

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD
19 DECEMBER 2008

SCRUTINY OF THE CRITICAL PATH AND DAY ONE PLAN

**Second Review – Transitional Progress According to the Critical Path Document –
Communications Strategy**

Purpose and Background

1. The main purpose of the second meeting of this group on 12 December at NWDC offices was to receive an update regarding the progress of the rebranding strategy to date. The Group considered the report by the Service Director Policy, Research & Communications which had been discussed by the Implementation Executive at its meeting on 10 December 2008. Members also considered the progress of the critical transitional tasks with a view to highlighting those issues that are at risk of not meeting their target deadlines (amber/red status in the document).
2. Cllr Christine Reed (JOSTB – NWDC), Cllr Jonathon Seed (JOSTB – KDC), Laurie Bell (Service Director, Policy, Research & Communications) and Marie Todd (Senior Democratic Services Officer) attended the meeting.

Summary of Concluding Views

3. It would be helpful if the Critical Path was grouped by responsible lead officer.
4. The largest area not currently being scrutinised was the Communications function.
5. Members requested copies of the staffing structures of the Elections and the Democratic Services Teams.
6. Some concerns had been expressed regarding finance staffing levels but it was felt that these issues would be dealt with by the new Service Director who would commence work in January 2009.
7. It was important to find out which work areas would be short of experienced staff and where there may be general staff shortages as soon as possible so that this matter can be addressed. Harmonisation of terms and conditions was also a matter of some concern and members were keen to ensure that best practice was followed.
8. The Service Director, Policy, Research & Communications outlined the latest position regarding branding priorities, the corporate style guide and the provision of uniforms. Members welcomed the corporate style guide which they felt explained the position very clearly. A Brand Officer would be available to provide advice to officers as necessary along with a hotline telephone

number. A phased approach to corporate branding would take place with the very visible public signage being changed in time for 1 April 2009. Costing had been undertaken by an external company and had been considered by the JIT in July. The group had some concerns as to whether the budget provision was adequate. The Service Director confirmed that the only identified possible overspend at present was the provision of uniforms.

9. It would be important to consider the provision of websites for members to enable them to place information on their individual web pages.
10. The Service Director also informed the group of the 100 day campaign which would be launched on 22 December. Members stressed the importance of informing employees and members of the campaign as soon as possible.
11. It was agreed that the next meeting of the group would take place on 14 January 2009 to discuss the following issues:
 - Update on the 100 day campaign launch;
 - Timetable of road shows;
 - Draft of the Corporate Plan.

Recommendations

That the JOSTB:

- a) receive an interim report at the January meeting setting out a general overview of staffing structures, highlighting any areas of staff shortages or shortages of particular expertise.
- b) receive a report on harmonisation of staff terms and conditions by mid-March.
- c) request the Service Director, Policy, Research & Communications to send the leaflet entitled "What will we be like?" and details of the 100 day campaign to all County and District Councillors.
- d) agree that the Critical Path and Day One Plan group should also take on responsibility for scrutinising the Communications function. Members strongly recommend the appointment of a committed member (with substitution options) from each Council to this Group and that these Members accept the responsibility of reporting back Critical Path and Day One Plan progress to their respective Councils.

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