

Report to: **Resources Scrutiny Committee**  
Date: **17<sup>th</sup> February 2009**  
Report of: **Principal Corporate Development Officer**  
Subject: **Corporate Development Unit quarterly performance report**  
Ward: **All**

## **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To provide information on the performance of the Corporate Development Unit for the period October 2008 to January 2009.

## **2.0 Consultation**

2.1 Consultation has taken place with colleagues in the team and with the Executive Member for Improvement.

## **3.0 Background**

3.1 This report shows progress against the team's work programme (Appendix A).

## **4.0 Summary**

4.1 The last performance report of the team was in October 2008. Since that time, the Unit has continued to undertake and deliver on a number of key projects as part of the planned workload, as well as play key roles on the Workstreams set up to consider and progress the arrangements for the new Council in line with the Local Government Review. The Assistant Chief Executive left the Authority at the end of October 2008, to take up a new post with the Tyne and Wear Fire Service. Since that time, Senior Officers within the Unit have shared responsibility for managing the service in the transitional period to the new Unitary Council. Key achievements in the period October 2008 to January 2009 include:

### **4.2 Performance and Improvement**

- The results of the Council's Corporate performance (National and Local indicators) for the second and third quarters of 2008/9 were reported to Management team, Working Executive and Audit Committee. As the majority of the data sets are new, and have no relevant baseline information as yet, the reports have focussed on explaining the new Indicators and their impact on the work of the Council. It is worth noting that the areas of Planning, Housing and Benefits continue to show improvement. Sickness levels across the Authority have also improved in the third quarter. There are some difficulties with the current performance of recycling and affordable homes, which are due to the economic downturn and are affecting all Councils nationally.
- The team has coordinated the Council's Direction of Travel self assessment to the Audit Commission, outlining the main achievements of the Council over the last year in terms of the transition plan and performance and also its input into the arrangements for setting up the new Unitary Council. The Audit Commission has now produced its draft annual audit letter and direction of travel statement which will be presented to full Council in March.
- An external evaluation of the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), by ECOTEC, to assess how well Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has been managed in line with the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, has been completed and the final report was received in December 2008. The report found that 54 out of the 63 Super Output Areas have improved their position in the IMD between 2004-07, 8 floor targets are improving, 3 are deteriorating and 3 are at the same level. Overall, strong progress can be seen in East Durham compared to other deprived areas across England.  
The floor targets that are making the most progress are around employment/worklessness, circulatory disease mortality rate, educational attainment and satisfaction with the environment. The report positively described the range of

innovative projects implemented by the Partnership and the effective way in which it had developed levels of trust and brokered solutions.

- As one of the study areas in the Audit Commission's assessment of former Coalfield areas over the last 10 years, resulting in their report, "A mine of opportunities" in November 2008, Easington was highly commended in terms of its partnership involvement in creating over 7,00 jobs over the course of the last 10 years. This was deemed a significant achievement given the severity of the deprivation in existence in the area.

#### **4.3 Policy**

- The Sustainable Community Strategy is now complete and will be discussed at the LSP Executive on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

#### **4.4 Local Government Reorganisation**

- Local Government Reorganisation has continued to feature heavily in the work of the team. Officers are involved with the Workstreams set up to consider the arrangements in relation to: Areas and Participation, Customers and Access, Democratic Services, Civil Contingencies, Equality and Cohesion, Health and Performance and Partnerships.

- The Civil Contingencies Workstream covers the future delivery of the civil contingency responsibilities for the new County Durham unitary authority and, of necessity, Darlington Borough Council. LGR has allowed an opportunity for a fundamental review, by both the new County Durham and the existing Darlington unitary authorities, of how they meet their civil contingency, emergency planning and business continuity management responsibilities.

The existing CCU arrangements have been re-examined, in light of national best practise and local needs, to determine the most effective means of delivery for the two unitary authorities of their civil contingency responsibilities.

