

New culture required for local government organisations

What do local governments need to change to achieve success in their CPA rating?

How do councils transform their culture?

Why is it important to create long-standing shifts in values, behaviours, beliefs and actions?

Background

Already described by the Audit Commission as an excellent organisation, Hartlepool Borough Council wanted to gear itself up to face new challenges. As a minimum, it wanted to maintain its excellent performance... and go further. Beyond that, it aimed to embrace changes - national, regional, political and socio-economic - so that it can achieve sustainable growth for the future.

The Solution/Process

Over the course of 12 to 18 months, Q. Learning worked with Hartlepool's top 150 managers (up to and including the Chief Executive) on a range of programmes designed to create long-lasting shifts in its management culture. It was the first stage in a newly established Leadership and Management Development Programme.



The first phase was critical to the success of subsequent phases of the programme as it prepared managers for the changing future and its impact on them and their teams. Q. Learning's programme did an excellent job of setting the scene and preparing people for change and really engaging them with their own learning and ongoing personal development.

The **Change management programme** for all 150 managers, focussed on the 'why' and the 'how' of change. Outcomes from this programme included:

- Establishing a clear frame for change and encouraging all managers to embrace it as a force for good.
- Developing a language to influence colleagues and external partners to deal with change.
- Embedding links between personal and organisational development by getting individual commitments to changes in behaviours, beliefs and values, and actions.

Leadership development for the Corporate Management Team included 1:1 coaching and workshops. The coaching gave each of the Corporate Management Team time out to address their individual issues surrounding change and to discuss their personal effectiveness. The focus here was on:

- Creating a meta-story around change that will ensure those inside and outside the organisation can find their place and their way forward.
- Focusing leadership capacity on exploring and defining the new landscape for local government.



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Outcome

There is now a substantial group of managers in Hartlepool Borough Council able to understand how the change process works - especially the transition people make during that process. Each manager is equipped with a number of models that enable him or her to plan change, pre-empt resistance and to focus effectively on how to respond to whatever changes come their way. In addition, managers also have specific tools and techniques that enable them to influence those who are more reticent or even resistant to change.

'Our management programme has gone from strength to strength and this can only be because of the positive change in culture and the key messages from Phase 1, which Q Learning delivered on our behalf. The way in which the programme was delivered has helped our managers to cope with the amount of change the authority has undergone in the last 18 months or so.'

Joanne Machers
Chief Personnel Officer

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