



Committee and date
Council

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Report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document presents a selection of the work undertaken by Corporate Support services and details some of the aims and objectives for the future.
- 1.2 Throughout 2018 Transformation has been a focus of activity with designing and testing the new systems. As the systems go live our focus will move to process design to ensure we maximise the productivity and efficiency gains afforded by the new technologies.

2.0 Organisation Development

2.1 Upskill Shropshire (Apprenticeships)

The number of apprentices continues to increase utilising the funds from the apprenticeship levy. At the end of September, 127 applications were received and so far 56 have converted into active apprenticeship starts. Funds are available for a period of 2 years (from 1 April 2017) and current projections suggest that all funds will be utilised. The current contract with providers on the framework expires 31st March 2019 and procurement will start in the new year.

2.2 Leadership Programme

The next round of Leadership Programmes commenced in September 2018 – 16 Senior Leaders and 36 Future Leaders are attending programmes focusing on the challenges and changes ahead for the authority. The programme content covers the key drivers of change: Digital Transformation, Commercialism, Agile and Mobile Working and Customer Experience taking account of external influences around national/local politics and enhancing Economic Growth for the county.

2.3 Commercial Opportunities

Shropshire HR is driving the authority's commercial agenda forward. In 2018, Shropshire HR has continued to develop its progressive marketing and engagement strategy, with impressive results. Not only has the service acquired a number of new customers in the care, private, and public sector, it has also proactively pitched for and secured lucrative HR consultancy projects.

Shropshire HR's success in 2018 has been made possible by adopting a dynamic marketing strategy. This strategy has led to the development of close links with key stakeholders, such as, the Marches Growth Hub, Shropshire Partners in Care, the VCSA, and SALC. Working with these partners, we have been able to deliver a number of well attended 'HR Breakfast Briefings' across the county. These briefings have been a key factor in our ability to build relationships with potential clients.

Shropshire HR will be reviewing its Business Development Plan in March 2019 and will be adopting ambitious growth targets as part of our continued commitment to commercial excellence.

2.4 Pay & Grading Changes

2018 saw changes to the pay for council staff. The pay award was implemented in April 2018 and following the Council decision on 17th May, all staff returned to national rates of pay, restoring the pay cuts of 2011 and 2012. In addition, Senior Managers on JNC terms and conditions underwent a Job Evaluation exercise which was implemented on 1st October 2018. Work is now underway on the changes to the pay structure required from 1st April 2019 as part of the NJC 2 year pay agreement.

- 2.5 The focus for the coming year will be focused on supporting the cultural and behavioural change required as part of Digital Transformation, being even more Commercial, Agile and supporting the changing Customer Experience.

3.0 **Employment Services**

- 3.1 Employment Services (Payroll, Recruitment & Contracts) have been significantly involved in working towards the implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning system. This has involved support the testing of the new system and the migration of data from the existing HR/Payroll system.

- 3.2 Work also continues on developing the commercial offer and following up leads for new business. The team have also been involved in several successful conversions of Schools into Academies and continue to provide a service to the Academy after transfer.

- 3.3 The team have implemented a new online Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) system which has affected Corporate users/all Schools (including Academies) and External Customers.
- 3.4 The customer base has also increased under the Umbrella Body status the team holds and this remains a significant commercial opportunity for the team to focus on in the future.

4.0 Occupational Health, Safety & ICT Approvals

- 4.1 The Occupational Health, Safety and ICT Approvals teams have been focusing on improving a number of initiatives to support staff in the following activities:
- The Health and Safety Team to work with Service Areas to produce and implement H&S management systems including policies, procedures and arrangements
 - To increase the commercial opportunities for Occupational Health and Safety to external customers.
 - Development of external contracts with associated Service Level Agreements (SLA) in place.
 - To fulfil contractual monitoring and support to Academies and customers under Service Level Agreements
 - Continue updating and monitoring of Workstation Safety Plus to reduce risks associated with musculoskeletal disorders.
 - Raise awareness of workstation assessments in particular agile working.
 - Support 'Leap into Learning' development for e-learning health and safety awareness courses across service areas.
 - Digital Transformation Programme – support development for the management of accident data and case management arrangements for occupational health.
 - To engage with Service Areas to ensure that health and safety compliance is in place and to review Self-Monitoring Checklist to ensure roll out to Premise and Team Managers .
 - Market and deliver new Defibrillator
 - Continue to support Schools and Facilities Management for Corporate buildings through the Safer Schools Initiative, security advice and Secure by Design.
 - To review and update employee occupational health consent forms in line with the new GDPR regulations.
 - To support and monitor compliance with internal policies on the acquisition of proposed new IT software.

