Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee	**PLYMOUTH** CITY COUNCIL

Date of meeting:	12 September 2022
Title of Report:	**Business Support Review**
Lead Member:	Councillor Mark Shayer (Deputy Leader, Finance and Economy) and Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport)
Lead Strategic Director:	Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services)
Author:	Ross Johnston/Anna Constantinou
Contact Email:	ross.johnston@plymouth.gov.uk/anna.constantinou@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Click here to enter text.
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part 1 - Official

Purpose of Report

This report builds on the report submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2022 (Appendix A) and provides the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a review of the changes and benefits delivered as a result of the Business Support Review.

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the benefits and changes to PCC's business support services.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Business Support Review was established to deliver change against three commitments:
1. Empowering our people to deliver
2. Provide a quality service to get the basics right first time
3. Providing value for money

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Business Support Programme contributed significantly to the balancing of PCC's budget in 2021/22 and has further forecast deliverables that support the budget arrangements set for 2022/23.

Financial Risks

N/A

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

N/A

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

N/A

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	**Exemption Paragraph Number** (if applicable) *If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.*						
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
A	Business Support Programme Review, 2 March 2022, Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	**Exemption Paragraph Number** (if applicable) *If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.*						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Sign off:

Fin	N/A	**Leg**	N/A	**Mon Off**	N/A	**HR**	N/A	**Assets**	N/A	**Strat Proc**	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Andy Ralphs											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 30/08/2022											
Cabinet Member approval: *Councillor Mark Shayer*											
Date approved: 01/09/2022											

1. WHAT IS BUSINESS SUPPORT

1.1. Background to the Business Support Review

The Business Support Review's case for change was approved in October 2020 with the vision to 'deliver modern, digitally focused, flexible and efficient business and administration services to all PCC departments'. The vision was to be achieved by delivering against three strategic aims:

- Use existing skills, increasing comfort with digital and the growing carbon agenda to seek to replace legacy technology systems and manual processes with modern, digital and standard ways of working.
- Use existing service centre functions and capabilities and growing digital skills to create efficiencies and deliver savings of £1.663m (£1,363m in staff costs and £300k in ICT savings) to support mitigating the threat of reduced revenue by remodelling the business support organisation structure to remove inconsistency and achieve the requisite financial savings.
- Use best practice and industry approaches to put in place a more rigorous management of business support to control outcomes, increase knowledge and create a resilient operation.

The final scope of the review included 46 roles profiles, with 276.5 FTE and 316 employees, with a total baseline cost of £7.6m.

1.2 Transformation of Business Support

On 12 January 2022 the new Business Support Service went live. The launch was successful with all Team Leaders and Service Managers understanding their role and the requirements to develop their respective service and teams, in line with the new structure (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Business Support Structure Overview
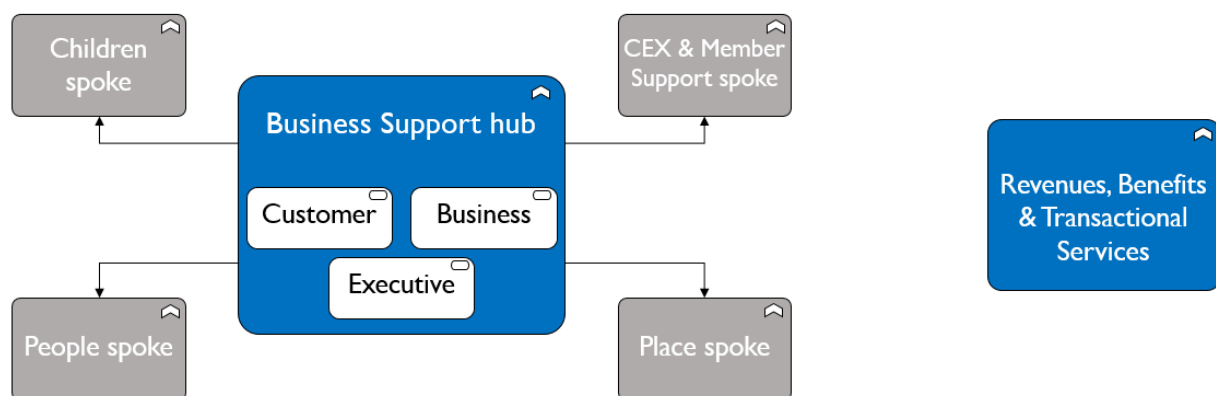
This new structure was delivered following a variety of technology and process changes. These changes were fundamental in creating an environment that supported modern, efficient and streamlined business support services.

