



## **Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, 26 March 2012</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

**Contact Officer:** Mark Delap  
**Tel:** 0151 691 8500  
**e-mail:** [markdelap@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:markdelap@wirral.gov.uk)  
**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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### **AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)**

- 13. MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME  
(Pages 1 - 22)**

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MBA QUALIFICATION</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSETS</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides information on the return on investment of the MBA programme.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 On the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2011, the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked that a further more detailed report be presented at the earliest opportunity, upon the issues of senior office training within the organisation, to include information as to how applications to attend the MBA course are assessed in relation to the costs and benefits to the Council.

2.2 A report recommending the award of the contract to the University of Chester for the continued delivery of the MBA Programme was agreed at Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

#### 3.0 OVERVIEW

3.1 Leadership development is essential to organisational success and is critical when organisations face tough challenges and hard times. Supporting both current and aspiring leaders at Wirral Council is an important strand of the People Strategy 2011 - 2012.

3.2 Our current corporate offer of leadership development comprises three main elements-:

- The Skills for Wirral Managers Programme (core skills for managers around policy, procedure, personal development and managing others delivered in-house)
- The Institute of Leadership and Management Award and Certificate (management qualifications accredited by an external organisation at Level 3 and Level 5 delivered in-house)

- The Masters in Business Administration (an academic qualification delivered by Chester University as previously reported on the 15<sup>th</sup> September and the 17<sup>th</sup> November)

#### 4.0 MBA RETURN ON INVESTMENT DETAILS

4.1 The three year MBA programme requires an investment of £7,800 per person. Based on the uptake of the programme since 2006 of 57 managers, our entire investment to date has been £491,400. In order to calculate the return on this investment for the organisation (the cost v benefits) an examination of factors such as financial benefits, improved performance, labour savings (less effort to achieve current outputs) have been considered. Ultimately the Return on Investment is the extent to which the benefits (outputs) exceed the costs (inputs).

4.2 Appendix One details the results of an evaluation survey carried out in November 2011 indicating the areas in which managers felt both they and the organisation had benefited from the programme and to what extent. These comments include reference to improved performance and labour savings as well as indicating where the organisation could maximise it's return on the investment made. Highlights worthy of note are as follows-:

- 84% reported that they are confident in the new skills and knowledge they have gained. *"I have gone from being a team of 1 to managing and leading a large group of staff. My section has been restructured several times and there have been many changes that staff have needed leading through. I have gained more confidence to lead staff and answer questions on why we are going the way we are as a council"*.
- 100% reported a benefit in their personal development *"Since embarking on the MBA I have changed jobs into a more corporate role and been seconded onto project teams for a number of corporate projects"*.
- *"The Council has received income, both revenue and capital as a result of my participation on the MBA Programme. This has been by providing me with the skills to identify strategic opportunities and link these to the Corporate Objectives and by improving my abilities to research and write bids for funding. A number of "Cornerstone Projects" have benefited from the funds secured and has allowed for capital receipts to be realized as has the current Strategic Change Programme in re-modelling services and creating efficiencies"*.

4.3 In year two of the MBA managers carry out work-based projects with the aim of identifying improvements and efficiencies within the workplace. Projects carried out to

date by the delegates have identified the potential for efficiencies and savings as well as general improvements in the way services are delivered. The examples below detail where potential savings have been identified -:

- Non- fixed Assets – a review of the management and use of non-fixed assets identified potential savings of £440,550.
- Budget Management Training – a review of the time spent by finance officers as a result of budget holders not having the correct skills and knowledge resulted in potential savings of over £100, 000 on the proposed introduction of a mandatory e-learning package.
- A Social Media Strategy – the proposed use of social media as an engagement tool resulted in identified potential savings of £ 72,201

The managers delivering the projects emphasised the fact that in order to realise these potential savings further work would be required along with the allocation of council resources to take the work forward.

