

At a Meeting of the Implementation Executive held at the Civic Centre,
Consett on **Friday 7 March 2008 at 1.30 p.m.**

Present:

Councillor A Nugent in the Chair

Durham County Council

Councillors Chaplow, Coates, Fergus, Marshall, Morgan, Priestley, Robson
and Walker

Chester le Street District Council

Councillor Ebbatson

Derwentside District Council

Councillor Watson

Durham City Council

Councillor Reynolds

Easington District Council

Councillor Napier

Sedgefield Borough Council

Councillor Armstrong

Teesdale District Council

Councillor Betton

Wear Valley District Council

Councillor Stonehouse

County Durham Association of Local Councils

Councillor Batson and Mr S Ragg

Unison

Mr H Pink

Officers:

- Lesley Davies - Acting Director of Corporate Services, Durham County Council
- Stuart Crowe - County Treasurer, Durham County Council
- John Richardson - Corporate Director, Environment
- Brian Dinsdale - Brian Dinsdale, Interim Programme Director, LGR Programme
- Roger Goodes - Programme Manager, LGR Programme

A1. Notes of G8 Meeting

The notes of the G8 Meeting held on 1 February 2008 were confirmed by the Executive as a correct record.

John Richardson informed the Executive that the County Council had agreed to formally establish the Implementation Executive at its meeting held on 6 February 2008.

Referring to the representation to the Electoral Commission, Lesley Davies informed the Executive that a final draft of a letter to the Electoral Commission had been approved by all Authorities, and sought approval of the Executive to send the letter following this meeting. The Executive agreed to the despatch of the letter. Councillor Walker added that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also provided comment on the representation letter.

Lesley Davies undertook to circulate a list of partners who would be lobbied on the Electoral Commission issue.

A2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

A3. Draft Terms of Reference

The Executive noted a report of the Chief Executive regarding the Terms of Reference for the Implementation Executive (for copy see file of Minutes).

A4. Establishment of Implementation Team

The Executive considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the appointment of an Implementation Team to support the Implementation Executive in carrying out its role (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the previously constituted Senior Officer Group be appointed as the Implementation Team as follows:

Durham County Council

Mark Lloyd
John Richardson
David Williams
Rachael Shimmin
Lesley Davies
Stuart Crowe
Vivien Wiley
Ann Campbell
Kim Jobson

Programme Director

Brian Dinsdale

Programme Manager

Roger Goodes

Chester-le-Street District Council

Roy Templeman

Derwentside District Council

Mike Clark

Durham City Council

David Marrs

Easington District Council

Janet Johnson

Sedgefield Borough Council

Brian Allen

Teesdale District Council

Neil Stokell

Wear Valley District Council

Mike Laing

A5. Programme Update

The Executive noted a report of the Interim Programme Director which gave an update on the progress being made within the LGR programme (for copy see file of Minutes)

Councillor Ebbatson referred to a reported £8m transitional fund being provided by Central Government towards the costs of LGR and asked what this money would cover and whether there would be a transparent audit trail. The County Treasurer replied that as far as he was aware, there was no such transition fund being provided by Central Government, adding that the proposals in the County bid would be met from across all Authorities involved, in the short-term from reserves, and from savings in the long-term. Councillor Ebbatson informed the meeting that the public was asking about transitional costs, adding that Councillors had a duty to ensure the process was transparent, and that there was a clear audit trail of costs and expenditure. The County Treasurer replied that it was planned to provide an audit trail for such costs and expenditure.

A6. Name of Council for 2008 Election

The Executive noted a report of the Acting Director of Corporate Services regarding the name by which the Council should be referred to on the election literature, ballot papers, etc, for the forthcoming local elections on 1 May 2008 (for copy see file of Minutes)

Councillor Napier, while understanding the legal position around the use of "Durham County Council" for the May elections, informed the Executive that it

was imperative for the post election Cabinet to prioritise the “selling” of the new authority as a new entity.

A7. Members Arrangements May 2008

The Executive noted a report of the Interim Programme Director, LGR Programme, which provided an update on the current planning of democratic processes and facilities for the post election period (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Napier informed the meeting that there would be many Members with a dual District/County role following the elections, and suggested that co-ordination take place to minimise the number of meetings which took place at the same time.

A8. Trade Union Engagement

The Executive considered a report of the Head of Strategic Human Resources which outlined recent discussions with the Trade Unions in relation to a consultation framework for LGR, and made proposals for consideration on the practical arrangements for engagement with the Implementation Executive (for copy see file of Minutes)

The Head of Strategic Human Resources informed the Executive that it was proposed a Sub Group of the Implementation Executive be established to work with the Trade Unions, to be made up of 13 Trade Union seats and 8 Elected Members. The Elected Members would consist of 5 County Councillors and 3 District Councillors.

Councillor Betton proposed that the three District Councillors on the Sub Group be Councillors Napier, Armstrong and Watson. Councillor Robson proposed that once a date for the first meeting of the Sub Group was agreed, the 5 County Councillor representatives would be drawn from those members which were available to attend.

Councillor Coates informed the Executive that the recommendations contained in the report did not include reference to the number of Elected Members on the Sub Group, which was 8.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained on the report be approved, with the additional reference to the number of Elected Members on the Sub Group being 8.

A9. Launch Events

The Executive noted a joint report of the Co-Leads of the Communications Workstream which provided an update on progress with the organisation of the unitary launch events planned for mid-March 2008 (for copy see file of Minutes)

A10. “Business as Usual” Decision Making

The Executive considered a report of the County Treasurer regarding a practical approach to the management of contracts between the date of the Secretary of State’s Direction and vesting day to ensure the smooth running of day to day business (for copy see file of Minutes)

An addendum to the report was circulated to Members (for copy see file of Minutes) which replaced Section 2 in light of the direction dated 29 February 2008 issued by CLG under Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act.

Resolved:

That the report as amended be approved.

The Chairman of the meeting was of the opinion that the following item was of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration because of the need to progress the process for the appointment of the new unitary Chief Executive.

A11 Recruitment of Chief Executive

The Executive considered a report of the Head of Strategic Human Resources which provided an update on the work undertaken in preparation for recruiting the new authority’s Chief Executive, sought agreement to some early recommendations made by the Sub Group to the Executive, and sought agreement to the Executive delegating powers to the Sub Group to manage the practical process issues leading up to the may elections (for copy see file of Minutes)

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.