

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Gedling 'Dynamic Council' Programme

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Author:** Senior Leadership Team

### **Wards Affected**

All

### **Purpose**

To seek Cabinet approval for a new organisational change programme which will instigate positive changes to the way the Council operates, and instil a focus on programme management and thematic delivery to meet the Council's corporate objectives as identified within the Gedling Plan.

### **Key Decision**

This is a key decision.

### **Background**

When considering a new approach to working, it is always important to reflect upon the adopted vision of the Council as follows:

*"We aspire to be regarded as a great Council by the people and businesses we serve and the staff we employ, by making a positive difference to people's lives and creating opportunities for everyone to achieve their full potential."*

Gedling has been successful in delivering many of the changes required by central government, including the financial challenges put forward by addressing the continued reductions in government grant. Since 2011/12 the Council has identified and delivered savings of £5.2m with no loss of services, and maintained its excellent performance.

However, the financial position is increasingly challenging, and it is estimated that Gedling's total government grant reductions, including New Homes Bonus, will be £5.4m which is equivalent to a 62% cash reduction as compared to 2010/11. According to the government's core spending power review, this now puts Gedling in the top 10 worst affected local authorities in the country.

Gedling has, and will continue to, take a proactive approach to funding reductions, actively seeking out ways to identify pressures, possible efficiencies and new sources of income. The budget agreed by Members in March 2017 set out a new efficiency target of £1.9m, with financial self-sufficiency being the ambition by 2021/22.

Gedling is facing significant challenges across a number of fronts. Whilst the most significant challenge is financial, the Council also needs to improve its services to a new generation of customers by building its capability to engage with an ever increasingly technology capable population and rapidly shifting demographic.

In order to meet these challenges, the starting point is to address three fundamental questions:

- a. Why do we need to change?
- b. How do we get through the next five years?
- c. What are we going to do differently?

The first question is relatively easy to answer in that the Council has to meet its budget efficiency target of £1.9m, and react positively to the changing digital world through advances in technologies and customer service expectations. The answer to the second question is to become a more flexible organisation, which is agile, outwardly focussed and enterprising. The answer to the third question is to adopt the '*Dynamic Council*' approach as outlined below and diagrammatically in Appendix 1.

## **Proposal**

There are significant savings and improvements to customer service that can be made by focussing on four key drivers of benefit:

- Digitalisation
- Agile Working
- Demand Management
- Commercialisation

Core to this approach is the clear articulation of the relationship the Council seeks to have with its community, and the way in which it puts customers at the heart of its design for the future. Community demographics, needs and expectations will clearly have an impact on the services the Council will prioritise and how they will need to be delivered.

The proposed '*Dynamic Council*' approach is Gedling's way of initiating the stepped changes necessary to meet these future challenges. Appendix 1 sets out a framework that will deliver improvement through five hierarchical layers as follows:

- *Driver for change* – budget efficiency target (as outlined above);
- *Enablers* – project and programme management approach;
- *Themes* – Digitalisation; Agile Working; Demand Management; Commercialisation;

- *Working Groups* – 12 No;
- *Governance* – Officer and Corporate Programme Boards.

Underpinning this is the need to recognise the customer as the single most important priority, and to this end, a set of five guiding principles has been established:

- ✓ Put customers at the heart of everything we do;
- ✓ Provide services that are quality and give good value for money;
- ✓ Listen to customers and staff and learn from what we hear;
- ✓ Simplify and strengthen processes and share them with each other;
- ✓ Ensure every enquiry that can be resolved first time is resolved first time.

Using this model as a way of thinking about the delivery of council services, and to challenge traditional ways of organising and delivering those services, will enable a genuine transformation of Council operations and deliver the following benefits:

- Meeting the financial challenge;
- Improving customer service and experience;
- Achieving genuine channel shift;
- Increasing the flexibility of the workforce;
- Rationalising the use of buildings;
- Creating capacity for further improvements;
- Creating a platform for alternative service delivery models.

The ‘*Dynamic Council*’ approach is built up from using hierarchical layers which are further explained below.

#### Project and Programme Management

It is important that a project management approach is embedded across the organisation as it ensures that corporate priorities are successfully delivered whilst managing change in a smooth and structured way. This approach also enables the right people to be involved in projects at the right time, and controls costs, timings and quality.

