

# North Tyneside Council

## Report to Cabinet

### Date: 10 September 2012

#### ITEM 7(c)

Title: Optimising skills  
within the Client  
Function

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor

Cabinet Member(s):  
Mrs Linda Arkley

Report from Directorate: Chief Executive's Office

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Wards affected: All

#### PART 1

##### 1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the approach the Council will take to ensure the Client Team, who will fulfill the Client Function, has the right skills to deliver within the client role.

##### 1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet

- (i) Endorse the approach to ensuring the Client Team has the necessary skills required to fulfil the role of the Client Function following the implementation of the Business and Technical Packages.
- (ii) Agree that a report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing information on the approach endorsed by Cabinet.

##### 1.3 Forward Plan:

This report is on the forward plan for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012.

##### 1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the 2012-2015 Council Strategic Plan and the Change, Efficiency and Improvement programme.

This report also relates to the Workforce Strategy and People Plan 2012 – 2015 in relation to one of the key priority areas of Building Organisational Capability and Capacity within the workforce.

## 1.5 Information:

### 1.5.1 Background

A Cabinet report (dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2012) titled *Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme Business and Technical Package Procurement – Client Function* was presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> August. The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet's approval for the retained Client Function pursuant to the Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and the implementation of the Business and Technical Packages.

A key action from Overview and Scrutiny Committee was for Cabinet to provide assurance that the retained Client Team has the necessary skills in order to ensure the delivery of the Business and Technical services in a timely way, within budget and compliant with the Key Performance Indicators set out in the contractual documentation.

This report provides an outline of the proposed approach to ensure that the client team have the necessary skills in order to deliver within their role and responsibilities.

### 1.5.2 Skills Audit and Development Plan

Through the procurement process for securing providers for the Business and Technical packages a need for client officer roles and specifications for these roles including responsibilities, skills and abilities, was recognised. The majority of these roles require existing professional and technical expertise and as a result key individuals were matched to the posts. It is, however, acknowledged that the officers identified to fulfil these roles may require further development in relation to contract management skills.

To clarify where such developments needs arise a Skills Audit of the key individuals within the Client Team will be undertaken to assess their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding linked to 12 key contract management areas. These are:

1. Risk management
2. Negotiation
3. Client / provider relationship management
4. Contract monitoring
5. Financial awareness
6. Legal appreciation
7. Technical appreciation
8. Commercial acumen
9. Political awareness
10. Contract administrative procedures
11. Project management
12. Leading people in times of change

These contract management skills are being scrutinised to ensure external verification through benchmark data from both public and private sector organisations and any adjustments made accordingly.

The Skills Audit to be carried out will provide a base line measure and enable a bespoke development plan for individuals to be put in place to support any development needs arising from the audit for the Client Team.

This Skills Audit will be completed online by the individual, in consultation with their Head of Service. Individuals will be asked to rate their level of expertise (four point scale from expert, through to novice / development required). The data gathered from this exercise will identify individual's contract management skill gaps and inform their Development Plan. The Development Plan will then be implemented in preparation for the anticipated Business and Technical Package implementation date of the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012.

The online Skills Audit will be completed between 17<sup>th</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012 by the individual and their Head of Service and between 1<sup>st</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> October: a bespoke development programme will be put in place for each individual to address any skill gap areas.

## **1.6 Decision options:**

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

### Option 1

Cabinet may approve the approach to ensuring the Client Team has the necessary skills required for the job role.

### Option 2

Cabinet may not approve the approach to ensuring that the Client Team has the necessary skills required for the job role and refer this back to Officers for further consideration (outlining the specific issues to address).

Option 1 is the recommended option.

## **1.7 Reasons for recommended option:**

Cabinet are recommended to approve option 1, which will enable the smooth transition, mobilisation and subsequent management of the contract and partnership for the Council. This will also support the delivery of the overall Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme and governance arrangement to be put in place in relation to the Business and Technical Packages.

## **1.8 Appendices:**

There are no appendices to this report.

## **1.9 Contact officers:**

Louise Robson, Human Resource Development Manager, Tel. (0191) 643 5043  
Alison Campbell, Financial Business Manager, Tel: (0191) 643 7038

## **PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING**

### **2.1 Finance and other resources**

Any development support identified from the skills audit for the client team is expected to be delivered within existing budgets. If additional costs are going to be incurred resources will be prioritised within the corporate development budget, and this will be reported back to Cabinet for a decision at the relevant time.

## 2.2 Legal

The skills audit process and subsequent development plan will ensure any changes affecting the workforce are in line with best practice and relevant employment legislation.

## 2.3 Consultation/community engagement

### 2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Skills Audit and Development Plan has been finalised in consultation with the Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and Head of Regeneration, Development and Regulatory Services.

### 2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

This is an internal organisational matter which does not require external engagement to enable recommendations to be considered.

## 2.4 Human rights

The proposals in this report support the Council's adherence to Human Rights legislation.

## 2.5 Equalities and diversity

The proposals in this report support the Council's equality and diversity standards. This area of work is a key part of the Workforce Strategy and People Plan 2012 – 2015, titled Building Organisational Capability and Capacity within the workforce, which already has an equality impact assessment attached to it.

## 2.6 Risk management

Any risks identified will be managed through the corporate risk management process.

## 2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications directly arising from this report.

## 2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environmental and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

## PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Manager Policy and Partnership
- Chief Executive