## **5.0 BENEFITS OF THE MBA PROGRAMME**

5.1 The aim of investing in an MBA programme is ultimately to develop managers to ensure that they have a sound knowledge base of business and management principles and theoretical approaches. The evaluation we have carried out supports this principle in that 82% of managers believe that the learning has enabled them to take on new and more challenging leadership roles.

Managers have also reported significant improvement in their own personal development with 100% of delegates reporting that they had developed their personal skills as a manager including those to allow them to work more collaboratively outside the organisation as well as on corporate projects, service planning and change projects.

5.2 An anticipated benefit of the MBA programme is that new leaders are developed in order to lead the organisation into the future and the challenges this may bring. An indication that this benefit is being realised is based upon the numbers of managers being promoted as a result of their studies. The feedback received from managers

indicates the following in terms of changes to job roles over the duration of their studies as a result of the MBA programme-:

Promotion	8%
New role	17%
New responsibilities	42%
No change in job role	33%

5.3 We are also aware of Managers who having commenced the MBA programme as an employee of Wirral Council, have decided to moved on from the organisation in order to secure new posts, representing a personal promotion.

Drop out rates from the programme have also been considered as Managers commence the programme and do not complete due to work or personal pressures, or other changes in their circumstances.

Moved to another organisation	7 out of 60 = 11%
Left the programme	8 out of 60 = 13%

5.3 Benefits to the Council include both those that are quantitative and qualitative (where it is more difficult to attribute a quantifiable return on investment figure). Managers listed the following as benefits to the organisation-:

- Better working across departments. Networking and opportunities to gain assistance improving problem solving and saving time.
- Work-based assignments that really benefit the workplace as they are tailored to real- time workplace situations.
- Time to reflect on problems and scenarios and put forward suggestions to peers for their consideration and feedback saving time and improving effectiveness.
- Educational attainment and opportunities for managers to discuss common issues and problems and apply learning to issues such as Management, Finance, HR practices.

## 6.0 IMPROVING RETURN ON INVESTMENT

6.1 As well as containing some very positive information about the MBA programme, the evaluation data shown in Appendix One also provided us with evidence that much more can be done to harness the benefits of the MBA. Linking the Projects more

closely with service based issues and harnessing the power of the Dissertation process by adopting a “Commissioned Dissertation” model whereby Chief Officers specifically commission final year dissertations to meet a service need, are just two suggested improvements. One manager responded that, *“The project work undertaken by the cohorts should be more effectively utilised to corporate issues. Students must already use their time on a project and carry it out in a rigorous manner. These opportunities have not been exploited to the best effect”*.

- 6.2 A further improvement to the programme has already been put into place which again relates to the projects and dissertations delivered in Years 2 and 3 of the programme. Managers are to be asked to provide projects and dissertations that not only identify improvements but also identify potential cash savings. Good practice in other Authorities sees the Year 2 projects being used to identify potential savings and then the Year 3 dissertations actually carrying out feasibility studies and impact assessments on the same. Having invested this level of resource into the identification and testing of improvement and efficiency ideas, the Council would then benefit from identifying tangible resources to deliver the projects going forward, thereby realising the savings.
- 6.3 The creation of “space” within the Council to allow graduates of the programme to release their capacity into the organisation is one of the challenges facing the Council. Studies done elsewhere have indicated that the creation of dedicated project teams comprising graduates from their MBA programmes have enabled the new skills and knowledge to be utilised to the best effect. The pressures of service delivery pressures “back at the ranch” have so far not enabled Wirral to follow this model and this is reflected in some of the feedback received from managers in terms of their concerns that their new skills and knowledge have not been optimised by the organisation. This issue is linked to the wider organisation development strategy around succession planning and the progression of leaders and managers within the organisation when opportunities for internal promotion are sometimes limited. Managers themselves have suggested the use of cross departmental secondments, task and finish groups and corporate project teams all of which would enable the organisation to benefit more widely from the managers’ skills, knowledge and learning.

