

NFDC TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That cabinet support a programme of staff engagement and the development of the Transformation Strategy to deliver change, improve outcomes and contribute to resolving the MTFP gap by delivering savings of at least £1M by FY26/27.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to council members on the role and status of the transformation programme.

3. BACKGROUND – THE WHY

- 3.1 NFDC has been fortunate in being able to maintain core services to a great standard without draining reserves or selling assets. This is borne out by continuing high levels of customer satisfaction demonstrated through the resident's survey. However, having already rationalised NFDC operations, maintaining that level of satisfaction will be harder as funding pressures continue despite the need to step up for new challenges.
- 3.2 Research has already been undertaken to establish our current position and understand potential opportunities to become a more efficient and dynamic if we rethink services focussing better on our customers. This, in itself, would target releasing a minimum of £1M in savings to support the MTFP but the programme also needs to allow for our ambitions in terms of new opportunities, building in flex to achieve corporate priorities and positioning the organisation to respond to emerging risks and additional pressures.
- 3.3 In October 2022 cabinet approved the case for NFDC undertaking a transformation programme to deliver a leaner, more efficient organisation, characterised by leading business practices, sustainable service delivery and a skilled and motivated workforce, and most importantly ensuring that our residents and customers are at the heart of our decisions.
- 3.4 This programme will examine and consider change in all aspects our services are provided spanning, how NFDC uses its assets, organisation design and leadership, processes, and new technology to deliver an efficient, agile, responsive organisation characterised by leading edge business practices, sustainable service delivery, excellence in customer service and a skilled and motivated workforce.

4. WHERE ARE WE

- 4.1 From the initial research, significant opportunities were identified around how we engage and serve our customers. Specific work is now being undertaken to further understand the experience of our customers and build on the findings of the recent Residents Insight Survey.
- 4.2 Given the, now widespread, use of web-based services across local government, this research aims to understand why residents and businesses rely so heavily on traditional ways of dealing with NFDC. This research work involves questionnaires,

focus group discussions and street surveys to capture the diverse views of people across the district at all levels. It will help build our understanding of our residents changing needs, societal shifts and where new technology could have a positive impact for residents and in turn release efficiencies.

- 4.3 To develop the outcomes and benefits that result, it was recognised that NFDC would need to bring in Transformation Programme expertise. The new Transformation and Improvement Manager is now in post and is working up plans and governance for the next strategic cycle to 2027. This builds on the work already undertaken to shape the transformation framework around key themes and building blocks.



- 4.4 Several projects within these themes are already progressing and, if need be, will be wrapped into Transformation Programme governance as it becomes established. Highlights of this progress include:
- i. Customer Service - The NFDC website has been transformed in the last two years but there are still changes we can make to optimise the site. Several improvements are underway designed to help customers find what they need more easily and so reduce walk up or telephone enquiry workloads. These quick wins will free up resource to support the wider transformation as it addresses more fundamental changes for future service. Ongoing Customer Research as mentioned above (para 4.2).
 - ii. People - Output to work with the management team to help them build the people and leadership skills required to move the organisation forward. Tenders are currently being evaluated for partner to deliver development agenda. The intranet is also being redeveloped to support 21st century working. New team web pages are being developed to enable team collaboration, information sharing and communication.
 - iii. Digital - To establish an IT environment with suitable tooling for services, staff and management. The ICT team continue to establish a platform conducive to transforming the organisation. Services now moving to the cloud, collaboration environments launched, operational applications renewal underway. Systems replacements are also underway for Operations/Housing/Planning & Regulatory Services which will form a part of the digital landscape for the future organisation in due course.
 - iv. Property & Accommodation - Required to define a future estate that will be appropriate for the Future NFDC. Options are being evaluated to understand the market/financial impact of estate strategies.

- v. Business Reviews - New Wastes Services IT allowing adoption of new services able to respond quickly and efficiently to customer requests and reports. Business Analysis and technology deployments now underway.
 - vi. Delivery - A key enabler for Transformation will be our ability to track and assess progress. A new Performance Manager is now in post currently working on the development of the Corporate Plan to draw out objectives that can be used to measurement benchmarks for all activity.
- 4.5 Whilst these projects progress, Transformation as a programme is in start-up. An interim board will be assembled to ensure oversight of the programme as it takes shape, chaired by its sponsor, The Strategic Director for Corporate Resource and Transformation, and lead by the Transformation Assistant Director and Transformation Manager.

