



**Rochford District
Council**

REPORT TITLE:	OneTeam Transformation Programme – Strategic Partnership with Brentwood Borough Council – Quarter 4 and Annual Update
REPORT OF:	Greg Campbell, Director of Policy and Transformation

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Quarter 4 update November 2023 to January 2024 along with the annual update on progress of the One Team Transformation Programme from February 2023 to January 2024.

This report identifies the savings that have been made to date as well as some of the many other benefits that the Partnership has delivered.

As we enter in the third year of the Partnership, the report also sets out the proposals to develop OneTeam through a series of service roadmaps, with the focus on aligning the combined backbones for each service area on which a new structure can then be considered, and the improvements and savings drawn out.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 On 26 January 2022, Extraordinary Council resolved to agree the Strategic Partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Rochford District Council (RDC) appointed Jonathan Stephenson as the Joint Chief Executive for both councils. Work then commenced on developing this partnership.
- 1.2 This report sets out progress of the OneTeam programme development in the 4th quarter of the second year of this roadmap, from November 2023 to January 2024,

as well as providing an annual update and proposals to align services through a series of Roadmaps that will seek to bring into line the core business areas.

1.3 Progress to Date

1.4 The following chart identifies the progress of service reviews so far commenced:

Service	Update
Human Resources	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in April 2022. Implementation complete August 2022
Communications and Digital Engagement	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in November 2022. Implementation complete June 2023.
Phase 1 – October 22-April 23	
Risk Management and Insurance	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in April 2023. Implementation complete January 2024.
Emergency Planning and Business Continuity	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in April 2023. Implementation complete January 2024
Procurement	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in July 2023. Implementation complete November 2023.
Customer Contact	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in July 2023. Implementation complete January 2024.
Economic Development and Inward Investment	Business Case approved by Transformation Programme Board in September 2023. Implementation complete March 2024.
Accountancy and Finance	Business Case on hold. Service reviewing proposal
Open Spaces Admin	Slippage from original end date of March 2023. Delay due to a number of staff changes within the service and the need to bring in a manager to oversee this area.
Tree Management	Slippage from original end date of March 2023. Delay due to a number of staff changes within the service and the need to bring in a manager to oversee this area
Democratic Services, Civics and Secretarial Support	Business Case on hold until further consideration of future requirement is agreed
Phase 2 – May 23-October 23	
Electoral Registration	Business Case reviewed by the Project Team in October 2023 and Transformation Programme Board in November 2024. Deferred until after the May 2024 elections.
Parking	Slippage from original end date of August 2023. Delay due to the need for Tier 4 Manager to be in post. Tier 4 Manager now appointed and awaiting for them to start.

Communities, Leisure and Health (includes Leisure Centre Contract)	Business Case was on hold. Service is reviewing proposal with Tier 4 manager now in place.
Planning Policy and Strategy	Following presentation at Project Board, the service review is being reconsidered to develop a more effective structure for a joined-up service. Awaiting new Director to start in March before progressing further
Planning Development Control and Enforcement	Slippage from original end date of August 2023. Business Case development to align with delivering the recommendations of the Planning Improvement Board and appointment of new Director of Place.
Licensing	Slippage from original end date of December 2023. Tier 4 Appointments now made and work progresses under the Licensing and Env Health Improvement Board
Environmental Health	Slippage from original end date of December 2023. Tier 4 Appointments now made and work progresses under the Licensing and Env Health Improvement Board
CCTV	Slippage from original end date of January 2024. Delay due to key staff absence.
Asset Management	Slippage from original end date of January 2024. Tier 4 Manager appointed and awaiting for them to take up position.
Facilities Management	Tier 4 Manager appointed and awaiting for them to take up position
Health & Safety	Tier 4 Manager appointed and awaiting for them to take up position
Homelessness	Slippage from original end date of November 2023. Tier 4 Manager appointed and awaiting for them to take up position
Housing Options	Slippage from original end date of November 2023. Tier 4 Manager appointed and awaiting for them to take up position
<u>Phase 3 – November 23-March 23</u>	
ICT, Data Protection & Digital Services	Service review in progress. Partner appointed and project activity is underway. Tier 4 Manager appointed and progress continues with new timeline identifying business case in June 2024
Revenues and Benefits	Service review has not commenced due to change in approach. Tier 4 appointment made
Waste and Recycling, Open Spaces & Street Scene Management	Service review has not commenced due to change in approach. Tier 4 appointment made who will set the timeline for the approach
Transformation, including Research and Service Design,	Service review has not commenced due to change in approach. Awaiting Tier 4

