WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

6 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	*WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN*
WARD/S AFFECTED:	*ALL*
REPORT OF:	*ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE*
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	*CLLR ANNE MCLACHLAN*
KEY DECISION?	YES/NO *(delete as applicable)*

1.0   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1   This report sets out Wirral's Improvement Plan and proposes the mechanisms for its successful management and delivery. The Plan (see appendix 1) sets out the key targets and objectives for improvement as well as the anticipated success criteria and delivery timetable.

1.2   The report proposes how delivery of the Improvement Plan will be managed through a governance model which illustrates clear lines of responsibility in relation to programme management and assurance. There is an outline of the resource requirements to set up and initiate the programme supported by a delivery model which details how the initial resource plan will be expanded upon. The report sets out the proposed reporting arrangements and a summary of how risk will be managed.

1.3   The plan presented was endorsed by the Improvement Board at its last meeting on July 20th 2012. Members are now requested to formally approve the Plan in order that delivery can commence as a matter of urgency.

2.0   BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1   The people who live, work and enjoy leisure on the Wirral deserve excellence from their Council. Recent external assessments show that in some areas, particularly governance, we have fallen short of that standard. Over the next three years, we face an unprecedented financial challenge – to reduce our annual budget from £300 million to £200 million. This will only be achieved by engaging openly with local people and taking hard decisions on the basis of evidence. To succeed will require innovation and imagination.

2.2   This improvement plan is based on the key issues identified by external reports; or raised by staff, or by Elected Members. It is a plan for transformation: to make us fit for a challenging future. It is a plan to ensure that the Council is in the best position to deliver optimum outcomes for the people and communities of Wirral.

The Improvement Plan is structured around the five improvement priorities agreed through the early work of the Improvement Board, specifically:

- Leadership: Political and Managerial
- Corporate Governance and Decision-Making
- Corporate Plan
- Budget and Financial Stability
- Critical Services Areas: Safeguarding and Developing the Economy

2.3 The Plan has been developed by the Council's Executive Team over a number of dedicated planning sessions and is informed by feedback from the Improvement Board and the LGA. It has been further informed by lessons learnt from the previous Corporate Governance Improvement Programme, specifically in terms of the need for greater Executive Team ownership and involvement in the management of change and improvement.

2.4 The Plan has been developed to align with the Council's revised Corporate Plan. The targets included under the five improvement priority themes are consistent with those in the revised Corporate Plan. The objectives that have been developed against these targets are the essential drivers for the specific work streams and projects required to achieve the success measures identified.

2.5 The Plan as presented is consistent with that which was endorsed by the Improvement Board at its last meeting on 20th July. However, it should be recognised the Plan is a living document which needs to be flexible and is being continuously developed and updated and work progresses. Updated versions will be published on the Council's website so the most current version can be accessed.

3.0 MANAGING THE CHANGE

3.1 It is critical the Improvement Plan delivers change across all parts of the organisation and at all levels. A change management strategy is being developed to support this and will be presented to the Improvement Board in October. It will also be necessary to engage staff, elected members and, where appropriate, partner agencies, in order for the Improvement Plan to be a success.