6.4 Improving the selection process for access the MBA will also improve the return on the investment made by the organisation. Entrants will be required to not only justify their personal reasons for applying and their commitment to the programme but will also be required to demonstrate support from their Chief Officer and areas of the workplace in which they will expect to see improvements or savings realised. Progression from year to year of the programme will also not be automatic as performance improvement will be expected throughout and will need to be measured and demonstrated in order for the manager to progress to the next year. At the end of Year One managers will have accrued credits equivalent to a Post – Graduate Certificate. At the end of Year Two managers will have accrued credits equivalent to a Post Graduate Diploma. At the end of the final year subject to successful progression through the programme managers will receive the MBA.

## **RELEVANT RISKS**

### **7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 The MBA is part of a suite of leadership development options

### **8.0 CONSULTATION**

None

### **9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

There are no implications arising from this report

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

The resource implications of this report will not be confirmed until the actual numbers of the next cohort going forward are agreed but the cost will be no more that £8,100 per head.

### **11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report



## 12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/4014> .

## 13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

There are no carbon implications arising from this report

## 14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no planning and community safety implications arising from this report

## 15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

15.1 That the return on investment of the MBA programme be noted

## 16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

**REPORT AUTHOR:** *Chris Hyams*  
Head of HR and Organizational Development  
Telephone: 0151 691 8590  
email: [chrishyams@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:chrishyams@wirral.gov.uk)

## APPENDICES

**Appendix One** – MBA Evaluation Survey Results

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny	17 November 2012
Cabinet	15 March 2012

## Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

### **Section 1: Your details**

**Council officer:** Melissa Holt

**Email address:** melissaholt@wirral.gov.uk

**Head of Service:** Chris Hyams

**Chief Officer:** Bill Norman

**Department:** HR/Law/Assets

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> March 2012

### **Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?**

**The MBA Programme**

### **Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?**

**Yes** If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

**Council Excellence Committee 26<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

**And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website**

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/4014>

**Section 3: Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in .....? (please tick relevant boxes)**

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 4: Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council .....(please tick relevant boxes)**

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 5: Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?**

**You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.**

**Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.**

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Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications

**Section 5a:** Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

See attached EIA

**Section 5b:** If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

See attached EIA

**Section 6:** What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

See attached EIA

**Section 7:** Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?

Yes / No – (please delete as appropriate)

**If 'yes' please continue to section 8.**

**If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:**

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 8:      How will consultation take place?**

Before you complete your consultation, please email your 'incomplete' EIA to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for re-publishing.

## Wirral MBA Programme Impact Evaluation November 2011

### 1. Why did you apply for the MBA?

- Improve the Council's productivity and effectiveness. Improve knowledge and skills. Personal development.
- To assist in my personal development, as a challenge and to re-familiarise myself with academic rigour.
- I was asked by my line manager if I would like to apply. I followed this up as I was interested in doing further training to broaden my understanding of Public Sector Leadership.
- I am committed to continuing professional development and saw this as a good opportunity to take part in formal learning. I also thought it would be a good qualification for career progression. I wanted the opportunity to study some wider areas of management such as Finance and Marketing which were not core functions of my role at that time.
- Because I wanted to develop the skills necessary to progress my career
- I enjoy learning and it had been a few years since my last professional training. I had always hoped to study at post graduate level and had registered my interest in this on my Key Issues document.
- To support my career development. At the time of applying, the role I was in did not offer many career development or progression opportunities and the MBA clearly provided this for me.
- Our cohort didn't- it became an MBA part way through. I had been led to believe the training we put ourselves forward for was specifically for senior managers and this felt appropriate.
- Several reasons: 1. Aware of other managers both internally and externally having MBAs so element of competitiveness and ensuring skills/qualifications are comparable 2. Keen to learn wider management skills 3. Awareness from others of benefits from strengthening cross department links 4. Keen to experience a modern university learning experience. Gives a better understanding of what younger colleagues have experienced as my first degree was undertaken over 25 years ago.
- I believed it would be a useful qualification that would assist me in my current role and provide opportunities to progress into more strategic roles.
- To further my career, for my own personal development. To be able to take future developments forward for the Councils.
- I wanted to stretch myself mentally and develop myself on a personal level/management style etc.

