

Transformation Board held on Thursday 24 October 2024 – Minutes

Present:

Attendees:

Commissioners:

Ged Curran, Commissioner, Chair
Denise Murray, Finance Commissioner

Members:

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

Officers:

Sukdave Ghuman, Monitoring Officer
Martin Chalmers, Director Digital, Data & Technology
Jane Senior, Director Commissioning
Sarah Wilson, Assistant Director, Legal & Governance, HB Law
Allison Kennedy, Head of Customer Service
Annabel Scholes, Interim Executive Director of Finance and Commercial (s151 Officer)
Sonia Khan, Director of Strategy, Change & Resident Engagement
Bal Toor, Director of HR & Workforce Transformation
Sue Butcher, Executive Director, Children's Services, Chief Executive Slough Children's Services
Kelly Evans, Deputy Director of Public Health

Secretariat:

Annabelle Lim, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commissioners, minutes

Also Present:

Andrew Merritt-Morling, Recovery Programme Manager
Stephanie Clark, Recovery Programme Manager
Alex Polak, Head of Governance and Scrutiny

Not In Attendance:

Gavin Jones, Lead Commissioner
Will Tuckley, Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Services
Cllr Pavitar Mann, Leader of the Opposition
Cllr Dexter Smith, Leader, with responsibility for Improvement and Recovery
David Coleman-Groom, Director Social Care, Adults
Chris Holme, Deputy S151 Officer
Mandy Brown, Chief of Staff to the Commissioners
Deemple Brain, Chief Executive's Office
Pat Hayes, Executive Director Regeneration, Housing & Environment

Minutes

1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest:

1.1 None.

2. Minutes and Actions from previous Transformation Board:

2.1 Minutes from the meeting held on 26 September 2024 were approved. Subject to the minister's decision on the future of the intervention following the representation period, commissioners will be looking to review the governance of the boards moving forward, including evaluating the core members and attendees.

3. Culture Programme Reset: (Sonia Khan)

3.1 Sonia said it was an iterative process and since submitting the paper, they had received the letter from commissioners on the action needed. They are conscious a culture programme was in place from 2022/23, however the scope was too broad and wasn't happening at the right time to facilitate its implementation. The current vision is to become an employer of choice but with a need to focus on residents' experience of the culture change. Secondly, it needs to reflect the breadth and depth of the culture change that needs to happen. An indicative allocation of resource has been given. HR has been linking in and are aligned that the PID needs development. Their renewed appraisal process has been receiving positive feedback. Alex emphasised that members were out of scope and so they were ensuring join up.

3.2 Sarah said they need to be clear that it's about resetting relationships at staff level - although culture is all encompassing, it is better to be narrow and deliver than be overambitious and not deliver. Sonia emphasised that ultimately, they need to think about how the change is experienced by our residents and that will happen over time – don't want to risk thinking they have changed if residents have a differing view.

3.3 Cllr Chahal said that the culture is not clear, and messaging could be misunderstood. Officers should leverage their members. They cannot force a culture or build one without understanding what they want to build. It was agreed the PID would make this clearer and it would be vital in considering the complexity of Slough's cultural multiplicity. Attendees discussed the need to acknowledge the more difficult areas of culture and competing responsibilities. Several agreed that the project rooms environment of collaboration and honesty was great and one to be reproduced.

3.4 Denise said they could have a long-term vision and then a more short-term plan – a roadmap to the culture programme with mapped milestones they want to achieve. There is a need to consider the strategic EDI.

Action: Sonia to make the strategic EDI more explicit in the culture programme reset (how to foster it, blend into the programme, make it more visible).

3.5 All discussed the need for the response to commissioners and council letters to be balanced and highlighted the recent positive example of the Chief Exec's response to the external auditors VfM report, particularly wording around permission culture.

4. Transformation Fund Update: (Sonia Khan)

4.1 Sonia said it was to share openly the working through with CLT around how they can be strategic and get the balance right between resources on delivering future operating model and overall direction of challenge. £2m is still allocated for 25/26. She spoke through the proposals in the paper.

4.2 Regarding a strategic partner, they are recommending that they have a programme director that would work to assess those opportunities. £0.5m is set aside for working with the strategic partner, which they understand is not viable but is seen as leverage and proportional to make.

4.3 Alex queried how PMO activity would map onto the different workstreams of the programme. Sonia confirmed that they have aligned improvement and recovery PMO to the 3 pillars. The issue is that they haven't got consistency of support under programme management. It's about creating greater consistency but also creating that resource.

4.4 Denise indicated that transformation of this scale always needs investment and asked what the larger programme of transformation funds was including around technology. Annabel said that there was a need to get foundations in place of what they need and then to drive delivery - they know they need to put some holding positions in MTFS. Martin said work was underway with the 3 teams proposed in paper and there was a need to make sure they understand problems that they need to solve and the order in which to resolve them. The challenges with data have been technical, skill and process - need to understand the balance to put in a solution. Sonia explained that the paper proposal focused on the corporate centre and conversations to go further continue.

4.5 Ged said it was useful to see thinking developing and that much of the work needs to be done within in existing resource, but they won't be able to as skills required don't currently exist. He emphasised that commissioners have been clear on the need for strategic partner, which will be more than the £0.5m indicated.

5. Target Operating Model update: (Sonia Khan and Andrew Merritt-Morling)

5.1 Sonia confirmed the paper going to Cabinet is refined version of paper shared in September's Transformation Board and that they want to test the principles. Review points will be layered over.

5.2 Andrew spoke through the documents – the critical path for the next 15 months and then the more granular plan. He indicated things have already significantly changed since papers were submitted. He spoke through the stakeholder engagement plan indicating that all engagement sessions are expected to run from 4-11 November so that they can identify what should go to Cabinet for the 18 November. He noted Jane's expression that attendees of the co-production meeting on 12 Nov would like to be involved.

5.3 Sukdave reflected on group leaders' reception of the TOM, citing the wide scope of resulting interpretations. Ged agreed that there was a risk people would be expecting the new TOM rather than just the principles.

5.4 Denise highlighted that given it's an iterative process, they need to figure out what to present first. Further, there was no reference to what they would stop doing, which is often the most challenging. They need to further consider what smaller, leaner means and how they/members will communicate that.

5.5 Ged queried the robustness of the system, drawing attention to the front door review including its timescale and resourcing. He indicated it was not clear how they would choose who receives investment first. Sonia accepted the point and agreed it was not reflected fully in plans. On the engagement side, Sonia said they wanted to speak to stakeholders before Cabinet to ensure they were part of solution. On the MTFS, they want to be fully aligned by 2026 and would be working with Annabel's team.

6. Programme Update: (Stephanie Clark)

6.1 Stephanie explained that given the state of flux, much had changed since the papers were submitted.

Action: Annabelle Lim to ensure Programme Update item is first discussion item on the next Transformation Board agenda.

7. AOB

7.1 None.

(The meeting closed at 15:00)

Date of next meeting

Thursday 28 November 2024 13:30pm in the Council Chambers.