Renfrewshire Council

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To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board

On: 30 August 2017

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Report by: Chief Executive

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Heading: Better Council Change Programme Update

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1.   Summary

1.1   This report provides members with an update on progress with the delivery of the Better Council Change Programme.

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2.   Recommendations

2.1   It is recommended that members note:

- the contents of this report; and
- the work ongoing to identify further opportunities for transformation across the Council

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3.   Background

3.1   Since 2011/12, the Council has managed a total of £117 million of savings and otherwise avoidable cost pressures. The Better Council Change Programme has been important element of the Council's approach to transformation and supporting longer term financial sustainability.

3.2   Since 2014/15, the Better Council Change Programme (BCCP) has been developed on a rolling two-year basis, with phase 1 targeting savings for the period 2015 to 2017 and phase 2 for 2016 to 2018. Phase 1 projects will have delivered annual recurring savings of £15.1m against an original target of £14.4m by the end of 2016/17. Phase 2 projects are targeting annual recurring savings of £5.5m by the end of 2017/18.

3.3   In the Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2017/18 report presented to full Council on 16 February 2017, elected members were asked to note annual future savings requirements of potentially up to £27m per annum for the Council.   The importance of the Council continuing to proactively progress financial planning work in the context of the medium-term outlook through the Better Council Change Programme and to prepare for what is anticipated to potentially be the most financially challenging and uncertain period ever for the Council was highlighted within the report.

3.4   Regular update reports on the Better Council Change Programme have been provided to date through the Leadership Board. With changes to policy board remits agreed by full Council in May 2017, regular updates on the programme going forward will now be provided to the Finance, Customer Service and Resources Board.

3.5   This report provides an update on the two main projects which comprise Phase 2 of the Programme, and on proposals relating to the development of Phase 3.

4.   Update on current live projects

Online Customer Access Project

4.1   A significant component of the BCCP is the development and implementation of the on-line Customer portal. The portal facility is maintaining and enhancing the delivery of services provided to customers through the introduction of transactional online customer access channels. This is focused primarily upon those services which create high volume customer contact, in order to maximise the benefits to the public whilst supporting the delivery of future efficiency savings.

4.2   The MyAccount customer portal was launched on 10th March 2016 with the Council Tax module. Customers can now access online services related to Council Tax and Housing Benefit including viewing their council tax account details (balance, payments, instalments, adjustments and household details), applying for housing benefit (including uploading supporting evidence) and advising us of changes to their circumstances. Online payments service and the Housing Rent module was launched in the winter of 2016. Work is progressing to implement modules to support key tasks in Community Resources relating to roads and lighting fault reporting; special uplifts; missed bins and Streetscene activities (e.g. reports of dog fouling, graffiti etc). Customer numbers have steadily grown since the portal launch in March 2016 and there are now close to 24,000 active users with an average of around 1,600 users online each week.

Enterprise Resource Planning / Business World

4.3   The ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) project will replace the Council's existing Finance, HR, Payroll and Procurement systems with a single, on-line, fully integrated software application which will:

- Significantly improve efficiency across the Council's financial, HR, Payroll and Procurement processes and deliver associated financial savings;

- improve the availability and accuracy of the budgetary, staffing and service information available to support managers plan and run their service more efficiently and effectively;

- allow managers and staff to self-serve across a range of processes such as expense claims, booking leave, receiving payslips, updating personal information, producing budget and staffing reports etc;

- allow staff and managers more flexible access to information and services wherever they are via different devices (laptop, tablet, smart phone) and,

- improve service resilience and reduce risk of major systems failure.

4.4 Implementation of the chosen ERP solution ("Business World" from Unit 4) commenced in July 2017 and is being undertaken by a joint staff team from the Council and Agilisys, the Council's chosen implementation partner. Implementation is being targeted across the organisation by end 2017.

4.5 A key area of activity relates to user acceptance testing, which is a critical phase for any new system implementation, in order to ensure the system will meet the requirements of key business areas and services.

4.6 The project team are also currently working with dedicated "change champions" to develop tailored training for staff which will support effective implementation.

5. Further developments

5.1 Previous financial updates to members have outlined a continuation of the period of financial uncertainty for the Council over the medium term and a potential budget saving requirement of up to £27 million per annum over the next two-year period.

5.2 The Corporate Management Team have since March been developing further change initiatives to support the delivery of savings and efficiencies.   A number of these initiatives are linked to existing programmes of change and will allow the organisation to realise further savings through further transformational activity. For example:

- the implementation of ERP and the Customer Account provide opportunities to move towards paperless activities wherever possible and to ensure that end to end processes and systems are streamlined and automated wherever possible. Further development of My Account will support the Council in ensuring that it meets the needs of customers through the most appropriate channel for their needs, with reduced duplication across services and a better more streamlined end to end process for the customer. Aligned to the implementation of these key technology changes is the development of advanced automation processes which will support increased efficiencies across key business processes and support the efficient transfer of information between key systems. It is expected that across ERP, customer portal development and advances in automation technology savings of approximately £1.5 million will be released over the next 24 months.

- Further opportunities for improvement and savings have been identified through the ongoing energy efficiency improvement programme that will aim to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, whilst reducing spend on energy. This will be delivered through the targeted use of photovoltaic panel on appropriate properties, installation of biomass boilers and the commencement of the targeted installation of LED lighting technology within suitable buildings across the Council's estate. It is estimated that ongoing programmes will support the release of a further £0.2 million of efficiencies between now and the end of 2017/18.

6.   Workforce planning

6.1   Renfrewshire Council has a highly diverse workforce which has undergone significant change in recent years in order to respond to the pace and depth of transformational change across both the organisation and the public sector.

6.2   In order to support the next phase of change through phase 3 of the Better Council Change Programme, a number of changes to the way the workforce is managed and organised will need to be supported by effective workforce planning and employee development initiatives outlined in the Organisational Development (OD) Strategy.

6.3   A workforce plan for the organisation has now been developed to drive this agenda, and is subject to a separate report to this policy board meeting. The Council Workforce Plan is strategically aligned to the Council Plan and Better Council Change Programme (BCCP) and captures the workforce implications of the Council's ongoing process of transformation. The plan highlights the challenges and opportunities that exist for the organisation and sets out the key workforce planning actions required in the coming years. The workforce plan is structured around 5 high level themes:

- A Modernised and Flexible Workforce;
- A Developing Workforce;
- A Resilient Workforce;
- A Skilled Workforce; and
- A Partnering Workforce.

6.4   Key workforce planning priorities in support of these strategic themes are being actively taken forward. Service level workforce plans have been prepared, with key actions being embedded and implemented through service improvement plans. Workforce planning is by its nature iterative and therefore the Council Workforce Plan will continue to evolve to match the objectives and aspirations of the organisation. This equally applies to each service's Workforce Plan. Regular consultation with trade unions regarding workforce planning activities will continue to be undertaken.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The report sets out the savings achieved through the BCC programme and those expected to be delivered of coming months. Savings arising from the programme will be appropriately reflected in future year budgets.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – *none*

3. **Community Planning** – *none*

    Children and Young People – none

    Community Care, Health & Well-being - none

    Empowering our Communities - none

    Greener - none

    Jobs and the Economy - none

    Safer and Stronger - none

4. **Legal** – *none*

5. **Property/Assets** *- none*

6. **Information Technology** *- none*

7. **Equality & Human Rights** *- The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.*

8. **Health & Safety –** n/a

9. **Procurement** - None.

10. **Risk** – n/a

11. **Privacy Impact** - None.

12. **Cosla Policy position** – None

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List of Background Papers

None

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