Report to:	**Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
Date:	**3 November 2016**
Title:	**TRANSITIONAL RESOURCES MONITORING REPORT**
Portfolio Area:	**Cllr S Wright**
Wards Affected:	**All**

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Urgent Decision: **N**   Approval and   **Y**
                                              clearance obtained:

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> **RECOMMENDATION**
>
> **It is recommended that the Panel note the contents of the Transitional Resources monitoring report and the progress to date.**

1.   Executive summary

1.1   This report will provide members with an update on the impact on services areas of the temporary, fixed-term transitional resources approved by council in June 2016 to improve customer satisfaction and public perception of the Council.

1.2   The report also provides an update on the current expenditure of the additional approved funds.

2. Background

2.1 The T18 programme was designed to meet the challenges of reduced budgets without cutting statutory frontline services. The programme was designed to improve customer satisfaction by providing the customer with improved access to services and delivering efficiencies by streamlined service delivery.

Whilst the budget reductions have been achieved, the transition to the new model has resulted in increased call volumes, increased call waiting times and service backlogs.

2.2 The resourcing model and staff numbers developed by Ignite were based on:

2.2.1 The new technology being delivered and more importantly embedded across the organisation.
2.2.2 New more efficient and streamlined processes implemented and embedded.
2.2.3 Customers using the new technology and process to self-serve rather than calling or visiting.

2.3 Due to a number of factors listed below the technology has been delayed:

2.3.1 The councils IT resources were reduced at the start of the programme.
2.3.2 The delivery of the technology solutions from the supplier has suffered delays.
2.3.3 A number of the solutions have needed significant development to meet the requirements of the council.
2.3.4 The availability of staff for testing and training has been limited due to the need to carry on day to day customer activity.

2.4 The impact of the technology delays has impacted on the roll-out of new processes and channel shift, as a result the delivery of online services has been severely impacted.

3. Current position

3.1 All temporary fixed term resources have now been recruited, these have been a mixture of agency staff, already working at the council and new recruits. Staff have been deployed so that existing agency staff with experience have been given more complex work and new staff deployed in to less technical roles.

3.2 A transition improvement team led by the seconded manager from Support Services and supported by the managers of Case Management, Specialists, IT and Business Improvement, now meets fortnightly and is working through the action plan to improve processes and technology in each area.

3.3 Of the £545,000 of additional approved funds £223,000 (41% of total) has been spent as of end of September (Period 6). Expenditure has been front-loaded to gain the maximum service improvement as early as possible.

3.4 Monthly call volumes had been at the highest levels for a number of years and as a result call waiting times were unacceptably long. Call volumes have reduced since the peak of June 2016 and call volumes in September were the lowest this year – and more significantly, the trend prior to the BT phone line problems were also lower.

3.5 A number of services had backlogs of work, which in turn was generating increased call volumes and higher levels of customer dissatisfaction. The services of particular concern were;

- Planning
- Waste
- Car Parking
- Council Tax
- Housing Benefit
- DFG's

Further details of progress are provided in section 4.0

3.6 The new contact centre phone system has now been installed and is working well, new telephony infrastructure (digital lines) will be completed during the first 2 weeks of November. The new website is currently under development.

3.7 Channel shift technologies are beginning to have a positive effect, with easy to use online Housing Benefit forms and an online direct debit form resulting in 50% take up and in turn positively impacting service delivery timescales.

4. Service by Service update

4.1 Contact Centre Performance

Contact centre performance has improved steadily over the last 3 months. This is evidenced by the latest Contact centre performance report which shows that;

4.1.1 Call volumes are decreasing (see table below)

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept
No of calls to CC 2016/17	27501	26390	29694	25420	27072	24274
No of calls to CC 2015/16	22436	20309	23744	27049	24461	26723

4.1.2 The % of calls answered is increasing (see table below)

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept
Calls answered 2016/17	69.5	70.8	71	71.9	72.8	77
Calls answered 2015/16	88.8	79.4	71	74	70.2	70

4.1.3 The % of calls answered in 20 seconds is increasing (see table below)

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept
% of calls ans within 20s 2016/17	30	33	35	32	38	44
% of calls ans within 20s 2015/16	59	43	35	33	39	42

4.1.4 The % of calls waiting more than 7 minutes to be answered is reducing (see the table below)

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept
% of calls answered after 7min 2016/17	40	37	36	38	35	26
% of calls answered after 7min 2015/16	23	29	32	33	28	26

4.2 Detailed service update.

The table below shows in more detail how the transitional resources are now being deployed and the impact the resource is having.

