial progress. Cllr Chahal responded that in other organisations, some managers of a certain grade were taken offsite for training and development. This process could be adopted at SBC as well. . Stephen Menzies said 50% of the quick wins were related to IT and requested anything that might impact IT be flagged up to him.

Will Tuckley reflected he wasn't surprised at what he had learnt. People responded in differing ways to the experience they had had, and this was to be expected. Some ability to express that was also to be expected. He felt it was more to do with how they related to their managers. There was clearly something around management standards that needed to be looked at more closely. There had also been huge churn which the Council needed to take into account. He was very happy to be involved in a supportive way to enable the direction of travel and wanted the workplace to be more inclusive.

Sarah Wilson responded that at Annual Council tonight, one of the items was code of conduct for Officers. One of the things that came out of the consultation was the dislike of the reference to 'selflessness'. Evidence showed there were quite a lot of members of staff who did not know or

understand the Nolan Principles for example. So, she had added something about obligations for Managers to provide regular feedback and for staff to engage with that.

The Leader said this illustrated the vital importance of managers being prepared on how to conduct appraisals. There was a subset of the workforce that was negatively impacted on the Our Futures Restructure. Staff felt that managers didn't have a good feel for what they were being asked to do and saw themselves as doing the equivalent tasks as interims and agency staff who were being more for the same work. This was also something that would need to be tackled.

Ged reflected that this was a very good start. He had conducted three exit interviews in recent weeks, in which all echoed the trauma discussed. Our Futures was a bad experience but not the worst, they felt the past two years were worse. People have seen a range of leaders come and go and were very sceptical about the amount of money being spent on the leaders, so expectations were now high. The brand of CLT needed to be revisited as the brand image was not good. Staff were very concerned about whether they will have a job in a two years' time, which needed to be acknowledged. Ged agreed with Will regarding appraisals. Having the rigour around ensuring they take place would have to be done well. Would need to know had they been done, how many had taken place, which ones had not etc. This data would also need to be presented to the Board and Commissioners. Ged thanked Sue for the work done to date.

Action: Sue to provide Ged with the appraisal data for next Board.

5. Workstream Update: Target Operating Model (Andrew Merritt-Morling)

5.1 Presentation included in the pack was presented to the CLT who approved the direction of travel and the critical path set out. Developing some design principles which were loosely based on the Our Futures Programme.

5.2 Output from the CLT was to start developing the TOM as a substantive by 24 July. Have therefore done an accelerated programme to deliver this. So, there were 9 weeks to deliver. Two SPoCs had been identified, the others needed to be confirmed.

5.3 Workshops being planned. As Is workshops being designed in conjunction with many different colleagues and departments.

5.4 Meeting with the Leader and Deputy Leader to progress this. Would also be working closely with Annabel Scholes and Dave Macnamara to look at the outcomes from the Finance Board.

Risks: capacity, time, capability, and ownership.

5.5 Will Tuckley felt this piece was critical for the organisation in terms of shaping the future of the Council and having a sustainable model for the future. Needed to accept it would get complicated at times because it needed to be a quick process. But at times it wouldn't match, but that would ultimately come together. Ownership would be key. The whole organisation needed to own this, both politically and managerially. Would also need to speak with residents about what this will mean for them and their services. This would all need to be kept in mind when developing the TOM.

5.6 Sarah Wilson felt this linked back to culture and corporate memory. The Ignite Report was at the start of the process was a detailed piece of work, there was ownership, and it was praised by the LGA. Ignite did not win the bid ultimately, Gate 1 did, and that's when things began to break down. Andrew responded that this would be going out to residents and partner engagement in October based on the current timeline.

5.7 Ged concerned about people further down the organisation responding quickly. Ownership would therefore take the form of the TOM Steering Group led by CLT colleagues to demonstrate to their staff that this is a priority, and everyone must get behind it and how the planning was being done for 24/25/26. The goal was to have one single Council view. Codesigning and coproducing the actual questions to focus on in the initial workshops. Needed to find the right people to take part in the workshops and CLT colleagues' help was required to identify them. Will agreed this was right. Alignment with the MTFs was a core priority. Similarly with estates. Needed to provide the operating estate to the operating model and avoid giving conflicting messages. Deemle Brain responded that

needed to have clear business cases to ensure things were financially viable and was working with the finance team to ensure that would be achievable.

Ged said the Childrens Company for example was not separate, but part of the overall programme.

Cllr Chahal was pleased to see this work taking place as it was key to the sustainability of the Authority. The Leader felt it was important to put this into the focus of the residents. There had to be a clear benefit in the eyes of the residents that they were going to get a better outcome.

Ged felt the message had been clearly articulated, the risks had been explored and ownership covered. Ged asked if there was anyone in the CLT that felt this was going to be an issue for them. CLT confirmed agreement. Annabel said she needed to catch up on this but was signed up to it.

