



**Chester-le-Street**  
District Council

**REPORT TO:** Executive

**DATE OF MEETING:** 1st September 2008

**REPORT OF:** Director of Corporate Services

**SUBJECT:** Implementing the Transition Plan; Developing 'People and Place'

**ITEM NUMBER:**

---

## 1 Purpose and Summary

1.1 In March 2008 the council adopted its Transition Plan for 2008/2009. Since that time early progress has since been made on the implementation of plan. The purpose of this report is to update members on progress specifically on the '**People and Place**' Priority and to seek Members agreement to progress made on developing the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan

1.2 So far the following progress has been made. The council has:

- agreed the principles and financial allocations within the 2008/2009 Corporate budget setting process;
- agreed the '**People and Place**' priorities and four areas of focus as part of the adopted 'Transition Plan';
- set up the four action learning sets and appointed leads, Executive support and sponsors;
- provided guidance and support to leads;
- Executive has agreed the delivery plan by the action learning set leads;
- carried out a launch event on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008
- worked with Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to undertake a workshop in May;
- agreed to a single '**People and Place**' Scrutiny Panel with a task and finish approach to undertake work to support the delivery of the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan which had its first meeting in June;
- agreed a Draft '**People and Place**' Scrutiny Work programme
- agreed an approach to monitoring and reporting progress to the Executive on the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan of which this report is the third
- agreed an approach to delivering the '**People and Place**' Personal Profile for all employees and launched the project .

- Commenced time lining and crosscutting work to re-evaluate the scale and practicality of delivering the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan;
- Set up a resource centre and commenced a programme of weekly member engagement opportunities in early July.

1.3 With specific regard to the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan specific progress has been made on developing the high level proposals and details of proposals are set out in Appendix 1.

1.4 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan;
- 2) Note the progress made in respect of individual progress and comment on the issues raised

## **2. Consultation**

2.1 Executive Members, the Chief Executive, Directors, relevant Service Team Managers, Action Learning Set Members (including external stakeholders) have been engaged in the development of the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan and its implementation to date.

2.2 No other consultations were considered necessary at this stage including external consultations or engagement.

## **3. Transition Plan and People and Place Priority**

3.1 The Transition Plan, in effect, replaces 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 and forms a firm part of the Transition Plan. This report tracks progress to date and puts forwards proposals to take forward the delivery of the **'People and Place'** priority.

3.3 The Delivery Plan content identified in the appendices in this report address all four areas of the **'People and Place'** priority focus i.e.

- Partnerships for Futures;
- Investment in the Town Centre;
- Strengthening Partnerships; and
- Neighbourhoods

## 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. Action Learning Set leads and relevant Executive members are responsible for the allocated budgets to deliver the four strands of the '**People and Place**' priority

### 4.2 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The Transition Plan and the '**People and Place**' Delivery 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. The subject of this report is principally progress against this plan and specifically the '**People and Place**' priority. It is not considered that the subject matter of the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plans at this stage requires any consultation or approval of the County Council because the proposals have been part of the budget process. Should potential resource issues change e.g. further unbudgeted resources caught within the direction occur then appropriate consultation with the County Council will take place.

### 4.3 Legal

The Transition Plan includes 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 '**People and Place**' Personal profile for all employees. It is important to note that the Transition plan and the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan are both living and developing documents and will be reviewed as a result of consultations undertaken and progress made. The approach to '**People and Place**' is through an 'action learning set approach' which has been a key tool used to deliver the council's improvement programme over the last three years. A key risk to delivery of business as usual next year is the capacity of the organisation to deliver. The council is faced with depleting human resources and account will be taken as to the ability of the council to deliver by regularly reviewing the strategic planning documents.

#### 4.5 Other Services

The Transition Plan and the '**People and Place**' priority have 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. In terms of developing In the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan, action learning set leads are having regard to ensuring the projects are fully inclusive and projects regarding engagement with otherwise excluded groups and social cohesion are included within the delivery plan proposals.

