

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 18th April 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Blueprint Uttlesford Update and Internal Audit Outcomes		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Petrina Lees, Leader of the Council		
<b>Report Author:</b>	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk	<b>Key decision:</b>	No

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## Summary

1. This report provides members with an update on the progress of the council's organisational change programme, Blueprint Uttlesford.
2. Year one completed 9 service reviews and provided a net budget saving of £1,214,000
3. An Internal Audit was carried out on Blueprint Uttlesford and received a 'Moderate' opinion.

## Recommendations

- I. This report is for Cabinet to note only.

## Financial Implications

4. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## Background Papers

5. None

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	CMT are the Project board for this programme. Staff updates provided at quarterly staff conferences
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

## Programme of Reviews

6. Blueprint Uttlesford is the councils organisational change programme, with two key objectives
  - To deliver the savings target of £6.6m as identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy
  - To support organisational and culture change across the Council
7. All service areas will be subject to review, and these are scheduled over a four year period. The schedule of reviews are not fixed and could change depending on other factors, for example, staff leaving may prompt the review to be brought forward or legislative changes to the way we are required to deliver a service may change the timing of the review.
8. The schedule of reviews for the four years are set out below.

2023/24 Reviews	Year 2 Reviews (2024/25)	Year 3 Reviews (2025/26)	Year 4 Reviews (2026/27)
Sale of assets (inc. major asset and Dunmow Depot)	Sale of assets (inc. major asset and Dunmow Depot)	Planning	Human Resources
Highways Rangers	London Road Rent (phase 1)	Mailroom	Finance
Local Highways Panel	Trade Waste	CMT (phase 2)	ICT
Car Park charges	Waste Services	Democratic Services	Customer Services Centre
Senior Management Team	Environmental Health & Licensing	Elections	Internal Audit
Revenues and Benefits (phase 1)	Revenues and Benefits (phase 2)	Legal	Executive Team
Environmental Health & Licensing	Communities	Climate Change	Contract, Performance and Risk
Economic Development	Facilities	London Road Rent (phase 2)	Comms and Website
Customer Information Centres	Museum (phase 2)		Economic Development
Museum (phase 1)	Housing Revenue Account		Homelessness/Housing Strategy
Grants (phase 1) this now includes phase 2 and Day Centres			

9. During the year some changes were made to the programme, with some areas being brought forward and some moving to year 2.
  - Sale of Asset and Dunmow Depot – a small saving was achieved on utilities, but the key activities were delayed due to external factors, and this will now be delivered during 2024/25
  - Environmental Health and Licensing – was planned to be a delivered over 2 financial years, due to staff resources this review will now be carried out in full during 2024/25
  - Grants and Day Centres – the review of grants was planned over two phases, when the review began it became clear that it would be beneficial to combine this as one review. As the day centres benefited grant funding it was appropriate to include this service within the grants review
  - Economic Development – this is a very small team, of only 2 FTE and the review identified it would be unable to deliver the council's priorities if it was reduced. One of the corporate plan key priorities is 'Encouraging Economic Growth', and to support this an additional £10,000 has been invested in the service budget.

- The Housing Revenue Account had previously been excluded from the Blueprint programme, as Blueprint is a council wide project it has been included in the 2024/25 schedule of reviews

10. The following table sets out the direct financial outcomes of the service reviews carried out during 2023/24.

	Outcomes
Sale of assets (inc. major asset and Dunmow Depot)	21,000
Highways Rangers	86,000
Local Highways Panel contribution	100,000
Car Park charges	534,000
Senior Management Team (phase 1)	115,000
Revenues and Benefits (phase 1)	66,000
Environmental Health & Licensing	0
Economic Development	(10,000)
Customer Information Centres	13,000
Museum (phase 1)	39,000
Grants (inc year 2 Grants and Day Centres from Year 2)	250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,214,000</b>

11. The above net saving has been incorporated into the MTFS as approved by Council on the 26 February 2024 and should not be viewed in isolation. The following table sets out the updated financial deficit position at the end of the four years (2027/28).

Savings Target 2024 - 2028	£'000
<b>Original Target</b>	<b>6,600</b>
Year one savings achieved	-1,214
Early savings on future years as per MTFS	-883
<b>Net saving requirement 2023/24</b>	<b>4,503</b>
Additional cost pressures (inflation, demand growth, member priority)	2,456
Additional income and funding	-1,695
<b>New savings target as per MTFS 2027/28</b>	<b>5,264</b>

### Cross Cutting Workstreams

12. To support the reviews and the overall Blueprint project objectives a number of workstreams were identified. Although these workstreams are not reviews some do have specific delivery actions, the workstreams are listed below.

- Benefit Realisation and Cost Control – Ensuring that identified savings are achieved and to monitor and report on the financial impacts via the Medium Term Financial Strategy, annual budget preparation and budget monitoring
- People – The Workforce Plan, supports the goals and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and the Blueprint Uttlesford project

- How we work – Business Process Re-engineering and AI, reviewing the current systems and processes and identifying where and how we could work more efficiently
- Income – Rental of council owned offices and other income generating projects
- Climate Crisis – A Climate Crisis action plan has been developed and each review should consider the impacts of the service on the environment and where it can support the councils' green objectives
- Shared Services – Each review should consider the option of a shared service
- Customer Impact and Community Empowerment – Consideration of how each service review will impact our customers and ensuring engagement with the community where appropriate
- Stakeholder Mapping and Comms. Strategy – Ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged with at the correct times and where a review or change of service delivery is considered that this is communicated appropriately

### **Member Workshops**

13. In September of last year, a member workshop was held, where officers presented the schedule of service reviews and cross cutting workstreams, all members of the council were encouraged to attend.

This event provided members with the opportunity to ask questions and provide their views on each review in an open forum. This was felt to be extremely successful, and it is planned to hold another of these sessions in the near future.

14. A specific, Member seminar is also being arranged for late April/early May to focus on the future operation of waste services (both domestic and commercial waste). This workshop will be built around a piece of analysis carried out for Uttlesford by the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) which is a government funded organisation that provides support to Councils.

This analysis will look at a range of different service models and will give us indicative cost and performance impacts, compared to our current service. As well as sharing this detail with Members so they can be actively involved in an evidence-led process, Cabinet members and officers will be in listening mode at the seminar to hear Councillors channel their residents' experiences and expectations on waste issues. This will ensure that when more detailed options are later developed as part of this Blueprint Uttlesford review, they are founded on clear Member input and steers right from the formative stages.

### **Internal Audit Outcomes**

15. The Blueprint Uttlesford project was subject to an Internal Audit at the beginning of the year, looking at its Governance, Planning and Reporting. The Audit opinion received was 'Moderate', the audit process reviewed a total of 10 risks with four receiving a substantial opinion, five moderate and one limited.
16. The Audit identified five recommendations, with one being a high priority, three medium priority and one low priority. All recommendations were accepted and have been agreed to be implemented during April 2024. A summary of the recommendations are set out below and the full audit report is attached as Appendix A.

Priority	Recommendation
High	CMT's role as Programme Board should be documented formally in a terms of reference
Medium	<p>Records should be maintained of all Blueprint Uttlesford board meetings, alongside versions of documents upon which any decisions were made</p> <p>There should be a project plan, service review document or equivalent for each review that outlines the key milestones and timetable that can be used to monitor against.</p> <p>EqHIAs should be completed for all reviews. If the lead determines this is not appropriate, this should be documented on the service review template and service review document</p>
Low	Consideration should be given to separate documents for each phase of multiphase reviews in order to make it easier to see the progress on each stage.

## Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
None this report is to note only			

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure