

Change Programme Priorities

Report of the Director of Transformation and Business Services

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

That the Cabinet agree to the proposals set out in section 3 of this report as follows:

- (a) The Introduction of the Council's operating principles.
- (b) The Change and improvement programme priorities.
- (c) The Governance Board structure for leading change, performance and improvement.

2) Introduction

This report sets out a framework to deliver change, improvement and performance across the Council which will strengthen governance and focus resources to lead the change agenda and operate more effectively as 'One Council'.

It reflects the need to deliver change and improvement at pace and builds on the work over the last year to reset the Council, through a corporate plan focussed on six key areas set out at Cabinet in July 2023, a Sustainable and Stronger Council approach endorsed in September 2023 and agreement to the principles of a performance management framework in December 2023.

An update on the Council's Performance Framework will be presented to Cabinet in May 2024.

The operating principles set out below provide a strong foundation for the Council to be high performing, sustainable and future focussed.

In December 2023 the Council were successful in receiving support from Local Partnerships funded through the Local Government Association (LGA) to inform and develop transformation expertise which has informed the development of the Council's change programme priorities and its approach to delivering change, alongside peer support and challenge from other County Councils.

3) Proposal

Six key operating principles will frame the Council's change and improvement agenda and the programmes of work will be monitored and assessed using these principles with a clear Board reporting structure to monitor performance in each area. The principles and priorities are set out visually in appendix 1 of this report.

Operating Principles:

Governance and assurance – ensuring grip and control aligned to the Council's Governance review, ensuring that the Council is resilient, safe and compliant.

Financial Sustainability – to ensure delivery of the Council's agreed savings plans, monitor spend and evidence best value in everything we do.

People First – embedding the Council's People Strategy to create a culture that supports and enables high performance, helping us to become a trusted, inclusive and innovative council.

Partnerships – collaborating with partners in health, other local authorities and blue light services as well as Central Government departments and the private sector. Being clear on roles and accountability with our partners.

Digital self-service – to maximise the use of technology to improve access to services and information, to reduce cost and operate more efficiently.

Evidence informed – using data to inform decision making and improve performance linked to the development and introduction of the corporate performance framework approved by Cabinet in December 2023.

Change Programme Priorities:

Children's Services Improvement – Devon Children's Services Improvement Plan
[Ofsted report](#)

Integrated Adult Social Care redesign – working closely with health partners to improve efficiency across the health and social care system.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Safety Valve – ensuring that the Council meet the Safety Valve milestones agreed with government.

Climate change, Innovation and Infrastructure – seeking out good practice and funding opportunities, making best use of, and improving the County's roads and infrastructure. Reducing the Council's property footprint and making more effective use of buildings.

Systems Replacement – critical IT system replacement including Finance, Adult Services, Children’s Services and Public Health Nursing and embedding change to reduce cost and be more efficient.

Each priority programme will have agreed projects and an Assistant/Deputy director ‘sponsor’ for each programme will be the ‘change lead’ with staff from across the organisation as part of the wider leadership team cohort helping to deliver change ensuring effective challenge, oversight and reporting are in place with the support of the Strategic Leadership Team.

This will require the Council to work in a different way and, aligned to how Strategic Leadership Team are currently operating, the Change Programme cohort will work together collaboratively on a weekly basis to focus on the Council’s Change agenda.

Alongside this the Council will need to continue to review how staff are working to ensure there is a whole Council approach to improvement and change, that staff are working on the right things and are working to support the areas of greatest impact. As part of this, the work to embed an ‘outward mindset’ to build strong relationships, foster greater trust and collaboration and achieve improved outcomes will be a critical success factor.

Governance and oversight

Aligned to the proposed Change Programme priorities, three Change Boards (set out in appendix 2 below), chaired by members of Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) will operate on a weekly basis in addition to a weekly budget focus meeting with a wider leadership team cohort.

Directorate Plans will be monitored through the Change Boards to ensure that there is oversight of performance within each directorate.

Communication

The scale and pace of change requires the Council’s approach to communicating with our communities, elected members, MPs, partner organisations and staff to be more effective. It has also become evident in the current climate that there are issues which attract a large amount of public interest which the Council’s approach to communication needs to reflect.