## 2. How did you find managing your time between the MBA course and your day to day role?

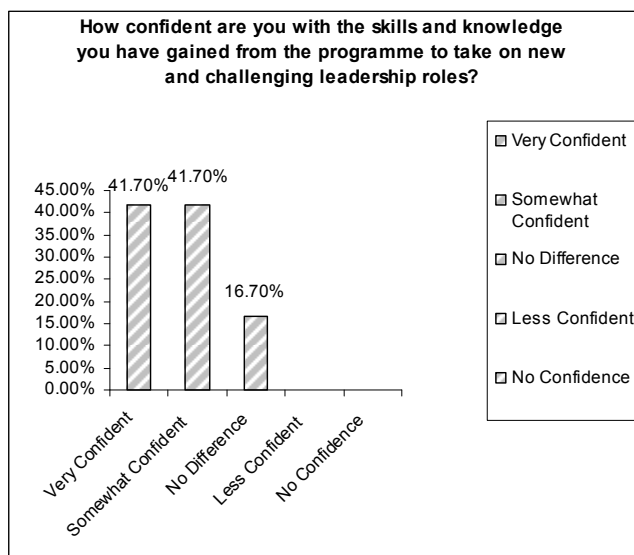


- Apart from the designated days at University I did not spend any work time doing my MBA coursework, it was all done in my own time.
- The time away from the office had to be managed and did add pressure. The work required outside of the office was considerable and so overall the course requires a lot of personal commitment.
- Extra time was necessary as you would expect to do at this level. I did extra work at week-ends and some nights.
- It was difficult and sometimes stressful to find the time to study and complete assignments alongside working full time and my home responsibilities. That said, I was committed to the MBA programme and as it was paid for by the Council and I had some time off to attend university, I felt my contribution was to complete tasks and study in my own time - so I had to find the time. I think going to Chester University for academic input was helpful and it enabled you to focus on your learning, but this sometimes caused problems as there was work piling up whilst you were away from the office. On occasion I had to leave uni early / go in late in order to attend to something at work - although my time attending Chester was prioritised by me and my manager, it was sometime unavoidable. In summary there were some difficulties but it was manageable.
- It was made clear at the outset that the MBA was not something to be undertaken during work time - this meant there was a clear division between work in the day and MBA in the evening / weekends / non-work days - so I'm not sure I understand the question?
- The vast majority of my MBA work was completed outside of work hours which was difficult but achievable with dedication. Due to the nature of the work (especially the dissertation) it was necessary to conduct some tasks in work time. It was sometimes

difficult to meet with my study group when meetings were arranged in work time but my line manager was quite accommodating.

- This is not a straightforward tick box response. In the first year, organising time between work and study was manageable. However, it was noticeable the level of commitment and time required to complete the MBA increased year on year. Therefore by the time of the dissertation it became more difficult.
- I think the catching up we had to do caused some difficulties as a result of the course changing to an MBA.
- Main problem was fitting in the hours with home life MBA is a major time commitment although I was aware of this when I signed up for the course.
- I linked and used my MBA studies to enhance the work I was doing.

