

**TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT PANEL
MEETING HELD MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024**

No	Item	<i>Summary of Key Recommendations</i>
1.	Welcome and Introduction	<i>Received</i>
2.	Apologies	<i>Alderman Boyle, Councillor Nicholl</i>
3.	Declarations of Interest	<i>Elected Members - None Officers - The Chief Finance Officer</i>
4.	Minutes of Transformation Programme Implementation Oversight Panel meeting held Monday 13 May 2024	<i>Confirmed as a correct record</i>
	For Confidential Consideration (Items 5 - 7 inclusive)	
5.	Action Plan Update	<i>Noted</i>
6.	Workstream Updates	<i>Noted</i>
7.	Independent Advisor – Update Report	<i>Noted</i>
8.	LG Staff Commission NI Update	
8.1	Corporate Health Check	<i>To recommend that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the direction of travel, to take forward the implementation of the next steps with the Human Resources Department, the Steering Group and the people plan</i>
8.2	Organisational Structure Review (Tiers 1-3)	<i>Noted</i>

9.	Reports to Council Committee	<i>Noted</i>
10.	Date of next meeting: Oversight Panel – Monday 12 th August, 6.00pm, The Council Chamber	<i>to recommend that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the date of the next meeting as Monday 12 August 2024 at 6.00pm.</i>

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT
PANEL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HEADQUARTERS AND
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024 AT 6.00PM**

In the Chair: Councillor Peacock (C)

Members Present: Alderman Scott (R), Knight McQuillan (C),
Councillor Storey (C)

C McKeogh, Independent Advisor (R)
D Stewart, Local Government Staff Commission (C)

Officers Present: D Jackson, Chief Executive (C)
M Quinn, Director of Corporate Services (C)
A McPeake, Director of Environmental Services (C)
D Wright, Chief Finance Officer (C)
J McCarron, Performance Officer (C)
J Keen, Committee & Member Services Officer (C)

In Attendance: A Lennox, ICT Officer (C)

Press 1(no) (R)

Substitutions:

Key: (R) Attended Remotely
(C) Attended in the Chamber

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair introduced D Stewart, Local Government Staff Commission and C McKeogh, Independent Advisor and welcomed them to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were recorded for Alderman Boyle and Councillor Nicholl.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Elected Members.

The Chair advised there was a standing Declaration of Interest for the Chief Finance Officer. Having declared an interest, the Chief Finance Officer did not leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

4. MINUTES OF TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT PANEL MEETING HELD 13 MAY 2024

Summary, previously circulated.

AGREED – that the Minutes of the Transformation Programme Implementation Oversight Panel meeting held Monday 13 May 2024 are confirmed as a correct record.

MOTION TO PROCEED ‘IN COMMITTEE’

Proposed by Councillor Storey
Seconded by Alderman Knight McQuillan and

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move ‘*In Committee*’.

*** The Press left the meeting remotely at 6:04pm**

The information contained in the following items is restricted in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

5. ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented as read by the Chief Executive.

Confidential report by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 & 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Implementation Oversight Panel on progress in relation to the Transformation Programme Action Plan.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Oversight Panel notes this update report as well as the progress against the Transformation Programme Action Plan recommendations.

Further detail was provided within the confidential report.

Sub-Committee noted the report.

6. WORKSTREAM UPDATES

Leadership / Culture and Relationships

The Chief Executive provided a verbal update in relation to leadership and culture stating that reasonable progress is being made. The main effort has been completing the organisational health check and structural review which are both progressing. The Chief Executive offered thanks to the Organisational Development/Human Resources Department for the tremendous work they have completed in relation to the people strategy and the senior leadership training. The Chief Executive advised that all the actions are achievable for the October deadlines.

Governance

The Director of Environmental Services provided a verbal update in relation to Governance stating that 13 of the 30 actions now completed, 16 actions are on course and 1 is amber. The Director of Environmental Services advised that of the 17 actions still to be completed, a significant number are within two areas:

- 1) Performance Management: the draft appraisals process from Human Resources is being reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and staff, this will be presented to Trade Unions over the summer for their input.
- 2) Risk Strategy: This is being presented to the Audit Committee on Wednesday 12 June 2024 and if it approved, more actions will be completed.

The Director of Environmental Services advised there are no other actions causing concern and all are on target to be completed at the end of September 2024.

Financial Governance

The Chief Finance Officer provided a verbal update on financial governance. He stated there are 3 actions still outstanding, one is directly in Council's control and two are with the Department for Communities. In relation to action FG8, training for Heads of Service, this training is scheduled for 28 June 2024. The Chief Finance Officer advised he will request an update on the two items with the Department for Communities.

