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Robert Hope Chief Executive

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY 21st JANUARY 2009** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for absence
2. To consider the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19th November 2008 as a true record. Copies attached
3. Declarations Of Interest

Members are invited to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest in matters appearing on the agenda and the nature of their interest.

Members should use either of the following declarations:

Personal Interest – **to be used where a Member will be remaining and participating on the debate and any vote:**

I have a personal interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

Personal and Prejudicial Interest – **to be used where a Member will be withdrawing from the room for that item:**

I have a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item (...) regarding the report on (...) because I am (...)

Officers are also invited to declare any interest in any matters appearing on the agenda.

NOTE: Members are requested to complete the enclosed declarations form and, after declaring interests verbally, to hand the form in to the Committee Administrator.

4. To consider the adoption of a new Publication Scheme. 1 - 11
5. To consider the recommendations of the recent Overview and Scrutiny Review of Local Government Reorganisation. 12 - 16
6. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Mrs Bolam, Buckham, Mrs Burn, Ferguson*, Gale, Grogan, Harrison, Hayton, Henry, Kay, Kingston, Murphy, Perkins, Stonehouse, Taylor, Mrs Todd*and Zair.

*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Harrison

Deputy Chair: Councillor Zair

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FORM

NAME AND DATE OF COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER	NATURE OF INTEREST AND REASONS	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE



POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2009

Report of the Chief Executive
NEW MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

purpose of the report

1. To recommend adoption of a new Publication Scheme with effect from 1st January, 2009 in accordance with the requirements of the Information Commissioner.

background

2. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires each Council makes available a Publication Scheme highlighting the class of the documents made available to the public. The scheme must show whether or not charges are applicable for the information.
3. The Council's current scheme, which is on the Council's website, was devised when the legislation became effective at the beginning of 2004.
4. The Information Commissioner's directive was that the new Publication Scheme be made available from 1st January, 2009. The Commissioner has devised a model scheme and Councils have been encouraged to follow this model. (See Annex A).

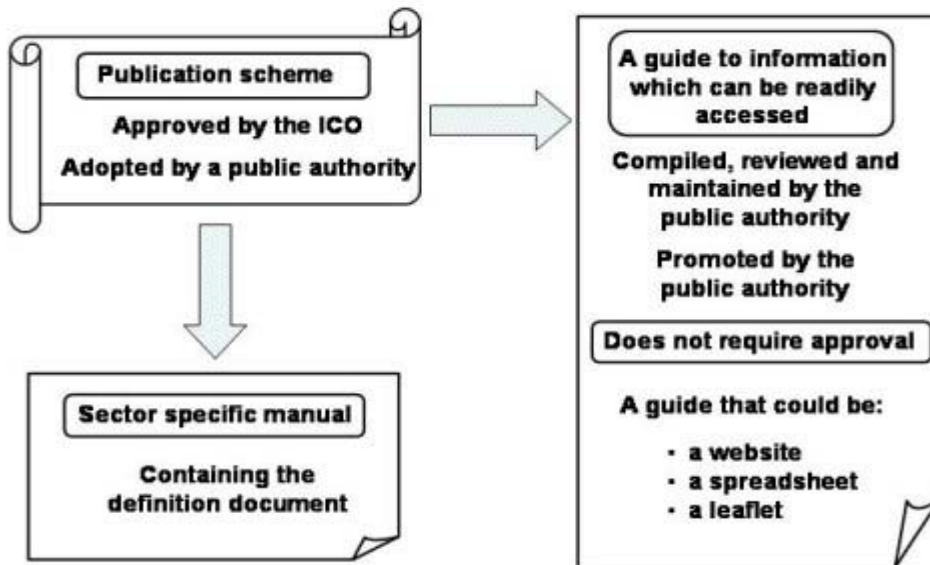
purpose of a publication scheme

5. The publication scheme sets out the kinds of information a public authority should make routinely available. The information should be easy for the authority and any individual to find and use.
6. Public authorities must adopt a publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner. To reduce duplication and bureaucracy and to ensure consistency in the release of information, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has developed a model publication scheme which any public authority can use.
7. The model scheme classifies information at a high level and broadly states the way authorities can provide information and what they can charge for.

