

Share It!

North West Shared Services Programme News Update

August 2007
Issue 5

The national picture

As we head towards the next spending review period, some clarity is emerging with regard to the improvement agenda, performance measures, efficiency requirements and support for transformation in local government.

The headlines are:

- An outline National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy (NIES), as described in the Local Government White Paper, will be produced at the end of September. This will be something of a holding paper because the NIES is dependent on the settlement agreed with Treasury that will be announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 to be published at the end of October. It's expected that the NIES proper will be published in February 2008
- In the NIES, there are going to be 200 indicators for local government, excluding schools, and there's likely to be one for efficiency and one for transformation. The transformation one is probably going to be focused on 'fulfilling customer requests at first point of contact'.
- Government is also producing 35 public sector agreements (PSA) for CSR-07, including a transformation PSA that will be relevant across all of government. How these will impact on local government, however, is not clear.

At the time the CSR-07 is published, regions will be asked to submit bids to the CLG to support improvement and efficiency in their areas. We estimate that these will have to be submitted in January 2008 and will include the scope of both the NWCE and NWIN in the north west. It is likely that NWeGG will also be part of this.

The north west as a whole, therefore, needs to create a new, single, regional governance model that will put together bids to cover all CLG funded improvement and efficiency activities and commit to delivering them. The chairs of the NWCE, NWeGG and NWIN are meeting shortly to start this process.

It is anticipated that 3% will be cut from the planned local government settlement each year from April 2008, across the whole settlement, including special grants. However, it isn't clear to what extent the special grants will be reduced and whether this amount is due to come from the overall headline allocations. The CLG has been asked to try to clarify this to aid with local government planning.

What does this mean for the north west?

The North West Shared Services Programme is working with the five sub-regions to ensure that the region is ready to grasp any opportunities for efficiency improvements and transformation in the 2008 – 2011 period.

Each of the sub-regions has been given a ring-fenced budget of £53,700 and is working to ensure that it has effective governance and a water-tight, three-year strategy in place by March 2008. Drafts are due by December 2007 and bids against the funding have already been received from AGMA, Cheshire and Cumbria. Meetings have also been held with Merseyside and Lancashire to enable them to develop bids and strategies.

As a starting point, each sub-region has been asked to provide a shared services contact in each of their authorities. Existing governance arrangements, current shared services activity and their three-year strategies (where available) have also been requested and these will be placed on the website.

[Click here for further information.](#)

Also on the website are case studies, lessons learned from a number of shared services case studies, legal advice and other useful documents. We also have a section of information recommended by the Shared Services Programme Team.

[Click here to view.](#)

The Shared Services Programme Team will continue to support the programme during the next few months working to the [agreed objectives](#).

North West Shared Services Programme Board August 16, 2007

The North West Shared Services Programme Board met in August to review progress and plan next stage delivery.

[Click here for further information.](#)

Improvement through efficiency

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North west councils ignore free training to support efficiency agenda

The north west's authorities have, so far, passed up on the chance to make an average of £6,600 saving per person, per year, ongoing, on free training to improve business improvement techniques.

The offer was made in June by the North West Shared Services Programme to all councils in the region.

But, so far, no-one has taken up, what amounts to, a golden opportunity to improve the skills of the workforce and deliver bottom-line benefits to the authority's budget.

The training, delivered by the NA Consulting, equips individuals within an authority with the knowledge to not only employ Business Improvement Techniques but also to train others within the organisation to do the same.

The training takes between 12 and 16 weeks and average savings per learner, per authority is currently £6,600 per year of which 70 per cent is cashable.

The training is conducted on site so the only thing an authority needs to do is provide the learners with the time release to undertake the course and the autonomy to then effect the processes needed to spread the learning to colleagues.

A case study is available on the NWCE Shared Services website.

If sufficient authorities now come forward to take up the training, NA Consulting may be in a position to re-offer the free training opportunity.

For further information, contact [Rosemary Cowgill](#).

What's in it for us? Event September 19, 2007

The first, full-day meeting of the newly combined LetsGo Group and Shared Services Stakeholder Group - 'What's in it for us?' - will be held on September 19, 2007.

There will be a presentation from a manager of a three-authority shared service that has been in existence for a number of years. He will reveal the benefits and lessons learned from the experience.

There will also be a presentation from a manager who has led his authority through the process of outsourcing, and presentations from representatives of each of the sub regions who will provide updates on activity and plans within their sub-region.

The event will also feature a presentation from Ashley Pottier – policy adviser from the Local Government Transformation and Efficiency Division of CLG - on the national shared services and transformation agenda.

[Click here to view the agenda.](#)

4Ps Shared Services Event

The NWCE is working with 4Ps to promote shared services among local authorities in the region.

4Ps are holding two Shared Services Network Group events in September – one in Sheffield and the other in London.

The agenda for both events will be the same and will include presentations from the participants in a number of shared services projects, including Devon Building Control team and a three-way offering from Watford, Dacorum and Three Rivers Councils.

The event in Sheffield will be held on September 11 and the London event will be held on September 13.

For further enquires, contact Lynsey Whitmarsh on 020 7296 6670 or email lynsey.whitmarsh@4ps.gov.uk

Esd-toolkit event – National challenges - Local solutions 20th September 2007, The Studio, Birmingham

A VIP invitation has been issued to council representatives to get to know the esd-toolkit better.

The toolkit aims to help local authorities as they tackle the challenges of CSR07, CAA and the ongoing modernisation agenda.

This event on September 20 will look at the changes the esd-toolkit is making and the direction it is taking. National speakers and experts already involved in these developments will give the latest information about the issues and drivers affecting the public sector and what's there to help.

Please [click here to book a place at this event](#) or email esd-toolkit@idea.gov.uk for more information.

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