**3. How confident are you with the skills and knowledge you have gained from the programme to take on new and challenging leadership roles? Please give examples.**



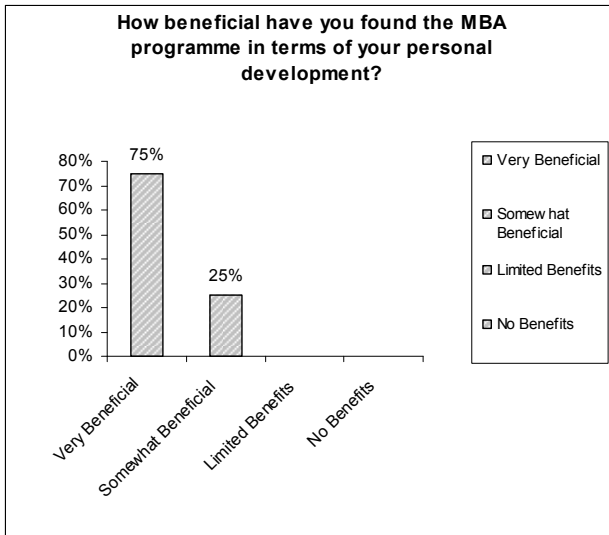
- Since my MBA I have taken on a new leadership role. I am confident in tackling this role. Line manager feedback is positive.
- The knowledge that you gain provides frameworks against which you can analyse your situation and assists you to doing the right things on a day to day basis. You also have a sounder basis for planning your continued development.
- A better understanding of change management and applying change management to service planning.
- I have undertaken a new role and changed departments since undertaking the MBA. I have also been asked to support the governance improvement plan. I think this has given me the opportunity to reflect on my learning and put some of it into practice. I



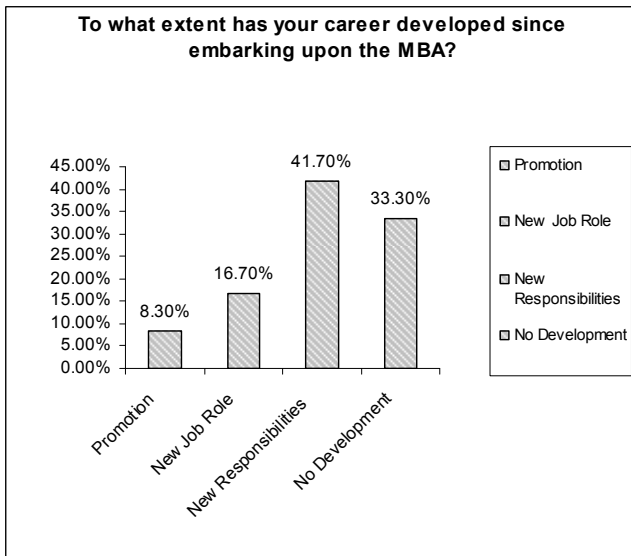
think the Council hasn't really harnessed the MBA programme as a resource. There were no clear expectations of the MBA cohort and some people have found roles and career development outside of the Council.

- I started out confident, but was demoted from my management role a couple of weeks after graduation, so opportunities to use the skills and employ the learning have been limited, which has affected it.
- I feel the MBA has vastly developed my management skills although I find it difficult to practice those skills in my current role. I was one of the more junior members of staff on the course and the information I learned from discussion with other managers was just as valuable as the academic course content. My team has diminished over the last year and any high profile or strategic issues are generally addressed by my line manager or the Corporate Procurement Manager, and although I feel more than capable, I am restricted by my job description and reporting hierarchy.
- The MBA is a good overall programme in support of management development. However, leadership itself is just one module on the MBA rather than the overall focus.
- It is difficult to say specifically how the course affected taking on new challenges as we are always developing anyway and to some extent the challenges themselves present a development opportunity. The time to come out of the day to day tasks and reflect on our approaches and consider new approaches was very helpful. I think the process of learning through the MBA made us think about how to approach things differently.
- I feel more confident in taking on senior leadership roles both due the course content but also in being able to research more effectively into new areas that I may need to develop in order to develop and implement strategy.
- This is due to me not having the opportunity to use my additional experiences, skills and qualification.
- I have gone from being a team of 1 to managing and leading a large group of staff. My section has been restructured several times and there have been many changes that staff have needed leading through. I have gained more confidence to lead staff and answer questions on why we are going the way we are as a council.

