



## Policy & Resources Committee

22 February 2023

<b>Title</b>	<b>Transformation Strategy</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	Yes
<b>Enclosures</b>	Appendix A – Transformation Strategy
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### Summary

This report seeks approval of the proposed Transformation Strategy (attached as Appendix A), to support the delivery of the council's ambitions and priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan.

The report also outlines the proposed governance arrangements for delivery of the Strategy.

### Officers' Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Agrees the council's Transformation Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to this report;
2. Notes the feedback from the Collaborate engagement exercise, as set out in paragraph 1.5; and
3. Notes the proposed governance arrangements for implementation of the Strategy, as set out in paragraph 1.9.

# 1. Why this report is needed

## Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed that officers should work with relevant Committee Chairs to develop council priorities and establish a series of work programmes for implementation over the next four years. Those work programmes have been collectively known as the transformation programme. An update on the delivery of the council's priorities was considered by the Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and the Committee endorsed the proposed approach to developing the corporate plan and transformation programme, based on a vision of being a council that cares for people, our places and the planet. A further update report was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's agreement to the attached overarching Transformation Strategy, which sets out the proposed approach to delivering the vision of being a council that cares for people, our places and the planet, and achieving the council's ambition of transforming the nature of its relationship with residents, to one of genuine partnership and involvement, and the way that it works with residents, communities and partners.
- 1.3 The Transformation Strategy reflects the structure and content of the draft Corporate Plan, which is considered elsewhere on this agenda. It provides a framework for taking the transformation agenda forward, rather than being a rigid set of tightly defined projects. This approach recognises that transformation is, at heart, about cultural change and requires an iterative approach that enables active engagement with staff, residents, communities and partners, so that they can participate in achieving the change we want to see.
- 1.4 The development of the Strategy has been informed by the work of Collaborate CIC. During the autumn of 2022, they independently facilitated a series of six workshops with staff, Members, partners, voluntary, community and faith groups, and residents on some of the key themes that it was anticipated would form part of the corporate plan. These workshops focussed primarily on helping to define what a council that cares for people, our places and the planet looks like. They also considered what the ambitions and desired outcomes for each of these themes should be.
- 1.5 The key messages from Collaborate's work were:
  - There is a sense of hope and positivity that the Borough can improve, and that the council can collaborate effectively with communities and partners to achieve that.
  - From residents there is a sense that the council and its partners recognise that they need to be involved and can lead on some issues.
  - Representatives of the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS) recognised that the relationship with the council is the best it has ever been, although there is further to go. They have clear ideas about what they need from the council, such as facilitation of their role, access to space etc. They recognise that there is an appetite to share power.
  - There was strong support for the "Borough of Fun" theme, which resonated across all groups and spoke to an important idea about "living, not just existing".

- Staff are keen to work with stakeholders and there was a sense they wanted to understand and respond to the community. They saw the bigger picture and connections between issues.
- The council can be an enabler in ceding power but still exercising leadership. This leadership role is seen as an active role: taking responsibility for ensuring issues are addressed, and by whom (alone or with others), and doing what only the council can, such as facilitating access to space and not outsourcing responsibility; being invested in the Borough.
- This means working with people, sometimes even being led by them.
- There was a clear recognition from residents and the VCFS that neither the council nor themselves could address complex issues alone; they require a collective and collaborative effort, including the council.

1.6 From a transformation perspective, this all suggests that there is a strong appetite for change in how the council interacts with its residents, communities and partners. However, there is also a recognition that we will need to develop the skills and infrastructure to support a new approach, and that practical work will be needed to bring staff on this journey and support the change in culture that is needed to make this real. Further workshops may be commissioned to focus on specific aspects of the programme, as it progresses.

1.7 The Strategy describes transformation as a journey. It is a journey that is well underway, as the development of the Strategy has taken place alongside, and been informed by, the delivery of a number of transformational projects and activities, including the implementation of community skips, development of cost-of-living support, and the governance review. During this period, the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee has also agreed a Community Participation Strategy, which is already in the process of being implemented. This will be a key component in taking our transformation journey forward to achieve the council's ambitions.

1.8 Our approach to transformation recognises the excellent work that all our staff do in supporting the residents of Barnet. It seeks to build on existing examples of good practice in resident and community engagement, and cross-service working, by sharing best practice and providing support to try new ways of doing things that put our residents, whether young, old or somewhere in between, at the heart of everything we do.

1.9 In respect of governance, the implementation of the Strategy will impact on the whole of the council and has cross-cutting collaboration at its centre. For this reason, it is proposed that the Council Management Team takes on the role of programme board, with oversight of project definition, scoping, resourcing and progress monitoring. A Portfolio Management Office has been established, which will support the Transformation Director in co-ordinating activity and reporting on progress. Pending the implementation of revised governance arrangements for the Council, updates on progress will continue to be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.

## **2. Reasons for recommendations**

2.1 The draft Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious long-term agenda for the future of the Borough and a significant shift in focus for the council. Delivering on that agenda will require changes in the way that the council works, to build on and expand existing

good practice. The Transformation Strategy provides a structured means of supporting the achievement of that change and ensuring that the council's strategic aims are turned into action, whilst maintaining the flexibility to amend and develop the programme of work based on experience and experimentation.

