Organisational Recovery – Summary

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic has forced unprecedented change on the authority in the way that it operates. This has presented some challenges that we have had to overcome, but it has also created some opportunities to harness changes that have been positive, and to adopt those on a permanent basis.

This report highlights some of the opportunities that we could choose to adopt, and also some of the challenges that still remain, and poses a number of questions for members to consider. Please refer to the background paper on Organisational Recovery for further detail on other actions that have taken place.

Adapting our services

We have started an exercise with all services to look at how their service delivery has been affected in the short term including changes in demand, initial changes in delivery and limitations created by lockdown. We have then asked services to begin to plan moving towards recovery, and lastly to think about their future service delivery including using some of the short term changes that might benefit the service / community in the longer term. These initial ideas will need development and implementation over the coming months and years.

We have used technology to continue to deliver our services, have changed some of our methods of physical inspections and cut out most physical meetings. Whilst some journeys will be important to reintroduce, it is important that we do minimise travel where appropriate.

A centralised admin function has developed rapidly and one main admin team is now providing a service to many other teams that are no longer physically based in the building. This has mainly been focussed on post and scanning to date but this has potential to be developed into a longer term solution creating efficiencies and flexibility playing a key role enabling longer term remote working.

Key actions:

- To conduct a review of all of our current practices and policies in relation to staff travel and a wide ranging green staff travel plan is developed.
- Develop the concept of a centralised admin team and its potential benefits.

Working From Home and ICT

Whilst the initial exercise to get everyone WFH was successful, many staff were not used to doing so and some did not have all of the appropriate equipment in place. Most staff were not WFH for prolonged periods and it has meant that major changes for almost all have been necessary. We have gone back to staff to see what further support and equipment, both ICT and office furniture, to ensure that all are working both safely and effectively now that WFH will be the new normal for most in the medium term at least. As far as we can equipment from EPH will be repurposed for this, but some costs might be incurred.

We have been working with managers on how best to effectively manage completely remote teams. A shift to managing by outcomes and how individual workloads can contribute to wider outcomes as well as developing trust is more important than ever. Maintaining effective communication channels with managers, teams and colleagues is vital and this is an area that will need continual development.

Key action:

- To enable WFH to become the norm, the council may need to invest further in the VPN, and adapt its culture to managing remote teams.

Use of East Pallant House

During lockdown, the use of East Pallant House (EPH) has changed dramatically. It is not currently open to the public and very small numbers of staff are using the building.

The way that our customers have interacted with us has been very different over the last few months and will continue to be so, we will need to consider how our Customer Contact Centre evolves at the appropriate time.

We also need to think about our future requirements in terms of office space, moving into recovery and beyond. If we continue to be working and interacting with customers remotely then our office footprint could reduce significantly. This reopens the questions as to whether we should still be in EPH or whether a smaller, cheaper to run alternative site is more appropriate.

We also need to consider what the plans of our current tenants within EPH (CAB, the Courts and Sanctuary) are. Currently none are using the building and we will need to include them in our recovery plans.

Key Action:

- Undertake a review of the office needs, and possible solutions to meet that need in the most efficient way. To include options to relocate to a different smaller facility.

Channel Shift

During the COVID pandemic the Council has closed its reception to the general public. This has accelerated the shift to delivering services online or by phone rather than face to face.

The Council has pursued channel shift for several years to modernise service delivery, improve customer access, and at the same time reduce cost to the authority. It is important that these most recent gains are not lost after the pandemic is over.

As mentioned above, should the council choose to move to smaller offices, and promote greater use of working from home as a permanent feature, enabling our clients to interact with the Council online as a first preference or via the phone will become even more important.

It should be stressed that no one should be disadvantaged or excluded from accessing Council Services, but face to face meetings should only be used as a last resort.

Key Action:

- To prepare a workplan with measurable targets to build upon the recent channel shift, and enable more service users to self serv online.

Procurement

Although the Council is still required to comply with European procurement rules, and the need to obtain best value for the authority, we do have some discretion especially in relation to smaller procurements that fall below the EU tendering thresholds.

Key Action:

- Procurement and Contract Standing Orders to be revisited to ensure that we set additional objectives to be graded for contracts beyond price, so that we can more positively value local delivery of services. This will supplement the primary driver of being focussed upon "best value" and making decisions which are lawful but also that look to support local business as far as we can.

Risks:

- We are likely to need some investment eg systems, equipment, ICT infrastructure, office accommodation.
- Culture fails to adapt to new working practices.
- Opportunities for beneficial change / transformation are missed
- Potential negative physical or mental health impacts on our staff
- Potential not to capitalise on channel shift, failure to make savings from the building etc if we simply reopen as we were before.
- Tenants no longer rent office space due to financial constraints and social distancing requirements

What	Who	Timescale	Member Engagement	Community / Partnership Engagement	Financial Implications	Comments/ actions needed
Adapting our Services						
1. Assess impacts on service delivery.	Led by DM for Business Support. Input from all DMs	In progress - June 2020	Cabinet member	N/A		Actions required: • Survey of all services underway. • Assess changes in demand, changes in delivery and any limiting factors. • Plans for recovery drawn up including identification of changes in service delivery that should be adopted as preferable. Examples already identified include Green travel plans, and centralised Admin (see below)
2. Review existing travel policies and practices & develop a new Green Travel Plan.	DM for Business Support	September 2020	Cabinet member. Joint Staff Consultative Panel (JECP).	May need to engage with some service users eg development companies & agents re planning & B C.		Actions required: • Adopt where possible remote meetings and electronic submission and review of documents in place of physical site visits & meetings.

