SUBJECT:	**ONE COUNCIL – CREATING VALUE PROCESSES**
DIRECTORATE:	**CORPORATE REPORT**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**SIMON WALTERS, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Further to the request in a previous meeting of this committee, this report seeks to provide an overview of the above programme of work and cover the early successes achieved.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The Creating Value Processes theme (CVP) sits within a wider programme of activity designed to drive forward the council's 'One Council' programme. The programme consists of four themes covering:

- Use of technology,
- Our physical assets,
- Organisational development and
- CVP, which itself focuses on streamlining processes and procedures to make the organisation as efficient as possible.

Each Strategic Director leads a theme and is supported by a cross authority working group.

2.2 The programme has been operating since late 2019 and despite Covid impacting heavily on the agreed programme of work over the last 18 months (the focus was quickly moved to rolling out new technology to staff to enable remote working), the pace is once more picking up again.

2.3 The CVP theme has achieved a number of notable successes to date, as covered in the main body of this report, with many new initiatives planned over the months ahead.

2.4 However, Members are encouraged to note that the four themes work seamlessly together – all supporting each other, so the success of any one theme is entirely dependent on the success of the entire 'One Council' programme.

3. Background

3.1 Our One Council initiative covers four themes of activity designed over time to modernise every aspect of the council's operation and function. Whilst the concept was developed during 2019, the technology theme within the programme was "super charged" at the onset of the covid 19 pandemic. As staff were sent home in compliance with government advice and direction, work was quickly rolled out to

give staff the technology they needed to stay in touch and continue working from home. This was a herculean achievement in such a short space of time and resulted in the technology theme moving forward at great speed with the full capacity of the organisation behind it. It has revolutionised the way staff work and now all staff have access to their own email account/Teams and the intranet. This has been positively received by staff at all levels and locations within the council, including for example remote (from City Hall) working toilet attendants and car parks team.

3.2 Now the authority is emerging from the worst of the pandemic (but noting the ongoing operational impact from new variants) , organisational capacity is once more being applied across the four themes, including the CVP theme.

3.3 The concept of One Council can be summarised as:

"Understanding and meeting the needs of our many customers, including residents, visitors, businesses, public and voluntary organisations. It involves:

- Instilling a website first culture and embracing digital technologies to improve service delivery across the organisation
- Delivering excellent and consistent customer service with customers choosing a cost-effective method of contacting us that meets their needs
- Redesigning services to maximise efficiencies and improve the customer experience"

This puts the customer, whoever they are, at heart of everything we do. It articulates how our customers will be interacting with us in 5 to 10 years' time – their needs, wants and preferences

In summary, its about providing the right services to our customers, in a way that meets their needs, and at a time that's convenient to them.

3.4 The terms of reference established for CVP essentially distil down to:

Using sound evidence to develop a programme of activity with two distinct areas of focus :

a. Outward looking: Redesigning services that enable customer interaction 24/7, starting with a review of the high-volume services

b. Inward looking: Redesigning processes that enable the organisation to flex very quickly to meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

3.5 The CVP steering group consists of a number of key staff brought together to oversee delivery of the projects. These staff come from a mix of corporate services and staff managing key high-volume front-line services.

4. **Progress to Date**

4.1 CVP has delivered a number of projects since its inception. These include:

- Designed and launched a new Intranet accessible to all staff, with a strong focus on our corporate values. This has also been the platform enabling the new 'in-brief' comm's videos.

- Created multiple e-forms for internal admin processes that are automated, removing manual processing where possible

- Launched a new online e-learning package for basic digital skills available to all staff

- Partnered with Microsoft to create a bespoke training programme for low code development (ie equipping our own staff with the skills to develop automated processes rather than 'buy in')

- Moved to online first culture for meetings, including implementation of devices in committee rooms to enable people to "dial in" to meetings , helping to contribute to reduced Co2 emissions and support home working.

- Transferred the city council to a new website offering increased functionality

- Evaluated the telephone calls into the contact centre to identify those services that cause the highest volume of calls and developing work streams to reduce that number

- Delivered accessibility guidance and training to make sure all the material we produce is easily understood and readable by a wide range of audiences. This resulted in our website becoming one of the most accessible local authority sites as evaluated by the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation (within top 30 of websites in mid-2021)

- Created a new website (microsite) for the Visitor information service with its own look and feel

- Developed a suite of new user friendly and accessible housing correspondence, which has reduced the number of people calling the contact centre with queries

- Made tweaks to council tax bills to aid clarity for the customer and reduce queries into the contact centre

- Housing tenancy services – created a new tenant sign up process to make it smoother and easier for new tenants and staff

- Streamlined the customer journey between UC team, Tenancy services and Welfare Advice so claimants are easily transferred between the various functions and ensure they have access to the funds they are entitled to

4.2 Current activity is focussed on:

- Developing an innovative national 'on line' Housing repairs reporting tool, which will ultimately enable tenants to identify and book faults/appointments via our website

- Developing a range of 'on line' forms for Community services - 'on line' forms for Missed bins, New bins, Clinical waste, Bulky goods. All designed to enable residents to report issues 24/7 and take pressure off the contact centre

- Extensive work to replace key aging IT systems

- Continuing redesign of a whole range of corporate forms and automated processes ranging from annual leave to order requisitions

- Automated customer satisfaction - assessing a new way to capture customer satisfaction in an automated way and so avoiding additional pressure on staff in the contact centre

- Overhaul of the council's processes and supporting software for recording and acting upon Risk Management

- Exploring other IT applications designed to reduce the pressure on the contact centre -eg Fix My Street

- Development of a range of options for benefits claimants to reduce the level of multiple changes to **ongoing** claims and hence provide greater clarity to them

- Overseeing the further development of the council's intranet site, providing key information to staff

5.   Future Activity

5.1   Activity yet to be programmed in includes:

- Maximising the benefit of moving to a unified telephony system

- New individual websites (micro sites) for key service areas such as crematorium, car parks, building control etc

5.2   As the other pillars progress**,** we anticipate that CVP will be passed projects to support these other work streams.

We anticipate more of these cross- pillar projects in the future. Soon to start are a review of our recruitment process, maximising our investment of 365 by continued development of automated processes and monitoring the effectiveness of any asset trials.

5.3   It should be noted that this programme is dynamic and hence subject to change on a regular basis as new and more pressing demands emerge either corporately or within service areas.

6.   Strategic Priorities

6.1   **Let's reduce all kinds of inequality**

A particular focus of the programme is centred on how our customers access the services they need - be it on- line, via the contact centre or face to face**.**

7.   Organisational Impacts

7.1   **Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any resources are allocated via specific reports on the individual projects summarised here.

7.2 **Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

No specific implications

7.3 **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

CVP is core to ensuring this is designed into everything we do.

8.   Recommendation

8.1   Members are recommended to:

i)   Note the progress made
ii)   Offer any comments on the programme delivery so far
iii)   Indicate when a further report would prove desirable

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	None
List of Background Papers:	None

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