

# Item 6

REPORT TO COUNCIL

30 JUNE 2008

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## All Portfolios

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION: - SEDGFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S TRANSITION PLAN 2008/2009

#### **1** SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines revisions to the Council's Transition Plan that was approved by Full Council in January 2008, and recommends that this revised Plan be endorsed as the Council's Corporate Plan for its final year of operation.
- 1.2 The Council's 2007/2008 performance against national Best Value Performance Indicators and a statement on contracts that have involved the transfer of staff are appended to the Transition Plan, enabling the Council to meet the statutory requirement to publish such information.
- 1.3 The revised Transition Plan is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **2** RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council...

- 2.1 Adopts the revised Transition Plan as its Corporate Plan for 2008/2009.

#### **3** TRANSITION PLAN 2008-2009

##### Background

- 3.1 The Council's approved Corporate Planning Framework commits it to the development of a three-year Corporate Plan, refreshed annually, and approved by Full Council. The Corporate Plan quantifies the Council's contribution to the shared vision for the Borough set out in the Community Strategy 2004-2014 by setting out its ambitions and priorities for the mid-term at a strategic and tactical level within the context of the local partnership landscape. It also outlines how the Council will meet its national performance targets and how it will continue to progress towards organisational excellence.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan is supported by five delivery plans, one for each of the Council's ambitions (Healthy, Prosperous, Attractive and Strong Communities) and another for its organisational governance. Progress towards these plans is monitored by the

- Council's Strategic Working Groups and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.3 Detailed information on service facilitation and delivery is set out in a range of supporting strategies and plans, including a set of three-year Service Plans, which are owned and monitored at service, directorate and portfolio levels.
- 3.4 A Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is developed in parallel to the Corporate Plan and defines both the resources available to deliver priorities and how they will be deployed. An Organisational Development Plan (ODP) complements and enhances the financial resources identified within the MTFP by ensuring that the Council has...*"the right people, in the right place, with the right skills at the right time"*.
- 3.5 In line with freedoms and flexibilities allocated to Councils rated 'Good' or 'Excellent' through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, the Corporate Plan has in recent years served as the Council's statutory Best Value Performance Plan, and had to be published by 30 June annually.
- 3.6 Part 7 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 amends the duty of Best Value, removing the requirement to undertake best value reviews, measure and report best value performance indicators (BVPIs) – now replaced by the new National Indicator Set – and publish a best value performance plan (BVPP). However two statutory elements required of a BVPP remain – reporting the outturn of the past year's performance against BVPIs and the publication of a statement certifying contracts entered into the past year that have involved the transfer of staff.
- 3.7 The decision to implement unitary local government within County Durham means that this Council will be abolished in April 2009. This has necessitated significant changes to corporate planning arrangements in order to facilitate a successful transition to the new arrangements.
- 3.8 Accordingly, the Council approved in January 2008 a Transition Plan for Local Government Reorganisation, as an amendment to its Corporate Plan. The Transition Plan rationalised the Council's priorities, set out clearly the arrangements for the management of the authority up to the handover period and how the Council would participate in the development of the new authority.
- 3.9 Within such an intensive process however, the pace of change is significant, and it has now become necessary to revise the Transition Plan to reflect progress in the developments of the new authority and the refinement of the Council's priorities and capital programme commitments over the last six months. Furthermore, an annual review of progress is a cornerstone of the Council's corporate planning framework, and is no less essential this year – a robust assessment of performance and expenditure will inform the approach of the new authority.
- 3.10 In the light of the above requirements and drivers, the Corporate Plan 2007-2010 and the Transition Plan approved in January 2008 have been reviewed and the two have been consolidated in a single revised Transition Plan for the Council's final year. The requirement to publish 2007/2008 BVPI performance and a statement on contracts will be met by appending these documents to the published Plan.

- 3.11 It is recommended that this revised Transition Plan become in effect the Council's Corporate Plan for the final year.

### **Development process**

- 3.12 Corporate Plan development has in recent years been comprised of extensive desktop analysis supplemented by a series of workshop sessions with Management Team, Heads of Service and senior managers from across the Council to...
- Consider community statistics, local views and the strategic and partnership context
  - Review performance in the previous period against targets
  - Review progress against key actions and identify the Council's key achievements
  - Review the Council's aims, objectives, priorities and targets
  - Identify key activity for the next period to improve performance
- 3.13 Planning for the transition to the new authority built on this process by reviewing the Corporate Plan 2007-2010 and its supporting plans, the Council's capital programmes and the Council's partnership database to develop a comprehensive and prioritised list of programmes and projects to be completed before April 2009. This work involved some element of rationalisation and 'mopping up', as it became clear that some initiatives were no longer be relevant or deliverable within the transition period. Equally, some long-term commitments and issues to be explored were brought forward for resolution in the short-term, such as community transfer of assets.
- 3.14 The Transition Plan states that the key priorities for the Council in the handover period are to ensure service standards are maintained, that employees are fully supported through the change process, and that priority commitments are honoured where practicable, so that the legacy of the Council is positive.
- 3.15 Whilst the aims and objectives identified in the Corporate Plan 2007-2010 and the first Transition Plan remain valid, the pace of change over the last six months has made it necessary to update the Plan in order to articulate revised priorities and approaches. This has been done through discussions with Directors, Heads of Services and Project Leads identified in the first iteration of the Transition Plan.

