

## GO goes live at Forest!



**Sue Pangbourne,  
Head of Paid Service  
at Forest of Dean  
District Council,  
comments on a GO  
milestone event.**

Friday, 9th December 2011 will go down as a key date in the GO programme - the day that Forest of Dean Council became the first authority to begin using the Agresso Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in a 'go live' mode. The start-up was quite a low key affair and confined to the 'back office' finance function on that day – but there was an awful lot of cake eaten before, during and after 'go live' to sustain our team !

We were able to run our first payroll on the new system in January (having missed by a whisker the ability to run it in December.) Self-service has been introduced in stages, starting with invoice approval by budget managers,

followed by input and approval of expenses claims. Last, but not least, was leave and sickness.

We decided to adopt this staged approach, rather than wait until everything was perfect and risk delaying the programme further. Bit by bit, we introduced the system, and ran short, focused drop-in sessions as things progress. This bite-sized learning worked well for us as it built on the knowledge gained at the Highpoint-led training back in November, and helped smooth the transition for staff.

Getting to this stage has involved a lot of hard work and patience in testing systems and training staff. It is now beginning to pay dividends as we start to see the benefits that the system brings.

We were conscious that all the eyes of the GO partnership were upon us, and I am sure that everyone will benefit from the lessons we have learned in getting to grips

with the many changes which the new system requires. These are not exclusively to do with the Agresso system – the work has thrown up some interesting cultural challenges -and I believe, as we get more used to the practices, that these new ways of working should strengthen trust and empowerment across the Council. We intend to capture the lessons learnt, as part of our change management work, and will share them with the rest of the partnership. We hope that this, along with the technical fixes, will ensure remaining GO launches have fewer snags to iron out.

The next key test for us is in April 2012 when the Shared Service is due to begin.

Meanwhile, I would like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone involved in helping to get things off the ground at the Forest. You have all shown commendable perseverance and a real willingness to adapt to these big changes in working practices.

### Achievements

#### March 2011

Hardware purchased and installed to prepare for installation of Enterprise Resource Planning system.

#### April 2011

Solution Design for ERP system signed off. Work on building system began. GO website went live.

#### June-July 2011

Cabinets / Councils agreed Shared Service arrangements - Employing Authority is Cotswold.

#### September 2011

Business Continuity Testing successfully completed

#### October - December 2011

User Acceptance Testing (Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire Councils)

#### December 2011

Forest of Dean went live.

### Milestones

#### December 2011 - March 2012

TUPE consultation.

#### February 2012

User Acceptance Testing (Cheltenham and West Oxfordshire Councils, Cheltenham Borough Homes and Local Authority Company)

#### April 2012

TUPE transfers completed to enable Shared Services to operate.

Cheltenham and West Oxfordshire Councils, Cheltenham Borough Homes and Local Authority Company go live

#### June 2012

User Acceptance Testing (Cotswold Council)

#### August 2012

Cotswold goes live.

#### October 2012

Savings begin to be delivered.

## Update on Progress with 'GO lives'

*The GO Programme Senior Responsible Owner, Pat Pratley, comments on the re-phasing of some programme milestones.*

As Sue Pangbourne has said in her article, the first 'go live' at the Forest of Dean took more time and effort than we first anticipated, but we had to make sure that procedures were working and that fall-back plans were in place should there be any significant teething problems.

As a result, the overall programme has been re-phased to ensure a smooth delivery of the system at all sites. The next step is for West Oxfordshire to go live in April 2012. This April 'go live' date will coincide with those scheduled for Cheltenham Borough Council and the two GO clients - Cheltenham Borough Homes Ltd and Ubico Ltd (the Local Authority Company which is being set up by Cheltenham and Cotswold Councils to provide environmental services across both districts.) Cotswold was also scheduled to 'go live' in April but this has now been delayed until August, principally because some of the key staff involved in this process are shared with West Oxfordshire, and they cannot be expected to deal with two launches at once.

The April launch for the Shared Service is still going ahead as originally planned. My thanks go to all involved to achieve the GO live at Forest of Dean and for the continued efforts of everyone involved in the GO Programme.

## GO Shared Services Senior Management Team takes Shape...



Ready for the challenge (left to right): Paul Jones, Jenny Poole, Amanda Attfield, and Paul Stuart

The establishment of the GO Shared Service took another leap forward in early December when three officers from the partnership authorities were appointed to the Senior Leadership team - Paul Jones (Cheltenham Council) and Paul Stuart (West Oxfordshire Council) are the designate Heads of Finance for the new service, while the designate Head of HR is Amanda Attfield (Cheltenham Council.)

Prior to the scheduled Shared Service 'go-live' in April 2012, the new appointees - in the form of a shadow management team - will be working with the designate head, **Jenny Poole** (Cotswold), to ensure a smooth transition to the new shared working arrangements.

During January all staff scheduled to join the Shared Service were encouraged to go along to a series of "Meet the Management Team" sessions and receive feedback from the 'Navigating Through Change' workshops.

Like Jenny, Paul Stuart and Paul Jones are founding members of the GO Programme Board, and Amanda has also been on the Board for a considerable period, so they all already have a wide pool of experience to sit alongside their undoubted expertise. They are all keen to engage with staff who will be part of the new organisation and will encourage everyone to contribute to its success.

The Management team thought that you might be interested to know a bit more about them and some of their interests.

**Paul Jones** has been with Cheltenham Borough Council since 1991 and has specialised in accountancy, culminating in his attaining his CIPFA qualification and his appointment as Head of Financial Services. He is a keen sports enthusiast (more of the spectator variety) who follows Tottenham Hotspur and enjoys the odd visit to Cheltenham races and is also a dedicated family man with two young children.

**Paul Stuart** says he really is as old as he looks in the photo! He has been working in local government finance since 1973. He worked his way up the ranks via Coventry City and Stratford on Avon Councils and joined West Oxfordshire in 1999, where he is presently Head of Corporate Resources. Paul is married with a son and daughter who have both left the nest.

**Amanda Attfield** has wide experience in human resources management and organisation development, including the private, voluntary, and independent sectors, with the last 13 years spent in local government. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, and holds a post graduate diploma in public services management. Amanda joined Cheltenham Borough Council in 2007, and lives in Hereford with her new husband and her two teenage sons.

The new management team is looking forward to the challenge of bringing the Shared Service into being on 1 April 2012 and working with you all to make it a success.