8. The model specifies seven classes of information. To maximise the routine release of information the categories have been set at a high level. Most information a public authority holds falls into the seven classes. However, this does not mean the authority must routinely release all the information covered by the broad definitions in the definition document for that sector.
9. The scheme sets out the circumstances under which an authority would not be required to make information routinely available. These are when:
 - the information is not held;
 - the information is exempt from disclosure, for instance personal data or commercial interest; or
 - the authority cannot easily access the information.
10. If the Council routinely publishes information, this should be available as part of an authority's normal business. The information should be easy to access through a website or be easily and quickly sent out by a member of the authority's staff.
11. The Information Commissioner requires Councils to have a guide to information within the classes. For small authorities like Wear Valley, the website map can be the basis for complying with the requirement of an information guide.
12. The website generally meets the requirements. The website map would need to be adjusted to make it fully compliant. The resources that apply to this task would be disproportionate to the lifespan of the scheme which is three months. It would not be appropriate to divert resources from LGR to remedy weaknesses that are nevertheless still compliant for such a limited period.
13. When the initial scheme was drafted attention focused on the availability of the material in hard copy form. The Council's website is now the best source of available material. There remains an obligation to make a copy of the scheme available in hard copy form. A printed copy of the website's site plan can be used as the hard copy index.

guide to the information available

14. In operating the scheme, an authority must provide a 'guide to information', giving details of:
 - the information it will routinely make available;
 - how the information can be accessed; and
 - whether or not a charge will be made for it.



15. The Commissioner expects that most authorities will use their website as a guide to information. The Authority is not required to provide a hard copy of the guide. As a starting point, the information commissioner has provided a definition document for each sector. The Council's current publication is a good starting point for identifying the information we must provide.

using the definition documents

16. The definition documents give examples of the type of information the Authority is expected to publish. The list attached in Annex B is not an exhaustive list; and the Information Commissioner wants all authorities to provide as much information as possible under the seven classes of information.

17. The information exemplified in the definition documents as a minimum requirement. Authorities should give all the information listed, unless it can be legitimately excluded.

considerations

18. The Council only has four months remaining in the midst of the LGR process so the minimum efforts regarding the information guide may be sufficient to meet the Information Commissioner's requirements. If the Council were a continuing authority, more effort would need to be made to update information categories and dedicate resources to expanding the guide to information.

financial

19. The Council is entitled to charge for the production of copies. The Council does not charge for accessing the website. There will be limited publishing costs in making available hard copies of the scheme.

legal

20. It is a statutory obligation of the Council to maintain a publication scheme when it is necessary to follow the directives of the Information Commission on the nature of the scheme provided.

risk

21. Failure to implement a compliance scheme would render the Council at risk of being subject to legal action by the Information Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Council adopt the Model Publication Scheme in Annex A.

Background documents referred to

Information Commissioner's guidance on Model Publication Schemes

Wear Valley District Council Website

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Chief Executive
Ext 306

Author of the report

Dr. Lawrence Serewicz
Policy and Partnership Manager
Ext. 311

Model Publication Scheme

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine,

information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.

- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

GUIDE TO INFORMATION

Information Class	Format	Charge	Contact
1. Who we are and what we do			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council constitution • Council democratic structure • Council directorate structure • Location and opening times of council properties • Currently elected councillors' information and contact details • Contact details for all customer-facing departments • Most recent election results • Relationships with other authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper TBD Electronic / Paper TBD Electronic / Paper TBD 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S. Spence S. Spence G Ridley (Chief Exec) TBD S Spence TBD L Spence G Ridley
2. What we spend and how we spend it			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial statements, budgets and variance reports • Capital programme • Spending reviews • Financial audit reports • The members' allowances scheme and the allowances paid under it to councillors each year • Staff allowances and expenses • Pay and grading structure • Election expenses (returns or declarations and accompanying documents relating to election expenses sent to the council) • Procurement procedures • Details of contracts currently being tendered • List of contracts awarded and their value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid?? ?? ??

