

Cabinet

4th December 2008



LGR Update

Report of George Garlick, Chief Executive

(Cabinet Portfolio Holder Councillor Simon Henig , Leader)

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the LGR programme.

Current Position

2. The programme continues to make good progress, with a number of key policies coming forward and the senior management structure close to being filled (subject to interviews).

Senior Management Structure

3. It is anticipated that the Heads of Service appointments will be completed during December. The process, which is initially for internal applicants only, has involved an assessment centre, application form and interview. It is hoped all posts can be filled internally. Some staff have opted out of the process to pursue an opportunity to take ER/VR. Once the posts have been filled then these cases can be considered further.
4. As mentioned in previous updates the new Directors are actively involved in the process having determined the interview shortlists and leading the interview panels.
5. 13 of the 31 posts have been filled by 'slotting in' existing officers with the remaining 18 posts subject to the process above.

HR

6. In order to progress the next phase of service design and implementation a separate team of HR and Finance Officers has been established to develop the detailed plans and undertake the implementation of the restructure beneath the Heads of Service.

Communication

7. The Programme Office is undertaking a review of programme communications including information to Members (e.g. website). This is to ensure that as the level of activity increases the level of communication increases appropriately, particularly to our key stakeholders.

Area Action Partnerships (AAP)

8. The consultation on final geography for the AAPs is now nearing completion with 13 meetings taking place in specific parish areas during November and December. Members, stakeholders and statutory partners will be involved in seminars in the first week of December to consider the functionality, governance arrangements and budgets for the AAPs, and in parallel a series of consultative meetings have taken place with all elements of the County Durham Partnership Framework. A consultation document and feedback questionnaire is available at the 'New Era' website.
9. Once the consultation process is complete final proposals for Members to consider and agree will be brought forward in January.

Constitution Working Group

10. This group is continuing to work through the elements of the Constitution which are being reviewed. Alongside the content of the Constitution the group is also considering related issues including the future support arrangements for Members and the Member Learning and Development strategy.

'Must haves'

11. The number of 'must haves' completed remains at 11. The majority will be completed early in the New Year and the Programme Office is continuing to schedule the timetabling of the necessary decisions required in good time for Vesting Day.

Full Council

12. An extraordinary Full Council has been called for Wednesday 17 December 2008 to agree the new executive arrangements and planning system governance including committee arrangements.

Priorities

13. Forthcoming programme priorities include:

- The Member Learning and Development Strategy;
- Member support arrangements;
- Feedback from the Cultural Audit;
- Key Housing policies including Homelessness, Financial Assistance and the Common Lettings Policy;
- Development of a Town and Parish Council Charter;
- Member/Officer nominations to outside bodies.

Member Seminars

14. The next Members Seminar is to be held on 15th December at 6.00pm and on 18th December at 12.00 noon. Further details will be issued shortly.

Recommendations

15. Members are asked to note the contents of this report and the progress being made.

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