Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	**Cabinet**	**Date:**	**13 October 2021**
Subject:	**Together Gloucester 2 – Programme Review**		
Report Of:	**Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources**		
Wards Affected:	**All**		
Key Decision:	**No**	**Budget/Policy Framework:**	**No**
Contact Officer:	**Bob O'Brien, Transformation and Commercialisation Manager**		
	Email: bob.o'brien@gloucester.gov.uk	**Tel: 396110**	
Appendices:	**None**		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0   Purpose of Report

1.1   To provide an update and summary of the work undertaken by the City Council as part of the Together Gloucester Transformation Programme – Phases 1 and 2. To formally close Together Gloucester Phase 2 and to note that capacity has been created to support ongoing transformation work in support of the Council's priorities and objectives

2.0   Recommendations

2.1   Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

(1)   the information set out in this report be noted

(2)   the action taken by the Council as part of the Together Gloucester Transformation process be welcomed and endorsed

(3)   the closure of Together Gloucester Phase 2 and the incorporation of future work into ongoing "business as usual" be formally endorsed.

3.0   Background and Key Issues

3.1   Together Gloucester Phase 1

3.2   In July 2016, the City Council brought together a group of nine volunteer staff with the aim to redesign the organisation. They were given a design brief which asked them to start with a blank sheet of paper and to design an organisational structure capable of delivering Council priorities for the next four years. We asked for the new Council structure to dismantle organisational silos, promote channel shift so that people can get more information and engage better with the Council online, embrace our principles of asset based community development and to save at least £1million from our current staffing budget.

3.3   We asked the team to be radical and innovative in their approach and apply the following design principles:

- Delivering at least a £1 million budget saving from the Council's salary budget of approximately £8m
- Reduction in the compartmentalisation (or "silos") delivering Council services
- Delivering priorities in the emerging Council Plan
- Implementation of generic job roles and descriptions while maximising multiskilling
- Cross-organisational style management using project teams to respond flexibly to future demand and priorities
- Embedding the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) in the way the Council operates, enabling individuals and communities
- Embrace channel shift opportunities
- Foster a more commercial approach to service delivery
- Promote new ways of working: empowered staff, home working, hot-desking, remote/mobile working and opportunities for co-locating
- Aspire to downsize to one warehouse
- Retain and recruit staff with the right attitudes, skills and competencies

3.4   The transformation project was called 'Together Gloucester' and its proposals were implemented during the Summer of 2017.

3.5   The project streamlined the Council Corporate Plan into four key objectives and created four new service areas, Place, Culture, Communities and Policy & Resources. Structural hierarchies were flattened, teams were made more cross-cutting and job roles were made more generic. The staff establishment reduced by 60 posts. Through vacancies, natural turnover and voluntary leavers, compulsory redundancies were kept to just 9 people.

3.6   Together Gloucester achieved savings from the staffing budget of £1.23m per annum from 1st June 2017. To date, Together Gloucester has saved around £4.92m. Over a 10-year period this represents a cumulative £12.30m saving.

3.7   When Together Gloucester was implemented it was made clear that the Council was not expecting the same workloads, delivered in the same ways to be delivered by smaller teams, and when we launched the new structures in June 2017, we invited staff to ask the 'why questions' "Why do we do that?" "Why don't we do this instead?"

3.8   Whilst Together Gloucester delivered on many of the original design principles feedback from the staff survey (October 2017) and the LGA peer challenge (November 2017) highlighted that, to make the most of the opportunities to transform how Gloucester City Council delivered services, we needed to provide support and capacity for teams struggling with how to change their processes and systems to do things differently and, in some cases, to 'stop doing things'.

3.9   Together Gloucester Phase 2

3.10   In September 2018, following a period of review and working with external change experts - Ignite, the Council agreed to launch Together Gloucester Phase 2.