#### 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. A key risk to delivery of business as usual next year is the capacity of the organisation to deliver. The council is faced with depleting human resources and account will be taken as to the ability of the council to deliver by regularly reviewing the strategic planning documents. The timelining and cross cutting work currently being undertaken is intended to help evaluate the councils ability to deliver on its '**People and Place**' priority while continuing to deliver improving services to communities within the District.

#### 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 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, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete. 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 and a web site is being developed. The Transition Plan has been made available to the County Council. An Intranet site for 'People and Place' has been established and work has been undertaken to update the council's own website to communicate the new priority. Should Members adopt the delivery plan progress towards achieving the '**People and Place**' priority will be significantly promoted and communicated. A '**People and Place**' brand has been developed and this will be used to co-ordinate, communicate and celebrate achievements in the coming months. Appendix 1 includes achievements that need to be communicated and celebrated and work is ongoing with the Communications Team to ensure that this happens.

### **5. Background, Position Statement and Options 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 approved by the council in March 2008 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. The new priority of **'People and Place'** is being 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 Transition Plan is 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 Council has already made progress in implementing the plan which is summarised as follows. The Council has:
  - agreed the principles and financial allocations within the 2008/2009 Corporate budget setting process;
  - agreed the **'People and Place'** priorities and four areas of focus as part of the adopted 'Transition Plan';
  - set up the four action learning sets and appointed leads, Executive support and sponsors;
  - provided guidance and support to leads;
  - Executive has agreed the delivery plan by the action learning set leads;
  - carried out a launch event on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008
  - worked with Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to undertake a workshop in May;
  - agreed to a single **'People and Place'** Scrutiny Panel with a task and finish approach to undertake work to support the delivery of the **'People and Place'** Delivery Plan which had its first meeting in June;
  - Agreed a Draft **'People and Place'** Scrutiny Work programme

- agreed an approach to monitoring and reporting progress to the Executive on the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan of which this report addressees
- agreed an approach to delivering the '**People and Place**' Personal Profile for all employees and launched the project .
- Commenced time lining and crosscutting work to re-evaluate the scale and practicality of delivering the '**People and Place**' Delivery Plan;
- Set up a resource centre and commenced a programme of weekly member engagement opportunities in early July.

5.5 In terms of the delivery of the '**People and Place**' priority the Action Learning Sets have been working with Executive Members to develop and implement Delivery Plans. This remains work in progress and the delivery plans are continuing to be developed. Progress to date in the four Action Learning Sets and key issues are as follows:

#### **Partnerships for Futures**

- All projects are on target
- Recruitment process has begun for Executive Director - interviews to take place end of August 2008
- Third Board meeting scheduled for early September 2008
- In principle agreement of Hanlon Skills Register to be implemented for database to support Partnerships for Futures
- Young Entrepreneurs sub-project being developed to help young people develop enterprising skills
- Specific sub project activity, such as Beamish Customer Care training on hold until Executive Director is in post
- Operational Plan and Terms of Reference to be agreed at August Board meeting
- On-going work taking place to implement Hanlon Skills Register database

#### **Investment in the Town Centre**

- Programme of events is now well underway and continues to attracts crowds to the town centre
- Events programme distributed to 8400 households, community centres and other outlets
- Work to develop the Business Improvement District is on hold as assistance is required
- A scoping report on Research on the future of the market was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 30 July and a meeting of the task and finish group will be held on 19 August 2008.
- Locator Board maps are currently being designed with a view to being installed in September 2008
- The Banners for dressing the town will be installed from 19 August 2008

- Work to extend canopies and provide better sheeting for market stalls will continue as soon as possible
- Meeting held with supplier to obtain an estimate for new Christmas tree lights