5. PROGRAMME INITIATION

- 5.1 In June/July the Programme will seek to verify:
- the case for change,
 - SMART corporate objectives associated with NFDC vision, and
 - design principles for transformation.
- 5.2 This is an essential platform that will define the scope and nature of changes to follow. Staff and member engagement will be instrumental to help shape this future vision.
- 5.3 Clear strategic objectives will allow the programme to review the NFDC backlog of pending and live projects to ensure all are aligned and consistent with transformation outcomes. The Terms of Reference for the officer Capital and Change Board will be updated to allow it to review projects and decide how they will progress.
- 5.4 During the Autumn of 2023 an initial “Roadmap” for the next four years will be completed outlining the key phases of change, major milestones and significant dates we anticipate planning around. It will be supported by a more detailed plan of change over the next 12 months at activity level. Resource planning will also be completed in outline allowing us to identify any additional capabilities that will be required for delivery.
- 5.5 With outline activity and resource planning it will be possible to present outline financial planning for the programme based on estimated cashflows and spend profiles against committed benefits realisation for cashable and quantifiable benefits.

6. GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 During the next quarter the key governance elements will also be defined and documented and will include:
- Terms of Reference for the main governance bodies (Programme Board, Benefits Realisation, Assurance),
 - Risk and Issue management tooling and process,
 - Delivery and financial reporting regimes,

- Change/configuration controls, and
- Templates, Webpages, Collaboration Sites.

6.2 Programme governance will be implemented, and a formal board will be setup with authority to minimise decision making delays. Once Transformation governance is operational any projects currently underway with impact on programme outcomes will move across to Programme oversight and management. This will mean they will start reporting progress, risk, issues and actuals to the programme as part of an integrated delivery of change.

6.3 The board will ensure oversight of the programme as it moves forward, chaired by its sponsor, The Strategic Director for Corporate Resource and Transformation, and lead by the Transformation Assistant Director and Transformation Manager and will report to the EMT and Cabinet.

7. NEXT STEPS

7.1 The Transformation Strategy will be presented to Cabinet later this year detailing plans, finance, governance and a change catalogue of all projects we may consider for delivery and highlighting the ones we know at present must proceed to deliver the Councils strategic objectives.

7.2 Before firming up planning, it is vital to maintain engagement with NFDC staff – the programme will conduct a series of open staff events to share Transformation thinking. Four will be held at Appletree Court and two at the Depots. The purpose will be to build understanding of what is planned, gauge the appetite for change and key issues that will cause concerns and gather commentary, suggestions, criticisms to help build confidence and ownership for change.

7.3 Branding and communications planning will also be launched to give the programme a recognisable identity and prepare for a pro-active campaign designed to engage members, staff and customers to build support and ownership. This will be captured in a programmes Stakeholder and Communications Management Plan.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The programme has needed time to establish a leadership team and complete building its evidence base to make the case for change. The next quarter will be critical in building organisation and planning needed to be able to make the right changes within a controlled environment: necessary to focus resource on changes that deliver a return on investment.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Benefits will span cash releasing, non-cash releasing and quantifiable impacts. Under best practice for benefits realisation management, it is expected that the programme will contribute to resolving the MTFP gap by delivering savings of at least £1M by FY26/27. Additional cash benefits will be targeted to allow for our ambitions in terms of new opportunities, building in flex to achieve corporate priorities and positioning the organisation to respond to emerging risks and additional emerging pressures, currently outside of the latest published Medium Term Financial Plan.

9.2 No additional financial requirements over that already agreed at this time. Wherever possible the programme will seek to involve NFDC staff for delivery and therefore minimise reliance on external resources except where capacity or skills types are not available.

9.3 More detailed future funding requirements will be confirmed as part of the September reporting cycle.

10. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Sustainability will likely be a core objective and part of the business case for every project commissioned to deliver the Future NFDC building on the actions already delivered by the Council in its response to the Climate and Nature Emergency. Within the programme itself, the carbon profile is small but there will be day to day attention to reduce any carbon impact arising from how we deliver change – primarily based on avoiding unnecessary travel and minimising waste wherever possible.

12. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The delivery of transformation programme will give regard to equality impact assessments throughout, especially within services where changes are proposed.

13. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Data protection will be treated as a matter for compliance wherever change may impact existing operations regarding the information we seek to capture and how it is retained to manage and deliver services.

14. RESOURCES AND TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL COMMENTS

14.1 The Resources and Transformation Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted and supported the Transformation Programme as outlined.

15. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

15.1 The Transformation Programme will provide a platform to shape the future organisation around our residents, delivering efficiencies, modern business practices, sustainable service delivery and a skilled and motivated workforce. I am pleased to support this programme which will put us in a good position to respond to future challenges and opportunities as they arise.

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Background Papers:

Transformation Programme Report:
Cabinet– 5 October 2022

HM Treasury Green Book