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District auditor's report • Financial statements for projects and events • Internal financial regulations • Funding for partnership arrangements 	<p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p>		<p>S Reid S Reid S Reid S Reid</p>
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports • Strategies and business plans for services provided by the council • Best value local performance plan • Internal and external organisation performance reviews • Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities • Capital strategy • Best value performance indicators • District auditor's reports on the best value performance plan and performance indicators • Comprehensive performance assessment • Inspection reports • Local Area Agreements • Statistical information produced in accordance with the council's and departmental requirements • Impact assessments • Service standards • Public service agreements 	<p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p>		<p>C Duggan C Duggan</p> <p>C Duggan C Duggan</p> <p>C Duggan</p> <p>S Dawson C.Duggan S. Reid C Duggan C Duggan</p> <p>C Duggan</p> <p>L Serewicz C Duggan L Serewicz</p> <p>S Reid TBD TBD</p>

4. How we make decisions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable of council meetings • Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of council committee, sub committee and standing forum meetings • Major policy proposals and decisions • Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies • Public consultations • Internal communications guidance, criteria used for decision-making, internal instructions, manuals and guidelines 	<p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p>		<p>S Spence S Spence</p> <p>Management team Management team</p> <p>Management team Management team</p>
5. Our policies and procedures			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures for conducting council business • Policies and procedures for delivering our services • Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff • Customer service • Records management and personal data policies • Charging regimes and policies 	<p>Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p> <p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p>		<p>G Ridley (Chief Exec)</p> <p>G Ridley (Chief Exec) A Foster D Emerson S Reid G Ridley/ Man Team</p>
6. Lists and registers			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public registers and registers held as public records • Asset registers and information asset register • Disclosure logs • Register of councillors' financial and other interests • Register of gifts and hospitality • Highways, licensing, planning, commons, footpaths 	<p>Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper</p>		<p>TBD S Reid A Barker A Barker A Barker A Barker</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> etc • Register of electors 	Electronic / Paper		L Spence
7. Services provided by the council			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory and licensing responsibilities • Services for local businesses • Services for other organisations • Services for members of the public • Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees • Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries and archive collections • Leaflets, booklets and newsletters • Advice and guidance • Media releases • Election information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper Electronic / Paper 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Mccoy S Dawson TBD TBD TBD M Richardson C Duggan TBD C Duggan L Spence

POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

21 JANUARY 2008

Report of the Chief Executive

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION REVIEW – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (INTERNAL)

Purpose of the report

1. To inform Committee of the progress of the recommendations of the recent Overview and Scrutiny Review of Local Government Reorganisation and to highlight proposals and time scales to implement the agreed recommendations.

background

2. At Council on the 2nd December 2008, Members agreed to the report by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Internal) on Local Government Reorganisation. The detailed review arrived at a series of recommendations that require implementation by the Council.
3. The recommendations were:
 - The minutes arising from EMT meetings should be communicated to all staff of the authority by either e-mail or hard copy.
 - Chief Executive's quarterly briefings to be increased to monthly briefings.
 - Weekly team meetings should be taking place between managers and staff; these meetings should be enforced by the relevant service Director. Team meeting agendas across all WVDC Directorates to incorporate an item for LGR discussion and an item for LGR workstream activities.
 - The monthly LGR newsletter should be printed and attached to staff's weekly and monthly employee payslips on a monthly basis. It is intended that the LGR monthly newsletter will supplement the WVDC teamtalk newsletter that is attached to employee payslips on a quarterly basis.
 - Re-launch with subsequent promotion of the WVDC's 'question time' lotus notes database.
 - All LGR related correspondence and documentation, including team meeting agendas and minutes, should incorporate the 'new era' logo in support of continuing harmonisation.
 - Thought should be given to the update of WVDC communications strategy.

