

Agenda Item 9
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
18 March 2025

Title: Change Programme update: 18 March 2025

Lead Officer: Darren Knight

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jessica Melrose

Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	23.02.25	Cllr Jessica Melrose
Finance	23.02.25	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		N/A
Chief Executive	23.02.25	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		N/A
Head of Service(s)	25.02.2025	Darren Knight
Section 151 Officer	23.02.2025	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	23.02.25	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group		N/A
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	No	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

1. Change Programme – background and timeline

- 1.1 The Change Programme is a key programme of work set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2030 and referenced in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.2 In February 2023, a report was taken to Cabinet, which identified that the Council would need to change how it operates to ensure it can continue to respond to the external operating environment and financial challenges the local government sector continues to face.
- 1.3 The Change Programme was born of the recognition that if the Council is to remain sustainable, it must evaluate how it does things. Given the significance of the change that is required, it is important that this is done with purpose and instils a culture of continuous awareness of the importance of recognising the benefits change opportunities can provide to the organisation.
- 1.4 In July 2023, WDC undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) through the Local Government Association (LGA), as part of its commitment to sector led continuous improvement. This review highlighted two areas relating to the Change Programme:

- The need to resolve the financial deficit
- The need to transform services to deliver improved outcomes

- 1.5 In November 2023, the Council's new Corporate Strategy was approved, and the Change Programme falls under Strategic Priority 1, Goals 1.2 and 1.3:

Strategic Priority 1: *Delivering valued, sustainable services in order that the Council can continue to focus its efforts and activities on the needs of its residents, communities and businesses, this priority will be underpinned by ensuring continued demonstration of financial sustainability through the medium term. This is the foundation for ensuring that there are the resources to continue to enable residents to receive excellent high-quality services that are responsive and accessible to local needs.*

Goal 1.2: *Continue to ensure the Council's finances remain on a firm and sustainable footing.*

- *"Our Change Programme will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how the Council delivers services to ensure they remain responsive and accessible to customer needs."*
- *"By reviewing how Council services are delivered and measuring performance will help ensure high quality services are being delivered across the Council."*
- *"The Digital and Customer Strategy and Change Management Programme will make it easier for customers to contact the Council 24/7, 365 days a year and enable our customer service team to help more customers at the first point of contact through different communication channels".*

Goal 1.3: Achieve and demonstrate delivery of high-quality services.

- *"We will measure our performance and develop how we use data, benchmarking and customer insight to ensure we continuously learn and improve how we deliver services."*

1.6 The Council's Change Programme – Case for Change was approved by Cabinet in March 2024 and then internally launched to the organisation.

2. Purpose of the change programme

2.1 The Change Programme - Case for Change (Appendix 1) sets out the rationale and approach for this improvement and transformation programme, the benefits it will bring and how success will be monitored and measured.

2.2 This document also includes the Council's Digital Strategy.

3. Programme Governance

3.1 The Change Programme has a programme board, which consists of the Cabinet Member for Transformation (Chair), Cabinet Member for Finance, Head of People & Communications, Head of Finance, Head of Customer & Digital Services and the Deputy Chief Executive.

3.2 The purpose and remit of the board is defined by its terms of reference and meets every two months.

4. Programme Overview & Progress

4.1 The Change Programme has three main workstreams - Independent Fees and Charges Review, Customer Service Redesign and Reinvent and reimagine how services are delivered.

4.2 **Independent Fees and Charges Review** – Andrew Rollins, the Council's Head of Finance, is the workstream lead and this work is being supported by specialist consultants CommercialGov.

4.3 CommercialGov undertook a review of the top ten service areas for fees and charges and assumption within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) have been updated as a result of this review.

4.4 This work has also included commercial training for officers including the Senior Leadership Team. The Council also now has access to CommercialGov's fees and charges toolkit and sector benchmarking data.

4.5 Following the quarter three budget report and identification of significant financial variances with bereavement services, CommercialGov have been commissioned to undertake a commercial service development review for this service. There is also going to be a member training session facilitated by CommercialGov.

4.6 **Customer Service Redesign** – David Elkington, the Council's Head of Customer & Digital Services is the workstream lead for this element of the change programme. The Corporate Strategy sets out an ambition to improve customer service delivery by making it easier for customers to contact the Council 24/7, 365 days a year and enable our customer service team to help more customers at the first point of contact through different communication channels.

4.7 This workstream is underway with the completed procurement of a new Customer Relationship Management System (JADU CRM), which provides the basis to help transform customer service delivery, process and procedures.