### **Strengthening Partnerships**

- Overall good progress is being made
- Significant progress made with the 'What a wonderful Women project'; recent meeting with communications company indicated positive and very professional outlook for DVD's.
- Initial meeting for Strengthening Voluntary and Community Sector held and agreed the way forward for the project
- Work being undertaken towards the community centre launch event on 4 October 2008.
- Work continuing on a number of possible projects for the three villages, as part of the Community Cohesion project
- ICT equipment in place at Sacriston Community Centre
- Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in place for review of unparished areas of Chester-le-Street and trips organised for members to visit other Town Councils
- Revised Action Packed Futures event to be held in Civic Heart on 18 October 2008
- Decision to be made on proposal received from Durham Sport regarding Phase II development for sports facilities work at Sacriston.
- Issues still to be resolved regarding the Sacriston Community Centre launch event and the facility for booking of community centre rooms.

### **Neighbourhoods**

- All projects on target
- Development work with schools on Local Democracy Week will re-commence in September 2008
- A draft DIY Neighbourhoods toolkit booklet has been developed and is being reviewed
- Feedback in response to initial approaches to Parish Council representatives has been positive and a preferred model has been determined for the Chester in Bloom project
- A new mini-project is being developed as part of the Respect and Anti-Social Behaviour Project by the Environmental Enforcement Team, which will focus on maintaining the high quality environment across the district



5.6 A significant amount has already been achieved in setting up the Action Learning Sets, developing and rationalising the delivery projects and implementing the projects agreed. The delivery plans are living documents and built to cope with change. There are a couple of issues that require resolving, for example, with regard to the Sports and Activity Network and Community Cohesion Projects, as referred to above, but overall good progress is being made in all projects. The Town Centre Development Manager also requires some support to submit a bid for the Business Improvement District.

## 6. **Recommendations**

6.1 Members are recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress to date on implementing the Transition Plan;
- 2) Note the progress made in respect of individual progress and comment on the issues raised

## 7. **Background Papers/Documents referred to**

- 7.1 Transition Plan March 2004
- 7.2 Corporate Plan 2007/2010 – June 2007
- 7.3 Budget reports to Council dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008
- 7.4 Report to Executive 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008
- 7.5 ‘*People and Place*’ Action Learning Set Monthly monitoring reports

**Ian Forster**  
**Director of Corporate Services**  
**15 August 2008**  
**Version 1.0**

**Ian Forster Tel 0191 3872130 e mail [IanForster@chester-le-street.gov.uk](mailto:IanForster@chester-le-street.gov.uk)**

## Appendix 1



**Chester-le-Street**  
District Council

### 'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report

<b>ALS Ref</b>	Action Learning Set 1
<b>'People and Place' Theme</b>	Partnerships for Futures
<b>Milestone and outcome achievement</b>	<p>Recruitment process begun for Executive Director. Good response from regional and national advertising. Short listing of applications taking place and interviews to take place end of August.</p> <p>Third board meeting planned for early September. Presentation to be delivered by Derwentside Engineering Forum.</p> <p>In principle agreement of Hanlon Skills Register to be implemented for database to support Partnerships for Futures.</p> <p>LSC Priority Sector Routeways Expression of Interest submitted for LSC co-financing funds for job-placement to take place.</p> <p>Young Entrepreneurs sub-project being developed to help young people develop enterprising skills – to take place in October/November and aimed at Yr 9 students across the four secondary schools in the district.</p>
<b>Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed</b>	Specific sub-project activity, such as Beamish Customer Care training on hold until Executive Director comes into post.
<b>Issues to be resolved and who by</b>	
<b>Successes to communicate and celebrate</b>	<p>Both public and private sector support has been gained for the project, with the following organisations agreeing to sit on the board to guide and provide strategic oversight to Partnerships for Futures. Board members consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beamish Museum</li> <li>• Durham County Cricket Club</li> <li>• Enterprise Agency</li> <li>• Hermitage School</li> <li>• New College Durham</li> <li>• Ambic Ltd</li> <li>• Chester-le-Street District Council</li> </ul>