3.11 Together Gloucester 2 (TG2) comprised seven distinct but related workstreams:

1. **Design and Benefit Management** – providing the groundwork for a successful change programme including a Transformation Board, a Benefits Management Plan, procurement processes and recruiting, training and coaching key staff.

2. **Process Redesign** – A systematic review of the Council's 400+ processes to identify opportunities to eliminate redundant processes, simplify or streamline where necessary and automate where possible. Ignite helped the Council identify 180 high volume, high value processes which needed priority review.

3. **Technology and Systems** – this workstream focussed on creating an integrated IT strategy, approach and implementation plan to equip the City Council with the technology necessary to support new methods of service delivery.

4. **Culture, Change and Engagement** – A council-wide programme of awareness raising, capability improvement, training, change preparedness, and the co-ordination and flexible management of making change happen designed to leave a lasting legacy of how to manage change in the future.

5. **Strategy, Performance and Governance** – A work package intended to strengthen the City Council's key strategy, performance and governance activities to enhance the Council's ability to address existing challenges and future opportunities.

6. **Commercialisation and Commissioning** – In 2018 the City Council had budgeted service expenditure of £20.6m (excluding housing benefit payments), £7m of this was staff expenditure. The commercialisation workstream was focussed on driving value for money through opportunities in the other £13.6m of expenditure.

7. **Accommodation** – The Council planned to relocate from its offices in Gloucester Docks into accommodation in Shire Hall. This workstream was about ensuring that the new accommodation met the Council's transformational aspirations around more agile working, was integrated into the IT transformation, enabled and drove service redesign and new ways of working, realised the savings expected from the move out of HKP and promoted and facilitated greater collaboration with the County Council.

3.11 TG2 was managed by the Council's Customer Service and Transformation Manager and a team of Business Analysts seconded from their day jobs and trained in systems redesign. Fixed term and agency staff and support from Ignite provided additional capacity during the implementation of TG2 during 2018/19.

3.12 The estimated cost of the TG2 Programme was £1.65m which included £0.9m investment in new IT. For further information on the TG2 Programme please see [Cabinet Report dated 12 September 2018](#)

3.13 TG2 Actions

a. **Design and Benefit Management** - A Programme Board and governance arrangements were setup to provide clear direction and monitoring of TG2. The programme team was designed and recruited in Autumn 2018 alongside training and coaching of key staff. A wider learning and development programme was developed for leadership as part of the Culture, Change and Engagement workstream. The programme vision and workstreams were documented, and a benefits management plan produced. This included the identification of six broad clusters of benefit: increased income; reduced expenditure; more efficient business processes; better use of resources; improved channel mix and higher customer satisfaction. Programme templates were developed to support the procurement activity and reporting processes amongst other things.

b. **Process Redesign** - We trained up a team of 6 in-house business analysts from across the organisation and, in collaboration with the relevant service areas, conducted a review of 140 council processes. 'As is' and 'to be' process maps were created alongside sets of detailed business requirements for each process. This review resulted in business and technology actions that were taken forward to transform our processes, with a focus on the end to end customer journey. In order to build service redesign capability, a series of virtual 'show and tells' and web editor training sessions were used to share tips and tricks and share simple tool-kits that people could take away and use within their teams - for example, a content design toolkit for web editors.

c. **Technology and Systems –** A comprehensive investment was made to achieve a step-change in the Council's technology and systems. Brand new laptops with Skype (and later Teams) telephony allowed staff to work more flexibly from the most appropriate location and a new digital platform and contact centre was procured to allow customers to self-serve and improve the customer experience. Contact Centre functionality was delivered for Housing and Revenues and Benefits for the first time, providing quality management information and customer insight to inform future improvements. And redesigned processes were launched on the digital platform across a range of council services from council tax and benefits to licensing and street scene. We're now refining and improving services based on customer feedback, building a culture of learning and continuous improvement.

