

## **REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**

Date of Meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Date of Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: One Exeter – Annual Review

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

#### **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1 This report provides Executive with an annual review of the One Exeter work programme and sets out the plans for the next 12 months.
- 1.2 The One Exeter work programme aims to deliver a fit for purpose organisation and meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It was initially agreed by Executive in February 2021.

#### **2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 That Executive recommends that Council notes the progress with the programme.

#### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

- 3.1 To deliver the council's ambition of leading a well-run council as set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-26. This will include working directly with staff via the Strategic Management Board (SMB), the Operational Management Board (OMB) and Managers.

#### **4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources?**

- 4.1 Delivering a programme of this magnitude will require additional resources. A Transformation Fund exists which has helped to fund delivery of the work programme. To date, the funding has been spent on resourcing the Programme Steering Group (PSG) through secondments. The PSG has been put in place to progress the work programme. This was initially for a period of one year but this has now been extended until 31 March 2024 to enable the continuous and uninterrupted delivery of the programme.
- 4.2 Some work within the programme plan will incur up-front costs such as staff development and support, or one-off implementation costs and these will need to be funded from existing resources or earmarked reserves. Such costs (recurring and non-recurring) will be clearly identified and set out in accordance with the agreed financial monitoring framework. Where appropriate, business cases for

funding this work will be developed and approval sought as appropriate from Members in the usual way.

- 4.3 The work programme is also dependent on an investment in ICT, for example, the introduction of Microsoft 365 and potential introduction of new technology to enable customers to self-serve. Work is currently being scoped to identify what can be achieved with the technology already in place.

## 5. **Section 151 Officer comments:**

The One Exeter programme underpins the approach to delivering a balanced budget over the life of the medium term financial plan. It provides a structured approach that not only delivers the reductions required but also provides a framework for improving service delivery and staff working conditions.

## 6. **What are the legal aspects?**

- 6.1 This report aims to provide an update on progress with the One Exeter programme and there are no legal aspects.

## 7. **Monitoring Officer's comments:**

This report sets out progress on the agreed One Exeter Programme and as such raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

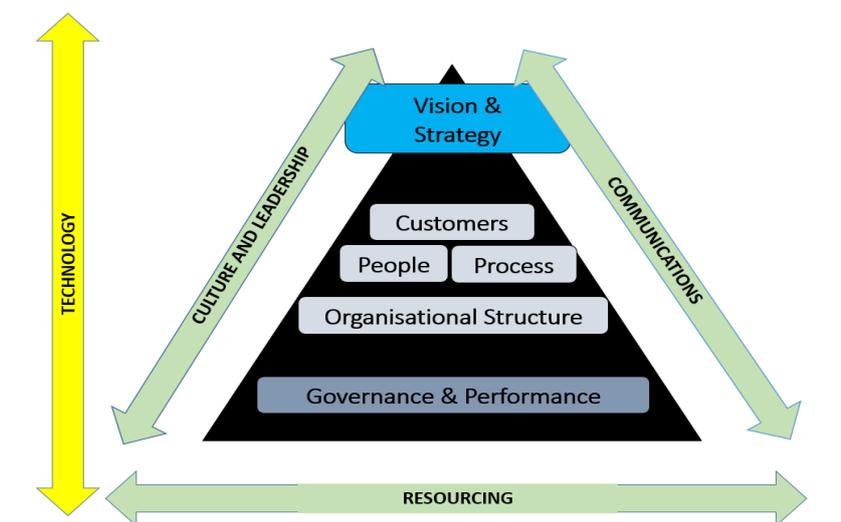
## 8. **Report details:**

### **Background**

- 8.1 The One Exeter Work Programme was approved by Executive in February 2021 and aims to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and deliver a fit for purpose organisation.
- 8.2 Work began in 2021, and programme plan was developed to deliver the One Exeter work programme. The original programme work streams are set out below:

Work stream	Area	Details
1	Leisure Service Review	Work towards a cost neutral Leisure Service
2	Target Operating Model/Service Reductions	To include Organisational Change Programme, changes to management structure, cessation/reduction in discretionary services and review of statutory and support services
3	Technical Accounting	Review of charges from the General Fund to the following services – Building Control, Land Charges, Visit Exeter, Licensing and Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
4	Corporate Property	Asset disposal and management/potential additional income and review of Asset Improvement and Maintenance costs
5	Seek external funding	Seek funding from ring-fenced and externally funded services
6	HR	New working patterns
7	Income Generation	To include commercialisation, return from borrowing on Exeter City Living Group activities and car parking income

