

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 7 JUNE 2007

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MONITORING GROUP**

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**1. Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the progress of the Corporate Governance Monitoring Group. Members are invited to note the report and make any comments on it, and to receive a further report in two months time.

**2. Progress**

- 2.1 The Group has met once since the last report to the Executive Board.
- 2.2 That meeting agreed the formal terms of reference document which had been produced following the agreement of the Executive Board on 11 January 2007.
- 2.3 It was agreed as a matter of clarification that the Corporate Governance Monitoring Group would review final external audit reports and lessons that needed to be learned in relation to corporate governance arising from them. The Group should not be the vehicle for sharing draft reports. The process for doing that should be through the drafts being sent to appropriate Chief Officers for consultation and comments. All final versions would be placed on the agenda of the Corporate Governance Monitoring Group. The Group would also receive summaries of internal audit reports to see if there were any corporate governance issues which needed to be addressed. Given the number of reports, it was not appropriate nor practicable for the Group to consider every Internal Audit report in full.
- 2.4 The Group considered the follow up Internal Audit report on the Statement of Internal Control. The Statement of Internal Control itself will be considered at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and will be subject to a report to Cabinet in June.
- 2.5 The Internal Audit follow up report on corporate governance was also considered and it was generally agreed that the progress highlighted in the document was good.
- 2.6 In terms of District Audit reports, the Group considered progress on the Probity in Partnerships report. The Head of Legal and Member Services had met with District Audit to discuss the partnerships which were contained in the list. It was agreed that work would be focused on those areas where there was a significant financial or legal obligation which could lead to liability for the Authority. The Head of Legal and Member Services had therefore subsequently met with key members of staff from the Department of Finance to assess the significance and risk of the partnerships in the Register. These had been evaluated, and the Head of Legal and Member Services is to prepare a

full analysis for the next meeting of the Corporate Governance Group setting out actions which are required. District Audit had confirmed that they had discussed the position with the Head of Legal and Member Services at some length and were happy with the steps which were being taken.

- 2.7 At the last meeting District Audit produced an update setting out a list of the full reports and draft reports issued since the last meeting, and the reports that should be issued within the next month. This was agreed to be a useful document and District Audit said that they could produce a brief summary of issues identified in the reports which raised concerns or matters relevant to corporate governance on a regular basis for future meetings.
- 2.8. The meeting noted that the Project Management Training Programme had been agreed at Chief Officers Management Team, and would be circulated.
- 2.9. The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services had forwarded to all relevant Chief Officers details of a number of training initiatives which had been introduced in various aspects of corporate governance. He attached a list of various training events currently underway together with the names of the Lead Officers responsible for delivering the training. A further sheet was attached setting out how each specific type of training should be refreshed and updated in order to ensure that staff understanding was current, and that new entrants to the organisation were provided where appropriate with the necessary training.
- 2.10 I have also subsequently had discussions with Internal Audit about corporate governance generally, and the revision of the Code of Corporate Governance in particular. The existing Code was prepared in the late 2003 and the I have asked that a group of key officers be convened to review it. I wish the Group to draw together all of the relevant policies and to make them available in a single source document. I have asked that officers then give some thought to how the policies are distributed and communicated to individual employees across the organisation.

3. **Financial and Staffing Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

4. **Equal Opportunity Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

5. **Human Right Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

6. **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

7. **Community Safety Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

8. **Planning Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

9. **Local Member Support Implications**

There are none arising from this report.

10. **Recommendations**

That

(1) the report be considered and its contents and the actions taken be commented upon; and

(2) a further report be received in two months time.

STEPHEN MADDUX

Chief Executive

MER/LW.  
24 May 2007