

FINANCE AND IMPROVEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8 JUNE 2026

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. John Palmer

Question:

Re: Organisational transformation: lessons learned review In the "Responding to the lessons learned" grid at paragraph 5.1 of the council's report, it states at the end of the last box that "several facets of the PwC proposed savings are being pursued through the Digital Programme". In item 3.8 of the independent Local Partnerships report, it says "a substantial amount of the money paid to the transformation partner [PwC] (c £7.4m) has been for work on digitising customer channels." "It is undoubtedly the case that at this point the programme is perceived to have delivered far less than was intended". Has the Chair a curiosity in seeking transparent public further detailing of what the "facets of PwC's proposed savings being pursued through the Digital Programme" are?

Response

As Chair I am both curious and keen that the Committee maintains clear and transparent oversight of the council's transformation activity as it moves forward and will expect further details of the transformation programmes to be presented in due course to this committee.

The reference to facets of previous proposed savings being considered through the Digital Transformation Programme as it prioritises its projects, reflects how earlier recommendations and learning are now informing current prioritisation and planned delivery.

Digital is a key enabler for a lot of the transformation proposed in the Council. There are currently more than 150 proposed projects being reviewed by the digital transformation board. These are a combination of projects from service areas, what is considered best practice from other Councils, and some of the previous proposed savings from PwC. The teams are using a prioritisation framework to prioritise those that the Council should take forward as part of its digital transformation programme. This will include elements of Children and Adults services digital transformation including the ways our residents can access services and information.

2. Marianne Atkins

Question:

The council's pursuit of financial sustainability does not absolve it of its responsibilities around 'good governance'. Does the Finance and Improvement Overview and Scrutiny Committee have assurance of good governance around fundamental issues, including the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, also the public involvement and consultation have always been meaningful and consistent with the Gunning Principles?

Response

As Chair, I very much appreciate your making contact regarding the Helena Lane reports following the publication of the Scrutiny and Cabinet agendas. I completely understand your concern about this provision, and the future options being put to Cabinet. It's naturally our job as Scrutiny to consider whether due process has been followed, and any learning captured - and of course the financial details.

I offer apologies - as I did in my email - on behalf of the Council for the late posting of the Scrutiny reports - which I know officers had been working hard to finalise - and appreciate your swift response. In view of this I gave special permission for you to submit a short statement and that has been circulated.

Thank you then for the points you have raised. We will ensure that these areas are all kept in mind during our review of the proposals being presented. In terms of your question regarding the financial workings, I am sure officers will address that point in their presentation to the committee