<p><b>Successes to communicate and celebrate</b></p>	<p>The initial establishment of the project could be promoted internally through team talk/intranet. Once further development work has taken place and a clear framework is in place for delivery of Partnerships for Futures it can be promoted externally.</p>
<p><b>Comments</b></p>	<p>Partnerships for Futures is progressing in line with the delivery plan.</p> <p>Board has agreed that project team can begin drafting operational plan, which will be agreed at August board meeting.</p> <p>Terms of reference to be agreed at August board meeting.</p> <p>On-going work taking place to implement Hanlon Skills Register database to support Partnerships for Futures activity.</p>



**'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report**

<b>ALS Ref</b>	Action Learning Set 2
<b>'People and Place' Theme</b>	Investment in Town Centre
<b>Milestone and outcome achievement</b>	The <b>programme of events</b> is now well under way and is still attracting crowds into the town centre. Unfortunately two events have been rained off. The events programme was distributed to 8400 households in Waldrige, Kimblesworth, Plawsworth, Sacriston and Chester-le-Street Town Centre. Copies were also distributed to community centres and other outlets.
	Work to develop a <b>Business Improvement District</b> has not moved on. The following assistance is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction about the terms of reference and purpose of the group in relation to the master plan.</li> <li>• The use of capital monies to assist in this piece of work</li> <li>• The provision of administration assistance to help in the organisation and development of essential data etc.</li> </ul>
	Work to <b>Research the Future of the Market</b> . A scoping report was presented at the last scrutiny committee meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> July.  A meeting of the task and finish group will take place on 19 <sup>th</sup> August and thereafter visits will be made to four local and more successful markets.
	Work on <b>dressing the town with banners</b> The banners will be installed from 19 <sup>th</sup> August.
	<b>The locator board</b> maps are now being designed and hope to be installed in September.
	Work to <b>extend canopies and provide better sheeting for market stalls</b> will continue when the Market Supervisor returns from sick leave.
	A supplier of <b>footfall counters for the front street</b> has been identified and a proposal has been received. This will provide data for five years. Awaiting for confirmation that capital funds can be used to complete this work.
	A meeting has taken place with Lumalite to supply some <b>new lights for the Xmas tree</b> and they will supply an estimate.

	The project to use <b>coloured paving slabs or adhesive signs leading from Riverside to the town centre</b> is on hold pending some estimates - the viability of these needs to be tested.
<b>Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed</b>	All projects seem to be progressing well but I would appreciate some assistance to develop the BID.
<b>Issues to be resolved and who by</b>	
<b>Successes to communicate and celebrate</b>	The success of the events that have been provided in the civic heart.
<b>Comments</b>	



**'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report**

<b>ALS Ref</b>	Action Learning Set 3
<b>'People and Place' Theme</b>	Strengthening Partnerships
<b>Milestone and outcome achievement</b>	<p>What Wonderful Women's Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steering Group approved branding and logo for the project.</li> <li>- Agreed a donation of £500 to Chester-le-Street Heritage Group in recognition of their assistance collating information on 'Wonderful Women' of Chester-le-Street.</li> <li>- Contact being made to identify and collate information regarding 'Wonderful Women'.</li> <li>- Work started with preferred communications company to specify the production of DVD's.</li> </ul>
	<p>Strengthening the Voluntary/Community Sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Successful dinner at Lumley Castle on the 10<sup>th</sup> July.</li> <li>- Group agreed to capture information about community/voluntary groups throughout district; who they are, what they do, what strengths are.</li> <li>- Further plans to identify how those services can be marketed, and how groups can take advantage of future opportunities.</li> <li>- Next meeting organised for 21<sup>st</sup> August to plan how this can be achieved.</li> </ul>
	<p>Community Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working on organizing the community centre launch event on the 4<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>- Work continuing on a number of possible projects for the 3 villages including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Extending Cestria Credit Union to the 3 villages.</li> <li>o Developing a food co-operative to take food produced from local allotments to sell within the community centres.</li> <li>o Investigation of different models for running kitchens; franchises, social enterprises or volunteers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- ICT equipment in place at Sacriston Community Centre.</li> <li>- Website resource organized for 18<sup>th</sup> August.</li> </ul>