Programme management is the delivery of a portfolio of projects and activities that are co-ordinated and managed as a unit such that they achieve outcomes and realise benefits for the whole organisation. It is this approach that will underpin the ‘*Dynamic Council*’ work programme.

#### Digitalisation

The Digital Strategy 2016-2019 was approved by Cabinet in September 2016 and is detailed in Appendix 2. It set out the Council’s overarching strategic direction for its digital agenda i.e. to provide a focus, quicken the pace and enable a more joined up approach to continual digital improvements in technology. The vision is “*customers are able to access our services at any time, from any location and from any device.*”

#### Agile Working

The Council’s Agile Working Strategy is detailed in Appendix 3. The vision is “*to create a more responsive, efficient organisation which empowers its staff to work*

*with maximum flexibility, which in turn will ultimately improve customer service and increase customer satisfaction.”*

It has a focus on four main strands of work: people, premises, processes, and paraphernalia. These are to be delivered via the working groups established for this purpose.

#### Demand Management

The Council's Demand Management Strategy is detailed in Appendix 4. The vision is *“to reduce excessive, avoidable, preventable and failure demand and focus the resources we have on value demand. We also want to slow down the rise in demand to levels that are manageable within the resources we will have available to us.”*

Managing demand begins by recognising the root causes that create and drive demand, whilst at the same time understanding how people behave, and what they want, need and aspire to. This will be delivered via the working groups established for this purpose.

#### Commercialisation

The Council's Commercialisation Strategy is detailed in Appendix 5. The vision is *“to stimulate innovation, grow existing services and develop new business, and develop a commercial approach which generates a greater financial and social return that assists the Council's financial resilience and sustainability. This will enable the Council to safeguard and improve services, and more effectively deliver its corporate aims and objectives.”*

It has a focus on four key areas of activity: strengthening the Council's commercial culture and capability; increasing income from Council services through trading, charging and investment; increasing external funding to the Council; and increasing capital and revenue income through housing development and economic/employment growth. This will be delivered via the Working Groups established for this purpose.

#### Working Groups

A total of twelve Working Groups have been set up, each under the leadership of a Service Manager, to deliver specific elements of the *‘Dynamic Council’*, but which will feed into one, if not more, of the four corporate themes of Digitalisation, Agile Working, Demand Management and Commercialisation. For information, the terms of reference for these groups are detailed in Appendix 6.

#### Governance

Each of the twelve project leads will report the progress of their Working Group to the Officer Programme Board established to steer, direct, and/or control delivery against the agreed terms of reference, timescales and milestones. The Officer Programme Board will consist of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, the Director of Organisational Development and Democratic Services, and the Service Managers for Finance, Legal and Organisational Development.

Representatives from the Officer Programme Board will then report to the Corporate Programme Board on progress against the four corporate themes of Digitalisation, Agile Working, Demand Management and Commercialisation, receiving direction as necessary. The Corporate Programme Board will consist of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Alternative Options**

The alternative option is to continue as we are. However, budget efficiencies will still need to be identified and implemented, and this could cause fragmentation of services across the Council if the budget reductions are not properly managed.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no specific financial implications attributable to this report. However, the work of each of the 12 Working Groups may incur expenditure as well as generate income once work programmes and strategies have been identified.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: '*Dynamic Council*' framework  
Appendix 2: Digital Strategy 2016-2019  
Appendix 3: Agile Working Strategy  
Appendix 4: Demand Management Strategy  
Appendix 5: Commercialisation Strategy  
Appendix 6: Working groups terms of reference

### **Background Papers**

None identified.

### **Recommendation**

That Members:

1. Accept and approve the new '*Dynamic Council*' framework and authorise officers to develop and implement new processes and changes to deliver the Council's corporate objectives.
2. Note the Digital Strategy 2016-2019.
3. Accept and approve the Agile Working Strategy.
4. Accept and approve the Demand Management Strategy.
5. Accept and approve the Commercialisation Strategy.
6. Note the working groups terms of reference.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

To ensure that the Council meets its upcoming financial challenges, and responds positively to advances in digital technology and customer service expectations. This

will be achieved by developing new and efficient working arrangements that will enable Gedling to be a self-financing Council by 2021/22.