Performance, Policy Development and Innovation, Projects & Programmes, and Grants & Funding	appointment following which clear direction will be set
Community Safety	Service review has not commenced due to change in approach
Building Control	Service review has not commenced due to change in approach
Legal	Work to review current service provision and future approach underway
Audit Contract	Work to review current service provision and future approach underway

1.5 In addition to the above service reviews, other reviews of programmes and processes are being undertaken into the councils’ finance systems, back-office and Land Charges functions. These are all presently being worked upon with a target to consider them by April/May 2024 followed by implementation.

1.6 A consultation on the Tier 4 structure was concluded in November 2023. Most appointments have been made. This process is due to complete shortly so that all Tier 4 Managers are in position.

1.7 Other Benefits/Improvements

1.8 Besides the overall savings that will be achieved through service reviews and the creation of OneTeam, there are a number of other benefits. Some of these are listed below:

- Joint Intranet
- Joint ID cards for all staff
- Joint branding
- OneTeam email addresses for Tiers 1-4 and some below
- Joint Chief Executive's newsletter
- Joint IT & Digital helpdesk
- Joint HR helpdesk
- Joint Project Management process
- Joint Policy and Strategy process and templates
- Joint approach and admin of UKSPF funding
- Created a path to create Data Sharing Agreements
- Wellbeing support
- All staff social events
- Joint approach to 'Cost of Living' campaign. Working together to deliver a joined-up campaign for the 'Cost of Living' including first live interviews for both leaders engaging with the community and businesses.
- Joint consultation portal – ‘Engage with Us’
- Developing a joint Communications Strategy
- Developing a joint Annual Communications Plan
- Beginning to align policies, including HR policies
- Mirrored committee report template
- Joint Health & Safety Committee
- Joint training for Risk Management, Health & Safety and Mental Health awareness
- Shared online forms

- Delivered CCTV for Rayleigh using the experience and knowledge of Brentwood CCTV. This is now a joint arrangement between the two authorities at a reduced cost which uses the Brentwood Control Room to monitor Rayleigh Town Centre through the CCTV
- A joint Sustainability and Climate Officer that was not in post prior to OneTeam and that was not necessarily palatable for one authority to fund. Split across the two, it is affordable, and the authorities are reaping the benefit of this joint working approach.
- Employment at the two authorities has become more attractive as it is now more interesting than when the authorities were singular. This has been supported by an increase in the number of applications received.
- We are using the skills developed by one authority to consider and create a Business Improvement District in the other authority's town(s)
- Developed standard templates for the creation of policies and strategies. This will help create a standard approach fulfilling obligations to ensure we have the right policies in place for organisations of our size.
- Appreciate that we are financially better off than we would have been if we had not brought the two authorities together to work more closely.
- Reduced costs for joint procurement of
 - new leisure contract
 - new consultation platform
 - The new consultation platform was purchased at half the cost of that advertised due to us being one Council.
 - The new platform creates a standardised approach. This approach has already been used for a number of consultations including the Budget Consultation.
- Created a new project and programme support process which has enabled better visibility of projects, measuring the authorities' deliverables against the councils' priorities and making projects accountable. This in turn enables the benefits to be realised and measured.
- Developed a joint Safeguarding Policy for both organisations.
- Working up a revised suite of Performance Indicators that will be reported on a regular basis to committee which at present is not the case in one of the authorities.
- Created resilience in Procurement, Communications, Human Resources, Customer Contact Services, Insurance, Risk and Emergency Planning. Others will follow however these are the areas identified so far.

