
ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out a proposal for a new way of carrying out the Council's corporate functions. The proposal will involve significant reductions in spend and staffing to carry out these functions and this report sets out how this will be achieved, in particular it identifies areas of work that will no longer be carried out, will be reduced or will be delivered by alternative models.

Background

2. Council has agreed four key functions :-
 - Championing the interests of citizens and business
 - Support strong partnerships to set a vision and direction for the Borough and its services
 - Promote the Borough to secure investment and support
 - Ensure the provision of good quality services
3. These capture the role of the Council as a body that is politically-led, and crucially, takes a leadership role for the whole borough. In carrying out this role the Organisation will:
 - (a) Set outcomes for the people and the place, and hold service providers (Council and partners) to account for their delivery against those outcomes
 - (b) Set direction for Council services and for the on-going process of change and transformation
 - (c) Give leadership and exercise influence across the diverse framework of delivery arrangements to secure the best outcomes for Darlington
 - (d) Engage with communities, employers, and other Darlington interests to galvanise a spirit of cohesion and resourcefulness.
 - (e) Build and nurture relationships with others that can contribute to Darlington's ambitions.
4. As the Business Model continues to be rolled out, the Council needs to take a view on the shape of the Council required to support us in the process of change.

Core Functions

5. Set out below are the functions needed to deliver it effectively. Leadership of this work, particularly with regard to work with Members comes from the Chief Executive and Chief Officers. A small cadre of Officers is required to support this activity. The functions are:
- a) Setting Strategic Direction and Priorities for Darlington and delivery plans for Darlington Borough Council
 - b) Leading the development and maintenance of strong relationships across providers and stakeholders, developing new alliances & Partnerships to achieve outcomes
 - c) Holding providers to account for Performance of Services/Functions
 - d) Communication and Engagement
 - e) Initiating and managing transformation programmes for Council services
 - f) Collection analysis, sharing and managing data to inform business planning.

Current Arrangements

6. These functions are delivered at a number of levels, across the Council's structures. As part of other teams there are staff in People that undertake corporate performance and policy, information management and engagement functions, there are staff in Resources that collect and analyse data, staff that provide media and electronic communications and others that organise transformation and change programmes, there are staff in Place that undertake functions relating to policy performance and project work in that area. Support to the Chief Executive is drawn from across the three Groups. There are strengths and weaknesses in current arrangements. For example, strengths because of the alignment and synergies with other functions in the three Groups, and strengths in project and programme management that have come from having a dedicated Transformation Team. There are however inefficiencies that come from having the functions so widely distributed, and weaknesses in enabling a single view of Council-wide matters to support the work of the Chief Executive.
7. In the context of a continued decline in resources it is imperative that we review these structures and find the most efficient way to carry them out. A centralised structure will better enable a reduction in resource. Some of the strengths will be lost but we need to adjust to a different context and recognise there will be a significantly reduced capacity.

Translating these functions into roles

8. A new structure is being proposed which will achieve significant savings and will focus on the highest priorities. Inherent in the decision to adopt the structure is the decision to cut back on and perform less well in some significant areas we currently do whilst carrying some risk. The structure aims to prioritise functions and reflect a changed way of working but also to stop doing some things which we currently do which will impact on the community. A key role for the new team will be to stimulate alternative delivery wherever possible both within its own functions and across the council.
9. The core functions of the team are usually located within the CE's office or Department but it is proposed that to support the spending reductions these functions should form part of the Resources group. The structure will need to be responsive to changing priorities and key to this approach is the role that Members and COE will play in determining priorities and direction of travel. Regular dialogue between Members, COE, AD and Head of Service will be required to ensure that the new roles are able to be responsive in this way.

The Structure

10. The Organisational Planning function will need to work with our partners and other organisations and within the community and this will be a key role of the new Head of Service. The Head of Service will also need to work with the Assistant Director and Director of Resources and closely with the Chief Executive to understand the vision of the organisation both short and longer term.
11. To provide lines of accountability and a management structure the functions will be organised into three staff teams, however the nature of the way the functions will be carried out will necessitate delivery by project teams drawn from across the structure. The intention is that staff will work closely together across the three teams and ideally be co-located to facilitate that approach.

Team 1: Engagement

Functions

Engagement, Consultation, Communications, Web and Electronic Media, Community Relations; Marketing and Influencing.

Key Roles

To help the community to work together; to help support Members in their community role; to advise people what help is available; to persuade people to get involved; to support Member engagement with the Community; to influence

behaviours and attitudes; to manage our reputation; to help people to understand the role of the Council and its decisions and to understand the wider climate in which we are operating. To manage public interface including media, consultation, web and social media interaction.

Team 2: Information

Functions

Collection and holding of data, management of data, the development of systems strategy, the management of core systems and the relationship between systems and processes. The improvement of processes across the organisation.

Key Roles

To work with the Chief Officer's Board to develop the Council's systems strategy and to act as liaison in our relationship with Xentrall ICT Services; to develop systems and functionality to deliver our priorities; to collect the data that helps us to understand our customers and residents; to prepare the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; to hold data securely but in a way that enables us to make best use of it; to challenge and review processes; to provide the most efficient delivery of services focused on our key objectives and customer outcomes; to help services to get the most of the systems we have and to make efficiencies with minimum impact on service outcomes.

