



**24 July 2017**

**Agenda Item: 5**

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING  
AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**DESIGNING SERVICES FOR THE DIGITAL AGE**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To outline a new approach that seeks to maximise savings and deliver service improvements by designing services for the digital age.
2. To seek approval and guidance on further Elected member engagement events before a report detailing the outcomes of the work streams is brought back before the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee in November 2017.

**Information and Advice**

3. The Council continues to face significant budget challenges and all services are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver savings through the usual, more traditional routes. Alternative approaches are required to enable future savings.
4. Research has included looking at a variety of approaches, accessing the latest thinking in key networks, talking to industry leaders and identifying case studies from other local authorities.
5. One approach identified – using a Service Design methodology - has resulted in some interesting examples of how wider organisational change driven by service users, but with digital as a key enabler, has delivered some impressive results (e.g. Central Government and Essex County Council).

**Service design method**

6. “Service design is all about making the services we use usable, easy and desirable. A service happens over time and is made up of touchpoints – the people, information, products and spaces that we encounter. Service design is the process of creating these touchpoints and defining how they interact with each other and with the user. Service design can be used to re-design an existing service to make it work better for users, or it can be used to create an entirely new service.” *[The Design Council]*
7. The approach taken by the Council to date has been to look at existing processes to find efficiencies and move them online where possible. This has not always recognised that many services are split into different pieces across different parts of the Council. Service Design is

about working out which pieces need to fit together and rebuilding them so they better meet the needs of local people and the Council can deliver more efficient and sustainable services.

8. In practical terms, service design means:

- Services are designed from when a user starts trying to achieve a goal to when they finish (**end to end**) – so content and transactions are designed around the customer not which service/department is providing it.
- The customer experiences a seamless service – by designing integrated (**front to back**) services including: any user-facing services, internal processes, supporting policy or legislation and organisational, financial or governance structures.
- Although digital is often a driver, it is not about just building digital solutions. It involves designing all customer touchpoints (**in every channel**) - whether digital, phone, post, face to face etc. Some of the biggest challenges are in the transitions between channels.

### **Designing services for the Digital Age project**

9. The Council is currently undertaking a six-month 'Designing Services for the Digital Age' project which began in April 2017. The key deliverables are:

- A high-level **digital vision and strategy** for the Council – to help inform future planning
- A **digital roadmap** - which will identify and prioritise services with the greatest potential for digital service transformation
- **Two service pilots** – to test the concept of service design and associated benefits realisation
- **Skills transfer** – in particular the service design methodology but also the overall approach to digital transformation

10. The Council is working with FutureGov to deliver this project - experts in combining design, technology and change – to explore the potential to rethink how services are designed to meet the needs of our service users and unlock savings. FutureGov is a public sector specialist and has worked with Central Government and around 100 local councils, as well as working internationally.

11. Ben Unsworth, FutureGov Project Director, will give a presentation to the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee on 24 July to explain more about what service design can achieve in practice.

12. From a shortlist of services, compiled through FutureGov's extensive initial engagement with the Council, the Corporate Leadership Team chose the following two service pilots:

- **Children's Integrated Disability Service** – a specific service pilot which will involve co-production of a new solution with service users and early prototyping and testing
- **Transport Services** – a wider scope pilot which aims to get to co-creation of ideas for improvement with service users and other key stakeholders. This will be used to inform the further work being done on the Transport Service's Budget Savings Options for Change

## **Next steps**

13. Work on all the project outcomes is taking place concurrently and the project is due to complete by the end of September 2017.

## **Other Options Considered**

14. Other methodologies for change, transformation and innovation have been researched and compared but they did not offer the potential to deliver the same level of financial savings.

## **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

15. Delivery of savings is becoming increasingly difficult and service design presents an alternative strategic framework for redesigning services in the digital age, which will be referenced in the Council's Strategic Plan.

## **Financial Implications**

16. The total project cost is £93,800 which has been funded from budgetary provision held in a revenue reserve.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended that Improvement and Change Sub-Committee:

1. Notes the new approach to digital transformation
2. Approves that a report is brought back to the Improvement and Change Sub-Committee in November 2017 outlining the results of the work streams
3. Supports further engagement events for Elected Members

**Martin Done**, Service Director Communications, Marketing and Commercial Development

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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## **Constitutional Comments (EP 29/06/17)**

17. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Improvement & Change Sub-Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

## **Financial Comments (SES 28/06/17)**

18. The financial implications are set out in the report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All