

The Tandridge Finance Transformation (TFT) programme

At the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting in March it was agreed to proceed to a joint working agreement with Surrey County Council (SCC). This will provide the Council with a comprehensive finance function comprising the s151 role and leadership and management of a full range of financial functions.

The Tandridge Finance Transformation programme was subsequently developed and approved at the Strategy and Resources Committee in July. This programme is supported by Surrey County Council aims to deliver improvements in both the finance function in and across a range of areas across the council.

TFT Programme Workstreams

The TFT plan sets out 5 workstreams which taken together will transform the finance function and the role of finance within the Council. The overriding purpose of each workstream is set out below.

a) New Finance Model

A right-sized, re-shaped and strengthened model and staffing structure. This is a blend of TDC directly employed staff and senior members of the SCC finance team who will provide management oversight, best practice guidance and if applicable direct delivery of services. The Council also agreed to invest an additional £76k per annum to provide additional capacity within the team and deliver greater resilience and capability.

b) SCC transition

A transition of the SCC finance team to provide management oversight, best practice guidance and (in some cases) take on delivery of services to TDC.

c) Organisational Development

Strengthened overall financial management, increased budget holder ownership and accountability and increased grip over and adherence to key corporate processes and controls across the wider Council, allowing better identification and management of financial risks.

d) Exchequer Transformation

A transformed Exchequer function with a reshaped team, a new set of business rules and controls which are operating effectively, a refined set of documented processes with clear ownership and performance metrics underpinned by an optimised use of the core financial systems resulting in a reduction of manual workarounds. The Council agreed to invest £50k in the project team to deliver these changes.

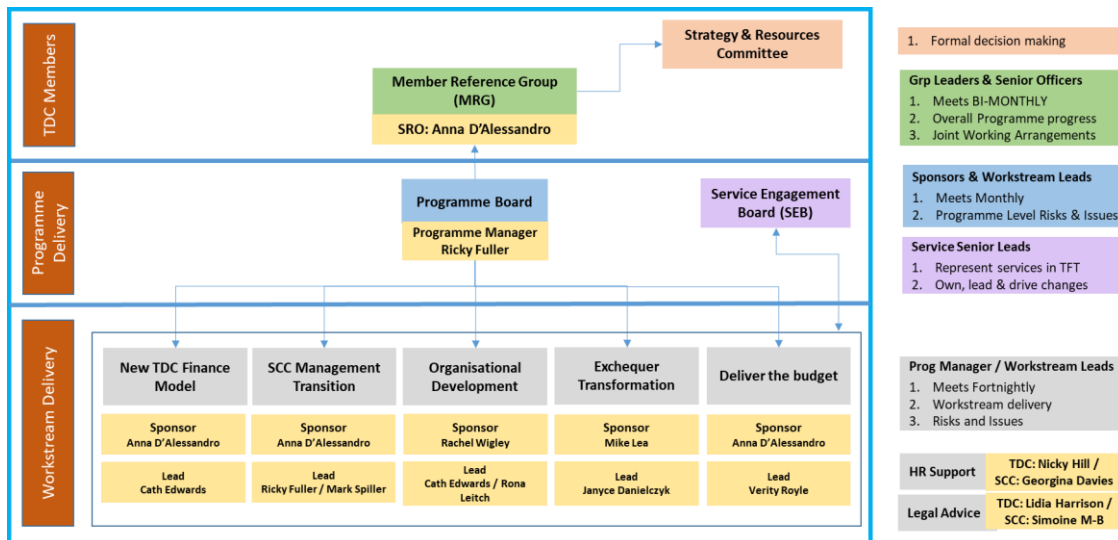
e) Deliver the Budget

This workstream will ensure a continuing focus on delivering the 2021/22 budget and the savings required to ensure a robust future financial position is established going forward, whilst incorporating the outcomes of the Grant Thornton forensic review.

