

Cabinet

22 January 2009

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 remains on track although progress slowed down over the Christmas period. That said key policies are now nearly all in place, the model for local engagement is ready for Cabinet to approve today and appointments have now been made to Heads of Service, with considerable work underway on the next layer of management.

Senior Management Structure

3. Cabinet were updated previously on the appointments to the Heads of Service positions. We are now looking at those posts which were unfilled in this first round.
4. Candidates who were unsuccessful or expressed an interest in ER/VR are now being considered for the unfilled posts although it is expected that a number of these will need to be filled by external candidates. Temporary arrangements are also being developed to fill the gaps and ensure service priorities are not at risk.

HR

5. Immediately following the appointment of the Heads of Service work started, as planned, on the next level down where it is anticipated around 100 jobs will need to be filled. Again the recruitment process will involve a mix of 'slot ins' and internal ring-fenced candidates. The consultation on this layer of the structure is to start later this month.

6. Work is now complete on disaggregating staff into the new service blocks so everyone will be clear on whom they will report through to and to ensure all are clear on their immediate priorities pending the detailed reorganisation activity which will be undertaken after Vesting Day. External career transition support remains available to all staff affected by the reorganisation.
7. Work is now also complete on an induction process for all staff to help launch the new organisation, and ensure everyone is familiar with the structure, operation and values which will be integral to the success of the new Council.
8. The Members Learning and Development Strategy is also nearing completion and will be brought before Members shortly.

Area Action Partnerships (AAP)

9. The development work for this critical deliverable for Vesting Day is now complete and is to be agreed by Members at this meeting. This includes final geography for the 14 Area Action Partnerships, the membership, functionality and operating model. The outcomes of this work remain closely aligned to the original bid including the financial commitment of £250,000 for each AAP (subject to final budget sign-off).

Constitution Working Group

10. Work on the new Constitution is nearly complete and Members are this month finalising the membership of the various committees which will be required from the 1st April. Member training is also due to start to ensure all are able to fulfil the statutory requirements of the new Council.

'Must haves'

11. Since the Christmas holidays good progress has been made on our 'must haves' (the critical day one projects) and a third will be completed by the end of this month. Although this still leaves the majority to be completed in February and March none of the outstanding projects have been identified as at risk of not being completed although some have revised their deliverables to implement a temporary solution pending a more robust long term solution being introduced after Vesting Day.

Members Seminar

12. The series of seminars are continuing, and in early March it is planned to take Members through all of key arrangements which will be in place on Vesting Day to ensure service delivery remains unaffected by the

reorganisation. Members are also reminded of the dates for the licensing training which are:

- 21st January (pm only)
- 27th January (pm only)
- 6th February (all day)

13. In order to sit on the Licensing committees, members must attend all 3 sessions. Dates for the other training are still to be confirmed.

LGR Programme Priorities

14. A key priority is therefore the detailed work on this including the signposting both externally and internally of the areas where we have changed the arrangements for service delivery and the areas which are unchanged.

15. The three new Executive Directors who were appointed from other Councils all start over the next few weeks, so ensuring they can 'hit the ground' running is another key priority this month.

16. Other priorities include:

- Budget agreement
- Concessionary pricing
- Harmonisation of service standards
- Fixed penalty notices
- Corporate enforcement
- Procurement Strategy

17. CLG have confirmed that they will be spending the day in Durham on 6th February to undertake a 'stock take' of the LGR programme to review the progress being made. In particular they will be reviewing the programme management and governance arrangements, progress on Housing, Planning and Local Engagement and the financial business case including savings.

18. Finally it is worth mentioning the recent announcement of Durham's intention to submit a bid to bring the title of Britain's Capital of Culture to the North East. The press release detailing this is also attached and is a first sign of how the new Council intends to raise its profile both regionally and nationally for the benefit of the County and region.

Communications

19. A detailed communication strategy has now been developed which details the key aspects of the communication programme up to Vesting Day and beyond. The existing County Council logo will be revised to improve its

accessibility and to modernise its look and feel. This will be introduced in a phased way before and after Vesting Day to ensure costs are kept down.

20. To support the communication programme in the run up to Vesting Day a tag line has been created '*altogether better*' which will feature on all communication and marketing material.

21. I am about to start a second series of visits to meet staff across the County to provide them with reassurance and answer any questions on the programme. These visits are being supported by a staff communication programme and briefing papers for Managers to cascade information to all staff.

Recommendations

22. Cabinet is asked to note the contents of this report.

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