

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

17 MARCH 2011

SUBJECT:	<i>DASS PROGRESS REPORT AND INTERIM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>CLLR BOB MOON</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The external CQC inspection in DASS required an immediate response on behalf of the Council. The report outlines the performance improvements that have been delivered so far and the challenges still to be delivered. When the Interim Director of Adult Social Services was appointed, it was agreed that an assessment would be made of both the short and long term management and leadership requirements for the Department in order to enable the Council to respond to the requirements for performance improvement and change. The recommendations note the improvements made so far, however given the critical report and the need to make significant improvements to protect vulnerable adults and deliver quality services a new approach to leadership is required. These proposals seek to secure high quality leadership and the transfer of excellent practice across the Council.

2.0 The Progress on Improvements So Far

- 2.1 Following the critical CQC inspection of Wirral's Department of Adult Social Services in September 2010 and subsequent adverse assessment in national gradings of social services departments, robust improvement plans were put in place.

These were designed to address:

- Issues relating to **choice**, such as self directed assessment, personalisation, information and the availability of a diverse range of services;
- Issues relating to **safeguarding, dignity and respect**, such as clarity of procedures across a wide partnership and access to support;

- Issues relating to **financial stability** such as the relationship with the NHS, cost control and the underlying cost pressures to 2014; and
- Issues relating to **performance** such as the professional standards of social work, performance management and risk management.

2.2 Progress is being monitored in several ways. There is an Improvement Board with carer and service user representatives, the Interim Director reports fortnightly to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member and Chief Executive, there have been two reports to Cabinet and reports have been given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for Health and Social Care, Council Excellence and Audit and Risk Management. In addition to this, performance is monitored externally as part of the “Sector-Led Improvement Programme”. This involves a relationship that is both supportive and challenging with a recent former director of social services nominated by Local Government Improvement and Development. Her most recent view was that Wirral is improving well, amongst the most positive of the seven authorities in this group. The Interim Director has requested an external peer review to take place as part of the programme in September 2011.

2.3 Examples of improvements relevant to the areas described in paragraph 4.1 include:

- Self directed assessments and personal budgets are being rolled out at a rapid rate. We project that we will be very close to our 30% target by 31st March and will have surpassed it by 30th April. We are already seeing clients exercising their choice in innovative ways;
 - All milestones in the improvement plan are scheduled to be met by the end of May 2011 with almost 70% have already been met;
 - Preparations are at an advanced stage for the Council to increase its role as a commissioner of work from the independent sector as a key part of transforming the service. This has enabled the Council to make savings of 9.5% on the fees it pays resulting in projected savings across all services of over £11million;
 - The Safeguarding Partnership has been strengthened, procedures have been revised, clarified and simplified;
 - The projected overspend for the current year has been reduced by approximately half. Significant savings are projected in the new budget. This has been achieved by a combination of close financial control and very productive partnership working with NHS Wirral;
 - Preparations have been made to vacate Westminster House and Esher House following the sale of the former. This has been done over a very short timescale and will result in a significant capital and revenue saving to
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the Council. The opportunity has been taken to extend integrated, collocated working with NHS Wirral at both frontline and strategic management levels, and also to extend agile working;

- A clear performance management framework has been introduced to guide the Department's work and performance standards have been introduced for social work; and

2.4 There remains, however, much to do. Pressures on social services remain extremely challenging as a result of an increasingly needy population, severe financial pressures and rightly increasing expectations. The challenges facing all employees in the Department, from frontline to leadership, are considerable. They reflect the changing national context of health and social care and also the degree of change that is necessary in Wirral.

3.0 Short Term Requirements

3.1 We have identified the short term needs to make the changes necessary:

3.2 The establishment of an Interim Head of Adults' Service provision. This is a vital role as we work with service users having personal budgets and an evolving provider market to make sure that choice is real and rich, and that services are available to meet clients' aspirations. It is proposed that the senior officer who has worked with us on secondment from a neighbouring authority is appointed to the position of Interim Head of Adults' Services on a fixed term contract until 31 December 2011.

3.3 A second is the joint Interim Head of Adults and Children's Safeguarding. The practice in CYPD for safeguarding has been delivered to a high standard. This proposal seeks to establish shared practice through joint leadership. This is an appointment with accountability over and above the occupant's substantive post and includes levels of responsibility, accountability and activity equivalent to a Head of Service. It is therefore recommended that the post should be graded at Head of Service level on an interim basis until 31 December 2011.

3.4 The third area is to consider the leadership required to drive transformational change across the department. The volume, scope and extent of the changes to be accomplished by the end of 2011 make very considerable demands on the Leadership of DASS. There is a need to supplement the leadership team, at a senior level with the ability to drive and embed the change required.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 To note the improvements that have been delivered so far by The Department of Adult Social Services, but that there are significant improvements still to be delivered.

4.2 To recommend to the next Employment and Appointments Committee the establishment of the following positions for a nine month period:

1. Interim Head of Service provision at Head of Service grade.
 2. Interim Head of Joint Adults & Children' Safeguarding at Head of Service grade.
- 4.3 To further recommend the appointment to the two posts of the individuals listed in the Appendix One
- 4.4 To ask the Interim Director of DASS to also bring forward to the next Employment and Appointments Committee a proposal for consideration of how the leadership of DASS can be enhanced and also further drive and embed the necessary transformational change to deliver the quality services required for the people of Wirral
- 4.4 To ask the Interim Director of Adult service to bring forward recommendations to Cabinet of what further improvements would be required for the long term structure of the Department, including those affecting front line employees

5.0 Relevant Risks

- 5.1 The CQC inspection in September 2011 outlined significant performance issues for DASS with identified areas for improvement. The proposals within the report will mitigate the risks of not achieving the improvement plan by enhancing the leadership skills & experience for DASS to deliver the transformational change required on behalf of the vulnerable adults of Wirral.

6.0 Other Options Considered

- 6.1 To access additional capacity through external bodies or management consultancy would cost the Council considerable more resources. The interim posts proposed build on established good practice across the council as well as bringing in additional skills and experience at a leadership level.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 None

8.0 Implications for Voluntary, Community and Faith Groups

- 8.1 None from the recommendations
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9.0 Resource Implications: Financial; IT; Staffing; and Assets

- 9.1 The staffing implications and costs are detailed in appendix one. The total financial implications are approximately £55,948 for the nine month period (plus on costs). This will be met from the reductions in management cost achieved following the retirement of the previous Director of DASS, together with some external support from the Department of Health and Local Government Improvement and Development. Current interim arrangements involving the transfer of senior staff from CYPD to DASS result in a net saving to the Council.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 None

11.0 Equalities Implications

- 11.1 None

- 11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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| (a) Is an EIA required? | No |
| (b) If 'yes', has one been completed? | No |

12.0 Carbon Reduction Implications

- 12.1 None

13.0 Planning and Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 None

REPORT AUTHOR: *Howard Cooper*
 Interim Director of Adult Social Services
 Telephone: (0151) 666 3650
 email: howardcooper@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix one - Interim Staffing Implications

REFERENCE MATERIAL

There is no reference material for this report.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date