**4. How beneficial have you found the MBA programme in terms of your personal development?**



**5. To what extent has your career developed since embarking upon the MBA? Please give examples.**



- I have taken a new leadership role.
- I have undertaken a new role and changed departments since undertaking the MBA. I have also been asked to support the governance improvement plan. I think this has given me the opportunity to reflect on my learning and put some of it into practice.
- Totally the opposite - given my demotion after graduation.

- I have been unable to act beyond my current job description. I was hoping to be nominated for a secondment to the Merseyside Procurement Partnership where I felt that the lessons learned from my dissertation on Collaborative Procurement between Merseyside Authorities would provide a valuable insight and I felt I could have really made an impact in that role. Unfortunately I was not nominated due to resource issues in my team.
- Since embarking on the MBA I have changed jobs into a more corporate role and been seconded onto project teams for a number of corporate projects.
- Hard to say if new responsibilities and roles are directly through the MBA or would have occurred anyway
- Sadly opportunities within Wirral Council have been few and far between. The voluntary severance and EVR process led to some reorganization and I have willingly accepted additional responsibilities. However there have been no opportunities for promotion advertised as the majority of promotion opportunities have been filled without an open selection process.
- My career has taken a step back, due to a Senior Management within the department. They have chosen not to recognise my experience or the MBA as a qualification.
- I have taken on a new area of work and have the confidence to rollout the new service area to the Council and maybe one day....take over the world! I could do it.....

**6. To what extent has the Council benefited from your participation in the MBA programme?**

- Extensively.
- I am better equipped to lead my areas of responsibility and have made changes in the way I manage. I am particularly interested in the social identity approach to leadership and have used this as the basis for management of teams.
- Approaches to service planning and evaluation and needs assessment. The need to build in external factors into planning is taken account of in planning. Links with other agendas and priorities are also better explored.
- I think the Council hasn't really harnessed the MBA programme as a resource. There were no clear expectations of the MBA cohort and some people have found roles and career development outside of the Council. The biggest benefit from the MBA for the council is the networking amongst officers who might not ordinarily work together day to day. The MBA enables officers to get to know each other and service areas, as well as how the council runs.
- It has felt rather like I spent 3 years working very hard, emerging with a Post Graduate Certificate in Leadership and a Masters in Business

Administration....which the authority has totally failed to take advantage of. Although it's been good in terms of my personal development, it does seem slightly wasteful.

- The Council has benefited by the excellent working relationships I have made with other managers on the programme. This means issues are resolved with a quick phone call and more people seem to be contact me for procurement advice.
- One of the most apparent benefits to the organisation is the creation of internal networks of middle managers which means there is greater corporate working across departments.
- We have had excellent outcomes over the last 2 years with comments from ofsted about leadership being outstanding.
- I think benefits are from number of factors: 1. Better working across departments. Networking and opportunity to gain assistance 2. Assignments are tailored to workplace situations - time to reflect put forward suggestions 3. Group project work/dissertation tailored to Wirral situation 4. Educational e.g. opportunities for managers to discuss common issues/problems and learn over issues such as Management, Finance, HR practices
- The Council has received income, both revenue and capital, to the value of around £1.5 Million and realized savings of £500,000 as a result my participation on the MBA Programme. This has been by providing me with the skills to identify strategic opportunities and link these to the Corporate Objectives and by improving my abilities to research and write bids for funding. A number of "Cornerstone Projects" have benefited from the funds secured and has allowed for capital receipts to be realized as has the current Strategic Change Programme in remodeling services and creating efficiencies.
- The service I manage has improved but has not been recognised by Senior Management. It is a service the Council appears to be uncomfortable with. I have however gained respect as a person/manager within the wider community and business world.
- I have taken on more high level tasks and a new service area of work. I am a better and happier manager and leader of people.