- 8.3 The focus of work stream 1 has changed over the last year. Whilst the original intention was to work towards a cost neutral Leisure Service, a detailed analysis and review of the service has identified that this will not be possible
- 8.4 The terms and conditions for Leisure employees, operational costs, competition in the leisure sector, changes to people's use of leisure facilities, lack of subsidy and cost of living crisis all factor. It is why an increasing amount of councils in the country have reluctantly closed facilities.
- 8.5 Officers are working on a detailed business case for the Leisure Service and focussing on work to control costs with a view to potentially identifying if or when a cost neutral position can be met, whilst giving the best opportunities for the residents of Exeter.
- 8.6 A Target Operation Model (TOM) was developed to shape the work required to deliver work streams 2 and 6 above which focus mainly on organisational change. The model adopted for the One Exeter work programme is presented below.



8.7 A vision and strategy was developed for each element of the TOM as shown in the table below:

Work Stream	Work Stream Vision (link to budget area shown in brackets)	Work Stream Strategies
Customers	A cost-effective exceptional customer experience every time (2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use customer insight to design services</li> <li>2. Limit costly contact channels</li> <li>3. Embed a single point of contact ethos</li> </ol>
People	The council is a place where staff are supported and developed to deliver quality services and reach their full potential (2 and 6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a Workforce Plan</li> <li>2. Develop an Employee Wellbeing framework</li> <li>3. Consider how the work place should be utilised</li> </ol>
Process	Streamlined, automated and efficient customer-facing processes for internal and external customers (2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritise, analyse and redesign processes and continuously improve them</li> </ol>
Organisational Structure	To have an agile and flexible organisational structure that's built on value for money principles (2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore alternative delivery models</li> <li>2. Create a streamlined structure</li> <li>3. Introduce generic roles where it makes sense to do so</li> </ol>
Governance	A governance framework for the work programme that enables timely and effective decision making and accountability (2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a framework of responsibility and accountability across the organisation (ToR)</li> <li>2. Ensure framework is aligned with council's constitution and policies</li> </ol>
Culture and Leadership	To develop and embed a culture for the organisation that all staff believe in	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define and agree values and behaviours</li> <li>2. Develop performance management framework</li> </ol>

Work Stream	Work Stream Vision (link to budget area shown in brackets)	Work Stream Strategies
	(2)	3. Develop support for staff to adapt to new ways of working
Resourcing	The right people at the right time to successfully deliver One Exeter (2)	1. To identify, secure, develop and support organisational ownership and delivery of One Exeter
Communications	To keep our stakeholders informed in a timely way (2)	1. Identify stakeholders and methods of communications for each stakeholder group 2. Seek and respond to feedback 3. Develop a Communications Plan that is aligned with Corporate Communications

8.8 A series of design principles have also been developed that not only reflect the objectives of the One Exeter programme but also incorporate the Government's design principles for delivering and running great public services. When reviewing their Service, Service Leads were asked to consider how they can meet these principles in the future:

- Services that are simple to use and accessible
- Services that are built around users and their needs
- Reducing contact through the most expensive channels (channel shift)
- Reduction in 'non value' work
- Creation of multi-channel first point of contact team
- Improve first contact resolution
- Creation of generic roles where appropriate
- Exploration of shared services where appropriate
- Reduction in the use of paper
- Reduce need for physical space
- Reduce silo working through creating a joined up experience

The remainder of this report provides an update on the progress that has been made in relation to the TOM as out in sections 8.3 and 8.4 above. This work specifically focusses on organisational development.

## 8.9 **One year on**

A summary of the work that has taken place over the last year is set out below:

### **8.9.1 *Development of a proposed Green Travel Plan***

It has been agreed that a formal Workplace Green Travel Plan will be developed to replace the existing policy. In order to inform the Plan the council is working with Devon County Council to conduct a Green Travel Audit. Alongside this, a staff survey is being conducted to understand how staff are travelling to and for work and what more can be done to support staff to adopt more sustainable modes of transport. The results of the audit and the staff survey will be analysed and used to develop the formal Green Travel Plan. This will be presented to SMB in the Spring 2023 and then subsequently proposed to Executive Committee. Any additional resources will be funded from the already existing Green Travel budget which is funded through the staff car parking levy.