### **3. Alternative options considered and not recommended**

- 3.1 One alternative option would be to not have a Transformation Strategy and to deliver the required programme of work as "business as usual". This is not considered to be the most effective way of achieving the step change envisaged in the Corporate Plan, as it would not create the additional resource and focus that is needed to achieve that change.
- 3.2 Another alternative would be to move all of the resources involved in project delivery into a Transformation Directorate. This is not considered to be appropriate, as it would separate transformation work from service delivery and not achieve the cultural change that is needed. It is essential that all parts of the organisation, from chief officers through to front-line staff, are actively engaged and involved in the transformation agenda.

### **4. Post decision implementation**

- 4.1 Work will continue on delivering projects that are already in train and scoping those that have been identified as emerging projects within the Strategy. The development of reporting mechanisms is underway and formal reporting will commence following agreement of the Strategy.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

### **5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1.1 The Transformation Strategy sets out the proposed approach to delivering the agenda set by the Corporate Plan, which itself sets out the council's priorities.

### **5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 5.2.1 At its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the allocation of £3m from reserves to fund the development and implementation of the transformation programme over four years. A Transformation Director has been seconded from within the existing structure and partial backfill costs are being funded from this budget. A small number of additional project managers and strategy officers have also been appointed on temporary contracts, to provide additional resource to support the development and delivery of projects that contribute to the delivery of the Strategy.
- 5.2.2 The programme of works and officer costs are not forecast to exceed the allocated reserves for the programme. As such, there is not expected to be an adverse impact to the General Fund arising from the programme itself. Any potential overspends directly related to the programme development and implementation will be subject to

mitigation plans and the council will seek to constrain pressures within existing resources.

5.2.3 Other resource implications associated with the delivery of projects will be considered as part of the scoping and approval of those projects.

### **5.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

5.3.1 The council's Constitution, Article 7 Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, sets out the functions of the Policy and Resources Committee, which includes responsibility for Strategic policy, finance and corporate risk management including recommending: Capital and Revenue Budget; Medium Term Financial Strategy; and Corporate Plan to Full Council.

5.3.2 The Policy and Resources Committee also has within its terms of reference "To be responsible for those matters not specifically allocated to any other committee affecting the affairs of the Council."

### **5.4 Insight**

5.4.1 Implementation of the Transformation Strategy will be informed by 'what works' and will be driven by the needs of our residents. Data insights will be used to support evidence-based decision making. Further, the development of the Insight and Intelligence Hub work programme has been aligned to the corporate plan and delivery of the Transformation Strategy.

### **5.5 Social Value**

5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. This is reflected in the council's social value policy.

5.5.2 The corporate plan supports the aims of this social value policy and the social values outcomes we are seeking to achieve. Any commissioning activity that is carried out as part of the implementation of the Transformation Strategy will be conducted in accordance with the social value policy.

### **5.6 Risk Management**

5.6.2 Risk management considerations will be an integral part of the scoping and management of individual projects that are initiated to deliver the Transformation Strategy.

### **5.7 Equalities and Diversity**

5.7.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the council's decision-making process. Decision makers should have due regard to the public-sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that the Committee has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public-sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

5.7.2 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.7.3 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

5.7.4 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

5.7.5 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- (a) Tackle prejudice, and
- (b) Promote understanding.

5.7.6 Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race,
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

5.7.7 The public sector equality duty considerations are key for the development of the programme of activity that will deliver the Transformation Strategy.

5.7.8 In the Corporate Plan, we give a very clear commitment to tackle inequalities and will embed equalities considerations into everything that the council does. We will also

take protected characteristics, including seldom heard voices, into consideration in any engagement activity. In our development of the programme of work, we will be carrying out Equality Impact Assessments as applicable for each individual project area.

5.7.9 Implementation of the Strategy will include projects related to delivering the “A great place to work” theme, which includes the commitment to put the council’s values (Caring, Learning, Inclusive, Collaborative) and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at the centre of everything we do.

## **5.8 Corporate Parenting**

5.8.1 In line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the council. This duty has been considered in the development of the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. This is especially relevant for our children and young people activity – striving for outstanding outcomes for our children and young people will benefit care leavers.

## **5.9 Consultation and Engagement**

5.9.1 In developing the Corporate Plan and Transformation Strategy, we have undertaken six engagement workshops. The Plan itself articulates a clear commitment that we will have active and continuous engagement with residents, children and young people and communities as we deliver the priorities and associated work programmes.

5.9.2 Implementation of the Strategy will include a focus on turning the newly agreed Community Participation Strategy into action, by sharing good practice from across the organisation (including from Adults, Family Services and Regeneration), and ensuring that effective and appropriate participation methods are embedded in all of our activities.

## **5.10 Environmental Impact**

5.10.1 The council has already committed to an ambitious target of becoming a Net Zero carbon council by 2030 and for Barnet to achieve this as a borough by 2042. The “caring for the planet” theme within the Corporate Plan very deliberately positions environmental impact and sustainability as a corporate priority. The impact of actions taken to deliver the Transformation Strategy will be assessed against our Sustainability Action Plan to ensure cohesion and alignment to our targets.

## **6. Background papers**

6.1 None.