Councillor Storey commented that it not acceptable that Council has to chase the Department for Communities for a response when Council are working to a deadline and need to progress.

Record Keeping and Land and Property

The Director of Corporate Services provided a verbal update on Land and Property and Record Keeping. The Director of Corporate Services advised 4 of the 20 actions have been completed in relation to Land and Property, 16 are in

progress, these relate to the Estates Strategy and Land and Property policies and procedures. SIB, on behalf of Council, have been progressing with these and input has been received from Officers, the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Department for Communities. An update to the Estates Strategy and the Land and Property policies and procedures will be presented to the next Land and Property Sub Committee meeting.

In relation to Record Keeping, the Director of Corporate Services advised 4 of the 7 actions were completed. There is working progress on the policies and procedures and training and development, and further work required in implementing these recommendations.

Risk Register/Issues Log

The Performance Officer advised that 96% of the actions are either green or on course. The risk register/issues log is considered at the weekly reviews and at monthly meetings with the Department for Communities. The Organisational Health Check and Organisational Review have moved from high to medium risk. The Performance Officer advised there is nothing significant to raise.

Sub Committee noted the updates.

7. INDEPENDENT ADVISOR – UPDATE REPORT

Confidential report, previously circulated, presented by the Independent Advisor, C McKeogh.

Confidential, by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 & 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Further detail was provided within the confidential report.

Purpose of Report

This report is the first quarterly report of the independent adviser appointed to support, challenge, and scrutinise the transformation programme and its implementation. This report is provided to the Department for Communities and to the Oversight Panel at Causeway Coast and Glens as agreed in the specification of

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Oversight Panel notes this update report.

Independent Advisor advised that she will be providing a quarterly report to the Department for Communities in June along with other papers. The report will reflect that progress to date has been excellent, that all the actions have been receiving attention and are progressing. The Independent Advisor stated that

the Performance Officer has been doing an excellent job, and the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team have all been working hard. The Independent Advisor stated the Head of Human Resources met with the Department for Communities and demonstrated that the actions were being implemented at all levels within the organisation. The Independent Advisor stated she had met more people in Causeway Coast and Glens area which has helped her understand the wider views in the area and provided her with more visibility to people. The Independent Advisor highlighted challenges, including concerns being raised about how well Council was embracing the Transformation Plan. The Independent Advisor stated the Chief Executive and Directors have met with staff and talked about their commitment to the Transformation Plan. The Independent Advisor stated agreement with comments made by the Performance Officer in relation to the risk register. She has no concerns about the progress being made.

Councillor Storey cited the following sentence from the Independent Advisor's report: *The report emphasises the importance of balancing the pace of implementation with thoroughness and the ongoing support and guidance from the Department for Communities* and queried what the substance of the support the Department for Communities has given.

The Independent Advisor advised that the Performance Officer and herself meet with two representatives from the Department for Communities on a monthly basis. At these meetings, progress being made on the Transformation Plan is discussed and the Department for Communities representatives challenge them. Some actions such as the structural review will not be completed by October 2024 and it is important that the Department for Communities are aware of this and give approval. The representatives from the Department for Communities go through the reports thoroughly. The Independent Advisor advised it is helpful to have dialogue with the Department for Communities.

Sub Committee noted the report.

8. LG STAFF COMMISSION NI UPDATE

The Chair invited D Stewart, Local Government Staff Commission, to present the Corporate Health Check.

8.1 Corporate Health Check

D Stewart presented via PowerPoint presentation. D Stewart stated she required third party assistance to complete the Corporate Health Check and she sought the assistance of the Independent Advisor to use and retain her knowledge in the diagnostic stage of the review. D Stewart stated the Health Check was completed to ascertain the culture of the organisation and the views

of the staff. The Health Check was completed between March and April 2024, and Council are to be commended for the work completed to date as some of the issues have already been addressed. The methodology used included Desktop Exercise and Document Review, Online Confidential Survey, Staff Reflections, Focus Groups and Confidential Interviews. D Stewart stated the 10 key findings were: Belonging and Sense of Community, Respect and Feeling Valued, Wellbeing, Getting Voices Heard, Raising Concerns and Receiving Feedback, Fairness and Equality of Opportunity, Communication (Staff Partnerships, Engagement and Involvement of Decision Making), Effectiveness of Leadership, Improvement and Personal Development, Application of Policies and Procedures and Environment and Facilities.

D Stewart stated there are five fundamental shifts that the Council should address:

1. Openness and Transparency
2. Valuing Staff and Ensuring Equity and Inclusion
3. Strengthening Employees Engagement by Valuing and Listening
4. Developing and Supporting the Workforce
5. Ensuring a Safe Working Environment.

