

Organisational Restructure

Summary of questions, comments and responses

Questions & Answers

General questions

1. Q – What’s the timetable for the next phase of the restructure?

A – Consultation on the next phase of the restructure is already ongoing in some areas. Proposals for other areas will be released by the end of November although it is envisaged that restructuring in some areas will continue over the coming months as proposals are developed.

2. Q – Why are we trying to make most savings in year one?

A – The savings we are proposing eg £13.8m when fully implemented, are required to deliver the level of savings we estimate to be needed in 2011/12. The speed at which we need to deliver savings is being dictated by the speed at which the Government are cutting our grant.

3. Q – What role have elected members played to date?

A – Cabinet are responsible for developing proposals on the budget and therefore have been involved in the preparation of proposals currently out to consultation.

4. Q – Two Asst Directors commission services (Partnerships & Place), however in resources there is no commissioning, why is this?

A – Commissioning is in the two service departments as specific service knowledge is required to commissioning. Commissioning is about identifying what is required to deliver the outcomes the council desires this is best done in service departments. Commissioning will be supported by the Customer Insight, procurement and contract management teams in the Resources Group.

5. Q – How will Directors be appointed and what level of expertise will the Directors have with regards to the broad spectrum of services within each Directorship?

A – There will be ‘slot in’ appointments for the Director of People and Director of Resources. There will be an internal appointment process for the Director of Place. Structures have been designed to ensure that there is sufficient expertise to support Directors across the broad spectrum of services included in each functional group. Leadership skills are crucial to the ongoing success of the organisation and we believe that the organisation has the right leadership capacity which we continually seek to enhance through leadership development.

6. Q – What plans are being put in place to support and monitor staff and services that remain in the public sector as they will have increased responsibilities and workload?

A – We are developing a new, simplified performance monitoring process for

the Council and the Darlington Partnership, which will more closely align to the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities. In terms of supporting staff our stress management and well being programmes will become increasingly important and continued emphasis will be placed on such support mechanisms.

7. Q - Who will monitor what is an effective service and how will the level of service be maintained?

A – Ultimately members will monitor how effective a service is and to what level it is maintained based on advice from officers. Performance management of services will continue to be undertaken and reviewed.

8. Q – What is the role of the Corporate Transformation Team?

A – A briefing for all staff is being prepared on the role of team and current programmes and will be circulated shortly.

9. Q – Can a breakdown of the efficiency proposals be made public?

A – As proposals are reviewed they will be shared with staff and other key stakeholder's via media forums such as the web and Town Crier.

10. Q- Why has the role of Chief Executive not been considered in the restructure? Could the role of Chief Executive be shared with another authority?

A –Sharing the role of Chief Executive with another authority would not be ruled out for future consideration. However such a measure would require considerable preparatory work and consultation with possible partners which could not have been achieved in the timescale of this restructuring.

Questions relating to People Group

10.Q – What is the DAAT?

A – Drug & Alcohol Action Team

11.Q – In the People structure learning disabilities, mental health etc comes under 2 Assistant Directors, why is this?

A – One area will have responsibility for provider services, while the other will cover the commissioning function.

12.Q – Why have 3 separate teams doing a similar role? (Connecting with Communities, Community Development & Darlington Together).

A – The Darlington Together team will incorporate the functions of the above teams.

13.Q- What will the Safeguarding Unit do?

A – This is a regulatory requirement and needs to be an independent function due to involvement with private & voluntary sector providers.

14.Q – Safer Darlington Efficiencies – Considerable potential efficiencies and delivery benefits have been put forward as part of provisional plans for the creation of a Safer Darlington Partnership

structure including CSP, DAAT, YOS, and ASB. The current DBC proposal as it stands does not enable those potential benefits to be realised.

A – Previous proposals regarding integration of CSP, DAAT, YOS & ASB were planned earlier in the year, prior to government policy changes + budget reductions for this area. Savings proposed in this area will continue to be made.

15.Q- Does Policy/ Data/ Strategy in the AD Partnerships team mean that a centralised PPP –type function is proposed?

A – This is still under review in the wider restructure.

16.Q – The Choice Adviser role should be kept separate from the Admissions service to comply with the Admissions Code of Practice in ensuring independence and impartiality of the service.