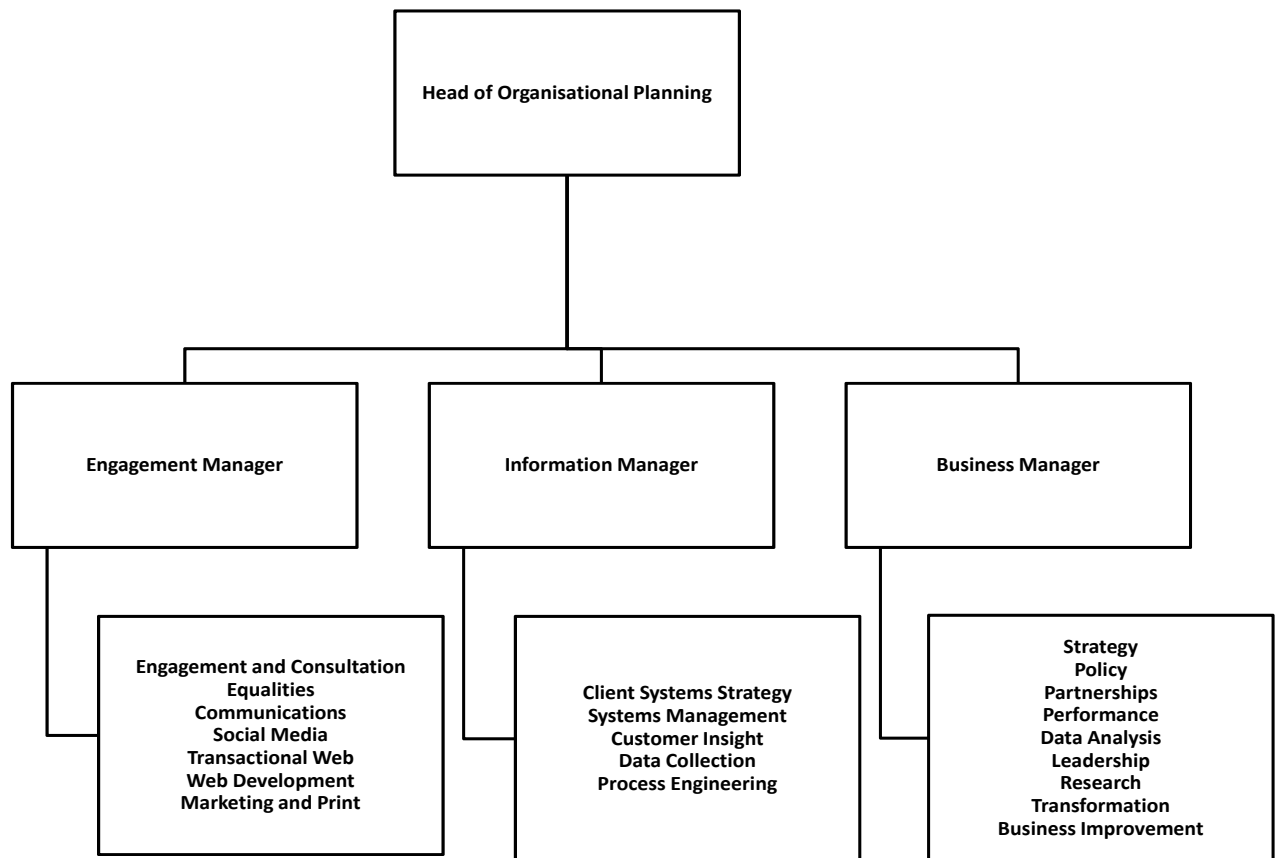
Team 3: Business

Functions

Strategy, performance, transformation, data analysis, research, developing vision, information management, inspection.

Key Roles

12. To provide the research and information to the organisation; to develop direction and vision; to help interpret the vision into key outcomes; to assist the organisation and service areas change to be able to meet that vision; to identify funding resources and partnership opportunities; to analyse performance and customer data; to identify key obstacles to the delivery of the vision; to identify strategies for overcoming the obstacles and to inform the objectives of engagement and influencing.



Areas for Workload Reduction

13. The Council is currently engaged in a budget exercise looking at statutory obligations with a ‘how low can you go’ approach. A similar approach will need to be applied to functions in this area with a view to stopping some which are not required local authority functions.

14. The proposal represents a significant reduction in staff resource and this is coupled with increased demand in some areas. Overall this will mean there will be areas for pulling back. The proposed structure will have a significantly reduced resource but there is scope for increasing on an ad hoc basis when necessary. A chart below sets out the proposed reductions, risks and mitigations and also sets out the priority areas.