4.2 Continued work to improve employee health and wellbeing has occurred as follows:

- Three themes to promote engagement with employees to support their own health and wellbeing has focused on 'Be Active', 'Be Mindful' and 'Be Informed'
- Monthly 'Feel Good' employee events around the county at Council buildings focusing on a range of self-help, prevention programmes and fun activities during lunchtime.
- A 'Step Challenge' was arranged in April/May to encourage employees to increase their physical activity by walking meetings, lunchtime walks and comparing their step achievement with colleagues.
- Two six-week sessions were facilitated by external qualified teachers on Mindfulness and Yoga after work in Shirehall to support employees to engage with self-help support in physical and mental health activities.
- Continued working with colleagues from Public Health's 'Help2Change' Team to deliver monthly Health MOT checks to employees to check blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
- Targeted support for musculoskeletal conditions from Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for fast track access for employees to Physiotherapy Services and accessible clinics as part of the Wellbeing 'Feel-good employee' events around the County.
- Delivered the 2018 programme of seasonal influenza vaccination programme to employees who meet the criteria. An increase in numbers vaccinated was evidenced this year.

4.3 Health, safety and workplace health is reported regularly to the Health, Safety and Welfare group and the group continues to monitor progress against work plans, incidents including accidents and approves all new health and safety guidance.

4.4 The focus for the coming year will be to continue to support initiatives regarding workplace wellbeing, reducing sickness absence and to build on the commercial approach of the teams.

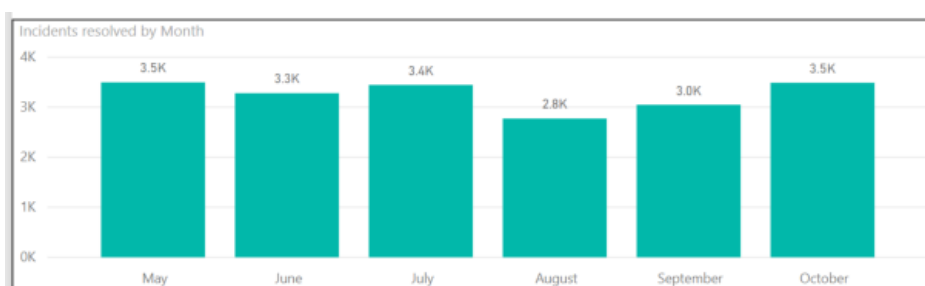
5.0 Digital Transformation / IT

5.1 IT Strategy

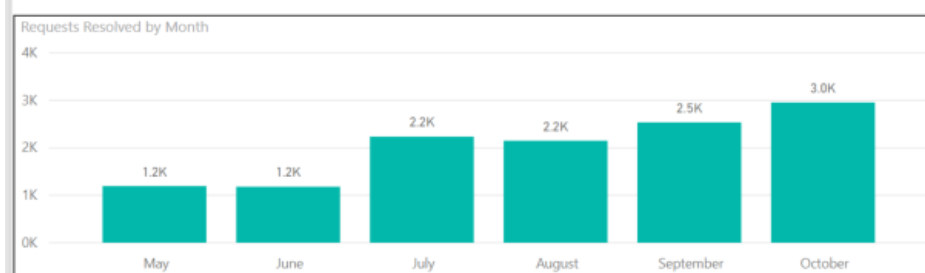
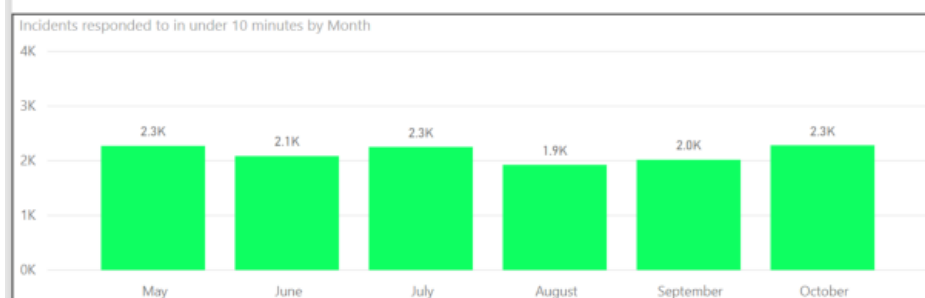
The IT department have continued to work to the approved strategy whilst also developing internal working documents to support our introduction of the industry

best practice IT management methodology of ITIL.