- 4.8 The introduction of low code technology now enables the Council to develop and deploy new digital services at pace and at low cost. Low code technology is defined as '*A Low-code development platform (LCDP) is software that provides a development environment used to create application software through graphical user interfaces and configuration instead of traditional hand-coded computer programming.*'
- 4.9 In December 2024, the first CRM services went live and to date these now include:
- Missed bin reporting (fully automated).
 - Additional container requests (fully automated).
 - Bulky waste uplifts (fully automated).
 - Assisted collection requests (currently semi-automated).
 - Additional waste capacity (currently semi-automated).
 - Clinical Collections (currently semi-automated).
 - Customer queries.
 - Garden waste (fully automated).
- 4.10 As of the 3rd March, the performance data shows:
- Customer Service cases raised: 1376
 - Web Cases raised: 11366
 - Project Team: 36 (genuine live cases raised at the start of each go live)
 - Contract Services: 5
 - Additional Waste Capacity: 65
 - Assisted Collections: 100
 - Bulky Collections: 758
 - Clinical Collections: 6
 - General Query: 1008
 - Garden Waste Subs: 9401 (although this is not the total number of permits as some are for more than one sticker)
 - Missed Collections: 565
 - Waste Container Order: 880
 - Registered for My Account: 6580 / 57.9% of web raised cases
- 4.11 Next steps include the following
- 'Sprints' to improve the process based on user feedback.
 - Rest of contract services to undergo business process re-engineering.
 - The next services to be identified for BPR e.g. regulatory services, planning etc.
 - Other quick wins CRM additions e.g. complaints, FOI via the app share.
 - Development of reporting capabilities – staff training for PowerBI is planned

- Cabinet demonstration

- 4.12 This work is building upon the successful relocation of front facing customer services to the Pump Rooms; whilst there is an increase in digital services, customers are still be able to telephone or visit WDC customer services. A key success has been the integration of JADU and the contractor system Whitespace which has enabled end to end automation of data.
- 4.13 **Reinvent and reimagine how services are delivered** – Darren Knight, Deputy CEO, is the lead for this workstream. The purpose of this workstream is for service areas to think about how they can do things differently, which can either reduce costs, invest to save and increase income.
- 4.14 Since April’s launch, progress has been quick off the mark with several initiatives progressing to increase income or reduce costs. Initiatives in the pipeline include returning waste calls from SDC, website advertising, general fund service charge review, LLPG review, reviewing the CIL administration charge, National Parking Platform, roundabout advertising, review of software budgets and a mini service review. Each initiative has an outline business case.
- 4.15 The Change Programme has a dedicated efficiency tracker which records and monitors the cash and non-cash benefits of the programme. The MTSF efficiency profile for the Change Programme is set out below:

General Fund

Financial Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Deficit	£3,528	£4,517	£2688.29	£194.49	-£993	
Change Programme rec target		-£300	-£704	-£900	-£600	-£2,504m

- 4.16 The initial focus of the Change Programme is starting with general fund related activity. The Change Programme principles will also apply to Housing Revenue Account related activities, but the immediate priority at the moment is the compliance action plan.
- 4.17 For 2024/2025 the Change Programme has delivered £333,200 of general fund revenue savings, which has been factored into the medium-term financial strategy. A positive from this outcome was an over delivery of savings by £33,200, which give a head start for the 2025/2026 target.
- 4.18 The Change Programme has also avoided £146,000 of growth requests.
- 4.19 For 2025/2026, the target is £704,000. So far, £190,100 has been confirmed towards this target with further efficiencies forecast. Based on this forecast would mean that £15,000 is still needed. The forecast is, however, subject to projected income targets being met and final ago ahead to join the National Parking Platform.

5. Change Programme Communications

- 5.1 The Change Programme was launched March/April 2024 with briefings at Cabinet SLT, Manager’s Forum, Group Leaders, dedicated intranet page, case for change booklet, manager cascade slide deck and other briefings.

- 5.2 Last year's employee pulse survey results indicate that 70% of staff confirmed their manager has briefed them on the Change Programme and of those briefed the level of understanding is at 6.49/10 (0 = no understanding, 10 = full understanding).
- 5.3 There have been regular updates at Manager's Forum over the last twelve months. In April 2025, there is a planned relaunch of the change programme to help maintain momentum and broader organisational awareness.

6. Summary

- 6.1 The first twelve months of the Change Programme has got off to a positive start with the first year's savings target achieved and several initiatives underway that will help to build momentum into 2025/2026. A wider pipeline of initiatives is in place and continuing to develop. Whilst there still a lot to do there can be some cautious optimism.

Supporting documents:

Appendix 1: Change Programme – Case for Change

[Corporate strategy - Warwick District Council. \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk)

[HOME | CommercialGov](#)

[Homepage – Jadu](#)

[Document.ashx \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](#) – JADU CRM

[WDC Report Template - November 2023 \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](#) – NPP

[WDC Report Template - November 2023 \(warwickdc.gov.uk\)](#) – waste calls