Improvements were identified and made to our website to improve accessibility, enhance customer journeys, and ensure that users trusted that they were interacting with the council. We developed a style guide based on Government best practice and rebranded third party micro-sites to ensure consistency across services.

d. **Culture, Change and Engagement** – A network of change champions was established with representatives from across the organisation at all levels. It worked alongside Transition planning activity with the Gloucester Management Team to agree our vision and target culture. Change Champions were advocates for change within their teams but also acted as early warning indicators if we hadn't got something right, and came together regularly to help shape the transformation and work through issues. A communication plan was developed and implemented encompassing internal and external communications and we launched new communications products such as TG2 Flash (a monthly digital newsletter) and

virtual 'show and tells'. These were designed to ensure everyone understood why we needed to change, communicate what was changing, and share progress. Communication campaigns were designed for the council tax billing cycle to promote paperless billing, increase the percentage of direct debit customers and encourage residents to sign up to our 'My Gloucester' online services. We built change capability through the change network and by incorporating change leadership training into a relaunched management development programme. A 6-monthly change survey was created alongside an annual staff survey in order to collect and review staff feedback. We used this to develop and implement an annual culture action plan which ensured we were on the right track to achieving our target culture. And we made good on our promise to create an organisation that encouraged flexible working by launching an agile working policy that trusted staff to choose how and where they worked based on the needs of our customers and the Council.

e. **Strategy, Performance and Governance** – A review of the Council's policies and strategies was conducted and four theme strategies created, aligned to our key priorities. Improvements were made to the service planning cycle in order to better connect personal objectives to the council plan. And the Council's first Customer Engagement Strategy was developed and used to guide the customer-facing transformation and channel shift activity. In order to create more policy and strategy capacity and help build a performance culture, two new posts were created and filled; Strategy and Policy Officer and Performance Improvement Officer. These roles have already had an impact.

f. **Commercialisation and Commissioning** – A programme to manage the delivery of four significant service contract renewals between 2019 and 2024 was developed (Waste/Street Scene (2022), Information Technology (2022), Revenues and Benefits (2021) and Leisure Services (2023)). As part of our options appraisal work for our Waste, Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance services, we have undertaken a comprehensive digital mapping exercise of our grounds maintenance assets. This will allow us to drive future enhancements to our digital services as well as improve operational performance. Work also commenced to map the benefits of the Council's substantial Property Investment Strategy and review the income potential of the City's investment in commercial businesses, with a report due this autumn.

g. **Accommodation** – the Council moved from underoccupied accommodation on 13 floors spread across 3 warehouses at Gloucester Docks to a single floor, open plan office space in Shire Hall, Gloucester. The new accommodation was deigned to accommodate 80% of office-based staff and was laid out to offer "hot desk" facilities for staff equipped with laptops and software-based telephony. All staff could work from any workstation or from home or other off-site locations. The accommodation move facilitated the Council's "Agile" approach to work environments and provided a sound platform for the Council's response to the 2020/21 Coronavirus Pandemic.

At the same time the Council moved its customer service activities into a new City Centre premises in Westgate Street called The Gateway.

The move out of Gloucester Docks released the property for sale to generate a capital receipt, enable the further regeneration of Gloucester Docks and facilitate the development of Gloucester's first, city centre 4-star hotel.

4.0 **Impact**

4.1 <u>Customer</u>

4.2 70+ new digital services have been launched on our new digital platform across a range of council services. These new services provide:
- The ability for customers to self-serve 24/7 from any location and from a device of their choosing
- Increased visibility of the end-to-end customer journey for customers and staff; users can track their cases via their My Gloucester account and receive notifications about the progress of their requests
- Reduced back office processing times for a number of services, with the opportunity to further streamline in future iterations
- Valuable customer insight to help inform future enhancements and improve operational services

4.3 Over 15,000 users have registered since launch, with many more choosing to use services anonymously. Every time our digital services are used we invite user feedback. Over 82% of users rate our digital services 4 or 5 stars out of 5 and we use the valuable feedback to improve services.

