

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the Implementation Executive held at the County Hall, Durham on **Friday 4 April 2008 at 1.30 p.m.**

Present:

Durham County Council

Councillors Chaplow, Coates, Fergus, Marshall, 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

County Durham Association of Local Councils

Mr S Ragg

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nugent and Councillor Batson (County Durham Association of Local Councils).

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Officers:

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| John Richardson | - | Acting Chief Executive, Durham County Council |
| Lesley Davies | - | Acting Director of Corporate Services, Durham County Council |
| Stuart Crowe | - | County Treasurer, Durham County Council |
| Brian Dinsdale | - | Brian Dinsdale, Interim Programme Director, LGR Programme |
| Roger Goodes | - | Programme Manager, LGR Programme |
| David Marrs | - | Acting Chief Executive, Durham City Council |

Councillor Robson, in the absence of Councillor Nugent, was nominated to take the Chair.

Councillor **C. Robson** in the Chair

A1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A3. 'Business as Usual' Decision Making

The Implementation Executive considered a report of the County Treasurer (for copy see file of Minutes) providing an update on progress on the Business As Usual paper presented at the last meeting.

With reference to paragraph 3 Councillor Ebbatson requested that Members of the Implementation Executive be provided with the statement in relation to authorisation of budget plans and requiring Chief Executives and Section 151 Officers to bring to the County Treasurer's attention issues which they consider may need to be brought to the Corporate Services Board.

Resolved:

That the report be noted. and the County Treasurer circulate copies of relevant communications to Members of the Implementation Executive by Friday 11th April.

A4. Programme Update: Risk Management and Business Continuity

The Implementation Executive considered a report of the County Treasurer (for copy see file of Minutes) providing an update on the progress being made in assessing and managing risk within the LGR Programme.

The Interim Programme Director explained that once a Strategic Risk Register had been drawn up this would be brought to the Implementation Executive for formal approval.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A5. Chief Executive Recruitment

The Implementation Executive considered a report of the Head of Human Resources (for copy see file of Minutes) providing an update on progress in relation to the recruitment of the Chief Executive for the new Unitary Authority.

The Head of Human Resources explained that since the report was prepared a further 5 candidates had entered into discussion about the post.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

A6. Support Facilities for Members on the New Council – Update

The Implementation Executive considered a Joint Report of the Acting Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Customer Services (for copy see file of Minutes) providing an update on the plans for the provision of additional support facilities for Members of the New Council.

In the ensuing discussion District Council Members indicated that they were content in principle with the suggestion of making District Council facilities available where appropriate and as the continuing business of the District Councils during 2008/09 permitted.

In relation to the costs of providing Direct Support Staff, the Acting Director of Corporate Services explained that there would be no additional costs in providing these posts as they were to be deployed from rationalisation of existing posts.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and the suggestion of making District Council facilities available where appropriate and as the continuing business of the District Councils during 2008/09 permitted, be supported in principle.

A7. Programme Update, Members Induction and Reporting Proposals

The Implementation Executive considered a report of the Programme Director (for copy see file of Minutes) providing an update on the continuing progress being made within the Local Government Reorganisation Programme.

Members discussed the demands that were likely to be placed upon Cabinet Members especially during the transition year. In the circumstances it was considered that the feasibility of having “designated support Members” to assist Cabinet Members be explored. The Acting Director of Corporate Services pointed out that the maximum number of Members that were permitted to serve on a Council’s Executive was 10. Therefore designated support members would need to take the form of an Executive Members’

Support Working Group, but members of the group could not act as substitutes or vote at Cabinet meetings.

The Implementation Executive also considered that it would be helpful to have a special meeting to consider the interim Constitution.

Resolved:

That the report be noted and that a Special meeting be held on Friday 25th April 2008 to consider a report about the proposed interim Constitution.

A8. Unitary Reorganisation Launch Events

The Implementation Executive considered a report of the Co-Leads of the Communications Workstream, Durham County Council and District of Easington (for copy see file of Minutes) about the Unitary Reorganisation launch events held at the beginning of March 2008.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

**A9 Appointment of Chief Executive and Other Senior Officers –
Leader’s Response to John Healey MP, Minister for Local
Government**

The Implementation Executive considered the Leader’s proposed response to John Healey MP about the process for appointment of the Chief Executive and other senior officers to the Council (for copy see file of Minutes). In essence the reply would indicate that the Implementation Executive supported open competition for such senior posts, within the constraints of employment legislation and having regard to the interests of business continuity.

In the ensuing discussion the District Council Members emphasised that taking into account the new culture and ethos of the Council open recruitment was the preferred option, where this was possible within the constraints of the employment legislation. Councillor Walker said that business continuity was also an important facet, to ensure that the quality of service provision was maintained.

Resolved:

That the Leader’s response be agreed.