

# PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

16<sup>th</sup> May 2008

The meeting commenced at 3.00 p.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor Pamela Hargreaves (Performance Portfolio Holder)

**Officers:**

Andrew Atkin, Assistant Chief Executive  
Joanne Machers, Chief Personnel Officer  
Joanne Smithson, Head of Community Strategy  
David Hunt, Strategy and Performance Officer  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

**50. Chief Executive's Departmental Plan 2008/09** *(Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Personnel Officer)*

**Type of Decision**

Non key.

**Purpose of report**

To report to the Portfolio Holder the Chief Executive's Departmental Plan containing the key objectives and actions for 2008/09.

**Items for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report and appendix set out the key objectives and actions within an Action Plan that showed what was to be achieved by the department in the coming year. The Plan also described how the department would contribute to the Organisational Development objectives as identified in the 2008/09 Corporate Plan which would be published in June 2008.

The Plan included proposals from all four divisions within the Chief Executives Department, as well as procurement issues that fall within the remit of the Procurement and Property Services Division within the Neighbourhood Services Department. The Plan would also be used as the basis for the quarterly monitoring reports to the Portfolio Holder.

The Plan had additionally been considered by the Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

The Portfolio Holder asked if any actions which had not been completed the previous year would be automatically carried over into the following year. The

Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that this had been done where appropriate and relevant timescales had been revised. The proposed targets, while stretching, would be achievable.

The Chief Personnel Officer indicated that a number of the targets which had been missed the previous year related to the job evaluation and single status process. The 2008/09 plan had fewer targets in relation to this process as the concern now was to embed the proposals, something which would be more of a challenge than the initial introduction. The Assistant Chief Executive also referred to the forthcoming introduction of a new HR payroll system.

### **Decision**

That the plan be approved for distribution.

## **51. Qualifications Based Training Applications** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval from the Portfolio Holder for four applications for post entry qualification support from the Regeneration and Planning Department and Neighbourhood Services.

### **Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The corporate policy on post entry training states that the relevant Chief Officer can approve support for qualification based training in all but the following cases:

- When the Workforce Development Manager and Chief Officer cannot agree on a proposed variation from the scheme
- When the course is in some way unusual or outside the normal scope of the scheme
- When the cost of the programme is unusually high
- When the study method is open learning
- When the course leads to qualification at Masters level or above

Five applications for qualification based training support had been made – four at Masters level and one at diploma level to be delivered via open

learning. Details were given within the report of the applications and proposed departmental support with particular attention being drawn to a clause whereby employees would be liable to repay the costs incurred by the Authority for this training should they subsequently leave the authority in the two years after completing the qualification.

The Portfolio Holder expressed her support for the proposed training as something which should be supported.

### **Decision**

That the applications for post entry qualification support as detailed be approved.

## **52. Equality Standard Level 3 Validation** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek funding for the Equality Standard Level 3 Validation.

### **Items for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

In 2008/09 the Council declared itself as having achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard. A requirement of the Standard is that declarations at Levels 3 and 5 have to be externally validated. The only way to do this is by achieving the Equality Mark at a cost of £10,500. Funding of £3,000 was available within the 2008/09 budget and it was proposed that the shortfall in funding be found via the Contingency Fund. The Corporate Management Team were in support of this.

### **Decision**

That the funding proposals be endorsed.

## **53. Challenging Council Services Project** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

- i. To update the Portfolio Holder in respect of the progress on the Challenging Council Services Project and arrangements towards organising a regional conference to share good practice with all the

northeast local authorities.

- ii. To seek funding for the project for the remainder of 2008/09

### **Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

Last year the Council raised funds through the Essential Development Support grant fund, one of the Improvement Partnership's eight key work streams. One-off funds of £24,000 were resourced to address gaps in Challenging Council Services identified through a peer review process in February 2007. A requirement of the funding was that an event would be arranged to share learning and experience with other northeast authorities. This would be taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008 at the Borough Hall.

As a result the project's funding and associated activity would come to an end in July 2008. In order to continue with the project one-off funding would be needed until March 2009 as a bid for additional resources could not be made until April 2009. It was proposed that funding of £19,000 be taken from the Contingency Fund. This was supported by the Corporate Management Team.

The Portfolio Holder queried how much of the £19,000 had been earmarked for payment of external facilitators. The Chief Personnel Officer indicated that the two facilitators would be paid for 10 sessions at £500 each per session. The Portfolio Holder expressed concerns at this expenditure, asking why the training could not be delivered in-house. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that these estimates were based on previous costs but there could be room for negotiation. The Portfolio Holder felt that there was too much reliance on external facilitators and in-house capacity should be encouraged. A detailed breakdown of the facilitations costs involved was requested which the Chief Personnel Officer advised would be made available for the next Portfolio meeting. The Portfolio Holder requested that this element of the funding request item be deferred until that time.

### **Decision**

- i. That the report be noted,
- ii. That the funding proposals for training facilitation be deferred until the next Portfolio meeting when a breakdown of the costs involved in employing external facilitators would be made available.

## **54. Workforce Development & Workforce Planning – Annual Report 2007/8** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

## **Purpose of report**

To advise the Portfolio Holder of the progress made during 2007/8 and planned future actions in 2008/9 in respect of the Workforce Development and Workforce Planning corporate activities.

