

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD – 3rd JUNE 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

‘ONE COUNCIL’ SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress of the ‘One Council’ Scrutiny Review.

1. Background

1.1 At the Scrutiny Programme Board meeting held on 14th January 2010, members agreed:

(1) That a Working Party comprising all Members of the Scrutiny Programme Board be established to consider the scope of a scrutiny review in relation to joined up working across the Council.

(2) That the officers be requested to arrange a meeting of the Working Party in advance of the next meeting of the Board.

1.2 A Working Group of Scrutiny Programme Board members was held on Friday 12th February 2010.

2. Scope of the Review

2.1 Members agreed that the objective of the review should be to improve the quality of service provided by staff and therefore to enhance the level of service provided to constituents by:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of joined up working between different Department’s within the Council, and
- Determining whether any duplication of effort takes place.

2.2 Reviewing this topic across the whole of the Council would be an enormous and impractical task. Members therefore agreed to focus particularly on the operation of the Call Centre and the One Stop Shops. The reasons for this selection were to:

- Narrow the scope of the review.
- Review an area which has a direct impact on customer satisfaction.
- Focus on service providers who clearly have to interact on a regular basis with other departments across the Council.
- Include service areas which require staff to have knowledge regarding the delivery of a large number of services and in which training is therefore essential.

2.3 The Scope Document, which was approved by the meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board on 4th March 2010, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Future of the Review

- 3.1 The meeting of the Scrutiny Programme Board on 4th March 2010 also agreed that any detailed planning for this scrutiny review should be deferred until the members of the Scrutiny Programme Board have an opportunity to discuss the work programme for the new municipal year.
- 3.2 On the assumption that members agree to include the 'One Council' scrutiny review as part of the new work programme, members may wish to consider whether to appoint a small panel of members to undertake the review and report back to the Board in due course.

4 Financial implications

Resources for the scrutiny review will be provided by existing staff.

5 Staffing implications

See paragraph 4 above

6 Equal Opportunities implications

None

7 Community Safety implications

None

8 Local Agenda 21 implications

None

9 Planning implications

None

10 Anti-poverty implications

None

11 Human Rights implications

None

12 Social Inclusion implications

None

13 Local Member Support implications

Members will form the panel which undertakes the scrutiny review.

14. Background Papers

None

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Board agree to the 'One Council' Scrutiny Review being included on the work programme for the new municipal year.
- (2) That a panel of members be appointed to take forward the detailed work of the 'One Council' Scrutiny Review.

Appendix 1: Scope Document for the 'One Council' Scrutiny Review

Date: 16th February 2010

Review Title: 'One Council' Scrutiny Review

Scrutiny Panel Chair: To be agreed	Contact details:
Scrutiny Officer: To be agreed	Contact details:
Departmental Link Officer: To be agreed	Contact details:
Panel members: To be agreed	Contact details:
Other Key Officer contacts:	
1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? 1.1 To create an excellent Council, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To improve accountability, accessibility and openness and involve those who use our services in their design and delivery	
2. What are the main issues? This review will focus on 'One Council' – investigating the issue of joined up working across Council Departments in order to avoid duplication. As the scope is potentially very wide, it has been agreed to initially focus on two areas providing frontline services, the Call Centre and the One Stop Shops. It may be feasible to investigate further areas of the Council organisation as a secondary stage to the review, with a view to rolling out any recommendations to other areas. The initial review will consider: 2.1 What services are provided by the Call Centre and the One Stop Shops? 2.2 How effectively do the Call Centre and One Stop Shops integrate with other departments in order to manage the resolution of issues? 2.3 How and at what frequency is training delivered to staff in the Call Centre and One Stop Shops? 2.4 Is the training provided by a single training function within HR or by individual departments? 2.5 Are staff in the Call Centre and One Stop Shops aware of their role in the 'wider' Council? Do employees have an holistic understanding of how the borough works? 2.6 How are staff recruited to the Call Centre and One Stop Shops? 2.7 Does the customer receive an effective service from the Call Centre and One Stop Shops?	

3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:

To improve the quality of service provided by staff and therefore to enhance the level of service provided to constituents by:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of joined up working between different Department's within the Council, and
- Determining whether any duplication of effort takes place.

4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:

4.1 To ensure that front-line staff are fully aware of their role in delivering the wider objectives of the Council.

4.2 To provide effective communication between the front-line service providers, relevant back office staff and the customers.

4.3 More effective use of staff by reducing duplication of effort.

4.4 Ensure that staff are as effectively trained as possible.

5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?

To use new evidence to enable changes which would lead to the outcomes listed in section 4 above.

6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

6.1 Appropriate Cabinet members of Wirral Borough Council

6.2 Senior Managers of Wirral Borough Council

7. Duration of enquiry?

The scope will be prepared in anticipation of this review commencing early in the 2010/11 Municipal year. The review will then be completed during that Municipal year, depending on the priorities determined by the new Committee members.

8. What category does the review fall into?

Policy Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
External Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holding Executive to Account	<input type="checkbox"/>		

9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?

The review will be conducted by councillors with the support of existing officers. However, the panel are looking for advice from people with expertise on this topic.

10. What information do we need?	
<p>10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).</p> <p>Recent Committee / Cabinet reports.</p> <p>The outcomes from a scrutiny investigation into the operation of the Call Centre by the former Community and Customer Engagement Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2007/8.</p> <p>Relevant national documents, from advisory bodies such as IDeA.</p> <p>Reports from other councils into similar topics.</p> <p>Examples of good practice from other Councils or Merseytravel's 'One team; One Family'.</p>	<p>10.2 Primary/new evidence/information</p> <p>Interviews with key officers</p> <p>Statistics for the Call Centre and One Stop Shops, including the number of calls handled successfully.</p> <p>Visits to Wirral Call Centre and One stop Shops</p> <p>Visits to Call Centres operated by both other councils and in the private sector</p> <p>Assessment of the effectiveness of customer service offered by the call centre and One stop Shops.</p>
<p>10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc). council officers to include:</p> <p>Ian Coleman (Director of Finance)</p> <p>Malcolm Flanagan (Head of Service, Customer service, Finance dept)</p> <p>Andrea Bruffell (Manager, Call Centre)</p> <p>Julie Williams (Manager, One Stop Shops)</p> <p>Appropriate front-line staff from Call Centre and One Stop Shops</p> <p>Appropriate Training manager / HR manager</p>	<p>10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <p>Services provided by the Call Centre and the One Stop Shops.</p> <p>Processes for the Call Centre and One Stop Shops to manage issues with other departments</p> <p>Details of training (including frequency) delivered to staff in the Call Centre and One Stop Shops</p> <p>Awareness of staff in the Call Centre and One Stop Shops regarding their role in the 'wider' Council.</p> <p>Methods of recruitment for Call Centre and One Stop Shop staff.</p>

11. What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).

11.1 Meetings with officers

11.2 Visits to Wirral Call Centre and One Stop Shops

11.3 Visits to Call Centres in operated by both other councils and in the private sector

11.4 Desk-top analysis

11.5 Possible mystery shopping

11.6 Possible questionnaire of customers regarding the level of service received.

12. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).

12.1 Area Forum meetings / Focus groups

12.2 Possible customer questionnaire