- 5.2 Our adoption of the ITIL management methodology has been a focus of several recent Audits, all which came out with a Reasonable rating and no significant recommendations.
- 5.3 Our Adoption of ITIL is delivering a much-improved service to customers, those being the Council and commercial entities. A Service Desk solution has increased our capacity to deal with IT queries, and in the last six months, the team have dealt with 19530 “Incidents”, which is the ITIL word for some sort of issue. It is important to note, these incidents may be as simple as a password reset or could take months to rectify, so this statistic is quite staggering for such a small team.



Total Incidents resolved last 6 months
= 19530



Total Requests Resolved last 6 months
= 12251

- 5.4 Most notable of all achievements in IT is arguably the cost savings achieved through contract negotiation and rationalisation. This figure is above £600,000 which is reflective of the hard work and determination the team have shown in resolving previous issues. The department hope to find more cost savings in the next financial year, with plans already actioned to reduce our contract spend further – which is a miracle given the weak pound and increase in almost all costs.

- 5.5 IT have also had a leading role in the development of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STP) Local Digital Roadmap (LDR) document, which is supposed to form the basis for each organisation on the STP's own Digital Strategy. The plan, once the document is approved, is to write our own Digital Strategy using the learning from the over-arching LDR.
- 5.6 As part of the STP, Shropshire are leading on the IT levels of Literacy work for the whole County, having produced a range of tools that we hope to roll out across all partners.
- 5.7 IT have been further developing our model of service delivery (based again on ITIL) but focussing on an Outcome based approach. Essentially, teams explain their issues and we look for technical solutions to help. This has proven to be an extremely effective way of actioning change through technology, as often staff have been unaware that a technical solution exists to their problems often due to low levels of IT literacy which is addressed in this brief.
- 5.8 Over the course of the year the IT department have worked hard to reduce the strategic risk around IT provision from high to medium with the anticipation it will fall further next year.
- 5.9 The IT department have continued to work extremely hard to reduce the number of Audit recommendations and have continued to make great strides, with only one limited audit to date in the current financial year which is a significant reduction compared to two years ago.
- 5.10 The commercial offering of IT continues to expand, this is fuelled with the continued development to the Schools Managed Service (SMS). It is worth noting that the service has now been fully trialled and tested with a marketing plan in place to generate additional business.
- 5.11 Other areas of income for IT are also being initiated such as the purchase of virtual reality headsets which can be leased to schools. These offer virtual experiences, such as star gazing and the like. These offer a significant commercial opportunity for the team as we are Shropshire's only reseller.
- 5.12 IT's contribution to the Digital Transformation programme has continued with fundamental parts of the programme managed by the team. Work of note includes the development and introduction of the Levels of IT literacy alongside strides in understanding the existing IT estate, to ensure we harness maximum value from existing assets.
- 5.13 IT undertook a successful Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Test, failing the systems over and back from our backup site in Nuneaton. This was the final

piece of work needed to gain a higher level of Audit and took many months, even years, of effort from a variety of staff to achieve.

- 5.14 IT have kept the aging Infrastructure functioning as it waits for replacement equipment through DTP or requests.
- 5.15 IT initiated the requirement for a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool to manage our commercial opportunities – we have since become one of two services successfully migrated and using it – with more services moving over soon.
- 5.16 Our IT Security team were one of the first to note the National hacking of Sodexo, even informing them and other authorities of the issue. This was thanks to an extremely well trained new member of the team who spotted the issues and raised the alarm.
- 5.17 WiFi has been introduced at a number of sites, with all key sites scheduled for implementation in the coming six months.
- 5.18 A number of laptops are to be re-purposed for use by charities, with more scheduled to be prepared in 2019. This is a better use of the Council's old equipment than the nominal amount of money gained by selling them for recycling.
- 5.19 The Digital Transformation Programme
Good progress continues to be made with DTP, parts of the programme are live and we are starting to see service improvement.
- **Social Care** – the adult social care modules of this project are scheduled to 'go live' on 10th December 2018, with children's service modules in February 2019. This new system will significantly improve the efficiency on the frontline of social work.
 - **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** – that will provide an integrated modern solution for all back-office processes to automate our existing manual and disparate systems and provide improved management information and a better reporting capability. This project is now in its third round of user acceptance testing. The project team are working closely with the suppliers to ensure that the final product is of the highest quality.
 - **Infrastructure and Architecture (I&A)** – to support delivery of the other streams of work, the projects under I&A have delivered much improved connectivity, frameworks for managing our data assets, new Business Intelligence tools and capabilities, amongst many other fundamental shifts in our IT offering.
 - **Customer Experience** – this piece of work has delivered the new call centre software (Touchpoint), which also includes a workforce management tool (Teleopti). The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool being

implemented is Dynamics 365 (a Microsoft product) which has already seen several areas of work moved onto the platform, with more scoped to be delivered over the coming months. This stream of work will also see the customer self-service portal (MyShropshire) be delivered, with an initial go-live in January for testing and a full go-live of all services, with changes from testing, in February.