1.9 Support for Staff

- 1.10 Work continues to provide support for staff undertaking the reviews and the wider organisation, including feedback from staff surveys, service review lessons learnt sessions and informal feedback from staff and managers, Employee Assistance Programme, as well as mental health professionals to talk to. The Intranet wellbeing pages are regularly updated to provide staff with the latest information on the support available to them.
- 1.11 A Staff Pulse Survey was held in December 2023 to gather important feedback from staff including questions on the service reviews and OneTeam. Following our annual survey in February 2023, there were four key themes that were focused on. These were communication, resources, workloads and OneTeam. The results of this survey were fed back to staff and recommendations will be followed through.

1.12 The councils are also engaging with other authorities undertaking similar transformation programmes to develop a best practice approach to supporting people through change.

1.13 Residents’ Survey

1.14 Between December 2023 and January 2024, a Residents’ Survey was conducted on the Partnership. The survey asked residents of Brentwood and Rochford to show their awareness and support of the Partnership. The following outlines the results of the survey.

	Brentwood		Rochford		Total	
Responses	41		37		78	
Awareness	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	23	18	22	15	45	33
Support	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	15	26	10	27	25	53

1.15 Further information on the survey report, and detailed qualitative feedback is shown in Appendix 1.

1.16 Budget Update

1.17 There was an underspend of the budget of £234,000 as the programme heads towards the end of year 2. The funding will continue to be closely monitored to ensure the spending remains in line with the budget.

1.18 Savings to Date

1.19 From the Transformation Programme overall, Brentwood Borough Council have created a saving for 2024/2025 of £491,000 and Rochford District Council have created a saving of £160,000. From 2025/26, the ongoing saving for Brentwood Council will be £491,000 and for Rochford District Council the ongoing saving will be £115,000.

1.19 Change in Approach

1.20 The service reviews completed to date have made important savings and delivered wider non-financial benefits. However as identified in Table 1 within this report there are a number of service reviews that remain outstanding, however following an initial high-level appraisal it appears that these outstanding service reviews are less likely to make the initial improvements or savings anticipated.

1.21 Therefore, to continue with service reviews aware that they are unlikely to yield the improvements based on their present format is not seen as palatable. However, making a decision not to continue with Service Reviews will not bring about the further

1.22 Therefore, in order to continue the work of the transformation programme and to create ‘OneTeam’ and bring about the benefits of the ‘OneTeam’ approach including resiliency, better working methods and financial savings. Which in turn will assist to

deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy for both Brentwood and Rochford, services will work towards creating Road Maps.

1.23 These Roadmaps for each service will seek to:

- Align Policy and strategy
- Identify the performance targets to be achieved
- Align process
- Align ICT and contracts
- Identify likely costs and savings
- Develop a timeline

This method will also consider:

- Prioritisation of services to be tackled first
- Work with these services to tackle key aspects of the Roadmaps created
- Develop new structures following the work and alignment of policies, processes and ICT in order to create tangible savings.

1.24 Anticipated savings and improvements from the Roadmaps will be reported back as part of quarterly updates in the usual manner. These improvements and savings will then be fed into the financial savings and MTFS.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 For information only.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The OneTeam Programme Board receive risk management reports by way of exception reporting.

3.2 High risks, escalated risks or those that remain an issue, form part of the extract from the risk register attached at Appendix 2. Please note at present there are no live Issues in the log to report.

3.3 Following previous concern, the risk register was considered as part of a wider workshop and updated. This included risks around staff morale.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

4.1 As outlined in the report, a public consultation was conducted during December 2023 and January 2024. The results are noted in the report and in Appendix 1.

