

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

15 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	Chief Executive's Office
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Chief Executive
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	The Leader of The Council
KEY DECISION:	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations in relation to strengthening the Chief Executive's Office to ensure appropriate priority is given to key areas of activity. This involves the transfer of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR and OD). In addition it takes forward the arrangements for establishing a Council Policy Unit, further to the review of policy undertaken as part of the governance work programme agreed by Cabinet on 16 November 2011 to ensure sufficient capacity is in place to manage this crucial area of activity.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

There is a significant improvement and delivery agenda that requires the leadership of The Chief Executive. It is important, therefore, that The Chief Executive has sufficient support to meet these challenges. It is also important that the key functions that can drive change, policy, communications and engagement, HR and Organisational Development, work closely together to support The Chief Executive to deliver the challenge.

3.0 HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The HR and OD function is a key driver for change and is of strategic importance in developing and delivering the capacity and cultural change required across the organisation. The People Strategy 2010-2013: 2011-2012 Implementation Plan was agreed by the Employment and Appointments Committee and outlined the key priorities of The People Strategy. These priorities require the leadership from The Chief Executive.
- 3.2 The aim of The People Strategy is to ensure that Wirral Council has an effective and productive workforce to meet its current and future objectives. The principles of The People Strategy are that people who are well led, healthy, motivated and developed, are more likely to deliver effectively. The Council's strategic people issues have been addressed through focusing our attention and prioritising action within 5 key themes with the priorities for deliver 2011/12 detailed below:

1. Developing and delivering leadership and skills across the organisation

- Improve the take-up of learning and development and continue to develop learning to meet the needs of the organisation

2. Developing our organisation, to respond to and deliver change

- Improved communications
- Continued development of a framework to consult and engage employees
- Remodelling the organisation to respond to organisational change
- Future workforce change plan to be put in place
- People are deployed effectively, and employee pay costs reflect the working arrangements within budget
- Delivery of the Transforming Business Support project
- Review Employee Pay Costs

3. Developing capability and capacity to deliver performance improvement

- Implement and embed a performance management framework for leadership.

4. Delivering performance through an effective People Management Framework and efficient processes

- To review and seek approval for the People Management Framework policies
- Delivery of one Casework system for HR cases
- Delivery and management of enhanced Attendance Management policy and procedure
- Implementation of Phase 2 and 3 of Job Evaluation
- Effect HR processes / services

5. Delivering our role as a good employer

- Achievement of Excellent Status for the Equality Framework for Local Government
- Further develop the Fit for Wirral Framework
- Development of Apprenticeship and Graduate Programmes

3.3 The People Strategy Implementation plan will need to be reviewed for 2012/13 to ensure that it both drives and supports the Council's Improvement Plan. Organisational Development is key to developing organisational capacity, leadership, individual performance management, team working and personal development.

4.0 POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1 A detailed review of policy was undertaken to establish the proposed functions of a Policy Unit with involvement from key stakeholders. As part of this work, a review of policy arrangements in a range of other local authorities was undertaken to explore models for delivery and identify good practice. These findings identified a strong correlation between the development of robust evidence-based policies and strategies with effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and local people. The review further identified that many of the models explored aligned responsibilities for policy development and equality and diversity within one team.

4.2 As the result of the review, this report makes recommendations with regard to establishing the Policy Unit by April 2012. It is therefore proposed that the Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated

post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit reporting directly to The Chief Executive in addition to existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, community and faith sector) and equality and diversity.

4.3 On the basis of these findings and with engagement from key stakeholders, the proposed functions of the Policy Unit which were reported to the Council's Corporate Governance Committee on the 8 February 2012 will include:

4.4 ***To lead on a coherent and joined up approach to policy, planning and strategy development for the Council***

The products and features of this function would include:

- Regular policy briefings
- Well coordinated policy framework
- Development of the Council's Corporate Plan and other strategic plans as appropriate including the Child Poverty Strategy
- Policy network for the Council with all departments represented

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- Elected Members are well informed on current and future policy issues
- Effective collaboration between departments on cross cutting policy issues
- Robust implementation and review of policy decisions
- Effective sharing of learning and best practice

4.5 ***To ensure that there is a robust knowledge and evidence based approach to decision making in order to tackle the key challenges for Wirral***

The products and features of this function will include:

- Robust approach to 'horizon scanning' and dissemination of information
- Regular policy briefings
- A single knowledge 'hub' / evidence base e.g. statistics, demographic info
- Annual 'state of the borough' report
- Joined up approaches for research and information

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- Consistent use of evidence to develop Council plans and strategies
- Shared view within the Council and amongst partners about the key challenges / opportunities for Wirral

4.6 ***To engage with local and sub-regional partners to shape and respond to policy developments and implement decisions***

The products and features of this function will include:

- Utilising the Local Strategic Partnership to discuss policy drivers

- Innovative partnership working
- A clear briefing process in place to inform the Council's contribution at City Region, regional and national level

The intended outcomes of this function will be:

- The Council and LSP proactively anticipates and plans for policy changes
- Shared view within the Council and amongst partners about the key challenges / opportunities for Wirral
- Identification of potential resources
- Influencing policy at sub-regional, regional and national level through ensuring that Wirral's interests and priorities are effectively represented.