Service area	Original objectives	Progress to date
Waste and Trade Waste	Support whilst new processes are implemented. Embed case management skill set around dealing with operational services. Support to ensure the trade waste service retains and develops customer base.	• A working group across CS, CF and Customer Services has improved service delivery • Backlogs have been reduced significantly. • Numbers of incoming service delivery failures have reduced by 50%.

Planning	Improve responsiveness to customer telephone queries. Reduce backlog. Implement Peer Review recommendations. Support whilst new processes are implemented. Reduce validation times.	• W2 processes have been introduced and work continues to streamline the process and shift to Case Management. This will include the movement of validation to L7 case managers to free up specialists. • Determination times still holding although we did see a slip in validation times over the summer due to high volumes of applications/staff leave. ** See also paragraph 4.3
Car Parking	Reduce backlogs and reduce the risk of income reducing. Provide support whilst new technology is purchased and implemented.	• No longer a backlog in this area of work. • Parking permits were over 200 now down to 30. • Parking appeals almost 500, now down to 18. • New applications and enquiries can expect to be turned around within 5 working days. • Work ongoing to introduce digital permits in Spring 2017.
Environmental Health and Licensing	Support for licensing and high risk inspections whilst new processes are implemented. Reduce the risk of income reducing. Support additional DFG workloads.	• Significant improvements in DFG's. • The timescale between Application received and Application made) – from August to September the overall average went from 105 days to 56 days. • Improved Approval to Completion time down from 72 days to 59 days. • The biggest improvement is the number of outstanding actions – previously we were 30 days behind on our outstanding actions, all cases are now up to date.
Council Tax and Housing Benefits	Support to reduce backlogs. Training and support to contact centre Additional capacity whilst channel shift	• The additional FTE in this area has enabled us to reduce backlogs and improve performance. • Council Tax: all general change of circumstances dealt with within 2 weeks. • Online direct debit mandate now working.

	technologies go live. Protect income and proactive enforcement.	• Benefits: 50% of new claims are now submitted online • New claims processing times have reduced significantly - 20 days in September compared to 42 days in June.
Housing Advice	Support to protect vulnerable customers whilst new processes are introduced.	• Transitional resources have allowed us to maintain vital services, although as yet this area has not been a focus for process change.
Support Services	Consolidation and streamlining of all invoice processing to reduce burden on Customer First, Commercial Services and Strategy & Commissioning case management.	• Invoice processing has now been centralised and rolled out across the organisation. This is freeing up Customer First case managers to focus on customer activities. • There will be a dip in performance as the team are addressing invoice processing backlogs that have built up across the organisation.
Building Maintenance and Transport, Fleet and Health and Safety (Commercial Services Depot Based)	Case management resource to support the business need in commercial services - this is specifically important in relation to building maintenance and transport, fleet and health and safety for the manual workforce. There is also a temporary resource allocated to the support of the operational supervision whilst the Phase 2 round changes are implemented.	• Case management resources are now in place. • In order to increase effectiveness and provide additional support the responsibilities for the line management of case managers in Commercial Services (Waste) is being undertaken by Support Services. This is freeing up Commercial Services management to focus on operational performance.

Assets	Support to aid transfer of work from specialist to case management.	• The asset register has been brought up to date resulting in immediate time savings for specialists.
Strategic Planning & Place	Support to aid transfer of work from specialist to case management Additional support for local and neighbourhood plans, TAP and community grants.	• Control over backlogs in other areas has allowed focus on TAP and community grants. • Queries, claims and applications are now being actioned within agreed timescales. • All TAP documents re-written and made available on the website.

4.3 Planning – concerns remain over the performance of the development management service. A 12% increase in application numbers is putting a huge pressure on staff who have exceptionally high caseloads. Whilst determination performance is still above target, customer complaints volumes are still unacceptably high. The transition improvement team are now primarily focussed on the planning service and additional performance measures are now reported to the Development Management Committee on a monthly basis.

4.4 The recruitment of a number of apprentices has proved challenging and only 1 of the 4 roles identified for the contact centre has been filled. A new round of recruitment is underway. The apprentice roles will build capacity, provide additional resilience as transitional resources end, provide future capacity to backfill against natural wastage and ensure we meet our commitments to the national apprentice programme.

4.5 Additional technical fixed term resource has been recruited to review and redesign the council's website (look, feel and content) to improve the customer access and journey. This is on target.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 Transitional resources are within the additional approved budget and remain on target as stated in paragraph 3.3. There are no new financial implications.

6 Risks

6.1 That service improvements are not sustainable when transition resources are removed. The transition improvement team are prioritising service improvement work accordingly so that incremental improvements mean that transition resources can be redeployed as backlogs are reduced.

7 Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	None
Financial	Y	See Section 6.
Risk	Y	See Section 7.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	None
Safeguarding	N	None
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	The report recognises staff welfare concerns and the proposals will support permanent staff.
Other implications	N	None