OPM® Office for Public Management

Member and Officer Development Programme

London Borough of Harrow

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Contents

Introduction

We are pleased to respond to your request for a development programme for members and officers. We have provided:

- A brief summary of the context for this work
- A summary of what we believe you wish to achieve through this programme
- Our proposed approach to this work
- Suggested timescales
- Proposed staff
- Estimated costs, with our standard terms and conditions
- Some of our standard policies, in the appendices

Context

The council is pursuing "charter mark" status. This requires that members and officers are aware of strategic challenges and the council's response to them. Both groups need to be able to work well together and with external stakeholders.

The Council already provides substantial training opportunities for officers and members. There are mandatory training sessions that members are required to attend, some are needed by all members e.g. equalities and diversity and some are designed for those with particular roles e.g. licensing. Some of these latter types of sessions could be run in parallel in order to free up time for other development activities.

Our understanding of your objectives/requirements

The purpose of this programme is to:

- Complement other training, especially the mandatory sessions offered for members and the master classes, which are aimed at CLG but are open to all
- Build members' awareness of the strategic challenges faced by the council, current and possible responses to these
- Acknowledge the political choices that exist but also prompt non party political discussion and potential responses to issues faced by the council and the communities it serves
- Enthuse members and officers to work together on issues of common concern both within the sessions and outside of them. This might involve the establishment of learning sets/project groups to take work forward between sessions

You want the programme to have an overarching narrative, so that people can see how the various parts fit together, even if they only choose to attend parts of the programme.

Our proposed approach

Overview

We'll work with you to agree an overarching theme. This could be something like "***serving and leading our communities in challenging times***". This would encompass the external national and local drivers, possible responses and what these mean for the role of the council and how it fulfils it. E.g.

The external environment

- The economic/financial climate and continuing pressure on budgets
- The national policy framework – the main drivers to which the council will have to respond – opportunities as well as threats e.g. Adult Social Care; Housing, welfare/benefits
- Local factors – assets as well as needs

The Council's response and future options

- Making savings – cuts, demand reduction, alternative ways of achieving outcomes
- Learning from elsewhere – characteristics of different sorts of councils
- Exploring how we see our role as a council
- Leadership role – seeing opportunities to add value, building support for it and the capacity to deliver it[1]

Working with partners, stakeholders and communities

- Co-design of services and strategies; and co-production of outcomes
- Learning from community budget pilots
- Using Community Based Leadership to leverage the capacity of communities, businesses and specific groups such as tenants

Programme structure

As already discussed you'd like a launch event in December 2012 and are looking for approximately 6 events p.a. Given the elections in May 2014 it seems sensible to plan a programme that would run through till shortly before that date. These sessions would run in the evenings 7.00-9.00 pm.

It is expected that participants in the programme may wish to form groups to take forward ideas generated in the sessions. They may also wish to visit other authorities or undertake other activities to investigate options/ alternative approaches, explore and test ideas. We can provide information and contacts to guide people to appropriate places to visit.

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[1] This is based on the Mark Moore approach to Strategic Leadership

Each event after the launch will stand alone but also be connected as part of the bigger picture. Some participants may wish to work in more depth around some of the issues that arise.

Programme Content

The launch event

Prior to the launch event we would check our understanding of the main issues with you, using the framework outlined under "overview" above. Subject to the outcome of these discussions we would use this framework at the launch event to begin a conversation and build a shared understanding of the environment, current and future challenges, current approaches and areas to explore. This would help us to co-create the agenda for future events.

Subsequent events

These would in part depend on the outcome of the launch event but we would expect them to cover the big strategic issues. Using our understanding of the Council, the sector and the external environment we can see that these might well include:

- The future role of the council. We can draw upon recent work we've done[2], plus our ongoing work with several other councils and the learning from the Community Budget pilots, which we are undertaking for the LGA. We could also bring in external speakers to stimulate thinking.

- Achieving outcomes through partnerships. Again we can draw on our involvement with community budget pilots and with Health and Wellbeing Boards

- Achieving outcome goals through increased community involvement. We have already run some sessions on Community Based Leadership, which drew on our experience in other authorities and the national "Ageing Well" programme[3]. In essence these use an asset based approach, and emphasise the role of the elected member in galvanising local capacity.

- Radical approaches to savings. The OPM paper on this has been used by CLG to think about the future. We could take that output and build on it, e.g. to explore areas that may have been off limits by using "what ifs" e.g. what if we had libraries but no librarians?