6.0 Communications

- 6.1 The management of the team has continued to be under Andrew Boxall, Head of Technology, with all the managers working closely to deliver responsive and proactive communications.
- 6.2 The communications team have been at the forefront of our Digital Transformation in many ways, with the media relations team adopting and utilising Electronic Document Resource Management (EDRMS) tools in Sharepoint and Microsoft Teams, whilst also benefitting from better data and business intelligence technologies.
- 6.3 The data and business intelligence gathered to help improve communications has found that the majority of articles put into the media are either written in a neutral context or positive about Shropshire Council, with only a minority (below 20%) being negative. A further exploration of the data showed that many of the neutral or negative articles have a potentially negative spin added due to the comments beneath, which are out of the control of Shropshire Council's communications team.
- 6.4 The communications team are also supporting the Transformation agenda, as new reports show the reasons why the Council has been contacted and gives us areas to target proactively.
- 6.5 During the snow of early 2018 the Shropshire Council website experienced a significant increase in the number of visitors to the site and issues ensued. To avoid such an issue again, the team have created a backup temporary website using a cloud based solution (Microsoft's Azure) which can re-direct residents to other sources of information. For instance, if it were to snow and the website could not cope with demand (as happened to many other organisations, including the met-office), we can use the clouded site to direct people to other sources controlled by us, such as Social Media and our newsroom.
- 6.6 The Digital Services team have worked on a number of commercial opportunities, such as three websites for schools (another starting soon), the CCG's website and the Pension services website. Furthermore, they have completed all the internal website work and produced a vast number of new sites for Shropshire, such as the Four Rivers Care home site.

7.0 Information, Intelligence and Insight

- 7.1 Information, Intelligence and Insight have continued to work across the Council with individual teams and commissioning activity, as well as informing and supporting more strategic work. These have included the development of the Market sector profiles to provide evidence for the growth sector plans for Economic Growth and developing a sound evidence base for the partial review of the Local Plan.
- 7.2 The Corporate Plan was refreshed earlier in 2018 and the Corporate Performance Management Framework has been updated to ensure that measures and project milestones that are reported reflect the plans and priorities of the Council. The Performance Portal has also been developed, increasing access to information on the key performance measures and provides access to information on trends and explanations on performance provided by the services areas.
- 7.3 Support has been provided for the preparation and on-site work of the Joint Area Ofsted Inspection in November 2018 and the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in April 2018. This Peer Challenge was successful and provided plenty of feedback and recommendations for the Council to continue to develop, innovate and take opportunities as they arise. Work has been taken to address some of the points raised, such as Cabinet and the Senior Team are working together, and an action plan for developments which will take longer to implement has been developed with involvement from Members. This will be taken to Council in the New Year.
- 7.4 Market Town profiles have been developed and published on the Council's website for all of the market towns. These have received positive feedback including from partners and the public who have used them develop plans locally and inform funding bids. They have also reduced officer time in responding to enquires by having the information to hand and in a published format that can be signposted to. Profiles are being developed for the top 15 villages based on population. These are expected to be published by Christmas. Information is also available in the electoral division profiles.
- 7.5 Reporting for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care has progressed well. The focus of this work is on developing reporting from the new social care system, to ensure that staff and managers continue to be able to self-serve the information they require to support them in their planning and decision making, and to identify the impact of change on people who receive services. This will be on-going work to develop reports and understand the data and information that is available from the new system.

- 7.6 The statutory returns and including for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, and Housing; and other national returns of data to the Government including for Strengthening Families have continued to be delivered accurately and to timescale.
- 7.7 Customer feedback to the Council has continued to increase overall. Increases have been gradual over time and across a number of service areas. All types of feedback are positively encouraged because it helps inform how services can improve. During the last 12 months significant work has taken place to develop the new Complaints Compliment and Comments system which went live in October. The system continues to be refined and further developments will be necessary over the coming months to overcome identified challenges, including identifying opportunities to increase automation of complaints raised and recorded through the My Shropshire Portals.
- 7.8 The response of the Council to national consultations provides the opportunity to influence government thinking, in particular support to rural counties, and raises the Council's profile nationally and regionally. Over 10 have been coordinated and submitted in the past twelve months.
- 7.9 The Information, Intelligence and Insight unit has continued to support the delivery of council surveys and consultations. Support work varies but commonly includes survey and engagement design, cross sector promotions, qualitative response categorisation, analysis and reporting/presentation of results. There have been 43 project requests made since January 2018. Approximately 8 of those projects are recent requests requiring ongoing work into 2019. Work is diverse and wide-ranging. Examples include the parking consultations, Big Town Plan, highways and waste consultations, statutory social care surveys, staff engagement survey, and many more.

