

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

7 OCTOBER 2013

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE AGILE COUNCIL

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to examine the Council's position in relation to PWC analysis of the steps a Council may need to take to meet the current financial, social, and technical change, to "create and operate a change ready organisation".

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- 2.1 **The work of the T3 attached in the Appendix to this report be noted.**
- 2.2 **A six monthly review of the Council's positioning in relation to these challenges be made to the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 "The Agile Council" is an approach to delivery promoted by PWC, an international financial and management consultancy business. The company with its extensive work with local government and the public sector could suggest that it has a good understanding of the context within which local government is working but also of the challenges faced by councils both internally in modernisation and externally within this context. The work has also been linked more recently to the Local Government Association's document entitled "Rewiring Public Services". It has been suggested that this approach if considered and developed can lead to a co-ordinated approach to effective, efficient and more economic service delivery using all tools available not only relying on reductions in specification or services.
- 3.2 Members will find attached in the Appendix to this report the work of the T3 (third tier officers) carried out both individually and collectively, to place the Council's work in recent years in relation to the propositions set out within the "Agile Council" approach. Members will note that the Council can track a significant history of service redesign, modernisation of service and service rationalisation based on up to date processes and customer requirements, together with an increasing use of customer insight and process redesign to bring further efficiencies into the Council's service delivery.
- 3.3 The Council had started its journey to radically change and develop service delivery with the major exercise of service redesign in 2005/2007. Full implementation of this was interrupted by the major fire to the Council's headquarters. However, the Council grasped the opportunity created by the crisis to radically develop an approach to co-located service delivery across a range of partners, which not only provided for savings in space utilised but also created an environment in which service delivery could be better focussed to the needs of the customers and clients of the organisations which will, and has, led to further service redesign and improvement of processes between organisations to the benefit of the customer and ultimately the public purse. It is accepted that this is an on-going process which not only needs to continue to meet the current challenges but also to improve service delivery for local people. Change, development and improvement is therefore a

constant and the Council is developing its approach in using many of the tools and approaches as set out within the “Agile Council” proposals to move forward. The Council has a developing programme of use of insight and evaluation of its activities to influence future service provision. The detailed analysis of the Universal Credit Pilot Cohort has led to a variety of changes in the Council’s approach and those of partners to ensure outreach to those most vulnerable and affected by the current welfare reform changes is effective and offers the support required. Examples of this include the Welfare Benefits Conference, the Job Fairs and “job ready” work programmes.

- 3.4 This is further shown in the partnership work at the Children’s Centres and in relation to the development of Supporting Leicestershire Families which was built largely on the Family Intervention Project of the Council. The development and integration of the supported services from the Council provided in the Children Centre to families was one of the areas much praised within the recent Ofsted report.
- 3.5 The Council has also used its approach to transformation to develop and modernise the Council to be reflective of customer needs and wishes. Some commentators state that a mere 5% of delivery is geared towards customer needs and wishes, further that a 35% is focussed on the organisational requirements to deliver and within the other activity there is scope for process and service improvement in the context of understanding needs. Whilst this is only one commentators view on delivery, be it in public or private sector, it is an area of activity for the Council with the Phase 2 work of the Transformation Programme when it focuses on the selected 15 processes to remove waste and increase productivity. It is suggested to members that there will be extensive learning for the Council as Phase 2 of the programme develops which will be able to be utilised to different degrees in other service areas. Productivity will become increasingly important, as the PWC model suggests as organisations contract.
- 3.6 It is accepted that change of this nature and gaining “ownership” from staff can be a challenge both for the staff concerned and for management. The Council has a good record of implementing change of this nature and engaging and involving the staff in redesign and change proposals. The results of the annual staff survey indicate a good level of staff engagement and commitment to innovation and change. However, often it is difficult to meet the aspirations of staff in relation to career development although opportunity for increased experience and later advancement is present when circumstances allow.
- 3.7 The open support for the “Agile Council” approach will give a useful benchmark and offer a guide to the Council in terms of its further work and evaluation of its impact. It is accepted that this is closely linked to the service and financial challenges of the Council and therefore it is suggested to members that a six monthly report/evaluation of the Council’s development of its “Agile” approach be made to the Budget and Strategic Planning Working Group led through the T3 Group. As required reports will be made to this Committee either through the mechanism of the regular Corporate Issues report or as an individual report.

3.8 **Implications**

3.9 **Policy**

The Council has within its priorities the requirement for a Well Run Council which sits above the work of the Transformation Programme and general service delivery/improvement. Assessment against the “Agile Council” approach will sit within this Council priority.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no particular financial implications arising from this report, however, any individual activities or projects will be independently financially assessed. It is expected within the Council's Mid Term Financial Strategy that the approach to transformation of service delivery particularly that utilising modern technology will produce significant savings for the Council.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

5.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

6.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

6.1 There are no particular implications arising from the report.

7.0 EQUALITIES

7.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report.

8.0 RISKS

8.1 There are no specific risks to be identified in relation to these items, at this time.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

9.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

10.0 CONSULTATION

10.1 Consultation and engagement has taken place with T3 who have led on the Council's understanding and response to this approach.

11.0 WARDS AFFECTED

11.1 All.

Contact Officer Lynn Aisbett, Chief Executive

Date: 2 October 2013

Appendices : Response of T3 to Agile Council Report: Appendix 1

Background Papers: Relevant T3 Notes
T3 Responses

Reference : X : Committees\2013 14\PFA