

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><i>DESTINATION EXCELLENCE</i></b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><i>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</i></b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF GREEN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### **1.0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on the work undertaken in response to the Destination Excellence events held on 12 and 13 January 2012.

#### **2.0. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 2.1 In January 2012, a series of 11 events were held over two days to provide an opportunity for the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and the Chief Executive to engage with staff. Entitled 'Destination Excellence', the events were held to share the vision and values of the draft Corporate Plan. The opportunity was also taken to acknowledge the failings set out in the AKA report and to set out the work being undertaken to improve and strengthen Corporate Governance.
- 2.2 Over 4,000 staff attended the events which represents approximately 80% of the Council workforce. Staff were invited to ask questions during the sessions and encouraged to raise any issues, concerns or observations on the feedback forms provided. Over 1,000 staff completed the feedback forms, with 220 staff completing question 4: "Do you have a question for the Leader of the Council?" asking a specific question of the Leader.
- 2.3 Due to the change in administration since the Destination Excellence events took place, the Chief Executive has committed to ensuring any issues are responded to, providing a summary of the feedback, as well as giving a written response to all members of staff who asked a question.

#### **EVENT OUTPUTS**

- 2.4 The Corporate Governance Improvement Team has undertaken an analysis of the feedback to deliver a number of outputs for the Chief Executive.

**(a) Output 1 - Issues of a serious nature**

Response forms were sifted to identify and respond to any issues of a serious nature. The approach taken to address these issues was consistent with the confidential protocol developed for delivering the one-to-one meetings with Cabinet Members and the secure, confidential email.

Of the 1,072 feedback forms received, 16 were identified as having raised issues of a serious or potential whistle-blowing nature. These have been or are in the process of being followed up in consultation with the relevant chief officers and Director of Law, HR & Asset Management.

**(b) Output 2 - Summary of main issues and themes**

An analysis of the questions on the feedback form has been undertaken and is summarised in Appendix 1. This summary will be posted on the Council Intranet and will be included in the next One Brief / One Council magazine to ensure it is communicated to all staff.

**(c) Output 3 - Frequently asked questions**

Of the 220 staff who raised a specific question for the Leader, a significant number were based on the following themes:

- Management accountability and dealing with poor performance
- Staff retention / the use of agency staff
- The shortcomings of the recruitment process
- Destination Excellence itself
- Children's Centres
- EVR/VS
- Adult Social Services
- Job Evaluation/Harmonisation
- The use/repair of Council Buildings
- Public Health

Further to consultation with the relevant senior officers, A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) summary has been developed which responds to these question themes. This will be published on the Intranet and other channels such as One Brief and the One Council staff newsletter.

**(d) Output 4 - Individual responses to specific questions**

There are approximately 150 questions for the Leader which are quite specific or detailed in nature and therefore cannot be responded to via FAQs. The Chief Executive is currently drafting a response to those questions he can answer as the Head of Paid Service, and will respond to staff in due course.

**(e) Output 5 - List of names for the Leader's office**

Where staff made a general observation and provided their contact details, a list of names has been collated and forwarded to the then Leader's office. A personal message was sent from the Leader thanking staff for the time taken to complete the feedback form and for their observations.

**Conclusion**

2.5 The Destination Excellence events provided a means to engage with staff on a large scale and secure a range of feedback on staff issues and concerns. Since their delivery, significant work has been progressed to analyse and provide support in responding to the comments and questions raised.

2.6 As a result of the change in administration, the Chief Executive has now taken responsibility for the necessary corporate and personal communications required following these events.

**3.0. RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1. There is a risk that in responding to these events, staff will be sceptical about the messages communicated. There is also a risk that staff may feel that their views are not being listened to.

**4.0. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1. As Destination Excellence was promoted by the Leadership of the previous administration, there is an option to abandon the follow-up work arising from these events. However, this option was not favoured as the need for better communication with staff was clearly highlighted in the feedback from the events themselves. This provides an opportunity for the senior management to demonstrate commitment to improving communications as well as listening and responding to staff concerns.

**5.0. CONSULTATION**

5.1. Following the Destination Excellence events, a corporate governance questionnaire was distributed as a means to engage further with staff on matters of corporate governance.

5.2 In addition, a more detailed staff survey was launched on 12 March 2012.

**6.0. IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1. There are none arising from this report.

## **7.0. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

7.1. The work described above has been delivered by the Corporate Governance Improvement Team which has limited resources, with most team members completing these tasks in addition to their substantive duties.

## **8.0. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1. There are none arising from this report.

## **9.0. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1. There are none arising from this report.

## **10.0. CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

10.1. There are none arising from this report.

## **11.0. PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are none arising from this report.

## **12.0. RECOMMENDATION**

12.1. That Members note the report and the work undertaken by the Corporate Governance Improvement Team.

## **13.0. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

13.1. Members have requested a progress report in relation to this matter.

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### **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Summary of themes from Destination Excellence.**

### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Corporate Governance Committee	18 January 2012
Corporate Governance Committee	8 February 2012

## **OVERALL SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FROM DESTINATION EXCELLENCE**

### **What have you learned from today?**

The response from staff was that it provided an opportunity to understand the Council's vision and priorities. The events were also seen as a starting point for changing how we do things, in particular the need for the leadership and senior management to communicate better and listen more to staff issues and concerns. There was also greater awareness of the challenges we face as an organisation.

### **After today, what will YOU and YOUR TEAMS do differently?**

Overall, staff responded that they would continue to carry on working hard and doing their best. Staff also said they would feel more comfortable in challenging decisions and processes to improve ways of working, particularly when the reason for doing something in a certain way was because we have always done it that way. Staff indicated they would try to communicate better and work closer with colleagues in other departments.

### **Tell us what you're proud of**

Overwhelmingly staff responded by saying how proud they are of their own work and that of their team in terms of the dedication, commitment and the hard work put in. There is also pride in terms of the positive impact and difference their work makes to people's lives particularly in relation to children, families and vulnerable adults. Some staff are proud of the Council as an organisation and the high standard of services we deliver.

### **Tell us what we do badly**

The response was that we are not good at listening to staff views or concerns and there is poor communication with staff and between departments. Staff also highlighted problems with management accountability and decision-making as well as poor budget management and wasting money. It was suggested that we could be better at celebrating our successes and giving more praise when it is deserved. Feedback also indicated we could be better at supporting staff to do their jobs more effectively in terms of managing workloads, reducing stress and doing more to train and retain staff.

### **How we can do it better?**

Overwhelmingly the response was that communication needs to improve and be more open and honest so people are more comfortable in voicing concerns and problems with managers. Staff highlighted the need for a clearer vision with clear plans so that staff can see how their own work fits into the bigger picture and a greater sense of everyone working to the same goals. The culture also needs to change so that managers and staff are held to account for poor performance.