## **Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

In 2005 the Government had produced the Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy. In response to this Hartlepool Borough Council had launched its updated Workforce Strategy in April 2007 covering the period 2007-2012. Consequently the 2005 Local Government Pay and Workforce Strategy had been superseded by the Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007. This was attached to the report as an appendix.

Details were given as to the progress made within the four objectives of the Local Government Workforce Strategy 2007 and of planned future actions. Details of external funding opportunities accessed in 2007/2008 and employee monitoring information was also provided. Plans for 2008/09 were also outlined.

The following queries were then raised by the Portfolio Holder:

- **Undertake member training needs analysis** – the Portfolio Holder referred to previous training she had undertaken and officers' failure to send out the follow-up information as promised. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that this information had been sent out to all Councillors who had taken part. Perhaps it had not been what the Portfolio Holder had expected to receive? The Portfolio Holder requested that officers continue to follow-up the member training process, asking if the Personal Development Plans could be resent to all members as a reminder. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that all those who had already taken part would receive their plans while a new offer of Personal Development interview would be sent to all councillors for the 2008/09 municipal year.
- **Establish a "grow your own" management development programme using nationally accredited qualifications delivered in-house** – The Portfolio Holder asked how many managers had taken part in the NVQ 4 and 5 programmes. The Personnel Services Officer indicated that approximately 12 officers had taken part in the pilot with many more expressing interest. The pilot programmes were still ongoing and their impact would be assessed and the possibility of continuing them considered.
- **Establish a coaching skills programme** – The Portfolio Holder was advised that 108 people had taken part in this programme, 28 on the more advanced course. A coaching network had also been set up, including a regular newsletter.

- **Explore and if possible achieve corporate Investors in People status within 2007-2008 and work to the IIP profile** – The Portfolio Holder asked if member commitment to IIP had been forthcoming. The Chief Personnel Officer indicated that there had already been a commitment from the Local Joint Consultative Committee with Trade Unions and the pre-assessment programme with departments had shown member arrangements were adequate. The Portfolio Holder referred to a previous suggestion that herself and officers go to the political groups with an update, something she felt could still be useful.
- **Promote Union Learning representatives (ULRs) and ensure all are competent to NVQ 2 level in Information, Advice and Guidance** – The Chief Personnel Officer gave a brief overview regarding the background to Trade Union learning arrangements. A pilot scheme was being developed to better train Trade Union representatives to help new employees be better inducted into the authority. They were also taking the lead on the provision of NVQ2 for manual workers. The Portfolio Holder was happy with these developments which would show new employees that the Union had a role within the authority.
- **Develop a qualification auditing system across the workforce** – The Portfolio Holder asked why Human Resources were struggling to obtain the required information from departments. She acknowledged that this issue had not previously been a priority but felt that following agreement by the Corporate Management Team the process should be relatively straightforward. The Chief Personnel Officer explained that individual departments held training information on all their employees departmentally and it would be useful if this information could be stored centrally. The Portfolio Holder felt that process had to be fair across the authority with all departments taking part. She asked that this problem be addressed in the coming municipal year.
- **Employee monitoring 2006/2007 – Disability** – The Portfolio Holder queried the statement within the report that one of the actions to be taken to increase the percentage of disabled employees accessing training would be assessment of the training venues and facilities available in line with the authority's access strategy. She suggested that officers speak to those concerned and ask them why they chose not to take part in training as their reasons might not relate to issues of access.

## Decision

That the report be noted.

## **55. Annual Diversity Report** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To report progress made in respect of planned actions for achieving Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) by March 2008 and other diversity achievements during the year 2007/8 and actions planned in 2008/9 to progress to Level 4 by March 2011.

### **Items for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The 2006/7 Annual Race and Diversity report was endorsed by the Portfolio Holder on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007. At that time the Council had achieved Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (BVPI 2a) and set itself a target of achieving Level 3 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. Previously in the meeting the Portfolio Holder had approved funding proposals for accreditation costs regarding achievement of Level 3.

Further details were provided within the report of diversity achievements in 2007/08 and key actions planned for 2008/09. The Chief Personnel Officer advised that the Annual Diversity Scheme would be taken to Cabinet as a key decision in June 2008.

### **Decision**

That the report be endorsed and the achievements and progress made noted.

## **56. Local Government Pension Scheme – Update on the new look Pension Scheme** *(Chief Personnel Officer)*

### **Type of Decision**

Non key.

### **Purpose of report**

To update the Portfolio Holder on the developments within the Local Government Pension Scheme as a result of new legislation implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

### **Issues for consideration by Portfolio Holder**

The report provided background information regarding developments within

the Local Government Pension Scheme as a result of new legislation implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008. The main provisions for the new-look Pension Scheme were detailed along with recent and future actions taken by Hartlepool Borough Council to forward their implementation. The Portfolio Holder asked how much lee-way was given by the Government to individual authorities. The Chief Personnel Officer advised there was some discretion allowed, including the possibility of pension being taken from the age of 50 (under certain prescribed circumstances) and beyond retirement age. The Portfolio Holder further queried the decision process regarding authority discretion and was advised that on this occasion an administrative decision had been taken due to the timing of the release of the information. Details were also given of a ballot regarding possible industrial action pertaining to the 2008 cost of living rise.

### **Decision**

That the report be noted.

**P DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

**PUBLICATION DATE: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008**