6 Workstream Update (ICTD) (Stephen Menzies)

6.1 Digital Strategy

- i. A digital strategy is about an agreed, coherent, concise description of what is meant by digital. It can't be owned by IT; it needs to be owned by CLT. Started having conversations with the TOM team as all timings need to be aligned with the TOM. Currently things that are missing include service and financial planning and how this cross-council initiative for 24/27 will be funded. Also missing is alignment to existing and future service-led initiatives and how this is take account of.

Approach and timelines, need to remember that data is a by-product of the interactions with the residents.

6.2 Data Strategy

- i. Need to understand what resources will be required. Includes a lot of AI. Required to create a professional development framework, including a data academy. Provide options for a data platform. Agree tactical solutions for priority areas such as ASC and Children's.

The ask was between £9-£12m over the next 3 years. However, this was an investment figure for the entire Council.

Dave Hounsell reported there were some elements of the current framework where progress had been made, performance and analysis, using fabric tools like 365. However, it had not been strategic or coherent. It was going to be important to keep some of the people that have been brought in.

Sarah Wilson felt there was something about the alignment of the separate things and staff turnover was an issue. Grant Thornton's report demonstrated that the issue was cultural not the software, so staff not being capable of putting the correct data in etc. needed to find a way of addressing this cultural, training and management issue.

Dave MacNamara was excited about this work but doubted could spend £12m on it. Annabel Scholes agreed that investment would have to be part of the equation for success. Have to make sure the projects were properly funded for success. Cllr Chahal reflected that tech, and IT would be the enabler for the Authority, as demonstrated by the Revs and Bens department and was happy to support where required. Stephen Menzies said there had been a change to the way things were approached, e.g., asking what was required, then choosing the right solution to assist. Cllr Chahal said all IT systems the Council needed to be listed and then check listed again for governance.

Action: Stephen Menzies to produce and share with Cllr Chahal.

Andrew Merritt-Morling said ICT and Digital would only succeed if the departments identified what their processes were, and which could be digitalised. Knowledge management and organisational intelligence would need to be used. The Council would need to get closer to this over the next few years and shift the mindset of the entire organisation.

Stephen Menzies said that local authorities had a different way of getting informed consent, which was very different to the retail sector, for example. Sarah Wilson said there were ethical uses of data and data discrimination to be considered.

- ii. CLT discussion had included commitment to the approach and the process and would be speaking with residents and feeding back to the Board. Will confirmed the CLT were aligned and comfortable with this.

Annabel said there was data library, which needed to be resolved.

Ged reflected that where there is acceptance to invest to save, the problems still needed to be recognised. The IT culture programme needed to contain the right rigour.

7. Transformation Fund Governance: (Dave Hounsell)

7.1 Assurance that the spending for this would come to this Board. Have now got a position on the budget for the transformation programme. The current budgeted fund had more allocated than previously thought. There was an unallocated pot of money for which business cases would need to be submitted in to spend it. Would need to develop the TOM further before committing additional money to various areas.

7.2 LGA Improvement Grant was now being seen as part of this conversation. Dave met with them last week and Will Tuckley would be meeting with them too. The relationship with the LGA would need to be reset going forward. This Board would move forward on this basis. Alex Polak already committed to spend on training with the LGA to deliver it during 2024.

7.3 The budget approved at Full Council in March included a total allocation of £4.0m, split 50:50 over the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years. Subject to approval of the draft outturn, one carry forward focused on ICT spend (£0.974m), and one carry forward focused on Recovery Programme Management Office spend (£2.731m). In total the Council has £7.705m allocated for Transformation, to be spent across 24/25 and 25/26. Additional allocation of £150k each to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care to enable change management to deliver on recovery objectives. This could be used in 2024/25 only.

Ged shared that Denise Murray had expressed concerns which meant that the paper was to be noted but not agreed at this stage. She did not entirely understand how the carry forward in the budget had been calculated and wanted to explore that further. Also the system analyst posts did not seem to be a legitimate charge to this fund. Slough would need to spend more than the budget allocated to deliver the transformation and that was something that would need to be clarified.

Action: Dave Hounsell and Annabel Scholes to review the paper with Denise Murray and report back to the next meeting.

8. Programme Developments: (Deemle Brain)

8.1 Terms of Reference

- i. The terms of reference (TOR) was updated and put into the official template. This will feed into the IRBs which will take place quarterly.
- ii. Forward Plan for June Transformation Board: TOM, customer experience, workforce management and democratic services.
- iii. Project Feedback: Highlight Reports:
 - a. Aim to bring through the dashboard to the monthly Boards with deep dives coming out of it and being managed and monitored for progress as well.
 - b. Governance: **Action:** Agreed that the Annual Governance Report work will be made a more explicit element of the Governance work stream

- c. Evidence Based Decision Making: **Agreed**: The scope of this workstream to be clarified and reported back to the July meeting Dave Hounsell indicated that there were plans to reshape the whole transformation programme building upon the previous IRB arrangements. Ged reflected it was worth remembering the Minister was considering the 5th report with a view to extending the intervention by two further years. There would also be a new set of Directions, so his advice was to align with those.

9. AOB

9.1 None.

(The meeting closed at 13.27)

Date of next meeting

Thursday 20 June 2024 12:00pm