

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

10 MARCH 2014

SUBJECT:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs' Reports
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Ann McLachlan (Governance & Improvement)
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Members of the Council with an update on the work carried out by each of the Policy and Performance Committees. The report includes contributions from each of the Committee Chairs. Members of Council are requested to consider any questions they have for the Committee Chairs.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Policy and Performance Committees were established as part of the constitutional changes agreed by Council on 30 April 2013. There are three committees aligned to the Council's Directorates and a fourth Coordinating Committee which is responsible for corporate and cross-cutting work.
- 2.2 The committees are responsible for discharging the Council's scrutiny function. Formal meetings include performance management, budget monitoring and policy updates as standing items. Each committee has also developed a work programme which includes a combination of officer reports and scrutiny reviews conducted by smaller groups of committee members.
- 2.3 The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Policy and Performance Committees met with the Scrutiny Support Team in January to review progress with the new arrangements for Scrutiny. The session was used to capture the learning from the current municipal year to inform the on-going development of scrutiny and inform the design of the work programme in the new municipal year.

3.0 COORDINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.1 Since the last report to Council a scrutiny review examining the Council's Preparations for Individual Electoral Registration (IER) has been completed and reported back to Committee. This piece of work was well-received and Members acknowledged the work undertaken by officers to prepare for the transfer to the new register later this year. However, there was also a note of caution that levels of registration in certain localities could be improved and the

move to IER should be seen as an opportunity for the Council to promote registration to those communities.

- 3.2 A second review panel, set up to explore the impact of the Council's budget options, recommended the work be paused as there had been uncertainty about the objectives it was seeking to achieve. However, the panel made a number of recommendations for alternative pieces of work that will be explored by the committee at its next meeting. These seek to focus on how the Coordinating Committee can develop and support the Council's scrutiny function more broadly.
- 3.3 The Coordinating Committee met on 5th February to consider two delegated decisions that were called in relating to:
 1. A report seeking approval top consult on the closure of Lyndale School
 2. Proposals for Changes to School Top Up Payments for students with high needs.
- 3.4 It was necessary for this meeting to be adjourned to allow for the appointment of community representatives to the Coordinating Committee in order that the most robust approach to reviewing these decisions is pursued. The re-convened committee meeting is scheduled for 27th February.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

4.0 FAMILIES & WELLBEING CHAIR'S REPORT

- 4.1 Since the last Council the Families and Well Being Policy and Performance Committee has held one meeting. Committee received the Scrutiny Report on the Implications of the Francis Report for Wirral.
- 4.2 The Committee accepted a recommendation from that report to create a Health Performance Monitoring Panel to carry out some of the scrutiny of health partners.
- 4.3 The Committee considered the motion referred from December Council about Tobacco Control. Reports were received on The Public Health Annual Report, the Intensive Family Intervention Project and the Child School Community Hub Project (arising from the work of the Child Poverty Working Group). The Committee also received an update from Cheshire and Wirral Partnership about a recent CQC inspection.
- 4.4 Work in progress:
 - Committee will receive in April a report on the Quality Assurance Framework and Standards in Care Homes
 - Committee has established a Scrutiny Review Panel to examine the Safeguarding of Children.
 - A Task and Finish group looking into Domestic Violence which will focus on the 16 – 18 year old cohort, is scheduled to take place after that.

4.4 Pieces of work completed:

- A Scrutiny Review into the Implications of the Francis Review for Wirral which is now recommended for the consideration of the Cabinet.

4.5 Thank you to all members of the Committee for their hard work this year, especially those who have served on Scrutiny Panels which have been excellently supported by Alan Veitch.

Councillor Wendy Clements

5.0 REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee met on January 27. It had a longer agenda than its previous meetings. This was, in part, caused by the new arrangements allowing Notices of Motion to be transferred to Policy and Performance Committees, rather than be debated in full Council. Two such Notices of Motion were considered by the Committee. Some clear benefits result from this change to the Constitution.

5.2 A motion on the Fire Service provided the Committee with an opportunity to invite Merseyside's Chief Fire Officer, Dan Stephens to make a presentation to the Committee. This enabled the Committee to gain a better understanding of the proposed changes, and their potential impact on Wirral residents. Similarly, the Committee was able to have a well-informed discussion on the development of sites for industrial and commercial use.

5.3 In addition to the above, there was a lively debate on the problems arising from parking on pavements. This is clearly a potential hazard to pedestrians and can cause damage to footpaths. However, in applying any sanctions the Council does need to take account of the difficulty in parking, particularly on some of the narrower roads.

5.4 Excluding the special budget meeting, this last meeting was the first since September. This gap clearly emphasises the crucial role of Task and Finish Groups, if meaningful examination of the Council's policy is to take place. Currently two very useful reviews are in progress. These are a detailed examination of apprenticeships, and an in-depth look at car park charges and parking enforcement.

Councillor Alan Brighthouse

6.0 TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES CHAIR'S REPORT

6.1 The Committee met in December to review the results of the 'What Really Matters' consultation. This followed the earlier meeting in November to scrutinise in detail the options put forward by the Transformation and Resources Directorate.

6.2 At its January meeting, the Committee received a report to highlight sickness absence performance across the new directorates, the process for dealing with sickness absence and the impact it had on capacity within the HR division and the wider organisation. The Committee resolved to establish a scrutiny review in the new municipal year to look in detail at workplace stress and absences.

6.3 A report was also received from the Head of ICT on the disruption to the Council's IT system in September 2013. The committee recognised the efforts

of officers in addressing the problems encountered and supported the proposed way forward in dealing with the on going risks to the effectiveness of the Council's IT system.

- 6.4 Two scrutiny reviews are currently in progress in relation to the process for managing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and the work being undertaken to explore shared services arrangements with Cheshire West and Chester Council. The FOI review is scheduled to report to Committee in April. The committee has also expressed interest in examining the allocation of funds from the Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme subject to receipt of a detailed officer report on this in April.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 N/A

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 N/A

10.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

10.1 N/A

11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

11.1 N/A

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

12.1 N/A

13.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 N/A

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

~~(a) Yes. The impact review has been sent to the Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator and is located at-~~

~~(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.~~

(c) No because of another reason which is

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications.

15.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 N/A

16.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 N/A

17.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 Members are requested to consider the contents of this report and whether they have any questions for the Chairs of the Policy and Performance Committees.

18.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

18.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to ask any questions they have relating to this report.

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APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council – Revisions to the Constitution	30/04/13
Council – Reports from Policy and Performance Committee Chairs	14/10/13
Council – Reports from Policy and Performance Committee Chairs	16/12/13