This has been done as part of the workstream tasks and the result is that the CCU will become part of the Assistant Chief Exec's Directorate, with Durham being the lead Authority in the partnership between Durham and Darlington.

- The Policy and Partnerships workstream are currently developing the Corporate Plan for the new Council, considering the arrangements for Integrated Service Planning and pulling together a central system for performance management.
- The team have played a key role in the Areas and Participation Workstream to address the detailed issues and develop options for Elected Members in relation to the final geography, function, and governance of Area Action Partnerships, and the broad criteria and processes for area and member budgets. This team are also managing the transition from District Local Strategic Partnerships to AAPs
- The team has contributed to the work of the organisational development sub group, which have, in line with the recruitment timetable for the new Council, helped to coordinate delivery of a range of sessions (both individual coaching and team workshops) on career transition, to be facilitated by Solace. In addition, Strategic and Operational Change Management workshops are to be held by CPCR with Managers across all the Durham Councils during the next two months.

#### **4.5 Work at the subregional and regional level**

- A continued lead role continues to be taken within the team in support of the Countywide Local Area Agreement project team. Officers sit on the Delivery and Improvement Group, set up to performance manage the LAA and monitor the delivery plans, brokering better joint working between the partner agencies

#### **4.6 Community engagement**

- The work on our approach to Community Engagement has continued to be developed. Particular focus has been given to:
  - Engaging with the Community Advisory Panel to help inform service design and engage residents on a range of key issues. The Communications Manager and the Head of Customer Services are leading this work. The latest piece of work with the Panel has involved gathering views on Affordable Housing.
  - The subsequent meetings of the pilot neighbourhood forums have taken place, at which Officers of the Council, Durham Constabulary, Durham County Council and County Durham PCT have reported progress against the "Agenda for

Action". The new forums were the subject of an evaluation process during August and September 2008 and have been extended into 2009. The last meetings of the pilot forums will be held in February and a questionnaire is to be circulated to members of the public who have participated in the pilot programmes as part of a final assessment process. The results of the pilots are to be fed into the new Unitary Council to inform the development of Neighbourhood Engagement arrangements below the Area Action Partnerships

#### **4.7 Equality and Diversity**

- The Equalities and Diversity Officer took up a new appointment with East Durham Homes at the beginning of January 2009. Before his departure, the Officer had progressed the work on Impact Needs Assessments, building up the Customer Profile and reviewing key policies and procedures.

#### **4.8 Organisational Development**

- The team have arranged for career transition support sessions to be provided for any staff member wanting to hone their interview/application filling skills in preparation for the changes ahead with the recruitment to the new Council. This training is being delivered by Kirsty McEwan Associates and will run during February

#### **4.9 Unplanned work and slippage**

- LGR work, whilst anticipated, is engaging an increasing amount of the team's capacity
- Additional support continues to be provided to East Durham Homes
- However there has been no unplanned slippage on the team's work programme during this quarter

### **5. Implications**

#### **Financial**

5.1 There are no financial implications to this report

#### **Legal**

5.2 There are no legal implications to this report

#### **Policy**

5.3 Progress on several key areas of corporate policy is included in this report

#### **Risk**

5.4 A risk assessment has been carried out and action put in place to manage these risks.

#### **Communication**

5.5 There are no direct communication issues in relation to this report

#### **Corporate implications**

#### **5.6 Corporate Plan and Priorities**

The work of the Corporate Development Unit is directly related to the ability of the Council to fulfil its corporate priorities.

#### **5.7 Equality and Diversity**

The work programme of the Equalities and Diversity Officer within the Unit is aimed at

enabling the Authority to achieve level 3 of the equality standard by 2009

**5.8 E Government**

There are no specific e government implications.

**5.9 Procurement**

There are no specific procurement issues.

**6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 That Members note the content of the report, the progress made by the Unit and the work plans for the coming months

**Background papers/documents referred to**

Performance Washup Report June 2008

Best Value Performance Plan 2008

Review of the Council's Community Engagement Approach 2008