Area for Reduction	Nature of Reduction	Risk	Mitigation
Preparation of key strategies and plans.	Reduction in key strategic documents. Reduction in formal meetings and consultation exercises in the development of strategy documents.	Reduced consultation may result in partners and some members feeling less involved in the process.	A clear timetable at the outset explaining a strategy development process and methodology will help to manage expectation and manage the time spent on strategy development effectively.
Co-ordination and liaison between services.	Reduce the number of liaison meetings between officers.	The reliance on a smaller group of individuals may lead to a reduction in challenge from different perspectives.	Early consultation with COE on broad direction will help to ensure corporate challenge at the outset.
Research, briefing and development documents.	Reduce the time taken to prepare and the number of briefings, discussion papers and reports.	Leadership does not have the benefit of broader perspectives and research when setting priorities. Fewer innovative proposals will be put forward.	Early consultation will enable a dialogue to feed in horizon scanning and research. Resource will be focused on limited priorities.
Service Planning	Operational Planning function will have very limited involvement in service planning provide only broad templates and methodology, with service planning resting with service	There is drift into service based priorities overtaking corporate direction. There is a lack of understanding of the importance and impact of service requirements in wider corporate planning.	Closer working between COB and COE and Heads of Service will provide alignment and joint meetings will be the focus of dialogue.

	departments.		
Performance Management	Reduce the data we collect. Reduce the number of KPIs and PIs for which we collect data. Reduce the data returns to government.	Failure to provide data to government leading to criticism. Data linked to grant may impact on grant received. Impact on reputation and the ability to understand the impact of delivery on outcomes.	Each return will need to be risk assessed. Those with the greatest benefit (eg grant funding) will be prioritised.
Insight	Do not support the Local Information Service. Reduce the capacity to layer and analyse data.	The reduction in the collection, collation and presentation of open data will lead to criticism. Decisions will be made without the benefit of insight data.	Decisions will rely on professional judgment. There will be compliance with open data legal requirements but not beyond.
Equalities Community Support	Reduce the number and extent of Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA).	There is a risk of legal challenge and a risk of lack of evidence of having considered the equality duty without an EIA.	There will be a risk based approach in relation to each decision, legal advice on the scope for successful challenge will inform the approach.
Media Releases Design and Print	Reduce the number of occasions we provide a media response. Reduce the number of press releases. Reduce the consultation of senior staff in relation to	The Council will be quoted as 'failing to comment'. Media releases do not reflect the views of senior management and Members. Reduction in design and print will have an	Greater understanding of COE priorities will help inform streamlined media releases. Social media will require this understanding. This can be applied to press as well. Work with Xentrall in relation to

	media releases. Reduce Design and Print work.	impact on the costs of the Xentrall partnership.	reductions.
Surveys and Consultation	Reduce the amount of corporate surveys. Reduce to support to service based consultation.	This will have an impact on the quality and scope of the surveys that we have, and on our ability to manage reputational issues and understand our customers.	Prioritise the important surveys. Co-ordinate survey work so the benefits of surveys conducted are used across the authority.
Transformation and Business Support	Reduce the centralised support to projects.	There is a risk that there will be insufficient business support to enable savings proposals to be delivered within timescales delaying savings and impacting further on the financial challenges.	Projects will be prioritised for support. Other projects will be delivered in service areas.
Systems Support	In the short term provide reduced support to officers using systems. Reduce the number of reports provided by systems. Longer Term improve the use of the systems and rationalise the number of systems.	Inability to respond to the need for reports for information will impact further on our ability to respond to information requests from government and in relation to our inspections. This may impact on our service delivery and on reputation.	Improve the use of the system and the data collected and held. Reduce the number of work-arounds. Ensure that data is input into systems at point of collection.
Engagement	Reduce support to some	A reduction in support to	Prioritise community support

	community based activities, such as support to community centres. Pass responsibility for some community work to voluntary sector.	community initiatives may lead to volunteers withdrawing and community initiatives failing running counter to our overall strategy of stimulating community involvement.	to project work most likely to bring a significant different or reduce Council costs.
Priority Areas	Enhancement	Cost	Benefit
Partnership working	Focus partnership working on maximising impact of joint resources.	Prioritisation will help to ensure that current impact is achieved with less resource.	Maximising impact of reduced resources.
Darlington Together	Focus on achieving tangible benefits from existing Darlington Together strategy	Prioritisation will help to ensure that current impact is achieved with less resource.	Helping community involvement to deliver services currently provided by the Council and off set the impact of cuts.
Information sharing	Take advantage of existing data sources available as a result of eg public health changes to provide greater insight.	Using greater access to data of others to off set the impact of reduced insight work.	Making better use of information available to ensure quality of decision making.
Electronic Community Networks	Use electronic networks particularly established community networks to provide access to a wider range of residents.	Electronic engagement is cheaper and provides access to new audiences.	Reaches a larger audience and lower cost. Will be supplemented by face to face engagement where appropriate.
Web Development	Additional resource in	The Council's web platform	This will save money on our

	structure for Web Development.	needs to be changed. We propose to use an opensource platform which will enable us to develop ourselves.	current contract for web development and will give greater flexibility on how the Council's website can be developed in future to support channel management objectives. .
Systems Strategy Process Engineering	Process engineering in conjunction with rationalisation of systems and development of a systems strategy will help to drive down cost.	This is proposed as an efficiency measure.	Cost savings, improved service delivery.