- Building a shared vision of the future (say 2016) as a way of identifying which actions will have greatest impact between now and then.
  - One way of doing this is to imagine that the authority is entering the LGC awards in 2016 – what does Harrow look like e.g. demographics, local businesses, economic growth; what's been achieved and how? E.g. a successful business growth strategy might underpin many other objectives.

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[2] See for example "The productive council of the future" – a report by OPM for the LGA, based on some futures summits that OPM ran

[3] For more information see the reports "unlocking local capacity"; and "ageing well" both available on the OPM web site.

– Another approach might be to create and use different future scenarios to think through what actions are needed now to achieve, desired results; e.g. which actions are "robust" i.e. fit all scenarios, which are contingent on particular situations.

Methodology

We recognise that these events need to engage people – so they need to see how what we're doing connects to their concerns but also needs to help them see how these issues fit into a larger more strategic picture. This can be achieved by ensuring that the events:

- Are interactive
- Draw on participants' experiences, including learning from visits to other organisations,
- Use stimulating external speakers
- Lead to action (or at least could if people wished)
- Are connected e.g. by work between events and by common themes

Inevitably people may have difficulty taking some work forward. In which case we can help people learn from such difficulties. We sue an OD mind set, e.g. if things are or feel "stuck", the new can investigate and learn from this "stuckness". This provides the basis for double loop learning, which is more effective than simply re-doing action plans.

Time scales

We understand that the first two events would fit into the existing programme of events for members i.e. 20th December 2012 and 22nd April 2012. The subsequent 4-6 sessions would be completed by end of March 2014.

Project Team

The Project Manager will be Paul Tarplett. The Project Director will be Lesley Campbell.

The initial delivery team will be Paul and Tim Whitworth. We will draw upon other OPM staff and our close associates as needed and with your agreement.

CVs can be provided on request

Appendix 1. Project management and quality assurance

OPM has a comprehensive quality management system in place to ensure that we provide services of a consistently high quality. This has been designed to meet the requirements of the International Standard for Quality and is subject to regular internal and external assessment and review.

OPM's quality management system has been approved and certified as complying with BS EN ISO 9001:2008.

We also have accreditation arrangements for certificates and postgraduate level diplomas with the Institute of Leadership and Management and are experienced in collaborating with other organisations in the validation and assessment of programmes

If we are awarded the contract, we will agree with you performance measures and quality assurance processes that are specific and appropriate to the project.

For each major project we appoint a project manager, a project director and a project co-ordinator.

The project manager has accountability for quality in respect of the management and delivery of day-to-day project activities. The role is twofold: managing activities to achieve your objectives and managing relationships. This includes:

- confirming objectives, quality indicators and scope, planning the detailed approach, defining and scheduling tasks, and identifying key milestones for reporting back

- choosing the team, allocating tasks, defining quality expectations for individuals, managing resources within budget

- managing the quality of services from sub-contractors, associates, partners and suppliers as appropriate to the contract

- risk management - spotting potential problems and taking action to avoid or minimise them

- making sure all strands of the project come together, monitoring inputs, outputs, quality and use of resources, maintaining appropriate records

- agreeing liaison arrangements with the client, keeping the client regularly informed of progress, any issues arising and any corrective action being taken, and dealing with any variations to the work programme

- ensuring particular contract requirements are complied with (e.g. confidentiality, management information requirements)

- post-assignment review of the project as a whole, taking account of client feedback, and dissemination of learning to improve future quality.

One of OPM's directors or principals takes on a quality assurance role as **project director**, working alongside the project manager: The named project director has overall accountability for the quality of the project delivery, including:

- playing a major role in developing the thinking and shaping the outputs for the project

- overseeing quality assurance of all outputs, to meet client requirements

- acting as a second line of communication with the client in case of any problems.
- ensuring any complaints are dealt with quickly and in accordance with our policy and addressing contractual issues should they arise.

The **project co-ordinator** supports the project manager and the team. This includes:

- keeping project documentation and files up to date and ensuring team members have access to the information they need
- organising project activities , meetings and events, and arranging production of materials
- client liaison
- project finance and monitoring.

A **project accountant** will work with the project manager and project co-ordinator to comply with all the requirements of the client's financial processes.

Appendix 2. Quality policy

Quality policy statement

OPM's approach to quality is set in the context of our values as an independent, employee-owned, social results business.