D Stewart shared the next steps as:

- Share with the Senior Leadership Team and Oversight Implementation Panel on 10 June 2024;
- Prepare a document for wider circulation;
- Set a completion date for the review and publication of the results.

In response to questions from the Chair, D Stewart confirmed the Sub Committee need to agree the direction of travel, to take forward the implementation of the next steps with the Human Resources Department, the Steering Group and the people plan.

In response to questions regarding governance, the Chief Executive advised the Minutes of the Sub Committee meeting will be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 25 June 2024 and those minutes presented to Full Council on 27 June 2024. The Chief Executive confirmed that this is the second biggest Council in Northern Ireland bringing together two Unionist and 2 Nationalist Legacy Council's, he further stated it is right to acknowledge the context of bringing the legacy Councils together as some staff's preferred choice was to be as they were in legacy Councils. The Chief Executive stated that at the last SOLACE meeting the Chair stated that Planners had not fully integrated into the Councils, and this was validated by all the Chief Executives.

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Storey and

AGREED – to recommend that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the direction of travel, to take forward the implementation of the next steps with the Human Resources Department, the Steering Group and the people plan.

8.2 Organisational Structure Review (Tiers 1-3)

Confidential report, previously circulated, was presented by D Stewart and Independent Advisor.

D Stewart stated that the structure review of Tiers 1-3 is to consider how to maximise resources to meet objectives. The organisation review should take account of the need for clear lines of accountability, responsibilities for decision taking and the framework for reporting performance information. With regard to accountability, there should be delineation between the corporate/strategic role of Elected Members and the professional and operational responsibilities of Officers. Consultation events took place between the 24 and 26 April 2024 and on the 13 May 2024 and were open to all staff in tiers 1-4, Trades Unions, and all Elected Members.

The Independent Advisor stated the findings of the structural review, she stated that all employees understood the role of the Chief Executive and that many wanted to see more of the Chief Executive. It was recognised that the number of Directors is insufficient for the size of the organisation and that their portfolio was too broad. It was also noted that there is a sufficient number of Heads of Service but, the workload is unbalanced, as some manage more staff than others. There is a sense that structures were created to fit the person not the organisation. Tier 3 managers indicated they wanted to work together more, to have a better understanding of what others are doing in order to streamline services. Staff acting up into higher roles needs to be addressed and the Independent Advisor stated Human Resources and Directors are considering this. The use of agency staff was considered, and the Independent Advisor stated that Human Resources has a plan for this, but, staff want to see this resolved quickly. It was identified that the lines of responsibility need to be made clear and accountability needs to be addressed for the Senior Leadership Team, the Corporate body, responsible officers and Elected Members. It has been acknowledged that there is a need for a Director of Finance to support the Finance Department. There is a sense that Growth Deal needs attention. It was recognised that the Leisure and Development Directorate is a large department which is difficult for one person to manage and that Environmental Services Directorate is an extensive and complex department. There is a need to get the structure right at each level.

Councillor Storey concurred that an organisation this size should be better structured, based on the remit in each Directorate and remarked on the financial cost of restructuring Tiers 1-3. Councillor Storey commented that Council should be focusing on its statutory duties and anything after that is a luxury. Councillor Storey commented that the Department for Economy should be responsible for economic development. Councillor Storey stated that what Council do will have an effect on the rates setting process next year and Council need to offer value for money.

Alderman Knight McQuillan reflected on the public perception of Council how people think Council are responsible for more than they are, and Council need to promote positive PR showcasing what Council does and what it is doing well. Alderman Knight McQuillan stated the use of agency workers has been discussed for years and Council are now getting on top of it.

The Chair stated there are many statutory obligations that Council are required to fulfil, such as animal welfare, health and built environment, environmental health and leisure and that rates fund a huge range of functions. Council do need to highlight the large range of functions they deliver.

9. REPORTS TO COUNCIL COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive stated this has already been covered in the response to an earlier question –the minutes of this sub committee meeting will be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and those minutes will be presented to Full Council.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: OVERSIGHT PANEL – MONDAY 12 AUGUST, 6.00PM, THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

AGREED – to recommend that Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approve the date of the next meeting as Monday 12 August 2024 at 6.00pm.

MOTION TO PROCEED '*IN PUBLIC*'

Proposed by Alderman Knight McQuillan
Seconded by Councillor Storey and

AGREED – to recommend that Committee move '*In Public*'.

This being all the business, The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 6:58pm

Chair