

Working to Deliver Change

A local government client wanted project management and change management support to underpin a major change programme.

Scoping

We worked closely with the internal Programme Management team and the Head of HR to define the approach for the programme. This included:

- Listening to managers, external consultants and HR staff to understand the context for the project, the resource available and the desired outcomes
- Putting together proposals for the leadership team on how to deliver these outcomes and presenting them at Board level

Delivery

The HR work-stream in the programme had very specific things to deliver that would support the implementation of new ways of working. This focused around a restructure of existing teams shifting the emphasis towards commissioning services from a more corporate centre. Key to delivering this was establishing:

- What will the new organisation look like?
- What will be different?
- What will the structure and job roles look like?
- What skills and behaviours will make this successful?

Moving the organisation from its current state to the desired model presented many challenges. Fundamentally to start with this focused on getting managers to understand and buy into the model and new ways of working. This was achieved through organisational design workshops used to test and explore how the organisation would work and the number of staff and roles needed. Our role at this point was to:

- Lead and facilitate workshops with programme board members and managers
- Influence the approach, taking into account wider programme needs and the organisational culture
- Put together project plans, risk logs and associated project documents for the HR side of the project – i.e. start to map how staff would be transitioned to the new structure
- Meet with Unions and Staff Groups to brief them on proposals
- Engage with the HR team who would deliver much of the process
- Communicate with the leadership team and other key players

The roll out of the programme began with an appointments process for the senior roles in the structure. New job descriptions were put together for all roles in the new structure. A preference process was put in place for managers at a specific grade level and this group were considered for the first layer of jobs.

Following confirmation of these appointments the remainder of the organisation structure was filled by a process of job-matching (i.e. where there was no change or very little change in the job-holders role they were matched to a job in the structure) and internal recruitment (where the role was new or there were no obvious matches). This was in keeping with the organisation's policy and culture.

The target date for completion of the transition was met including issuing confirmation letters to all those affected. All those appointed in the new structure were provided with a welcome email and an online welcome pack giving an overview of practical changes such as team names as well as information on the new business model.

Key points

Good project management will help to deliver change but clarity on where you're headed is absolutely critical – a vision, goal or purpose needs to be there if you want your people to come with you.

As with all change, uncertainty is inevitable so communicating what is known as soon as you can is incredibly important for staff who are impacted by change. And when there's nothing to say it's important to say that too!