### **Structure of the Plan**

- 3.16 The revised Transition Plan is structured in the same way as the first iteration and as past Corporate Plans, comprising a backwards look at performance over the last year and a forward look to the current year, with specific sections on the development of the new authority and key projects to be taken forward during the life of this Council.

### **Key changes from first Transition Plan**

- The plan has been updated to reflect changes to the countywide change programme driving the development of the new authority and developments since December 2007
- A review of performance in 2007/2008 has been included, together with a progress update on key interventions outlined in the 2007-2010 Corporate Plan
- The key projects section has been refined in line with developments since December 2007
- The financial plan section has been updated to reflect progress since January 2008, including the revised capital programme
- The risk section has been updated by Management Team
- A full breakdown of performance against national Best Value Performance Indicators has been appended, to meet statutory requirements
- A Statement on Workforce Matters has been appended, to meet statutory requirements

### **Implementation**

- 3.17 It was agreed by Council that the Transition Plan would be delivered in line with Managing Strategic Programmes (MSP) and PRINCE2 principles, dovetailing with the countywide approach, in which a number of members and officers from across the Council are participating.
- 3.18 Management Team has acted as the Transition Programme Board under this framework, with officers nominated by the Council to attend workstreams of the countywide change programme meeting regularly to discuss emerging issues and reporting to Management Team as appropriate. In addition Management Team receives frequent highlight reports from the Key Project Leads.

### **Business as usual**

- 3.19 Outside of this transition programme, business as usual will continue. Service standards must be preserved as far as practicable against a background of increased employee turnover, a moratorium on recruitment, a possible drop in morale and the ongoing development of new delivery arrangements involving the time or secondment of key officers.
- 3.20 Performance will be closely monitored for early warning signs of deterioration. Cabinet and Management Team will continue to receive performance and budgetary updates via a quarterly, composite, exception report. Quarterly reports will also be made available to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

### **Communicating the Transition Plan**

- 3.21 Once approved by Full Council, the Transition Plan and its supporting documents will be made available on the Council's website and its intranet.
- 3.22 Hard copies will be made available in key public buildings, and on request. In addition, copies of the Plan will be distributed to all members, Management Team and Heads of

Service, key partners, the Audit Commission and Government Office for the North East.

- 3.23 Each Head of Service will be briefed on the content of the revised Plan and any resulting changes required at a service planning level.
- 3.24 To communicate key information to local people, as in previous years the Council will prepare an Annual Report in Plain English, summarising key achievements in the last year and outlining future plans. The Annual Report will also provide a summary of the Annual Accounts Statement.

## **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Financial**

- 4.1 The rationalisation of initiatives, programmes and projects, together with the restructuring necessitated by staff turnover, have resulted in financial savings that in turn have been used to support performance and employee development.
- 4.2 The Council's Budget and Capital Programme have been revised to meet Transition Plan objectives; this is detailed in the body of the Plan.
- 4.3 Costs will be incurred in printing the required number of copies of the Transition Plan. Such costs can be met from approved budgets.

### **Human Resources**

- 4.4 In the lead up to LGR it will continue to be necessary to carefully monitor the Council's existing staffing levels and structures using vacancy protocols recently agreed by Management Team. These protocols ensure that resources are aligned to the tasks of delivering day-to-day services, managing transition projects and ensuring full and meaningful participation in the development of the new unitary council
- 4.5 Furthermore, to ensure that all employees are supported throughout the transition process, their development needs have been assessed against the demands of the Council's Transition Plan and additional funds have been secured and other funds have been carried forward to meet these enhanced needs.
- 4.6 A series of employee communication briefings has also been arranged to ensure that all employees are fully aware of the impact that the transition plan is having upon them.

## **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 Management Team and officers involved leading key projects have been consulted in the preparation of this Transition Plan.

5.2 Once agreed, a Team Brief on the Plan will be circulated to all employees. A Transition Plan internet site has been developed that will include regular updates on all projects and workstreams.

## **6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **6.1 Legal and Constitutional implications**

The approval of the revised Transition Plan will result in no new legal or constitutional implications.

### **6.2 Risk Management**

Local Government Reorganisation is the principal strategic risk to the Council and its services. The Transition Plan provides a means of mitigating the risks posed by reorganisation to community needs, performance levels and employees. Work on transition risks is shared with the LGR programme office and also monitored through this channel.

### **6.3 Value for Money**

The Transition Plan provides a clear focus for activity in the transition period and eliminates unnecessary action and expenditure.

### **6.4 Sustainability**

The Transition Plan includes actions designed to promote the long-term wellbeing and sustainability of local communities.

### **6.5 Information Technology**

ICT integration will be key to the development of a new authority and will be considered as part of the transition programme.

### **6.6 Human Rights**

This report and its resulting actions are fully compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **6.7 Equality and Diversity**

The Impact Needs and Requirement Assessment (INRA) programme has been re-profiled to ensure that it supports the Transition Plan rather than diverts resource from it.

### **6.8 Social Inclusion**

The Transition Plan will promote social inclusion by including actions to better articulate community needs and priorities and to boost community involvement.

### **6.9 Neighbourhoods**

The Transition Plan will promote neighbourhood working by including actions to better articulate community needs and priorities and to boost community involvement.

### **6.10 Children and Young People**



- 3 The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative
- 4 The report has been approved by Management Team