

Change Management Strategy

Introduction

Change is inevitable and is in fact necessary to ensure that the council and its services can continue to operate in the landscape of local government, which in itself has changed dramatically in recent years and will continue to do so.

The council is continuing to face very challenging financial times. In the most recent Spending Review (November 2015), the Chancellor set out how the government will continue to work towards reducing the budget deficit. This has resulted in the council facing a £2.5m budget gap to 2019-20 within its General Fund, with £1.5m of this needing to be found by the 2018-19 financial year.

The council has recognised this and in its new Corporate Plan sets out a clear corporate objective for the 2015-19 period of delivering a “sound and self-sufficient council”. Specifically the plan has put in place a policy commitment for the council to be: “A well-run and innovative council supporting its staff to realise commercial opportunities whilst transforming its services to deliver at the best possible value for money”

It is therefore critical that the council is using its finite resources in the most effective and efficient way, in order to continue to provide good services to the community. To address the challenges this raises, the council is committed to make financial efficiencies by reviewing and, where necessary, changing the way it delivers its services to the residents and businesses in the borough. There is a need for the council to take a strategic view of the council’s finances moving forward taking on the difficult balancing act of saving money whilst ensuring sufficient resources are in place to carry out council activities.

The council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key part of the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework and sets out the high-level strategy for how the council will ensure revenue resources are directed towards delivery of the Council’s vision and priorities. The Change Strategy is a key supporting document for the overarching MTFS.

To ensure that the council makes these changes in the right way and in fact, makes the right changes this strategy intends to set out three key areas of change activity:

- Content – How the council will identify what needs to be changed.
- Processes – How change will be planned and implemented.
- People – How to address the human dynamics of change in terms of engagement and commitment to change.

Change can mean different things to different people; some see change as an exciting opportunity whereas others see it as a threat to their position and working practices. By taking an open and transparent approach to change, the council will implement any changes in an inclusive manner, ensuring all staff and Members are part of the change process.

Change Activities – Content, Process and People

Content

The council's Change Activities are made up of several strands of work:

- Review of specific processes and ways in which the council currently operates in order to identify service efficiencies and potential improvements for the customer.
- Implementation of recommendations resulting from the work of the Service Review Team.
- Exploration and implementation of shared working arrangements where it is suitable to do so.
- The work of the Digital Team in promoting the use of technology as a means of interacting and communicating with our customers.

Review of Specific Processes

This work stream will be driven by the findings of the work of the Service Review Team and informed by the council's Management Team and Members. The work of the Service Review Team will have highlighted areas where change is required specifically in regard to council processes and how these can be streamlined and the council's Management Team will undoubtedly have suggestions as to areas within their own service areas that require improvement

In each case, a fundamental review of service delivery, specific to the relevant process, will take place. This will involve a „start to finish“ approach, looking at the way in which the council currently delivers services, identifying what isn't working or where efficiencies can be made and then implementing these changes.

Any changes that have been identified that require a fundamental change to the service will be agreed not only by the council's Management Team but with the council's Cabinet as required.

Implementation of recommendations from the Service Review Team

In addition to the major process reviews identified through the Service Review Team, there is a number of other, the best practice or income generation recommendations resulting from the work of the Service Review Team. These which will also contribute to improved efficiency and financial viability of the council moving forward.

All of the options identified will be presented to the Cabinet in order for them to review where savings can be made and ultimately, direct the future work of the Service Review Team. From April 2016, the focus of the Service Review Team will be re-directed to the implementation of these recommendations.

Exploration and Implementation of Shared Working Arrangements

Some of the recommendations resulting from the Service Review process highlight the potential for shared working arrangements. There is the potential however, for shared working arrangements to be explored in other back office functions which have not been through the Service Review process and as such, this will form another strand of the Change Strategy.

Taking direction both from the work of the Service Review team and from the council's Management Team and Members, shared services or shared working arrangements will be explored and implemented across the council, where it is practical and where there is a sound business case to do so. The council's

Partnership Framework sets out the process for exploring shared working opportunities in more detail.

The Work of the Digital Team

The council's Digital Strategy 2015-2018 sets out the way in which the council aims to expand the service delivery options by providing and encouraging customers to use the most convenient and cost-effective digital contact channels, where appropriate.

Making the most of the technology available to the council and driving customers towards self-help and alternative means of communication will support the council in becoming more efficient both in terms of service delivery and financial viability.

