Housing Voids
Business Process Review

16 June 2020

How we approached the Business Process Review

The core activities for the project to-date are shown below.

| As Is Discovery Workshop | Design Principles Workshop | Redesign Workshop | Storyboard - Redesign and Benefits | Quick Wins |

The project **objective is to minimise the period that properties are void** e.g. key-to-key targets are met or bettered.

The Business Process Review identified the key reasons that targets are not being met and how processes, technology and other influencing factors can be redesigned or improved.

The **value add for Dacorum of engaging Sopra Steria** to deliver the review includes:

- The **impartial and independent assessment** of the end-to-end voids processes, **identifying problems, issues and duplication**
- The ability to **really challenge the current ways of working** and inefficiencies as independent experts in service redesign
- Created a **positive forum for staff to debate and agree new ideas and working practices,** and how these could be introduced easily to deliver immediate benefit
- Providing a **roadmap to deliver much broader improvements and benefits**

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Key Issues Affecting Performance

Operational

- The **organisational structure enables teams to operate as 'silo functions'**, resulting in a disjointed working practices and delays to processes. This is because staff are primarily making decisions and changes within their area of control.

- The operational silos result in **isolated decisions or changes being made** without taking into account the end-to-end, service-wide impacts

- The void **processes are mostly executed sequentially**, resulting prolonged void periods.

- There is significant **duplication of effort**. For example multiple surveys are carried out at the same property by different teams each with a slightly different remit.

- At the time of the review **customers were unable to self serve effectively** and were encouraged to call or attend the offices. The voids team has adopted new ways of working due to CV19 that have created a strong foundation to build on once lockdown is lifted.

- Some Osborne activities and charges for works are **challenging for the voids team to control** and cause significant frustration to the team.

Service and Policy

- **Properties can only be let on a Monday**, requiring re-work and delay to tenancy commencement

- **Tenant obligations and expectations** are not always set effectively

- **Policy prioritises current tenants' needs** before the needs of applicants on the housing register

Technology

- The **IT systems do not support the delivery of the service** effectively

- **IT alignment to support service needs** to **leverage technology is not good**

- Data is held in **multiple systems that are not integrated**, resulting in multiple sources for the same information
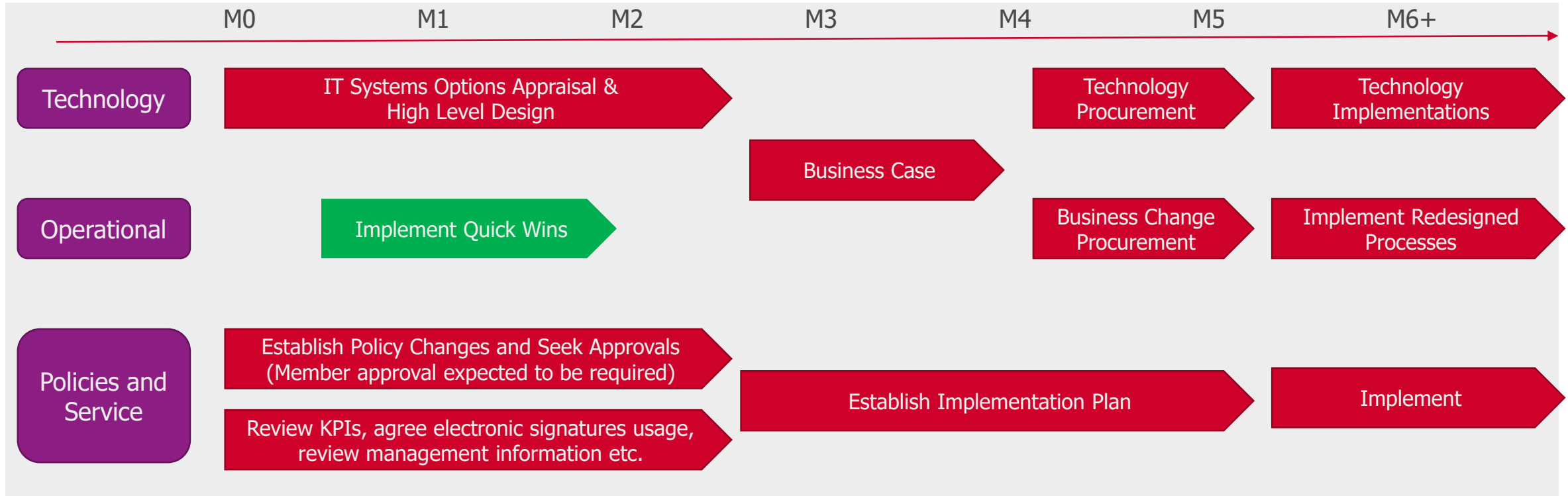
Quick Wins Delivered So Far

Include

- Use of **key safes and contactless key return**, identified in the redesign and introduced rapidly to support safe working during lockdown

- New **processes are being run concurrently**, reducing the void period

- **Surveyors are using laptops to carry out surveys**, rather than paper and re-key.

- **Existing applications are being leveraged** to reduce manual activities and duplication, for example auto-notification of property changes issued to teams rather then constant checking and emails.

- **Once and done surveys** can be implemented quickly, reducing the number of surveyor visits, improving the information available to the wider team regarding the property (photos, floor plans, property information)

- **Have taken back control of specifications** from Osborne, giving better financial control and decision-making through use of new specification tool

- **Delays through aids and adapts process have been minimised** through inclusion in the once and done survey for voids

- Notification process will have **self serve option for tenants**, and ability for tenants to upload evidence without needing to visit the Council

- **Duplicated activities have been removed** from the process

- **Communication between teams is improved** and use of Microsoft Teams will be extended to share information

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Next Steps to Achieve Full Benefits

The high level plan below illustrates the recommendations from the business process review of Voids. Due to Covid19 issues we progressed the quick wins as a priority.