4.2 Future partnership consultations will address the requests for information on the partnership's purpose, benefits and savings raised by the respondents.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no further financial resource implications from this report at the present time. Any information from the Roadmaps created will be fed into future budgets and planning

6.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No legal implications from this report. Any changes or impacts will be considered within individual service review proposals.

7.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of any service review that will affect or change the service being provided.

8.0 ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no environmental implications from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – OneTeam Consultation Qualitative Feedback

Appendix 2 – Exception Risk Log

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Extraordinary Council	19/03/24
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	19/03/24
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	20/02/24
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	01/02/24
Council	14/12/23
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	05/12/23

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
– 16 April 2024**

Item 9

Chief Officer Appointments Committee	31/10/23
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	03/10/23
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	05/07/23
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	20/03/23
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	07/03/23
The Executive	07/03/23
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	01/03/23
Extraordinary Council	21/02/23
Council	15/02/23
Council	13/12/23
The Executive	09/11/22
The Executive	11/01/22
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	04/10/22
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	27/09/22
The Executive	27/09/22
Chief Officer Appointments Sub-Committee	26/09/22
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	26/07/22
Council	14/07/22
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	14/07/22
The Executive	13/07/22
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	06/07/22
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	16/06/22
Extraordinary Council	14/06/22
Chief Officer Appointments Committee	01/06/22
Council	25/01/22

One Team Consultation Qualitative Feedback

The Strategic Partnership Consultation ran between 6 December 2023 to 31 January 2024 using the new joint engagement tool, 'Engage With Us'. The consultation platform was promoted in the Winter 2023 edition of Brentwood Our Borough magazine, that was distributed to homes across the Borough. The consultation was also publicised across both councils' social media accounts and included in each council's digital resident newsletters and internal newsletters.

There was a total of 78 responses from residents and workers across all wards within Brentwood and Rochford.

Overall, 45 respondents were aware of the partnership before taking part in the consultation. 25 respondents were in support of the partnership. Although the majority of the respondents stated they were not in support of the partnership, a good number of comments requested further information on the partnerships purpose, management of finances and intended benefits.

Brentwood Responses

41 of the 78 responses were from those who live or work within Brentwood. Of the 41, 23 respondents were aware of the partnership before taking part in the consultation. 15 were in support of the partnership.

Some of the comments in support of the consultation were that it made 'good economic sense', it provided the 'opportunity to grow and thrive whilst learning from each other', and it would reduce 'the burden of overhead on the taxpayers'.

There were 26 respondents who were not in support of the partnership and their comments were concerned about the protection of each individual authority's finances and resources. Some felt it was 'just a plan to cut services', others felt that Brentwood's 'independence has been lost', and a number of comments raised the distance between the two authorities.

13 respondents took the opportunity to provide further comments. The majority of these asked questions about how the partnership would be measured, what the benefits were and requested further information on the finances, savings, and purpose.

Rochford Responses

37 of the 78 responses were from those who live or work within Rochford. Of the 37, 22 respondents were aware of the partnership before taking part in the consultation. 10 were in support of the partnership.

Some of the comments in support of the consultation were that it 'was the way forward to ensure both councils are sustainable', some felt there was 'a strength in numbers' and that the partnership 'should be able to get more things done'.

There were 27 respondents who were not in support of the partnership and their comments were largely concerned about the protection of each individual authority's finances and resources. One respondent felt 'the differences between these two communities are immense', some reflected they did not know enough to support the partnership, some

couldn't 'see the benefits of the two councils geographically fairly wide apart working together', and some were concerned about 'keeping our identity and use of funds being distributed fairly'.

15 respondents took the opportunity to provide further comments and, like Brentwood, the majority of these asked questions such how the partnership would be measured, what were the benefits and requested further information on the finances, savings and purpose.

Future partnership consultations will address the requests for information on the partnership's purpose, benefits and savings raised by the respondents. Some of this information is already publicly available and will be signposted as part of the consultation feedback.