<b>Milestone and outcome achievement</b>	<p>Potential for a Town Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scrutiny Task and Finish Group set up to look at the unparished areas of Chester-le-Street.</li> <li>- Trips organized for members to visit and consider other Town Councils.</li> <li>- Finish of project expected in time for 3<sup>rd</sup> December Executive.</li> </ul> <p>Action Packed Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revised event to take place in Civic Heart on 18<sup>th</sup> October.</li> <li>- Event to involve local schools, competitions and prizes for harvest festival and Halloween displays. Displays of local produce from local providers and cookery demonstrations.</li> <li>- Consideration to be given on how two sites; Civic Heart and Riverside could be 'joined up' to promote a two site theme. Possible use of bike taxis to move public between sites on 18<sup>th</sup> October.</li> </ul>
<b>Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed</b>	<p>Sports and Activity Network</p> <p>A proposal from Durham Sport has been provided regarding development work at Sacriston regarding a Phase II development for sports facilities. A number of questions are outstanding regarding the proposal and a decision is yet to be made whether this proposal will be funded from Strengthening Partnerships.</p>
<b>Issues to be resolved and who by</b>	<p>Community Cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Issues to resolve regarding the Sacriston Community Centre launch event; including the purpose of the event, the attendees and the location.</li> <li>- Clarify and cost a suitable solution to allow different community centres to view and book each others resources and facilities – Graeme Clark.</li> </ul>
<b>Successes to communicate and celebrate</b>	<p><u>Action Learning Sets moving from a planned to a delivery stage.</u></p> <p>Scrutiny task and finish group in place for review of unparished areas.</p> <p>Initial meeting for Strengthening Voluntary and Community Sector and agreed way forward.</p> <p>ICT provision for Sacriston Community Centre.</p> <p>'What Wonderful Womens' project making good progress; recent meeting with communications company indicates positive and very professional outlook for DVD's.</p>
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Overall good progress being made.</p>



**'People and Place' Action Learning Set Monthly Monitoring Report**

<b>ALS Ref</b>	Action Learning Set 4
<b>'People and Place' Theme</b>	Neighbourhoods
<b>Milestone and outcome achievement</b>	<b>Local Democracy Week</b> - development work will re-commence with schools in September.
	<b>DIY Neighbourhoods Toolkit</b> - A draft toolkit booklet has been developed and is being reviewed.
	<b>Chester in Bloom</b> - Initial approaches to Parish Council representatives has been undertaken to gain appetite for small open space improvement features. Feedback has been positive and a draft letter of engagement has been prepared and will be sent out to all PCs by 15 <sup>th</sup> Aug. A preferred model has been determined and will include a seating arrangement, a wildflower meadow, standard trees up to 10 000 new bulbs and a dedication plaque. Whilst approximate costs have been outlined detailed costs for implementation have been requested from the Ground care Team.
	<b>Respect &amp; Anti Social Behavior</b> - There is a new mini project being developed by the Environmental Services Enforcement Team, which will make a positive addition to this work. It will be a campaign branded as Open your Eyes ad will focus on the maintaining the high quality environment across the district.
<b>Actions behind target and remedial measures proposed</b>	There are no actions behind schedule and all projects are now live.
<b>Issues to be resolved and who by</b>	-
<b>Successes to communicate and celebrate</b>	There are no new successes to celebrate.
<b>Comments</b>	The project team are continuing to work towards the final outputs of their Neighbourhood projects.  All of the projects will acknowledge and fulfill the Young People and Place Initiative and ensure that where possible young people have the widest opportunity to participate.