8.0 Legal and Democratic Services

- 8.1 Legal Services continues to support the corporate governance of the Council and the specific needs of the service areas. The new case management system is now up and running and has supported the mobile and agile working of the team. This has been particularly beneficial to the child care solicitors who spend the majority of their time in Wolverhampton family court.
- 8.2 It was highlighted last year of the ongoing pressures in child care cases and this has continued and if anything has intensified. All services within legal are facing increased demands but it is recognised this is the case across most service areas as a result of reduced resource. The restructure of the committee and elections team is underway to address some voluntary redundancies which have met the planned savings target.

- 8.3 Electoral Services have done fantastic work supporting other councils in the West Midlands area, often at short notice and in difficult circumstances. Some of the legal team have supported this as well. This has generated a significant income for the Council.

9.0 Commercial Services

- 9.1 The last twelve months have been busy and productive with a number of investment projects being designed, evaluated, planned and delivered. These align with the Council's economic growth, commercial, financial and asset management strategies and also the One Public Estate (OPE) programme for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. Shropshire Council is the lead organisation and accountable body for the OPE partnership.
- 9.2 The Council was successfully awarded £150,000 of OPE revenue grant in financial year 2017/18 to progress feasibility work for the Shirehall redevelopment project to create a public sector hub in Shrewsbury, and also to design and develop plans for the housing, health and care hub at Paul's Moss in Whitchurch. Both projects involve close collaborative working with public sector partners with joint executive boards overseeing key projects with executive officer involvement.
- 9.3 Shropshire Council was also awarded £545,000 Land release funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for a land remediation scheme on council owned land at Ellesmere which will unlock development of up to 60 housing units. Only 80 councils were awarded funding with Shropshire's allocation being the only successful one in the West Midlands area.
- 9.4 Furthermore the Council was also successful in bidding for up to £9.3m of marginal viability funding from the MHCLG Housing Infrastructure Fund. The bid was for western Shropshire interchange improvements – unlocking the Marches Gateway for housing and employment growth. Oswestry is identified as a major mixed-use growth area comprising the Oswestry Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) of 750 dwellings and other housing sites and associated employment development sites comprising 40ha.
- 9.5 Council officers have developed an investment risk profile approach along with a project evaluation process to consider and appraise the merits of a portfolio of investment projects which seek to support economic growth and development in the county and which provide a sustainable revenue stream for the council. The council has acquired the Shrewsbury shopping centres primarily to support the economic growth and regeneration of the town centre. The purchase also generates a sustainable income stream, which will support the Council in the long-term delivery of services within a challenging financial environment.

- 9.6 The second phase of work to provide additional halls of residence for the University Centre of Shrewsbury students has just been completed. The new modern student accommodation block at the Tannery site in Shrewsbury provides an additional 52 rooms in the town centre as student numbers continue to grow. The ground floor of this first block of three due to be developed on site will be marketed for commercial use.
- 9.7 The council has also given approval for the construction of the second block at the Tannery site to provide the new home for the Riverside Medical Practice which operates from the Smithfield Road site in the town centre. Subject to agreement of terms between Shropshire Council, the Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the partners of the medical practice the plan is for the practice to occupy the majority of the second block to be constructed, with a new pharmacy also set to be provided on the site. No decisions have been taken in respect of the third and final element of the site.
- 9.8 Officers are currently undertaking a review of the asset management strategy under the direction of the new Executive Director of Place. Assets will be categorised as operational to reflect the future shape of services, investment to produce a yield and return, development and regeneration to support housing and employment growth, heritage to maintain and protect historic assets in a trust model and those that shall be disposed to generate capital funds for future investment.
- 9.9 The asset management strategy and plans will align closely with the spatial plans being developed for Shropshire's market towns. Adopting the one public estate methodology will ensure that a collaborative approach is taken to determine the optimum ways of assembling, developing and using land and buildings to meet the growth and service needs of Shropshire's market towns and supporting a more flexible and agile public sector workforce and exploiting digital tools and technology to the maximum.