2. THE KEY BENEFITS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Business Support Review has been successful, evidenced by the following critical achievements:

- £423k benefits in 2020/21 financial year – achieving 200% above business case target of £200k for 2020/21 through vacancy management;

- £1.749m benefits in 2021/22 (including £1.5m permanent savings) following the removal of 61.8 posts through vacancy deletions, the restructure delivered Nov – Dec 2021, and income generation activities.
- £420k full year effect savings, from the restructure, forecast to be delivered in 2022/23.
- an interactive 'one stop' business support staffroom page for all business support requests and activities, supporting the Council's drive for digital change;
- an interactive, automated and transparent reporting tool through Power BI, to share business support performance in an open and visual manner and published tool on business support staffroom page;
- an automated and intelligent chatbot service, serving customers digitally at the first point of contact through Facebook.

3. ADAPTING BUSINESS SUPPORT AND LEARNING LESSONS

Due to the size and scale of the change in Business Support, it was anticipated from the very start that there would be some issues to resolve and lessons to learn. To help manage this a collaborative approach to troubleshooting and iterating the service was developed, which has seen a number of key adaptations and lessons captured in the Business Support's first 6 months, including:

- adopting and embedding a continuous improvement ethos, led by a Continuous Improvement Manager to support future change and embed tools, techniques, principles and governance that enables Continuous Improvement to be a key aspect of everyone's role;
- adopting best practice methods, in particular, an EA and PA community of practice now operates to share knowledge skills and improve the service's agility;
- re-shaping the original structure to better meet the needs of the Chief Executive's and Members departments;
- developing a long-term business plan to support future change and service improvements

Learning about the change, its impact and future opportunities has been a key activity in the first 6 months since Business Support was launched. Staff feedback and Senior Management reviews have helped identify key improvement areas. The key learnings from this engagement can be summarised as:

- the exploration and review of transitioned processes from departments such as Community Connections in order to understand demand and define service level agreements;
- reprioritising of tasks and focus within the recruitment aspect of the service has improved response times however it identified the need to carry out an end to end review of the total recruitment process to provide a modern and agile service for departments and applicants;
- increased demand in Children's services, Community Connections, Contact Centre and other people and community teams is having a knock-on effect on business support delivery times. Resolving this is a critical driver for developing business support to become a more flexible and resilient operation.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, Feedback Report, stated that 'the successful delivery of key change projects, such as Business Support, have delivered financial savings for the council, and should provide the confidence to go deeper and wider to maximise efficiency opportunities as part of a more clearly defined Transformation/Change Programme". This feedback, along with the adaptations and lessons learned has been incorporated into the next wave of change and sets the foundations for the 'One Council' and 'Optimising Our Assets' programmes, specifically how these programmes are being framed to embed a more flexible, resilient and sustainable business support service.

4.   BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AND FLEXIBLE BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE

The BSR vision and goals have now been transferred to the new service area with a revised view of the ongoing commitment to continue learning and reviewing processes and how they are applied to enhance service delivery.

Business Support Goals:
- To continue improve business support's use of digital tools and optimise the investments that the council has already made in Microsoft and Firmstep technologies.
- To continue work with staff and Digital Services to co-design and deliver simplified, streamlined and digital processes where possible.
- To continue to develop a modern service with workforce equipped with the right access and skills to use modern technologies.

The Business Support Service assists the organisation to provide services that underpin the Council's Values and Priorities, the Service is committed to deliver through:
- Empowering our people to deliver
- Providing a quality service to get the basic right time first
- Engaging and listening to our residents, businesses and communities
- Providing value for money

The table below identifies the Service's focus and key deliverables of the next 12 months which support and aligned to the Council's Operating Model:

Develop and maintain Performance Management framework within Service	- Review processes ensuring fit for purpose - Agree service tasks targets for each area - Agree method of recording and monitoring targets - Review and maintain go live catalogue of BS services - Identify single points of failure - Focus on improving the Recruitment Service delivered within the Business Support Service
Enhance and maintain effective working relationship with Stakeholders	- Build confidence and effective relationship with peers and Councillors - Agree and monitor SLAs with internal and external partners - Regular interfaces, problem solving and sharing data performance - Create a digital platform to enable Services requests - Manage wellbeing within the Service in order to create a healthy workforce through regular 121, early prevention and identification of wellbeing need through communication - Review structure identify agency levels - Ensure PFH and shadow PFH has relevant information in a timely manner
Ensure there is continuous improvement	- Develop Service Plan - Create a digital platform for staff within the services to share good ideas and learned practice

and learning as part of service delivery	• Create a digital platform for Stakeholders to request service requests • Encourage communication and learning across the service and partnerships • Key role in supporting Council's Digital Plan
Deliver a balance budget and identify efficiencies across the Service	• 5% vacancy savings • Evaluate posts/tasks to ensure the service continues to deliver value for money • Identify single points of failure • Identify work demand patterns across the Service to support peak demands across year
Review service provision within Customer Hub	• Monitor performance, demand and response rates • Review service offer to focus staff resources on supporting statutory service priority lines for the most vulnerable • Create new lines to support customers who are digitally excluded • Protect Council income through offering payment only line