A revised digital offer of a corporate discount for staff and Members using Stagecoach services has also been agreed and will be launched in January 2023. Work is underway to communicate this across the organisation with a link on the intranet on how staff can access this new scheme.

### **8.9.2      *Draft Employee Wellbeing Framework***

Since Autumn 2022, when two papers on Wellbeing were presented to SMB (Wellbeing Immediate Ideas and Employee Wellbeing Programme Briefing Paper), a proposal paper is being developed. This will include feedback from SMB, data from the Staff Survey and is planned to be available for discussion in Spring 2023. The paper provides a strategy for integrating Wellbeing into the organisation at all levels. The framework provides support for employees in five areas:

- Physical Wellbeing
- Mental Wellbeing
- Financial wellbeing
- Social Wellbeing
- Development and Professional Wellbeing

A Health and Wellbeing page is already available on the intranet and all employees have been offered a corporate discount on gym membership.

### **8.9.3      *Draft Values and Behaviours Framework***

Work has been taking place to develop a Values and Behaviours framework which reflects what's important to both the council and its employees and signals a shift to a new, fit for purpose council. Colleagues from SMB, OMB, the Staff Sounding Board, the Union and the Equalities and Diversity Group have all had an input into the development of this framework.

This final draft will be shown to a group made up of sounding board members, the PSG, the original working group and a union representative. It is planned for this to be the final round of staff consultation. Any final changes will be made, and the final proposed Values and Behaviours presented to SMB in the Springy 2023 for approval. Prior to this feedback will be sought from Members.

The final version of the Values and Behaviours will be communicated to all staff and will be incorporated into the new Performance and Development Review process. This will ensure that the Values and Behaviours are embedded across the council and that all staff understand what is expected from them as an employee of the council.

### **8.9.4      *Review of the Growth and Development Review process***

A new Performance and Development review process has been drafted to replace the former Growth and Development Reviews. Colleagues from SMB, OMB, the Staff Sounding Board, the Union and the Equalities and Diversity Group have all had an input into the development of the process. The draft new process has been designed to see how well employees are performing their role and demonstrating the proposed Values and Behaviours. The draft Performance and Development Review process has been piloted and a final version will be prepared in response to the feedback received through the pilot. Full roll out of the new process will commence in April 2023.

**8.9.5 Service Reviews undertaken by all Services which have identified proposals to deliver a minimum 15% service cost reduction and opportunities and meet specific design principles.**

As part of the work programme, all services were asked to undertake a review of their service. The aim of the review was two-fold:

- To provide a general overview of service operations to inform identification of opportunities for reducing service costs and meeting the One Exeter design principles (see section 8.4)
- To provide a list of actionable opportunities/proposals with cashable savings profiled over the lifetime of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) from 2023/24 – 2026/27.

The outcome of this work has resulted in the identification of £1.104 million of proposed savings for 23/24. The details of these proposals are set out as item 18 on the Executive Agenda. The work has also identified a number of cross cutting functions which will be considered/developed through a series of task and finish groups. There are opportunities to bring these functions together to provide a more streamlined and efficient service for both employees and customers.

**8.9.6 Engagement with the Local Government Association (LGA)**

The LGA has been invited to spend some time with the council early this year to help understand whether decisions are being made at the right level and by the right people.

This approach is known as Decision Making Accountability (DMA). Some of the benefits of this approach are that it leads to timely decision making and employees have clear responsibilities and are empowered to make decisions as near as practicable to the point of delivery. This in turn should lead to a more productive and agile Council.

**8.9.7 Development of Redundancy and Flexible Working Policies**

The council recognises that employees are integral to the successful delivery of the council's objectives. The current employment policies are being reviewed and updated to reflect new ways of working.

To date, the Flexible Working Policy and the Redundancy Policy have been updated.

**8.9.8 Draft Tri-Council Digital Strategy**

A draft Tri-Council Digital Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Strata and East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils. The strategy identifies how the council might improve its online offer to residents, visitors, businesses, Members and staff through the use of simpler and better services and tools. This Strategy will underpin the council's Customer Access Strategy which is currently being developed.

**8.9.9 Employer of Choice**

An initial assessment has been conducted to compare council's terms and conditions and employee benefits against other employers in the city. The purpose of the

exercise was to identify opportunities to improve the council's employment proposition and ultimately attract and retain staff in what is currently a very competitive employment market. The overall results of the exercise found that the council compares favourably against other employers in the city but that its full and competitive offering should be better promoted to current and prospective employees. Work is underway to address this and further opportunities are being explored through the Green Travel Plan and the Employee Wellbeing Framework referred to above.