Programme Governance

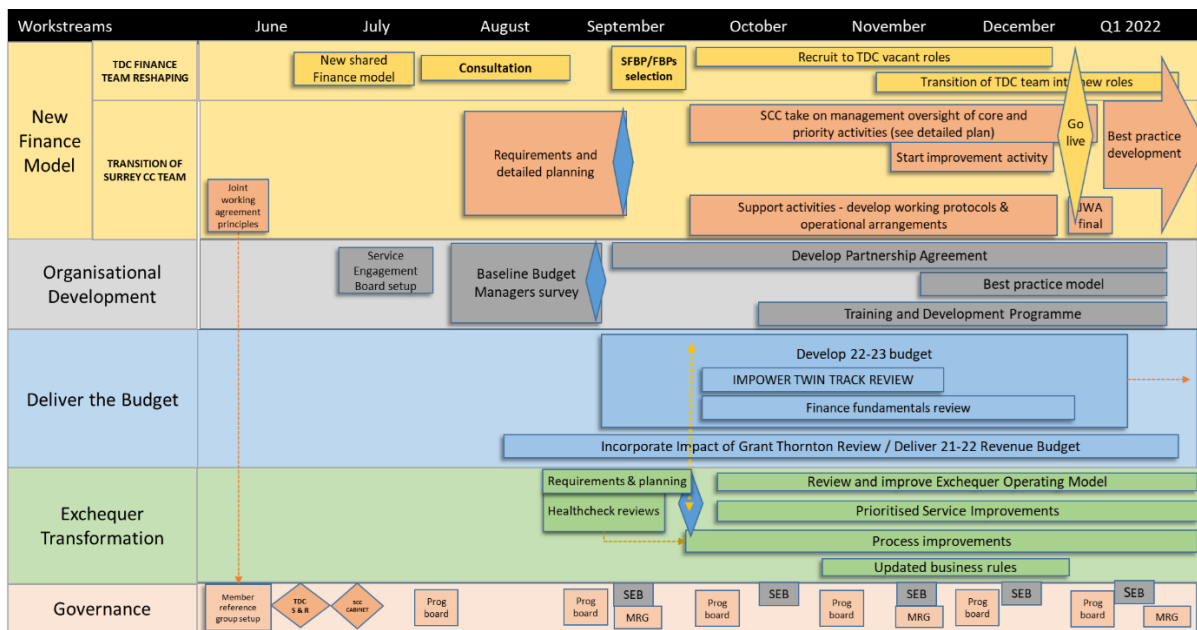
The TFT programme is managed as shown in the chart below with progress monitored through a Member Reference Group and formal decisions taken through the Strategy and Resources Committee.

The plan delivery is managed through a Programme Board and Programme Manager with each of the 5 workstreams having a sponsor and lead officer.



Progress to date

A programme roadmap has been created to track the delivery of each of the workstreams (as shown below), supported by detailed plans for each activity.



The TFT programme has made good progress. Current achievements include:

- remodelling the joint TDC and SCC finance team to align with the SCC finance function and provide additional capacity, resilience and expertise
- appointing to the new structure TDC finance function
- transitioning in senior members of the SCC finance team to provide management oversight
- building a 'one team' approach across the TDC and SCC teams
- establishing a finance service engagement board to oversee improvements in financial management across the Council
- undertaking a budget managers survey to determine areas of strength and areas for improvement and actions to address weaknesses
- providing TDC with access to the award-winning SCC Finance Academy

- undertaking a financial system healthcheck review of the key Exchequer processes (payments, banking and debt collection)
- identifying improvements in financial reporting
- developing plans to address the 15 recommendations arising from the Grant Thornton review.
- undertaking an in-depth review of areas which underpin confidence in the accuracy of the budget including a review of the Balance Sheet, Reserves, Provisions and associated policies, a review of the control and suspense accounts and a line-by-line review of every 2021/22 budget line, to ensure the base budget is sound
- commissioning of the Twin Track budget review to support the identification of savings and income generation to offset reductions in funding and ongoing service pressures for 2022-23 and to inform the budget approach for 2023-24