## **7. What savings or service improvements have resulted from your studies?**

- Service business process streamlining, increasing effectiveness, productivity, value for money. Improved strategic planning and stakeholder involvement. Improved financial monitoring. Improved leadership and team management.
- It is difficult to isolate the effect of the improved knowledge and understanding has on service delivery. On a qualitative basis I think that my ability to lead and manage has improved but to link that exclusively to a specific measurable improvement I cannot.

- Better performance management which have established performance measures and outcomes.
- I wouldn't say there has been any quantifiable service benefits that can be directly attributed to the MBA.
- There may have been some, but given I have no management responsibility they're difficult to quantify.
- My dissertation focused on improving collaborative procurement and addressed the inertia that was beginning to develop. Collaborative procurement has the potential to make real cost savings on the goods and services we buy, but from a Wirral perspective, cross authority relationships are deteriorating as the fundamental issues are not being addressed by the new post holder and lead authority. I feel Wirral could have made a greater contribution to reinvigorating the collaboration and pushing for further savings through standardisation and economies of scale.
- Not aware of any directly as bigger organisational changes have been delivered through EVR/VS and the subsequent restructuring.
- Developments in foster care recruitment, service reform for children with disability services
- Hard to pin point direct improvements. I would hope that quality of decision making is better to reflect learning from the programme Group reports and dissertation produced which may be of benefit. However some of these require a need to take things on further at a corporate level. Officers producing the reports may not be placed or have the time to build on the outcomes
- The quality of service, staff moral, community involvement, charitable finances, the environment has improved a great deal since returning in April.
- I can see the wider dynamics of a puzzle, challenge or situation and I think more efficiently.

**8. In your opinion could the MBA be improved in any way? If 'Yes' in what way?**

- A clear Council vision for outcomes related to MBA participation. Higher quality lecturers and tutors providing a higher quality course. All dissertations and projects should be linked to Council priorities and the work from them effectively utilised for Council improvement.
- The project work undertaken by the cohorts should be more effectively utilised to corporate issues. Students must already use their time on a project and carry it out in a rigorous manner. These opportunities have not been exploited to the best effect.
- Using the Project element to address council priorities
- The programme should have been targeted at specific individuals with clear expectations on both sides - expectations of the council in terms of identifying value

(service improvements savings etc) commitment to stay in Wirral and expectations of the individual as to how this will improve their career and prospects within Wirral.

- Better integration between the course and day to day job role. Standard approach to study leave (some people in some departments got it, others didn't and had to take annual leave)
- I think further emphasis could be made on work based activities - we worked so well as a team on academic projects that I think this could be easily transferred to work based cross departmental projects.
- Greater buy-in from executive management team to get greater organisational benefit from the year 2 projects and final year dissertations. Year two projects provide opportunities for management consultancy or feasibility studies for new projects/ways of working. The final year dissertations provide the opportunity for very focused research and intelligence.
- I think it has after the first cohort
- However need to be aware that an MBA is based upon an academic syllabus - it is not always translatable to practical situations
- The projects and Dissertations for the MBA need to be closely aligned to the Strategic Change Programme with these areas being viewed either as research projects into potential efficiencies that may be created or by actually implementing savings projects.
- There really needs to be some advice and guidance and practical help with the demands on your time as a senior/middle manager. It's not enough just to say it will be time intensive you need some folks who have been through it to tell it like it is, I have done this with many folks and it doesn't put them off it just gives them a clearer idea of the challenge ahead. To say it is demanding on your time is like saying childbirth may be a little painful.....

