

# Finance Transformation Programme Update - June 2022

## Audit & Scrutiny Committee - 5 July 2022

Report of: Chief Finance Officer (Section 151)

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Purpose: For information

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Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

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### Executive summary:

This document provides an update on the closedown process being followed for the Tandridge Finance Transformation ('TFT') programme which is due to complete at the end of June 2022.

The key objectives of the closedown process are to identify:

- what the programme has achieved including key deliverables, achievements and benefits that have been delivered.
- activities and deliverables that have not been completed and ensure that these are assigned ownership
- activities and deliverables items that will form part of a service improvement plan at the close of the programme.

Formally closing the programme is an important process to undertake because it helps Surrey County Council ('SCC') and Tandridge District Council ('TDC') to effectively ensure that the programme's original objectives have been met and, where there is remaining work, assigns ownership and ensures work continues.

The project review process also enables SCC and TDC to review the relative success of the project, confirming the realisation of its benefits and to reflect on any lessons learned/best practice that can be applied to future projects.

Effective governance and decision-making around project closure also ensure that TDC is realising the benefits of the TFT and that learning is captured which may help to improve TDC's approach to delivering projects going forward.

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**This report supports the Council's priority of:** Building a better Council.

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## **Recommendation to Committee:**

That A&S Committee note the closure of the Tandridge Finance Transformation programme, achievements to date and next steps.

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## **Reason for recommendation:**

The closure report, included as Appendix A, is being brought to Committee for review and comment. The TFT programme has delivered the vast majority of the key objectives that were agreed at the outset of the programme, as well as significantly expanding on the original scope, and the report specifies how further improvements will be implemented via a continuous learning and development plan.

The need for strong governance in the delivery of the savings identified during the programme, will be carried forward into the Future Tandridge Programme and will be monitored by the Benefits Board as part of that programme.

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## **Introduction and background**

TDC interviewed two candidates for the CFO vacancy, one of which was Anna D'Alessandro who was duly appointed in Summer 2020 (on the basis of a part-time secondment from SCC) and proceeded to lead the finance function, identify improvements and develop the joint working approach with the County Council. Whilst initial improvement measures were identified and instigated, it became apparent that a more fundamental transformation of the finance function was needed to deliver sustainable improvement, and to address the underlying significant weaknesses in the financial position of the Council.

An approach to addressing these issues was developed, involving an innovative new joint finance model and an aligned transformation programme; this proposal was presented and approved at the Strategy and Resources Committee in March 2021 and, following a period of due diligence, launched in July 2021.

The TFT programme identified a set of initial objectives which have largely been delivered (see Section 4 of Appendix A); consequently, the programme is being closed at the end of June 2022.

Ongoing activities have been assigned to specific owners with set delivery dates; for example, the delivery of savings identified through the TFT programme will be managed and monitored within the Future Tandridge Programme ('FTP') which is underway.

It is important to note also that the finance partnership between TDC and Surrey County Council is continuing beyond the life of the programme. This is set out and embodied within the Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between the two Councils.

Further improvements will continue beyond the life of the programme along with ongoing work to embed some of the changes introduced. This will become part of the improvement activity led by the Finance team. The Member Reference Group (set up to oversee the TFT) expressed a desire for ongoing progress in delivering improvements to be reported periodically. It is proposed to report that progress to A&S on an annual basis.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

There are no direct financial implications of this report. The finance function, delivered through the Joint Working Agreement, continues to provide services within the budget approved by Strategy & Resources. Additionally, Finance has proposed savings of £16k as part of a report to S&R on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022. There is an onus on the Council to ensure that this arrangement continues to deliver value for money as it progresses. Delivery of continuing improvement represents a key part of demonstrating that value for money is being achieved.

### **Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

There are no legal implications resulting from this report. The annual report details the continued implementation and operation of the joint arrangement service. An audit of the shared service to determine the efficacy of the implementation and governance arrangements in place should be carried out.

## **Equality**

The Council has specific responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. Part of this is to ensure that the potential effects of decisions on those protected by the equalities legislation are considered prior to any decision being made.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, provides that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the EA;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (as defined by the EA) and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status apply to the first part of the duty.

Members should have due regard to the public-sector equality duty when making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome.

The Officers have reviewed the impact of the closure of the Finance Tandridge Programme and concur that there is no negative or positive impact on protected characteristics and residents.

### **Climate change**

There are no direct impacts on environmental aspects in this budget report. Climate change implications will be assessed as part of any changes to Service provision through a business case process.

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A** – Tandridge Finance Transformation –Programme Closedown report

### **Background papers**

None

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