



Chester-le-Street
District Council

REPORT TO: Council

DATE OF MEETING: 27th March 2008

REPORT OF: Director of Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Transition Plan

ITEM NUMBER:

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members agreement to the Transition Plan which forms Appendix 1 of the report.

1.2 The Transition Plan aims to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
- build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
- identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
- establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

1.3 In doing so the Transition Plan incorporates a review of the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. It also takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process and provides a summary of the budget agreed. It sets out the council's new single priority of '**People and Place**'. The Plan includes the council's Corporate Improvement Plan following its learning through comprehensive Performance Assessment last year.

1.4 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Adopt the Transition Plan as the council's strategic planning document for 2008/2009

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Executive Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, and Service Team Managers have been engaged in the development of the Transition Plan
- 2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation with the County Council will be undertaken.

3. CORPORATE PLAN AND PRIORITIES

- 3.1 The Transition Plan, will, in effect, replace the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. The Transition Plan includes a schedule of proposals from the previous seven priorities which ought to be and can be achieved in the remaining life of the council.
- 3.2 The council's choice to move towards a single priority of '**People and Place**' priority was considered as part of the budget setting process.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial implications and value for money statement

The Transition Plan takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process. Specific resources have been made available for both the contribution to setting up the new organisation and the implementation of the '**People and Place**' priority. It is considered that the council has properly reviewed its priorities in the light of Local Government re-organisation and its abilities to deliver services during the transitional period. The view is taken that in doing so the council will achieve value for money in a year of significant challenge. In delivering '**People and Place**' resources may need redirecting during the forthcoming year.

4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The Transition Plan is the council's response to the challenges it faces in the final year of its existence. It is considered that the plan commits the council to working within its capacity to provide human and financial resources to help establish the council while delivering 'Business as usual'. It is considered that the Plan meets the guidance and recommendations provided by the Audit Commission set out in their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation with the County Council will be undertaken.

4.3 Legal

The Transition Plan will include a factual statement of legal guidance to managers and Members. This remains under preparation and will be added to the Plan when complete. It is considered that the Transition Plan provides vehicle to enable the council to work within its legal powers during the transition period.

4.4 Personnel

How the council supports its employees through the transition process is a key part of the Plan. The Transition Plan revises the Organisational Development Strategy commits the council to supporting its employees through the process and help them take advantage of opportunities that will occur in the new authority. A key part of this is the development of a One Team Personal profile for all employees. Should Members adopt the Plan then consultation will be undertaken with the trade unions. It is important to note that the Transition plan will be a living document and will be reviewed as a result of consultations undertaken and progress made.

4.5 Other Services

The Transition Plan has implications to all services delivered by the council.

4.6 Diversity

There are no specific diversity issues in respect of the Transition Plan. The Plan does not replace the Equality Plan which will continue to be implemented through the lifetime of the council.

4.7 Risk

There are clear risks to the organisation in failing to continue to maintain and improve on its progress in its remaining year. The council remains committed to improving its services although it faces difficult capacity challenges through the transition period. The council will be undertaking a strategic risk assessment once the delivery plans in relation to '**People and Place**' have been developed.

4.8 Crime and Disorder

It is not felt there are any specific implications of the report on Crime and Disorder. Actions agreed through the delivery of the '**People and Place**' priority may include proposals to positively address crime and disorder issues.

4.9 Data Quality

Every care has been taken in the development of this report to ensure that the information and data used in its preparation and the appendices attached are accurate, timely, consistent and comprehensive. The council's Data Quality Policy has been complied with in producing this report.

4.10 Other Implications

The report does not relate to a key decision. It is considered that the information will be communicated to the community and stakeholders by inclusion on the web-site. The Transition Plan has already been made available to staff and Members through the intranet in a draft form. Should Members adopt the plan progress towards achieving the '**People and Place**' priority will be significantly promoted and communicated.

5. **BACKGROUND, POSITION STATEMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL**

5.1 As a result of Local Government Reorganisation Chester-le-Street will cease to exist as a council from April 2009. In order to set a framework as to how the council will conduct its business during this final year a 'Transition Plan' has been produced. The Plan forms Appendix 1. The Transition Plan aims to:

- state the Council's aims, objectives and priorities during the transition period;
- build on the councils learning and continue its improvement programme;
- set out revised corporate activity and funding arrangements for transition period;
- clarify corporate transition programme management arrangements;
- identify how we will support and motivate and support staff through the process;
- set out the values and principles by which the Council will operate during transition; and
- establish terms of engagement with 'County Durham Council' Change Programme

5.2 In doing so the Transition Plan incorporates a review of the Corporate Plan 2007/2010. It also takes account of the 2008/2009 budget process and provides a summary of the budget agreed. It sets out the council's new single priority of '**People and Place**'. The Plan includes the council's Corporate Improvement Plan following its learning through Comprehensive Performance Assessment last year. '**People and Place**' will be implemented through an 'Action Learning Set' approach, an approach which has brought the council significant success as part of its improvement journey to date. The Plan includes proposals to develop delivery plans to secure sustainable change to the people and places within the district and customer focused outcomes which can be used to influence the agenda of the new unitary council.

- 5.3 This plan will be the overarching plan for Chester-le-Street District Council during the transition period, and as such sets out how services and projects will be facilitated, delivered and resourced. It is a rationalisation of the Council's Corporate Plan (incorporating the Best Value Performance Plan) 2007-2010, published in June 2007, and associated Medium Term Financial Plan, Organisational Development Strategy and Corporate Improvement Plan. As such, it represents the Council's contribution to the Districts Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the Strategic Vision for County Durham
- 5.4 The next year will be a difficult period. It is an uncertain period for members and staff alike. The council has already experienced a reduction in staff as people in the organisation look to secure certainty about their futures outside of the county. Staff turnover is currently high at 12%. Not only are staff moving on but there is a loss of talent to the County as a result. In operational terms it will be more difficult to deliver what we have set out to do. It is felt that the Transition Plan will guide the council through this difficult period and that there considered that the Transition Plan needs to be a living document which will allow us to adapt to change during the year. It will therefore be kept under regular review.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Adopt the Transition Plan as the council's strategic planning document for 2008/2009

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS / DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO**

- 7.1 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – Audit Commission March 2007
7.2 Corporate Plan 2007/2010 – June 2007
7.3 Budget reports to Council dated 28th February 2008

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11th March 2008
Version 1.0

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