5.0 INITIAL STAFFING AND RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. Cabinet on 11 July 2010 agreed to a centralised model for The Human Resources and Organisational Development function with a phased plan for delivery. It was recognised that to meet the challenges facing the Council the HR/OD team would need to work differently, with consistent leadership and direction under a "one team" approach. The principles of centralising the HR/OD function ensure that there is one team which brings all the functions of HR/OD together. This allows for alignment of work, ensuring all team members understand the priorities and are working towards those priorities, ensuring the most effective utilisation of resources. This will be completed with a further report to Cabinet outlining the financial changes and future structure.

5.2 The role of Head of HR and OD is currently at a Head of Service level. The role will now take on additional duties which include directly supporting and reporting to The Chief Executive in leading and driving The Improvement Plan for the Council which will have a capacity building and people focus. This role will also provide direct support to The Chief Executive.

To ensure parity with other direct reports it is proposed that this role be re-graded at a Deputy Chief Officer level, DCO3. However as the senior management grades are currently being evaluated, this change will be subject to the outcome of job evaluation.

5.3 At The Employment and Appointments Committee on 29 September 2011, the Committee approved my recommendation to create a Policy Unit working directly to me and approved the creation of a new post of Head of Policy. Since this report in September, I have implemented an interim arrangement whereby officers with responsibilities for policy development have been reporting directly to me. This has resulted in significant capacity issues. Policy development is an extremely important function for the authority, as identified in the AKA report, and it is therefore essential that this area of work is given sufficient capacity and strategic direction to robustly influence and improve Council services. The recommendations made within this report are therefore based on ensuring that a strategic direction is effectively provided to the new post of Head of Policy and the policy unit, and I am therefore recommending that the Council's policy function reports into a Head of Service rather than directly to me to provide additional support and capacity to this important work.

5.4 The review of policy arrangements in a range of other local authorities identified a strong correlation between the development of robust evidence-based policies and strategies with effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and local people. I am therefore recommending that the Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit. This post already reports directly to the Chief Executive as a DCO3 with existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, and community and faith sector) and equality and diversity. This post will also provide direct support for The Chief Executive.

5.5 The core staff in the Policy Unit will work closely with a wider network of officers in departments and link as appropriate to other core functions in order to effectively coordinate the Council's approach to knowledge management. This will include links with the functions delivered by the Director of Public Health such as the preparation of Wirral's joint strategic needs assessment and wider research and information requirements.

5.6 A proposed structure chart is shown at Appendix A

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

6.1 The bringing together of key functions to support The Chief Executive seeks to mitigate the risk of the Council not delivering on the Improvement plan.

6.2 A project team has been established for the review of policy with robust project planning and risk management in place. The risks in relation to this project are regularly reviewed to ensure that these are addressed through mitigating action.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The establishment of a Council Policy Unit is one of the 10 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) approved by the Corporate Governance Committee on the 16 November 2011. This provided a clear steer for the review and therefore no further options were considered.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation with the key senior staff affected has taken place.

8.2 Consultation with stakeholders in respect of the establishment of a Policy Unit has been undertaken as set out in section 5.0 of this report. This report has also been considered by the Council's Corporate Governance Committee on the 8 February 2012.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

9.1 The proposed functions of the Policy Unit relating to engaging with partners will take into account the need to ensure effective engagement with voluntary, community and faith groups.

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

- 10.1 The net annual cost of the change of the grade for the post of Head of HR and OD is £2821 plus on costs.
- 10.2 All other proposals are met within existing resources.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 No legal implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?
- (a) Yes and impact review is attached –

[Law, Human Resources and Asset Management Equality Impact Assessments \(post 2010\) | WIRRAL Borough Council](#)

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 No carbon reduction implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 No planning or community safety implications have been identified in respect of the proposals set out in this report.

15.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 15.1 It is recommended that proposals in this report are agreed as the basis of the further work required in establishing the Policy Unit by April 2012.
- 15.2 The Head of Communications and Community Engagement is assigned to a newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement with overall responsibility for the Council's Policy Unit reporting directly to The Chief Executive in addition to existing responsibilities for all communications and community engagement activities (including marketing, tourism, the voluntary, community and faith sector) and equality and diversity;
- 15.3 Authority is designated to the newly designated post of Head of Policy, Communications and Community Engagement to establish the Policy Unit on the basis of the proposed function and staffing considered in this report and works with departments and key service areas to ensure the effective delivery of the core functions of the Unit.
- 15.4 That the Head of HR and OD reports directly to The Chief Executive and the function is moved into the new Chief Executive's Department. The role will be

graded at Deputy Chief Officer level DCO3, subject to the outcomes of Job Evaluation.

15.5 Recommend to The Employment and Appointments Committee the changes to the Staffing arrangements outlined above.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

16.1 The recommendations are in response to the critical milestones set out by Anna Klonowski in her report *'Improving Corporate Governance In Wirral'*. The establishment of a Council Policy Unit is one of the 10 Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) approved by the Corporate Governance Committee on the 16th November 2011.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Structure chart – The Chief Executive's Office

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Corporate Governance Committee	8 February 2012