

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 14 OCTOBER 2010

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

INTERIM MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 On 18 October 2010 the Council will be invited to confirm my appointment as Interim Chief Executive for a period of up to nine months.
- 1.2 The Council faces a number of challenges that must be speedily addressed. It is clearly essential that we tackle the £106 million budget deficit that currently exists over the next four years. The Strategic Change Programme is an important element of this and sufficient support must be put in place to ensure its successful delivery.
- 1.3 At a time of significant change it has never been more important to communicate with, consult and engage with the residents, businesses, voluntary sector and community groups of Wirral.
- 1.4 What is even more important is to ensure that we act on the results of what we are told. In my opinion immediate measures must be put in place to ensure that resources are targeted towards the services that are most important to the people who we serve. This will necessitate changes to the Council's Policy and Corporate Planning processes as well as changes to the Council's structure.
- 1.5 I am therefore recommending in this report a number of interim staffing arrangements that will enable change to be delivered speedily and effectively pending a permanent management re-structure and appointment of a Chief Executive on a permanent basis.

2. Delivering a balanced budget

- 2.1 It is vital to the future of the organisation that the existing budget deficit is addressed. I believe there are three key elements to this:
 - Effective delivery of the Strategic Change Programme. Additional support is required to ensure this as detailed below;
 - Effective implementation of the outcomes of the current public consultation following the Cabinet decision; and
 - Departments ensuring robust budget management and effective financial control.

2.2 This is my key priority and the interim staffing changes I propose to put in place, if appointed as Interim Chief Executive, will ensure that the Council has the capacity to deliver upon them.

3. Ensuring the effective delivery of the Strategic Change Programme

3.1 New management of the Strategic Change programme will ensure that deliverable savings are realised and new programmes are added over the coming months.

3.2 To ensure that the Director of Technical Services is provided with sufficient capacity to lead on the Strategic Change Programme (Cabinet Decision, 24 June 2010), I am recommending the following changes:

- One of the three Heads of Service in the Technical Services Department to carry the title of Interim Head of Technical Services with accountability for the operational day to day management of the department including the recently re-aligned Cultural Services. It is proposed that expressions of interest are sought for this post from the three Heads of Service in the Department; and
- The Director of Technical Services to carry the additional title of Programme Director (Strategic Change).

4. Placing communication and consultation at the centre of future policy making

4.1 In my opinion it is essential that the Council's Corporate Plan is driven by the following four key elements:

- The current consultation – 'Wirral's future – be a part of it' will conclude in November. It is crucial that residents see the results of that process being turned into action. We must utilise the results to help shape and influence both the current budget making process and the development of future policy;
- Cabinet will receive a report in December detailing how the localism agenda will be taken forward. This will help to ensure that Council services are delivered in the future with the needs and aspirations of local communities at their heart. To be meaningful this must therefore be central to the Corporate Planning process and integral to future planning;
- The Strategic Change Programme must be embedded in the Corporate and departmental planning processes and effectively communicated to staff and stakeholders; and
- Crucial to the future delivery of services will be the Council's ability to support, nurture and work with the voluntary and community sector. This is a process which has begun with discussions in the consultation Task Forces but is an area of work that requires priority.

- 4.2 At a time of significant change meaningful communications and engagement with our staff, residents and stakeholders has never been more important. This activity must be led and properly coordinated in order that we are able to respond to concerns and feedback promptly and effectively.
- 4.3 I therefore propose to centralise all communications and engagement activity at the core of the organisation. This will include the Council's press office, internal communications and marketing staff, community engagement, policy, performance and the coordination of Freedom of Information requests.
- 4.4 These interim arrangements will enable speedy action to be taken to drive forward the Council's future planning process by establishing a team that will report directly to me. This activity will be led by an Interim Head of Policy, Communications and Engagement, with the key responsibilities to include:
- Leading and developing the current and future budget consultation exercise;
 - Ensuring the results of the consultation exercise are at the heart of the new Corporate Plan;
 - Ensuring the engagement of the public in policy development and service delivery across the Council including the development of 'Big Society', the Localism agenda, and Strategic Partnership activity;
 - To lead the coordination of policy development across the Authority and ensure Strategic partnership activity is fit for purpose;
 - Improved communications and engagement with all residents, businesses, partners and voluntary sector organizations;
 - Delivering excellent communications and engagement with Council Staff; and
 - Direct operational support for the Interim Chief Executive.
- 4.5 It is proposed that this role is an interim appointment for an existing Head of Service. As a new role, reporting to the Interim Chief Executive, it is proposed that expressions of interest are sought from all Heads of Service across the Council..
- 4.6 In addition I have asked the interim Director of Corporate Services to put in place arrangements to ensure the continued successful delivery of the Investment and Housing Strategies. I am therefore also recommending that the Head of Housing Services takes on additional duties commensurate with those of a Head of Service on an interim basis.
- 4.7 It is requested that Council be recommended to delegate to the Interim Chief Executive powers to make all such interim appointments (and to approve any interim terms and conditions) beneath Chief Officer level as he considers to be in the best interest of the Council and local people.

5. Proposed principle for future management restructure

- 5.1 It is clear that the Authority will need to radically change how services are delivered in the future. It is therefore essential that the Council is reorganised both to make management cost savings and to ensure structures are modernised and fit for purpose.
- 5.2 This reorganisation should be driven by a number of principles. These include the commitment given in the Wirral Progressive Partnership Agreement which stated:
- 'the Partnership will review the overall structure of the Council based on the overarching principle that duplication of services should be eliminated; front line staff and managers should be given the responsibility and the power to make decisions subject to appropriate levels of accountability.'**
- 5.3 To maximise the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Council the restructuring proposals should also embody the centralisation of a number of support functions which are currently distributed across Departments. These include HR and Finance. A report elsewhere on this agenda by the Director of Finance contains proposals for a first stage in this process with regard to the financial and associated functions of the Department of Adult Social Services.

6. Financial & Staffing Implications

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Interim Head of Technical Services and the Interim Head of Corporate Planning, Communications and Engagement receive an additional payment for the duration of the interim appointments in line with the salary scale for Deputy Chief Officers; and that the Interim Head of Housing receives an additional payment for the duration of the interim appointment in line with the salary scale for Heads of Service. The financial implications for the Interim management arrangements for the nine month period, provides a net saving of approximately £15k

7. Risk Assessment

There are none identified in this report

8. Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment

There are none identified in this report

9. Community Safety Implications

There are none identified in this report

10. Local Agenda 21 Implications

There are none identified in this report

11. Anti-poverty Implications

There are none identified in this report

12. Social Inclusion Implications

There are none identified in this report

13. Local Member Support Implications

There are none identified in this report

14. Background Papers

There are none identified in this report

15. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 15.1 That Cabinet endorse the interim management arrangements as detailed in this report.
- 15.2 That Council be recommended to delegate to the Interim Chief Executive powers to make all such interim appointments (and to approve any interim terms and conditions) beneath Chief Officer level as he considers to be in the best interest of the Council and local people.

J. WILKIE

Deputy Chief Executive