4.4 Since rollout of our digital platform we have been better able to record 'one and done' interactions and we're starting to use that information to identify opportunities to make improvements. In addition to the digital services feedback, we regularly invite customers to complete a customer survey. This has consistently shown that customers would use an online process in the future. Further indication of improved customer satisfaction comes from the number of complaints which has remained low and an increase in the number of compliments being received.

4.5 Our website redesign and style guide has helped transform user journeys, making information and services more discoverable, accessible, and consistent. Between Q3 2019 and Q4 2020 it climbed 120 places on a public sector benchmarking site, securing improved overall ratings. The site was assessed on accessibility, quality and performance.

4.6 Despite the challenges of the pandemic which saw some residents cancelling direct debits, the percentage of customers on a direct debit plan for council tax has increased from 63% in March 2020 to 65% in June 2020 before rising to 68% in June 2021. We've also seen the number of users choosing paperless billing increase from 382 in June 2020 to 3,585 in June 2021 and will work to increase this in the coming year, supporting the Council's climate goals.

4.7 In July 2021 a new customer engagement platform, GovDelivery, launched with 8 topics at go live. This will better connect people to what's happening in Gloucester and provide further opportunities for enhancing digital services.

4.8 Finally, the Council's transformation achievements were recognised at the 2021 Granicus Digital Public Sector Awards where we were winners or finalists in three categories:
- **FINALIST: Digital Achievement Award (Capstone Award)** – "For organisations delivering impressive outcomes through digital tools & tactics"

- **FINALIST: Modern Service Delivery Award** – "For an organisation that ushered in a new era of service delivery for citizens"
- **WINNER: Service Designer/Implementer of the Year** – "For making a remarkable difference for implementing a new digital service" and individuals whose "leadership, vision, creativity, & dedication changes lives"

4.9   Staff

4.10   Staff Surveys have been undertaken every year since 2017. The number of staff responding to the survey is high (86% in 2020) and the data shows the positive impact of TG2.

4.11   Comparing the pre-TG2 2017 results with the post-TG2 2020 results shows that the number of staff who believed that the organisation valued innovation and creativity rose from 50% to 78%. The view that ideas for improvement were encouraged and considered rose from 55% to 84%. Staff feeling a sense of personal accomplishment rose from 48% to 86%. Satisfaction in the provision of training rose from 40% to 76% and the provision of the right equipment for work rose from 42% to 70%. Although the question changed slightly over the period, in 2017 only 20% of staff felt that change was well handled, whereas in 2020 89% of staff said that the City Council had the capability for change and 86% said we had the capacity to deliver it. Confidence in the Senior Management Team (SMT) rose from 48% to 84% and the view that SMT communicates well rose from 39% to 84%. In 2017 60% of staff felt proud to work for the City Council, in 2020 this rose to 92%.

4.12   As supported by the staff survey results, implementation of the Together Gloucester Transformation Programme has allowed us to grow change capability and capacity internally. We have developed change leadership skills across the Gloucester Management Team and raised awareness across the organisation with a fully engaged Change Champion network. Business Analysts, bringing a wealth of service knowledge from across the organisation, have developed a range of transformation and service redesign skills from workshop facilitation, process mapping, and creation of user stories and detailed business requirements, to form building, user testing, training and rollout.

4.13   The move to an appointment system for Housing and Customer Services and launch of The Gateway has improved our ability to shape and manage demand. This has been supported by investment in a new digital contact centre, bringing contact centre functionality to Housing, Revenues and Benefits teams for the first time. This has eliminated the risk of losing calls through poor hunt group processes by providing demand and queue management capability alongside real time information on calls. Teams are now using this data (real time and historical) to analyse trends and maximise resource planning.