3.2 There is a need to maintain a sound system of internal control and to support this, a governance structure is proposed (see diagram below). This ensures clear lines of accountability between the management and delivery of the programme. The structure also separates out the function of programme assurance to ensure the plan is being effectively managed and delivered. The key elements of the structure including functions and responsibilities are set out below.
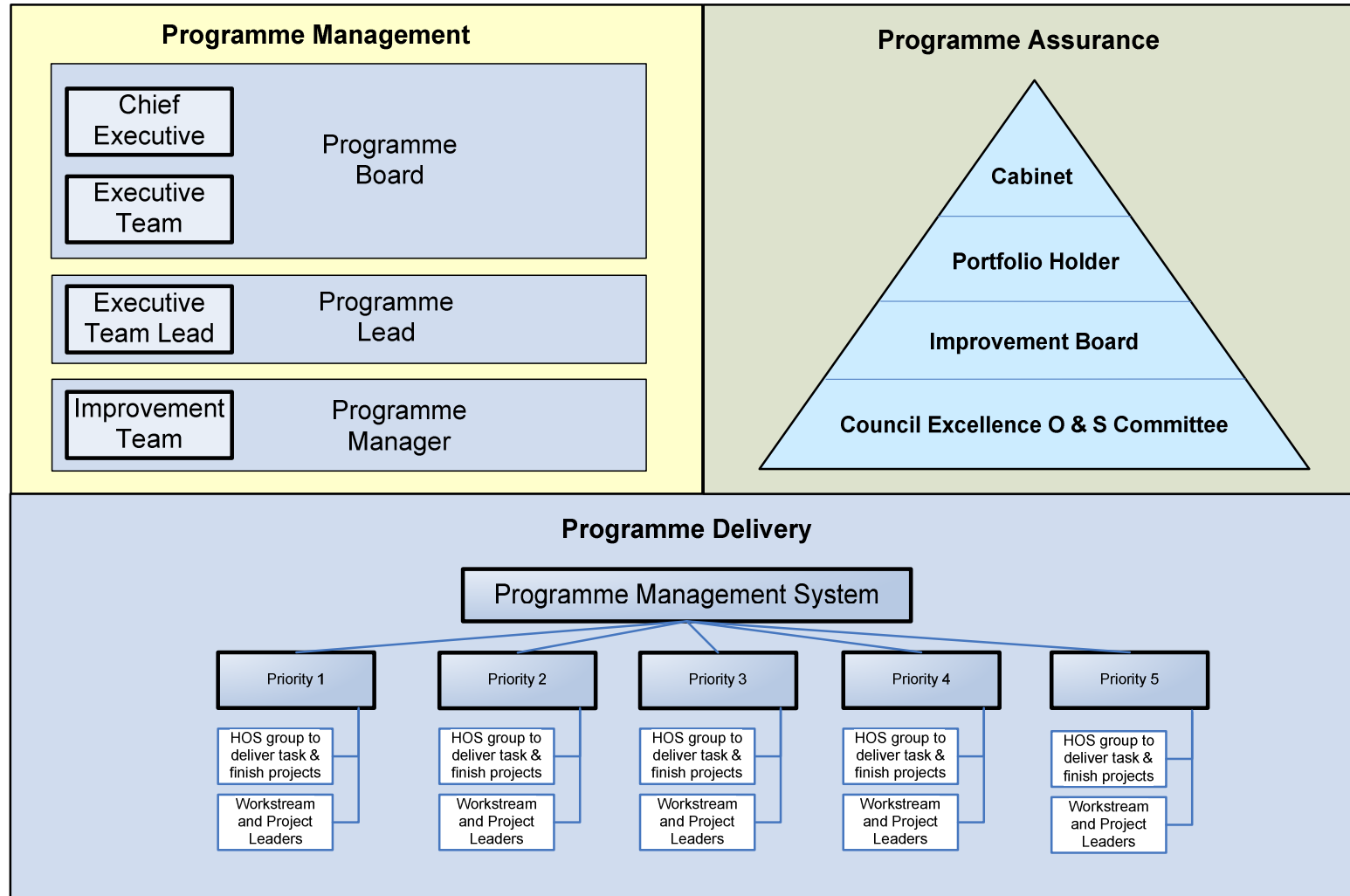
Programme Assurance

3.3 The function of programme assurance is to ensure that the Improvement Plan and associated work programme are being delivered on time and to the required quality. The components that make up the assurance function and their respective roles are as follows:

- **Cabinet** – provides the executive function of the Council and oversees the work of the Executive Team.

- **Improvement and Governance Portfolio Holder** – has oversight of the overall improvement programme and provides a link role between the Executive Team and Cabinet.

- **Improvement Board** – reviews progress, provides challenge to the Council where appropriate and offers guidance and support.

- **Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee** – to review progress and provide scrutiny of improvement activity.

It is envisaged that elected members will also provide assurance and oversight to the progress of the plan through the mechanisms available such as Scrutiny Committees and Audit & Risk Management Committee.