At OPM, we are committed to achieving standards of excellence in the provision of all our services. We aim to become the provider of choice for relevant services in our sectors by consistently meeting our clients' requirements and providing services of the highest quality.

OPM's Directors accept total responsibility for ensuring that we achieve high quality in everything we do. They are responsible for ensuring that every client assignment is carried out by suitably qualified, trained and experienced staff working to proven quality procedures and with appropriate management and support.

One of OPM's Directors is nominated by the Board to act as a quality champion. The quality champion works closely with our quality manager, who is responsible for supporting the implementation of OPM's quality policy and procedures on a day-to-day basis.

All OPM members are expected to up-hold the quality policy and follow quality procedures. Partners, associates, and suppliers are also expected to comply with these requirements.

At OPM we pride ourselves on offering innovative services that meet new or emerging, as well as established, client needs. For every project, and especially when conducting highly innovative work, we work closely with our clients to identify appropriate indicators of quality and to ensure these are met consistently.

Quality policy

To ensure that we provide services of a consistently high quality, OPM has a comprehensive quality management system in place. This has been designed to meet the requirements of the International Standard for Quality and is subject to regular internal and external assessment and review.

OPM's quality management system has been approved and certified as complying with BS EN ISO 9001:2008.

OPM's commitments to quality are set out in our Quality Manual. We also have detailed quality procedures covering every aspect of our work.

The most important components of OPM's quality system, which are set out in more detail in our quality procedures, are as follows:

- Ensuring that high quality and suitably qualified staff are recruited into the organisation, by having rigorous and fair recruitment procedures in place.

- Ensuring all staff are supported in carrying out their role and exercising their responsibilities to a high standard through robust line management arrangements, regular appraisal and appropriate training and development opportunities.

- Working closely with our clients to establish appropriate indicators of quality, monitoring these on a regular basis, and seeking regular feedback, including at the end of each project.

- Employing robust project management arrangements, with clear roles and responsibilities and appropriate procedures for client liaison and managing risk.

- Having clear procedures in place to identify and quickly resolve concerns and complaints.

- Ensuring that we comply with all relevant legal requirements and meet industry standards, including in relation to health and safety and the storage of sensitive information.

- Ensuring that we continue to meet our clients' expectations by setting quality objectives, monitoring our progress against these, and regularly reviewing and improving our approach to quality through internal and external assessment.

OPM's Chief Executive and Directors are firmly committed to this policy and to ensuring that it is implemented in full.

Appendix 3. Confidentiality

Commercial in confidence information provided in this proposal

Under section 43 (commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act, certain types of information are considered confidential because their disclosure to unrelated parties would prejudice an organisation's commercial interests.

Relevant examples here are:

- OPM's method statement
- OPM's pricing schedule, including our rates and breakdown of costs
- CVs of OPM staff

We provide this information within our proposal on the assumption that you will regard it as confidential. We specifically ask you not to disclose it to third parties – particularly our competitors – nor to publish it.

Appendix 4. Equality and diversity

We recognise our duties as an employer and, although we are not a public body, we strive to meet the standards set out in the legislation for public service organisations. We also recognise the strong business case for embracing diversity. Within the workforce, it has been demonstrated that promoting diversity encourages creativity amongst staff, assists in the retention of human capital, and helps to attract talented employees. It is also clear that a positive and pro-active approach to equality and diversity helps equip us to meet the needs of our diverse client base.

As part of our commitment to improved social outcomes, we are also determined to ensure that our wider activities contribute to equality and diversity. OPM is involved in a range of volunteering activities in our local area – a busy and diverse part of London. Recent volunteering activities have included: literacy and reading support at a local school where 65% of the children are second-language English speakers; e-mentoring pupils at a large, inner city, multi-ethnic comprehensive school for girls; and lunch-time support at a special day school for children with physical disabilities and special educational needs.

Our equality and diversity policy sets out our key commitments to equality and diversity and demonstrates how we will meet these commitments in practice.

In order to fulfil our overall commitments we aim specifically to be an inclusive public services consultancy that:

- provides sensitive, appropriate and high quality professional services to diverse clients, and is widely known for this
- recognises the particular challenges faced by some clients, their users and communities
- continues to provide high quality specialist services in the area of equality and diversity, which reflect and inform our broader consultancy activities
- strives, in all client work, to promote a positive engagement with equalities legislation and a commitment to good practice in this area.