#### **8.9.10      *Creation of Staff Sounding Board***

A Staff Sounding Board has been formed to engage with staff throughout the delivery of the work programme. Every service has a representative that sits on the Board. The kind of areas the group has looked at include the Green Travel Plan, the Employee Wellbeing Framework and Internal Communications. The Union also sits on the group and this complements the other work undertaken with the trade union as part of the change process.

#### **8.9.11      *Staff Survey***

A staff survey was conducted in October 2021 to understand how staff were feeling about their work. At that time the country was coming out of lockdown and employees were adjusting to new ways of working. 288 responses were received where the majority of staff said they were happy in their work and with the support they received for their wellbeing. The survey has been conducted again in January 2023 to compare the results with last time and to help further inform the work around employee wellbeing and green travel.

#### **8.9.12      *Pilot and ongoing review work in Customer Services***

Customer Services has already started to pilot some of the new ways of working. The learning from this work will be used to inform the development and delivery of the wider Customer Access Strategy. The work includes:

- The complete cessation of published email channels, replaced with contact forms that promote self-service and improve efficiency and reporting. This means that all enquiries can be tracked and managed and handled more quickly.
- Bringing decision making to frontline delivery in relation to waste and recycling services, to improve and speed up customer outcomes and reduce unnecessary hand overs between departments. This has led to a reduction in handovers between Waste and Customer Services and shorter resolution times for customers.
- Conducted customer surveys around revenues forms, to assess barriers to online services and inform future actions. Early findings include:
  - 64% of callers do not refer to website before calling
  - 50% of callers unaware that transaction could be carried out online
  - 27% had no internet access and or access to a computer

Customer Services are currently pulling together next steps in response to these results, including those to promote use of online services.

- Continued delivery of digitised complaints in Customer Services (previously in Corporate Support). Outcomes include:
  - One full time equivalent saving through digitisation of process

- Improved first time resolution with switch to trained frontline Customer Support staff responding to complaints
  - Improved corporate consistency of complaint responses
  - Significant reduction in number of complaints, including those escalating to stage 2 and beyond
- Ongoing review of Customer Service Centre face to face operations, to promote self-service, better enable those who may be vulnerable or excluded and to maximise the use of staff and physical resources

### **8.9.13      *Communication with Stakeholders and Unions***

The Programme Sponsor has met regularly with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder and Union Representative to provide updates on progress with the One Exeter Programme. SMB and OMB have of course been closely involved in this work.

## **8.10      Proposed Outcomes - Next 12 months**

A summary of what the One Exeter Programme aims to deliver over the next 12 months is set out below.

### **8.10.1      *Implementation of Service Review proposals with a particular focus on cross cutting functions***

Service Leads will be instrumental in delivering the cost reduction proposals identified for 2023/24 and finding ways to break down silos and deliver more joined up services for customers. The PSG will work closely with Service Leads to develop task and finish groups to deliver this work. Part of this process will involve defining roles and responsibilities and understanding what help and support will be required.

### **8.10.2      *Development of Customer Access Strategy***

The One Exeter vision for customers is 'A cost-effective exceptional customer experience every time'. The key strands of this work include:

- Creating self-service information and a digital experience that becomes the channel of choice
- Restricting the use of more expensive channels
- Creating a single front door for customers, based around a centralised customer service team

Work has already started on gaining insight into both the digital and customer improvement opportunities, as highlighted by service leads through their service reviews. Further work is taking place to develop a Customer Access Strategy which will communicate both internally and externally the vision for customer delivery and the roadmap for achieving this. As with the Digital Strategy, this strategy will cut across the whole of the council and link to many of the work streams identified within the work programme.

If the council is to achieve its vision for customers, it will require input and buy in from all of its stakeholders.

### **8.10.3      *Technology***

Delivering a new model for customer delivery will require a fundamental shift in emphasis as to how technology is used. In the past it has been about underpinning services, now it is about service delivery. The council plans to:

<b>Move away from</b>	<b>Move to</b>
IT enables staff to perform their role	Digital is the enabler of citizen engagement and services
IT as a cost saving activity	Investing in IT will create greater savings elsewhere in the Council
Call centre focussed	The primary channel of delivery is digital
Desktop estate	Mobility first, mobile, laptop and device agnostic
Labour intensive upgrades to large systems	Incremental upgrades and component-based systems. Lo-code, no-code solutions for quick and easy roll out.