3. Develop a business case for a centralised Admin service.	DM Business Support, supported by DM for Dev. Management.	By December 2020	Cabinet Member plus JECP Cabinet / Council depending on costs.	Service departments affected and Staff Reps	Savings to be implemented for 2021 budget. Some capital costs may be needed for any implementation costs.	Actions required • Review and assess benefits and dis-benefits of centralising admin functions into a single team. • Scope services to be included, and quantify resources needed & new structure for admin team. • Staff consultation & implementation.
Managing Staff						
1. Ensure sufficient staffing resources are available to critical services.	DM for Business Support	March 2020 – on-going	Cabinet Council			Action required • Continually review capacity in Services and identify critical pinch points. • Redeploy staff where possible • Furlough staff unable to work where possible to minimise cost.
2. Support staff wellbeing.	DM Business Support & Wellbeing team.	June – on-going	Cabinet Member & JECP			Action required • Ensure support mechanisms are in place and staff signposted appropriately.

Working from Home & ICT support							
1. Ensure staff have the tools necessary for them to work effectively from home.	DM for Business Support & ICT manager	July 2020				Some capital costs might be required for VPN development.	Action required • Complete staff survey of ICT / equipment needs, and supply reasonable requests. Repurposing equipment where possible. • Review and identify improvements to the VPN to increase performance & reliability. • Complete the DR solution at the depot as soon as contractors available. • Ensure systems are secure. • Further develop remote meeting systems for both formal and informal meetings. • Support & training for Managers in managing remote teams.

Use of East Pallant House						
1. Assess the requirements for office accommodation in the future.	DM Business Support / BI & Facilities Manager / DM for Property & Growth.	• Initial study- Aug 2020 • Appraisal of options – March 2021	Cabinet Member O&S Cabinet Council	Depending on preferred option some community engagement might be required, but should be minimal if little / no impact on service delivery.	Depending on final option chosen there may be a capital sum required, at least to bridge a potential gap between moving and realising a capital receipt. Revenue savings should be realised.	Action required • Facilities to access the need for office accommodation. • Estates Service to identify possible solutions including shared accommodation, new development, pre-let in SG. • Business case to be developed incorporating capital spend, capital receipt, operating savings, impact on services & customers.
Channel Shift						
1. Develop an improvement programme to ensure services are delivered electronically rather than face to face.	DM for Communications, Licensing and Events	June - Aug 2020 – to agree targets	Cabinet member			Action required • Working with services, set out a clear and measurable set of channel shift targets. Focus being on areas of greatest impact.
2. Deliver Website Enhancements.	DM for Communications, Licensing and Events	Sep 2020 – June 2021	Cabinet	Some user / access groups might need to be engaged.	Some capital investment may be required.	Action required • Upgrade website to enable more mobile friendly version of eforms. • Create a wizard based contact us form.

						• Push customers via eforms rather than generic email. • Push more services to online booking. • Investigate use of chat bots. • Other service specific targets identified above.
Procurement						
1. To ensure as far as we legally can, we support local businesses through our purchasing arrangements.	DM for Democratic Services	Sep 2020	Cabinet member Cabinet Council		none	Action required • Review and amend contract standing orders to enable local purchasing to be considered when procuring goods and services, as far as reasonably practicable. • Train budget holders.
Finance						
1. Identify savings opportunities in the short to medium term through Efficiency Savings & Policy Options.	SLT & DMS Co-ordinated by Andy Buckley	June to Dec 2020	Efficiencies – SLT & Cabinet Members Policy options Cabinet & Council (Might need O&S involvement)	Unlikely unless significant policy changes proposed. Staff reps.	Savings	Action required • Divisional Managers develop ideas to achieve savings within their services • Divisional Managers provide initial list of quantified savings ideas for consideration • Coordinate DM

						submissions broken down between "efficiency savings" and "policy options" for review at SLT Strategy Day • Present efficiency savings and policy options to Cabinet / SLT strategy day and determine those to take forward • Cabinet to consider policy options and recommend options to Council (worth noting that some options may take longer to finalise e.g. EPH) • Council to consider policy options and determine which to adopt • Work with finance / DMs to feed efficiency savings into 2020-21 budget
2. Implement the Future Services Framework	SLT Co-ordinated by AB & JM	July 20 to Dec 21	Panel of senior members plus CEO. O&S Cabinet Council	Staff reps Public consultation on options for implementation.	Revenue savings. Some use of reserves might be necessary for restructuring.	Action required • Send out service analysis templates to Divisional Managers • Service Analysis papers drafted and submitted

						• Draft categorisation and impact analysis of services and costs provided to SLT • SLT Workshop to challenge assumptions and reprioritise services and rescore impact analysis • Outcomes of SLT session compiled and draft FSF completed • Member input –Panel / Cabinet / Council repeat process completed by SLT to challenge service categorisation and impact analysis scoring • Outcomes of member sessions coordinated and final FSF prepared • Finance availability compared to FSF and service provision adjusted according to funding (to be considered at Strategy Days) • Service changes fed into budget process 2022-23