4.14   The new digital contact centre can be staffed from any location providing much needed flexibility which allowed us to quickly switch to home working during the pandemic. It has also helped us promote our digital services as they've gone live or respond to unexpected issues with time sensitive voice messages. These have helped reduce peaks in demand whilst also encouraging channel shift. It has put teams in Customer Services, Housing and Revenues and Benefits in direct control to adapt these when needed. And our move away from legacy systems and

alignment onto a single digital platform that is more connected to our users is helping to provide a single, consolidated view of work.

4.15   There is also evidence of a more mature performance culture emerging; the technology and systems workstream has provided systems with the capability to better record customer insight and performance metrics. These are being used to inform changes to digital services, highlight operational issues and conduct individual performance reviews. Customer Services are using Contact Centre and Digital Platform data to identify training opportunities and encourage a healthy performance culture of continuous improvement in the team.

4.16   The new Strategy and Policy Officer and Performance Improvement Officer posts have acted as a catalyst for this maturing performance culture by working with teams and providing much needed corporate capacity. In addition to this dedicated capacity for policy and performance work, the council have been able to use it to respond quickly to changing corporate priorities and projects that we might otherwise have struggled to resource. Some examples include:
•   Leadership and development of the service planning process, including support and challenge to service managers
•   Development of the measuring and monitoring of success through data and the corporate performance report
•   Introduction of performance clinics to highlight problem areas and drive improvement activity
•   Development and oversight of the policy review schedule, including support for individual policy review processes
•   Leading role in the Equalities Working Group
•   Leading role in the Commission to Review Race Relations
•   Covid19 Data Dashboard
•   Project governance support for the Barton and Tredworth improvement programme

5.0   Business as Usual

5.1   Together Gloucester 2 was intended to run to April 2020. As a consequence of delays in the procurement of aspects of the technology platforms, unexpected absence, and disruption caused by the pandemic, the Council agreed to extend the project to April 2021 with a reduced team of seconded business analysts. This extension has allowed progress on systems redesign and implementation to continue and provided essential capacity to support the Council's response to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic and the urgent establishment of a community support hub.

5.2   In the spring of 2021 the Council reallocated resources released as a consequence of the work of the Transformation Team in order to retain the Transformation and Commercial Manager role and make permanent two full-time business analyst posts. The intent behind this move is to create a small, permanent in-house capacity to support ongoing organisational and systems transformation in support of the Council's priorities and objectives. This will ensure that we continue to build digital services that meet our customer journey aspirations and have the capability and capacity to respond to new opportunities, for example the adoption of in-cab technology and automation for waste services on transition to UBICO. It also provides the capacity to oversee the Council's commissioning programme, foster a

more commercial approach to future projects, and develop robust commercial reporting to ensure best value. Finally, it gives us the ability to use customer and staff feedback to iterate service improvements, delivering benefits for customers and staff. A template has been developed to do this in a structured way.

6.0   Social Value Considerations

6.1   The Council recognises it has a role to play in generating social value for local people through its day-to-day activities. Through the implementation of the Social Value Policy we look to integrate economic, environmental and social sustainability into our work.

6.2   The Together Gloucester 2 Programme has looked across the board to increase efficiency without compromising quality. This has taken many forms but notably the move to online services creates benefits across all three aspects; it enables the Council to save Officer time as they are not handling a large number of straight forward enquiries (economic), it reduces paper waste (environmental) and it allows Officers to focus their time on more vulnerable customers who need additional support (social).

7.0   Environmental Implications

7.1   The Council's focus on maximising the opportunities for agile working offers the potential to make a real contribution to delivering the City Council's Climate Action Plan

8.0   Alternative Options Considered

8.1   This report is an update report. Alternatives to the actions set out in this report were considered at the time that Together Gloucester 1 and 2 were commissioned.

9.0   Financial Implications

9.1   None arising from the content of this report.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

10.0   Legal Implications

10.1   None arising from the content of this report.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

11.0   Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1   None arising from the content of this report.

12.0   People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1   None arising from the content of this report.

13.0   Community Safety Implications

13.1   None arising from the content of this report.

14.0   Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1   None arising from the content of this report.

Background Documents: None