

**REPORT FOR: PERFORMANCE AND
FINANCE SCRUTINY
SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	21 January 2014
Subject:	Towards Excellence Update
Responsible Officer:	Philip Hamberger, Divisional Director, Business and Service Development
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Phil O'Dell, Performance Lead Member and Yogesh Teli, Policy Lead Member
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides an update for members on progress in delivering the Towards Excellence Programme, which incorporates the project previously known as PRISM (Public Realm Integrated Services Model).

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the report.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

In October 2012, following a decision at Cabinet in September 2012 which resulted in call-in, Cabinet approved the detailed business case for the PRISM (Public Realm Integrated Services Model) project. This was a major transformation programme within the newly formed Environment & Enterprise directorate.

In the summer of 2013, and in light of some concerns about the project, the Chief Executive took advantage of a natural break in the project timeline to take a pause for reflection and to review how the project was being delivered.

The project was re-started later in the summer with a new name – Towards Excellence - and with the addition of two new projects (service review and operational improvement projects). The original three projects: restructure, new ways of working and technology remained. This report focuses mainly on the three original projects.

What is the Towards Excellence Programme?

The vision for the programme is simple:

- Great leadership
- Confident staff
- Services we can be proud of

The first four objectives listed are original PRISM objectives and objectives 5 and 6 are new programme objectives.

1. To deliver improved customer services by sharing more information with residents and businesses through the website and Access Harrow. e.g. potholes, tree works and progress on resident requests for service
2. To bring together community engagement work for the directorate into one team to provide local communities greater opportunities to get involved in helping plan and deliver our environmental services
3. To enable the development of multi-skilled teams that will be able to monitor, report and deliver a variety of street-based activities
4. To enable Managers to make more informed decisions about delivering and improving services.
5. To define delivery options for services within Environment and Enterprise from 2015 onwards based on a robust analysis of performance information, benchmarked comparisons, learning from the best, commercial nous, customer intelligence and market understanding.

6. To deliver short to medium term service improvements through a focus on initiatives aimed at a step-change in performance and/or delivery of complex MTFs savings.

Timescale

Following the pause, the timeline for the three projects that were part of the original PRISM moved to full completion by 31 March 2014. There were some benefits in this delay as it meant that the technology and new ways of working could be delivered together and at the same time as new teams were formed.

The technology part of the programme was always likely to be a challenge and has proved to be the case.

As an example, during the summer and early autumn 2013, service requirements were identified that were essential but which had not formed part of the originally agreed specification. More work has been required to ensure that the new technology can fully meet the requirements of the service.

There are also dependencies outside of the control of the programme which have impacted on delivery, for example a planned upgrade of the Council's back-office systems which support our contact with customers.

The timeline for go-live of the technology is programmed to commence in May 2014 and finish in July 2014, and CAPITA have reaffirmed this date, but this remains open to robust challenge from Harrow's Programme Director, Sponsor and senior management team.

The other two projects (service review and operational improvement projects) are longer term projects and will take us past the election and will support the incoming Administration in delivering their priorities and financial strategy.

Financials

The £2.8m cost of delivering the full PRISM business case was approved by Cabinet in October 2012.

There are additional costs both for the extended timescales and because the scope has been widened through the two new projects. The latter will be covered within the Directorate using existing funds as part of on-going service improvement.

As well as incurring additional cost, the revised timeline has also delayed the financial benefits. There is a commercial, contractual arrangement with CAPITA, but the terms of the contract are focused on outputs rather than successful outcomes and there is no link between the payment mechanism and the timely delivery of benefits. Robust commercial challenge is being brought to bear against the original deliverables, but there is limited scope in which to do this. A change request for additional costs has been submitted by

CAPITA and is close to resolution. All financial risk related to the restructure falls to the Council.

The original financial benefits, £1.5m in 2013/14 (with a full year effect of £1.85m in 14/15) were mostly related to staffing and these will be met from 2014/15. The Directorate is working hard to contain any overspend in 2013/14 as a result, and this is being reported through the usual budget monitoring. The challenge should not be underestimated, and managers are working hard to contain the pressure as far as possible.

Position statement

Staffing (restructure)

The restructure element of Towards Excellence, being delivered by Harrow Council staff, is progressing well and is almost concluded. Initially, almost 90% of staff were assimilated/job matched (332 out of 373), and the remainder ring-fenced to various posts. The ring-fenced staff were given a two week period to apply for allocated roles. Interviews for staff ring-fenced to existing posts were completed before the 31st December 2013, as planned.

As a result, the total number of staff assimilated/matched/appointed to roles rose to 92% (342 out of 373).

The project teams worked closely with joint trade unions during the role evaluations. Their successful collaboration was recognised with a nomination for a CREATE award, for which they received 2nd place.

Where possible, staff will be redeployed to suitable alternative roles and given training to meet the requirements of these roles, in order to avoid redundancy.

New Ways of Working

The New Ways of Working project has a Harrow Council project manager and is supported by Capita. The project is focused on enabling professional staff to concentrate on delivering their service and establishing robust technical support and community engagement teams.

The project team is working closely with service managers. A series of 'Service Definition Documents' for each team are almost finalised. These will provide the blueprint for the future operation of the service teams and their relationship with other teams and partners.

Training for staff is being designed and tailored for each service area. The transition process has begun; led by the new managers, and is aiming to 'go live' with the new structure and new ways of working in February 2014.

Technology

The technology project will reduce the number of IT systems used by the service and improve customer services by sharing more information with

residents and businesses. Whilst there is a Harrow Council project manager in place, the key supplier in this project is Capita. The software suppliers are contracted to Capita.

This project is the most challenging element of the Towards Excellence Programme. New software is being developed specifically and staff and service managers have been involved in ensuring that this software will meet the needs of the service.

Design documents are over 96% complete and development of the software is being monitored closely by Capita. The implementation timetable has been rescheduled and is due to be completed by July 2014.

Once the software is available to Harrow, significant testing will be undertaken to ensure that system is suitable and resilient before it is deployed.

Service review and operational improvement

These projects are being managed completely by Harrow Council staff from within existing resources. A pilot review of Arboriculture Services is being carried out. This review is focusing on the current strategy and resources (workforce, systems and finance) used to deliver the service and how aspects of these can be redesigned to mitigate current operational issues in a sustainable manner.

Operational Improvements are being looked at across a number of services with developing the service offer for Trade Waste among the priority reviews.

Financial Implications

N/A

The financial implications of this programme were set out in the report that was approved by Cabinet in October 2012 and are also covered in the main body of this report..

Performance Issues

N/A

The performance implications of this programme were set out in the report that was approved by Cabinet in October 2012.

Environmental Impact

N/A

The environmental implications of this programme were set out in the report that was approved by Cabinet in October 2012.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

Separate risk register in place? Yes

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes

Corporate Priorities

N/A

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Philip Hamberger, Divisional Director, Business and Service Development, (direct telephone number 0208 420 9298)

Background Papers: None