- The counselling service should be widely promoted. This could be through the use of teamtalk newsletters and by way of additional one off promotions in the run up to Vesting Day so that staff are provided with an opportunity to have one to one confidential discussions with qualified counsellors should the need arise.
- The WVDC PRAD document should continue to be used in the run up to Vesting Day by managers and staff, with an emphasis placed on health and well-being.
- WVDC's staff should be given the opportunity, irrespective of grade, to have one to one confidential careers guidance to support them through the transition period.
- Training and development opportunities should be advertised to the staff of WVDC on a more frequent and consistent basis via the WVDC database or by way of one off newsletters in the run up to Vesting Day. Hard copies should also be used to ensure all staff have like and consistent information on training and development opportunities.

proposals

4. The Action Plan in Annex C highlights the improvements that can be achieved prior to unitary 'vesting day'.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) Committee approves the attached Action Plan.

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope
Chief Executive
Ext 364

Author of the report

Cheryl Duggan
Organisation Improvement Manager
Ext 313

ANNEX C

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT REORGANISATION ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATION		PROPOSED ACTION	WHEN	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER/RESOURCE	PROPOSED OUTCOMES
1	Minutes of all EMT communicated to all staff by hard copy or email	EMT minutes to be put on LGR database and link emailed to all staff. Hard copies to be produced for staff with no access	January 2009	Organisation Improvement Manager/ Marketing & Communications Manager	All staff more aware of LGR progress
2	Chief Executive's quarterly briefings to be increased to monthly briefings	All staff monthly briefings to be held until vesting day	January 2009	Organisation Improvement Manager/ Marketing & Communication Manager	More frequent face to face briefings to increase staff awareness
3	Weekly Team meetings should be taking place between managers and staff; these should be enforced by the relevant service Director	Team briefing protocol to be implemented across the authority. All managers to hold weekly meetings with staff	January 2009	Organisation Improvement Manager/ Marketing and Communications Manager All Managers	Face to face team briefings to increase awareness
4	Team Meeting Agendas	Team meeting agendas across all WVDC Directorates to include an item for LGR discussion and an item for LGR workstream activities	January 2009	All Managers	Increased awareness
5	The monthly LGR newsletter should be printed and attached to	LGR Newsletter attached to payslips	December 2008	Organisation Improvement Manager/ Marketing and	Increased awareness through improved readership

	weekly and monthly employee payslips on a monthly basis			Communication Manager	
6	Re- Launch with subsequent promotion of the WVDC's 'Question Time' lotus notes database	Re- launch and promote the 'Question Time' lotus notes Database	January 2009	Marketing and Communications Manager	Increased awareness
7	All LGR related correspondence and documentation, including team meeting agendas and minutes should incorporate the 'new era' logo in support of continuing harmonisation.	New Era Logo to be made available to all staff Logo to be included on all documents.	January 2009	Marketing and Communications Manager	Improved harmonisation
8	Thought to be given to the updating of Communications Strategy	Communication Strategy to be updated in accordance with the development of the new unitary strategy	January 2009	Marketing and Communications Manager	Updated strategy for employees to follow
9	The counselling service should be widely promoted thorough team talk and one off promotions	Item included in the next Team talk 24 Hour Help line promoted and additional one off promotions	March 2009 January 2009	Head of HR/Marketing and Communication Manager	Uptake on Counselling service
10	WVDC PRAD document continued to be used	PRADs continued	Ongoing	All Managers	Training needs identified
11	WVDC staff to be given opportunity for one to one	Managers to identify all staff requiring career	Ongoing	All Manager	Career guidance delivered.

	career guidance	guidance			
12	Training and Development opportunities advertised	Advertised on database as they come in Managers to identify training and development requirements Managers to inform staff of opportunities	Ongoing	Head of HR/ All Manager All Manager	Trained employees