A – This role will no longer be part of the Admissions service within the proposed new structure and will be included in 'Identification and Assessment'.

17.Q – Where do Connexions fit in the People Directorate?

A –Connexions comes within the Children's, Families and Learning area within Early Intervention and Prevention.

18.Q – Why have we not merged children and adult social care?

A – Adult Social Care merged with Housing during 2009 as there are a number of common themes including Reablement and Supporting People, which also created financial efficiencies. Children's Services had also proposed a number of service specific savings. It was decided that merging Children's & Adults at this stage would not be conducive to delivering the savings already proposed in both areas. However, where possible, opportunities for merging services have been explored and some progress made in terms of safeguarding services and services for disabled children and adults.

19.Q – Why is DAAT not in Children, Families & Learning with the other prevention services?

A – The People Group is structured with commissioning and provider services in different teams. The DAAT's main focus is commissioning services, and the Council's role within that is focused on contributing to the commissioning of treatment services.

20.Q – Under AD Partnerships there are 2 items listed as 'Business Support' and 'Workforce Development', are these activities relating to the DBC internal workforce?

A – To better reflect the key areas of responsibility the post will be called Assistant Director for Development & Commissioning. Part of the role involves supporting local communities to become more self reliant, for example through the development of Social enterprises or Community Interest Companies. The Business support and workforce development functions relate to supporting social enterprises, voluntary groups and other partner organisations as well as workforce development for the People Group.

Questions relating to Resources Group

21.Q – What expertise does the Corporate Transformation Team have regarding Social Firms or Volunteer Engagement?

A – Some team members do have knowledge regarding micro enterprises, social firms and volunteer engagement but this is not a key role of the team. Corporate Management Team recognises the need for further expertise in this area, and is looking at capacity.

Comments received

General

- Queries re varying responsibility/capacity at senior levels across functional groups
- Front line staff need a forum for providing ideas for efficiencies
- We should be using and sharing a single National Land and Property Gazetteer with other service areas as the added value is up to £25 million.
- The Transformation Team should have Geospatial Information as an enabler for change. A clear strategy for the use of Geospatial Information across the authority and its partner organisations. A clear commitment to use its existing Land and Property Gazetteer as its sole source of address data.
- Commissioning should be centralised and come under Resources.
- Need to seek shared services with all Tees Valley LA's for central support services.
- Does the term "Corporate Director" or "Executive Director" more accurately describe the corporate rather than departmental role directors of the future will clearly have?
- It is not clear from the structure where commissioning sits for every function.
- Darlington already has the 2nd lowest management costs in the North East, why are we driving costs down further and losing good staff.

People

- Community Development would be better placed in Children, Families & Learning as they have more contact with community groups and the general public.
- Libraries & Adult Learning have developed considerably since 2003. Libraries should fit under People 'responsible for social care, education, safeguarding and community engagement'. Libraries and Adult Learning should not be split. Libraries are about people and have worked well with Children's Services in the past.
- Housing & Council Tax should be in Resources.
- Workforce Development should be centralised and come under HR in Resources.
- The CSP & ASB teams should be merged, only needing one manager.
- ASB team should sit with Community Safety Partnership.
- Early Intervention & Prevention is under an AD who has responsibility for Children's social care, schools and education etc, seems to suggest a devaluing of that team and its functions.
- Open access public buildings should be with the People Directorate due to all other services within AD Children, Family Learning, and service user using facilities e.g. Dolphin, Civic, and Libraries etc.
- Workforce development should be with Children, Families & Learning due to services within this, who could deliver the teaching and learning in a more cost effective way?

Place

- There are too many Assistant Director posts under the Place structure
- Transfer Commissioning, Service Planning & Performance from Place

Directorate into Resources

- Combine Highways, Design & Projects from Building Services – This will result in savings from one less AD post.
- Comments were received regarding splitting Community Services into two separate services (Regulatory Services & Community Services)
- If a decision is not taken to separate Regulatory Services at AD level, we would suggest these functions should be transferred to Policy & Regeneration.
- Outsource refuse collection to a private company

Resources

- Would Housing be better sitting under Resources
- Registrars should come out of Resources and into Place Directorate.
- Transfer Marketing into the Place Directorate
- Transfer Health & Safety & Quality from Place Directorate into Resources Directorate to sit with corporate H & S