External engagement, support and the wellbeing of all elected members and staff is a theme which has been raised through Member Days, engagement with Group Leaders, staff, the Police Authority and by Devon MPs in the context of local and national issues and growing concerns around safety and unacceptable behaviour.

In response to this, work is underway to develop a fit for purpose and agile approach for internal and external communication.

4) Options / Alternatives

A ‘no-change’ option was considered but discounted on the basis it would not enable the required focus, pace or accountability in the delivery of change across the Council.

5) Strategic Plan

The proposal set out in this report reflects and aligns to the vision and priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 (www.devon.gov.uk/strategic-plan).

Specifically, the proposals reflect the commitment: 'Transform the way we work – to make us more resilient and adaptable'.

6) Financial Considerations

The proposals set out in this report will be met within existing resources. Where it is identified that additional resources (including funding) are required, the business case and any funding requirements would be considered through the agreed approval processes and as part of the new SLT Change Programme Board structure.

7) Legal Considerations

All Councils have a general duty of best value to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

8) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

There are no direct environmental impact considerations because of this proposal, however, where specific projects forming part of the Change Programmes priorities will have an impact, an impact assessment will be carried out.

9) Equality Considerations

Where relevant, in coming to a decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

The exact nature of the anticipated or known impact will be set out at project level and will be made available on the Council's website: www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published.

10) Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken / included to safeguard the Council's position.

11) Summary

This report sets out a proposal for how the Council will be ambitious in delivering change, and the principles it will adopt to become a high performing and sustainable authority.

Name Matthew Jones Director of Transformation and Business Services

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Policy, Corporate and Asset Management: Councillor John Hart

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Reports mentioned in section 2 of this report are published on the Council's Website at: democracy.devon.gov.uk

Contact for enquiries:

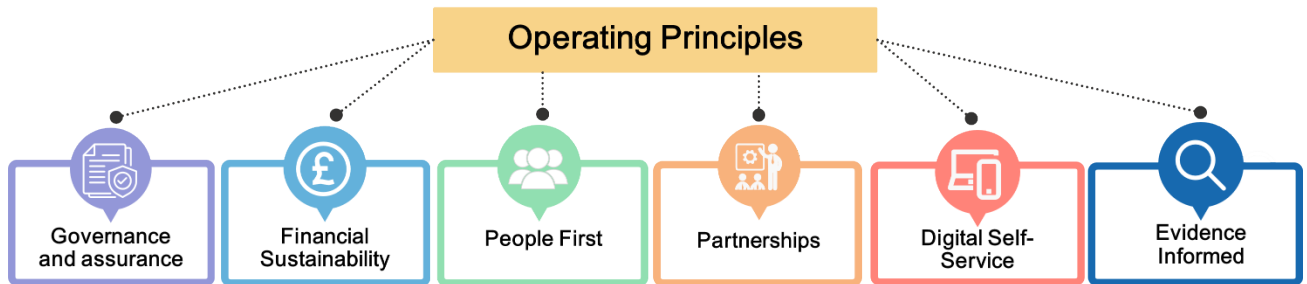
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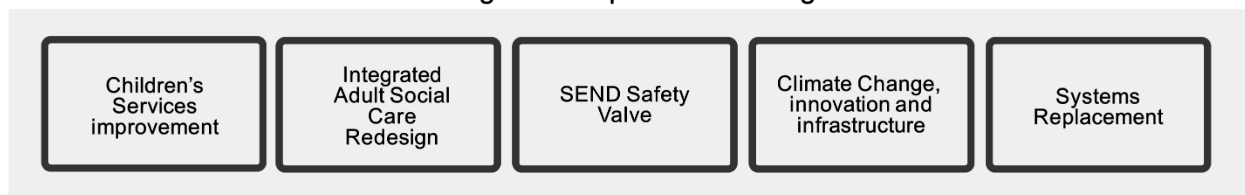
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Appendix 1

DCC – High Performing and Sustainable



Change and Improvement Programme



Appendix 2

Working Together – Change, Performance and Improvement Boards