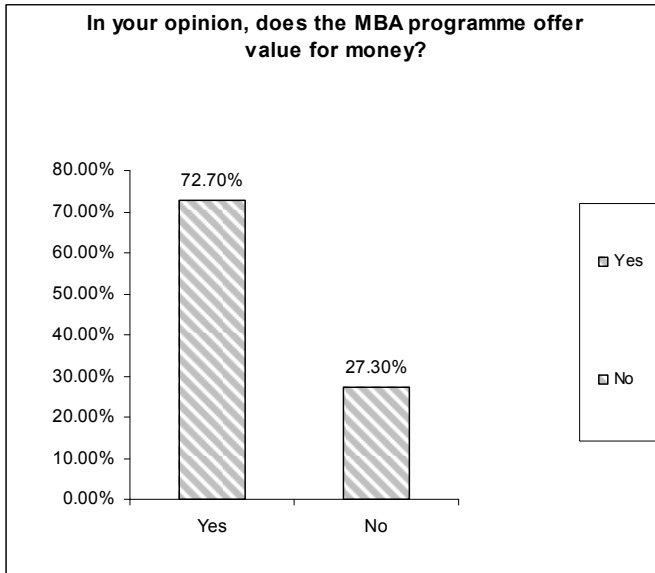
## **9. How can the Council best use your new skills and knowledge?**

- The Council is effectively using my skills and knowledge. Re Question 10, it depends on how you are evaluating value for money. It would benefit the Council to have a clear expected framework of outcomes before commissioning any future expensive courses. Staff development is crucial to any organisation. The Council will get value for money from some participants but not others.
- The MBA provided an excellent opportunity to work with staff from other departments. For many this was a major plus. It helped to understand the environments that people worked in and provided a platform for innovative ideas based on differing experiences and perspectives. Perhaps, using MBA students we should set up cross departmental task groups to tackle Council projects/issues. Further opportunities for development need to be available - temporary secondments in other depts that offer opportunities to stretch individual's abilities.

- My job role has been evolved to take account of this.
- I think the council should allocate specific tasks and finish project work to people who have been on the MBA. For three years Officers have attended University for approx 15 days and have managed this as well as any additional study leave etc. alongside the "day job". The council should expect MBA students to commit to 15 days project work per year, outside of officers day to day role. It would be good development and would keep some of the networking aspects that have proved beneficial from the MBA.
- I think it may have been wiser not to have removed my management responsibilities so soon after graduation. The Council could be getting a great deal more return on its investment if opportunities were available within the organisation. I do appreciate the economic climate does not lend itself to such opportunities being made available, but it seems a shame I'm having to look externally for opportunities. It seems to have offered great value for money for me personally (in terms of emerging from three years of funded study with two qualifications), but not so much for the organisation
- By providing opportunities for progression to enable me to play a greater, more strategic role in the section in which I am based or opportunities for secondment onto specific projects where procurement plays a role.
- Through the use of more corporate project teams to deliver change programmes.
- It should build on opportunities for us to work across departments more.
- May be opportunities for using MBA cohorts to undertake group working for particular tasks. Otherwise useful in building a sizeable body of managers to build on and deliver culture change
- I feel that the Council could benefit from adopting a fast track management approach for MBA graduates. Moving those who have completed MBA's to different areas in order to break down some of the organizational barriers that still exist in the Council and bring new ideas to some of the problems the Council has struggled with for some time. The Council could benefit from defining a career progression pathway for MBA graduates so that they can move into more responsible areas sooner and make a difference.
- I have transferable skills, which are reflected in my employment history. I have a reputation for getting things done and for thinking out of the box. I am a natural leader and developer. I am there to be used but it appears I may have upset a couple of people in high positions. Question 10 I am saying no because WBC have not utilised my skills. I personally have gained from achieving the MBA.
- Look at our dissertations and see what big issues we are looking at and what our findings are. Ask us to buddy up with folks who need support for a little while or longer if they need it. Get us to talk to candidates who are on the MBA now WE WON'T PUT THEM OFF but they feel they are the only folks who have sat in the

classroom thinking they can't do it. Use us for delivering training or as part of departmental inductions or as part of a training day if appropriate.

**10. In your opinion, does the MBA programme offer value for money?**



End of Report