The council will look to utilise existing technology to achieve these plans but there will be an inevitable cost associated with delivery of this work which will be assessed on an invest to save basis.

#### **8.10.4 Introduction of Microsoft 365 (M365)**

M365 will replace the Microsoft Office environment and the desktop products that are used by the council every day, such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint with a cloud-based version. More significantly, M365 has a much wider range of products, which are designed to help improve the user experience, the customer experience and business efficiency.

Delivery of this project will be broken down into four phases, with the first phase due to start in the next month. The first phase will be for MS Teams to be rolled out to all staff and for training to be provided.

#### **8.10.5 Service Plans**

As part of the performance management framework and to support the introduction of the new Performance and Development Review process, all Service Leads will be asked to prepare a Service Plan. Most Services already have a Service Plan but for those that do not, guidance and a template has been created.

#### **8.10.6 Revised Organisational Structure**

The programme identified a need for a new organisation structure to be in place for April 2024 at the latest. This has already commenced with the forthcoming departure of the Chief Executive and Growth Director. The LGA have been asked to develop proposals for the council to consider and the DMA work already described in this report will contribute to that. These proposals will be presented to Members in due course.

#### **8.10.7 Review of terms and conditions**

A review of the Councils' employment Policies will be presented to SMB for consideration in early 2023.

### **8.10.8 Accommodation Review**

Following the roll out of the Agile and Flexible work programme, COVID-19 struck, and staff use of the Civic Centre declined considerably. A headcount undertaken in November 2022 revealed that only an average of 65 staff were in Phase 2 of the Civic Centre each day, spread over the five active floors. This is clearly not an efficient use of the Civic Centre.

Over the coming year, an Accommodation Review will be undertaken which will identify the most cost efficient method for accommodating staff that need to work from an office base.

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

9.1 The One Exeter work programme contributes to the following corporate priorities and plans:

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Plans</b>
Leading a Well Run Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make it as easy as possible for more people to help themselves by providing high quality information and advice through digital and self-help services</li><li>- Provide a 'single front door' for customers who need to contact the council and provide high quality information and advice through digital and self-help services.</li><li>- Continue to support our staff to shift to agile, mobile and remote working, ensuring we make the best use of the skills and experience of all of our staff</li><li>- Development of an Employee Wellbeing Framework</li><li>- Review of the Organisational Structure</li><li>- Provision of value for money services</li></ul>
Prosperous Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continue to identify opportunities to improve the council's employment proposition and ultimately attract and retain staff</li></ul>
Promoting Active and Healthy Lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Development of an Employee Wellbeing framework</li><li>- Development of a Green Travel Plan for employees</li></ul>

## **10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

10.11 A detailed risk register has been developed. The top five risks identified can be found in Appendix A.

## **11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people’s needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because this report is for information only.

11.5 As the work progresses, an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken for each area of work that will impact on people with protected characteristics. The assessment will be kept under regular review by the PSG to meet the continuing duty to monitor and review.

## 12. **Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

12.1 The implementation of the One Exeter work programme will make a positive impact on the Council’s carbon footprint. Specific projects are set out below:

Programme Activity	Impact on carbon footprint
Green Travel	Encouraging staff to walk or cycle to and for work will reduce the need to use cars and consequently positively impact congestion and pollution levels.
Agile/hybrid working	The continuation and development of agile and flexible working will reduce the need for office space which will, in turn, reduce the amount of energy needed.
Microsoft 365	Microsoft 365 will offer the council much more scope to collaborate and share ideas. More meetings can be held remotely reducing the need to travel and information can be shared without the need for emails or printing papers, thereby reducing energy and paper wastage.
Customer	More services will be available online which will allow customers to self-serve at times that are convenient to them, rather than during traditional office hours. This will reduce the need for customers to travel to

Programme Activity	Impact on carbon footprint
	the city centre for face to face services or complete paper based forms.

### 13. **Are there any other options?**

- 13.1 Each of the work streams identified in the One Exeter programme could be delivered in isolation by nominated work stream leads. However, without any strategic oversight or coordination, there is a very high possibility that double counting of savings or duplication of work could occur. In addition, adopting a joined up delivery approach, will ensure that any unintended consequences that have an impact on other parts of the organisation, are identified at an early stage.

**Deputy Chief Executive, Bindu Arjoon**

Report Author: Lorraine Betts

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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