



Case Study

Darlington Borough Council

Darlington Borough Council - Driving through change

Adopting a fresh approach to leadership and change




With change very much on the agenda, Darlington Borough Council were looking for a fresh approach to drive change throughout the organisation. They realised that the excellent management skills that had stood them in good stead in the past were not enough to guarantee success in changing times. They knew that they needed leadership capabilities to add to existing management skills.

The Procurement Journey

Through their Transformation and Efficiency Agenda Darlington Borough Council identified the need for a Senior Leadership Programme that would form a key element of the council's strategy to drive change, improve efficiency and deliver value for money services for the community. To support this need Darlington Borough Council embarked on a procurement programme, which led to the appointment of Jigsaw@work's experienced leadership team.

The Brief

Darlington Borough Council were looking for a Leadership Development Programme that would build upon an earlier diagnostic process that had identified some generic leadership development needs. These included:

-  The leader as coach
-  Leading through change
-  Motivation and team effectiveness

A further requirement was also specified – adopting a modular approach in the context of its Transformation and Efficiency Agenda.



Kathy Hales, HR Officer Organisational & Workforce Development from Darlington Borough Council said:

“The Jigsaw@work® team tailored their detailed bid to encompass all of our initial requirements and impressed the selection panel with their innovative delivery styles and underpinning knowledge.”

Keith Patching and Sian Mathews, part of Jigsaw@work's leadership team, set about designing a programme that was aimed at the council's top two tiers within the business - approximately 34 individuals at Director, Assistant Director and Chief Executive levels.

The team invested time and effort getting to know the organisation and client group, working closely with the Chief Executive and her team to ensure that the design of the workshops would meet organisational needs and the development needs of the target group.

The aim of the programme was not to try to tell the Council how to do their business, but to help develop the skills leaders need to make change happen effectively. This demands genuine leadership capabilities.

Keith Patching commented:

“The Leadership Development programme was designed to teach people to ‘drive’! Focusing on personal development and how individuals can work more effectively together our programme was able to get the team to where they wanted to be more quickly and effectively, whatever strategic direction they actually choose to take.”



Delivery

During a 12 month period Jigsaw@work® delivered three modules to two cohort groups, these focused on:

- Leading efficiency and change
- Team dynamics
- Coaching for efficiency and change

Each module was delivered as a two-day workshop and was followed by one-to-one coaching sessions and meetings for the corporate management team and corporate managers, which were all designed to reinforce learning.

Leadership, Character and Strategy

As part of the sessions Jigsaw@work® introduced LCS, a valuable model that increases self awareness of individuals' characters, their leadership styles, and those of others. Each participant received an in-depth personal analysis that showed them, individually, how to act with the integrity leaders need. No two leaders are the same. Each participant had to face up to their own unique leadership development challenges.

Learning around MBTI was also incorporated into the programme to build upon the team's previous development work, expanding their knowledge of this model and how it can be used to improve self awareness and communication in the workplace.

Supporting a diverse group

Having the ability to support such a diverse group and accommodate each individual's personal preference, in terms of delivery style and content, was an initial concern expressed by Darlington Borough Council. Understanding this Jigsaw@work® ensured that this was addressed from the very start by:

- actively involving participants in both the selection and design process
- taking the time to get to know the organisation, the group and their individual challenges
- "When considering the development of a senior leadership programme our initial concerns were around the facilitators' ability to engage with such a diverse group of senior managers. Ultimately the extensive work that Keith and Sian did in preparing the programme and understanding the group set aside initial concerns." Commented Kathy Hales.

Outcome

Feedback from the senior leadership team indicated that they had been inspired and engaged; comments were 100 percent positive. One candidate commented: "Totally relevant, particularly as we are operating in an environment which is constantly changing, we have to respond increasingly quickly, so more than ever we need to quickly win people over."

Keith Patching said: "The return on investment for Darlington Borough Council lies in their understanding of, and acting upon, discretionary leadership – giving individuals the confidence and capability to take a greater degree of responsibility for their actions and to reduce the inefficiency of having delays through deferring decisions upwards when it is necessary to do so."

Looking to the future

Those involved in the Senior Leadership Programme quickly became ambassadors of the programme and are actively involved in supporting rollout to their own teams, a process that began in July 2010 through a SMN Leadership Development Programme.

Summary

"Jigsaw@work® designed and delivered a fresh approach to increasing leadership capabilities. They integrated telephone and face to face coaching to progress the team's development needs outside of the group environment.

"The combination of Keith's knowledge, energy and passion combined with his background as an academic in Leadership and Sian's experience, perceptive nature and passion for the subject proves to be a winning combination as their delivery style has been both dynamic and yet down to earth and was very affordable given the quality of the delivery."



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