Improvement Plan Governance Structure

Programme Management

Chief Executive	Programme Board
Executive Team	

Executive Team Lead	Programme Lead

Improvement Team	Programme Manager

Programme Assurance

- Cabinet
- Portfolio Holder
- Improvement Board
- Council Excellence O & S Committee

Programme Delivery

Programme Management System

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4	Priority 5
HOS group to deliver task & finish projects	HOS group to deliver task & finish projects	HOS group to deliver task & finish projects	HOS group to deliver task & finish projects	HOS group to deliver task & finish projects
Workstream and Project Leaders	Workstream and Project Leaders	Workstream and Project Leaders	Workstream and Project Leaders	Workstream and Project Leaders

Programme Management

3.3   The programme management function ensures there are clear lines of accountability in terms of who is responsible for managing the Improvement Plan. The components that make up this function are as follows:

- **Chief Executive** – has overall responsibility for the management of the Improvement Plan and acts as chair of the Programme Board.

- **Executive Team** – operates as the Programme Board with collective responsibility for delivering the Improvement Plan which features as a standing item on weekly Executive Team meetings. Executive Team members also have individual responsibility for acting as sponsors for the five priority themes, providing additional oversight to support delivery.

- **Executive Lead** – has overall responsibility for implementation and managing the Improvement Team.

- **Improvement Team** – has the day-to-day responsibility for managing the programme and coordinating delivery across the Council.

Programme Delivery

3.4   It is essential that change projects and activities are owned and delivered across the organisation and the knowledge and skills of staff are fully harnessed and engaged. In order to achieve this, Heads of Service are working collectively in project groups to undertake more detailed planning of the activities to develop projects under each Improvement Plan priority.

3.5   There is a need for project management discipline to ensure a consistency of delivery across the five priority themes. Part of the role of the Improvement Team will be to provide coordination and support to ensure the work under each priority is delivered within a controlled environment. This will include the use of Project Initiation Documents, Project Plans and Project Risk Registers to ensure there is a consistency and rigour to planning and monitoring progress.

Project Management System

3.6   To support the project management discipline outlined above, the Council's programme management system (Concerto P2) will be used to ensure consistency in project planning, management and reporting. The system has been successfully implemented to support the management of the strategic change programme. Further modules have recently been developed to integrate the Council's business planning, performance and risk management. The system facilitates the management of project issues and risks, as well as allowing authorised users to view information in real time to review progress against project plans.

3.7   There is a need to ensure appropriate training in the use of the system for senior officers and identified project managers and this has been factored into the resource planning. Through the wider adoption and use of this system, there is an opportunity to ensure consistency and improve the quality of management information for the Executive Team.

Reporting Requirements

3.8   The system also provides a mechanism for consistent reporting on project status, project issues and risks for the Executive Team. It is proposed that weekly Executive Team meetings should have the Improvement Plan as a standing item for exception reports only. This will ensure that any issues are identified and overcome swiftly. It is also proposed that once a month, the Executive Team dedicates a full meeting to reviewing the progress of the Improvement Plan. This will identify the elements for a regular highlight report to Cabinet and the Improvement Board.

3.9   A forward plan of reporting progress and decisions or endorsements required, will be developed as part of the detailed planning to deliver the Improvement Plan. It is envisaged the monthly Executive Team meeting precedes the deadline for reports to the Improvement Board. This will enable the consideration of progress, risks and issues, but will eradicate the need for duplicate reporting to separate audiences.

4.0   RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.1   There is recognition that the Improvement Plan will need to be adequately resourced, although this must be within the context of diminishing resources. As such, careful consideration has been given to existing resources that can be targeted to delivering this work.

4.2   In order to embed this improvement activity within the day-to-day operation of the Council, it is proposed that existing service managers lead the delivery of the targets and objectives within each of their priority areas. Each priority area will be supported by an Executive Sponsor from the Executive Team as set out in the programme management arrangements.

4.3   Some resources have already been applied to the Council's improvement activities. However, it is recognised there is limited capacity in some areas and this may impede progress. Therefore, an analysis has been undertaken to determine the existing resources available and the additional requirements to deliver the Plan. These are set out in the resource plan (see appendix 2) which also makes reference to the timescales involved and the identified or potential sources of funding.