Process

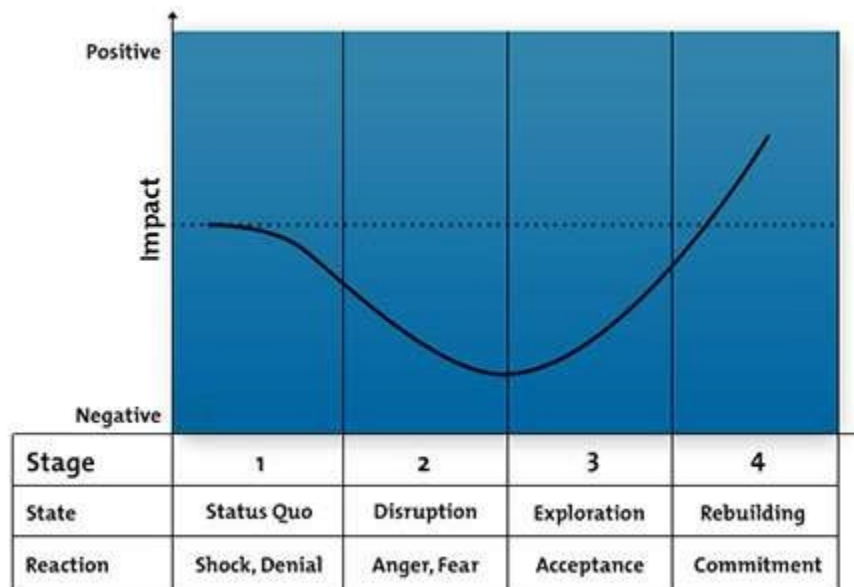
Any change activities will be discussed and agreed with the council's Management Team and where applicable, Members, prior to commencement. This will ensure that the following aspects of any change activities are agreed at a senior management level:

- Change Activity Sponsor – identification of whom the lead officer at a senior management level is to ensure regular project reporting and support.
- Scope – the scope of any change activity will be agreed to ensure that all officers involved are clear on the service elements and/or processes that are due to be reviewed/changed.
- Timeframe – a realistic timeframe for the change activity will be agreed. This will ensure again, that all officers involved know the deadline they are working to in terms of undertaking service reviews and/or implementing changes required.
- Project Team – identifying who will form part of the team to undertake the review and implement changed. These officers will be led by the Corporate Change Manager and will be from the relevant service, although it is also likely that a „critical friend“ from an independent service area will also be involved. Officer time will be freed up to ensure they are able to commit to the review whilst it is underway.
- Decision-making process – clarification on the process for making decisions about the changes to be made. This will be dependent on the nature of the change that is required and whether it has previously been identified such as through the Service Review process.
- Communication – agreement on how the process/review will be communicated to officers directly affected by the process. Again, the method used may be dependent on the nature of the review or change that is being implemented.

The above is a summary of the types of activities that will need to be considered once change activities have been identified. Other specific details will be confirmed with the Corporate Change Manager as required and all change activities will be underpinned with a detailed project plan to enable proper monitoring of progress of the project.

People

The most critical part of the Change Strategy and its associated activities is People. All people react differently to change and it is therefore important that all officers are supported through any changes that are made. 2.9 Typically, people go through four stages of change and these are most commonly depicted in The Change Curve:



Understanding the various ways that people react to change, helps in minimising the potential negative impact the change could have and can help people adapt to it more quickly. Identifying where people are along this spectrum will enable any change activities to be managed and progressed effectively.

The Corporate Change Manager will have a key role to play in working with people through the transitional period to ensure the change is managed and implemented effectively and will be supported by the council's HR team throughout the process.

In ensuring that communication with all those involved is conducted effectively, the following will take place:

- Identification of service stakeholders i.e. those who will be affected by the changes. This will focus not only on internal officers but others who may not necessarily need to be involved in the specific review, but will need to be informed of any changes taking place.
- Early interaction with service stakeholders to ensure that they fully understand the case for change (why this is happening) and the vision (where making the change will take us).
- Officers will be involved in the actual review process (as detailed under the „Process“ stage above). The implementation of reviews or change activities will be undertaken with the officers who will be affected by the change.

The service stakeholders will be a fundamental element of all change activities; it is recognised that without them change will be very difficult to implement and as such, they will be kept up-to-date on progress throughout the process.

Stakeholder Engagement

Elected Members

The council's Members will play a fundamental role in ensuring that the council works towards meeting the budget gap set out in the introduction of this strategy.

Cabinet Members will be tasked with making decisions about council services moving forward. As a result of the Service Review Process, a number of options have been identified which offer alternative ways in which to deliver council services and in some cases, the option of not delivering the service in the future.

Cabinet Members will need to review the potential savings this may generate and balance this with the financial position of the council and the impact on the customer and decide the best course of action. There will undoubtedly be tough decisions for both officers and Members moving forward.

Trade Union

Where any changes that are taking place impact on officers of the council, the Trade Union Branch Secretary will be kept up-to-date with the implications of any changes and will be consulted on as required.

The council will endeavour to identify redeployment opportunities for staff where it is appropriate to do so and will fulfil any statutory consultations that are required as a result of any suggested changes that impact on staff.

Measuring Success

Success is measured in different ways, depending on the change that is being made and the service or process involved.

At the start of each review of change activity, a set of measures will be agreed with the relevant Director and responsible manager in order to be able to determine if the change has been a success. These measures will cover the following:

- Service performance – measuring how the change has impacted on overall performance of the service/process.
- Financial performance – measuring how the change has impacted on the costs of the service/process

These measures of success will be agreed and reported to Management Team as part of the Performance Management Framework of the council.