4.5   In summary, there is an estimated budget requirement of £635,000 to initiate and take forward this programme of work. A number of funding sources have been identified to meet this requirement including:
*   A support grant from the Northwest Improvement and Efficiency Partnership of £40,000
*   An existing budget provision of £100,000 for a site licence for the programme management system
*   A sum of £300,000 allocated within the 2012/13 budget for improving corporate governance
*   There is some under spend associated with the Council's Efficiency Fund

4.6   It is acknowledged the funding identified does not meet the initial requirements set out in appendix 2. However, further work will be undertaken to identify additional resources and prioritise activity on a phased basis in line with funding availability. Additional resources will need to be further quantified as the plan develops and is

implemented. All potential sources of external funding and opportunities for releasing internal resources will be explored in order to meet any additional requirements.

5.0 PROGRESS TO DATE AND NEXT STEPS

5.1 Given the urgency associated with this work programme, a significant amount of activity has already been undertaken in relation to initiation and start up. A number of Project Initiation Documents have been scoped out and developed for discrete elements within the Plan. This includes the four Projects being developed and managed by the Heads of Service, specifically:

- Review of Business Systems
- Creating a Transparent Council
- Putting the Customer at the Heart of Everything we do
- Empowerment

5.2 An initial programme risk register has been developed by the Executive Team and this is included as appendix 3. The proposed approach for managing risk is set out in section 6 below.

5.3 Subject to Cabinet approval, the next steps in terms of implementation are centred around the following activities:

- Further project planning of the targets prioritised to be delivered within 6 months
- The development of a more detailed resource plan activities to be delivered within 6 months on a phased basis
- Completion of the Programme Risk Register
- The development of a Change Management Strategy that underpins how the Improvement Plan will be delivered and sustained
- The development of a reporting timetable around key milestones and decisions.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

6.1 An initial Programme Risk Register has been developed by the Executive Team and is included in appendix 3. In terms of the approach for managing risk, there is a need for risk management and reporting to be embedded throughout programme management model. A three-tier approach is suggested, with the Programme Board (Executive Team) responsible for identifying and reviewing Risk at the overall programme level.

6.2 The second tier of risk identification and management will need to be at the priority level. It is envisaged there will be a risk register identified for each of the five priority themes. The third tier will be at the project level and it will be the responsibility of the identified project manager to upload risks into the programme management system. This will allow for any necessary escalation to the Executive Team.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The Improvement Plan is considered to be the only option for the Council and as such, no other options have been considered.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 The development of the Improvement Plan has been undertaken in consultation with the Improvement Board and elected members. The activities contained within the plan have been informed by consultation with staff through the staff surveys undertaken this year.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

10.1 The initial resource requirements have been assessed and are set out in section 4 and appendix 2. A more detailed resource plan will be developed as part bof the detailed project planning required for each priority.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Delivery of the Improvement Plan will involve reviewing and refreshing a number of core documents including the Council's constitution, the Scheme of Delegation and the Member / Office protocol. Where necessary i.e. when a key decision is required, these will be reported to Cabinet separately.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

 (a) Yes and impact review is attached.

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 Members are requested to approve the Improvement Plan, the proposed governance model and initial resource requirements to enable the commencement of delivery as a matter of urgency.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 The people who live, work and enjoy leisure on the Wirral deserve excellence from their Council. Recent external assessments show that in some areas, particularly governance, we have fallen short of that standard.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Improvement Plan
Appendix 2 – Resource Plan
Appendix 3 – Initial Risk Register

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Document	Date
Improvement Plan Feedback from LGA	June 2012
Corporate plan	July 2012
Business planning consultation report	July 2012
Corporate Self Assessment	June 2012
HESPE Report & Action plan	May 2012
Comprehensive Work Programme (KLOEs)	October 2011
Marine Lake Action Plan	June 2012
Annual Governance Statement 2011/12	June 2012
Performance Appraisal Framework (E&A Committee)	April 2012
LGA workshop notes	March 2012
Staff Governance Survey	January 2012
Ipsos Mori Staff Survey	April 2012
Member Survey	December 2011
AKA Governance report	September 2011
AKA and Martin Smith Action Plan	January 2012
AKA Final Report	January 2012
Report to Improvement Board on Elected Member Development Programme	June 2012
DASS [draft] report on AKA actions	July 2012
Safeguarding Peer Review findings	June 2012
Feedback from staff sessions with Michael Frater	June 2012
Outcomes of Corporate Governance Comprehensive Work Programme	March 2012