

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

13 JUNE 2013

SUBJECT:	<i>IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH/HEAD OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE</i>
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	<i>CLLR ANN MCLACHLAN</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress delivering the Council's Improvement Plan six months into implementation.
- 1.2 It should be recognised that significant changes have now taken place since the Improvement Plan was developed during summer 2012. The Plan reflects the position the Council was in at that time with an emphasis on the need to get some of the basic infrastructure for change in place to enable the organisation to begin a longer process of transformation.
- 1.3 We are changing the emphasis of the Plan to ensure that it is more outcome-based. Within this covering report we have identified those outcomes that we believe will demonstrate the impact of the changes we are making as an organisation against the priorities that were set in July 2012. They will also enable us to be stronger in our approach to delivering the commitments made in our Corporate Plan for 2013-16. Looking forward, the focus for the next six months will be on ensuring we can evidence the actions we have taken that show we are strengthening corporate culture to meet our current and future challenges. Key priorities will be to embed a new performance culture as well as embarking on a series of transformational projects that we see as essential in shaping the Council we will be by 2016. The Peer Challenge follow-up visit recommendations support this, particularly around the need to strengthen our corporate functions and linking our transformation programme to a vision of our future.
- 1.4 The report is accompanied by a detailed milestone report (Appendix 1) which includes a summary of progress against each of the Improvement Plan objectives and a Red, Amber, Green, Blue (RAGB) rating.
- 1.5 Of the 45 objectives within the plan:
- 11 are rated blue and have now been completed
 - 13 are rated green and are on track, in progress and complete to plan with no issues
 - 21 are rated amber which are not yet complete, a risk but not yet an issue
 - 0 are rated red and are a problem requiring serious attention or action

- 1.6 This (RAGB) rating illustrates that significant progress has been made. The report narrative set out below highlights the main areas of progress and those areas requiring more attention. There is a summary against each of the five Improvement Plan priorities and at the end of each section, a list of the key supporting evidence. Where these documents are publicly accessible, a hyperlink has been included.
- 1.7 Progress with Priority 1 'Political and Managerial Leadership' has been strong with the delivery of a series of development sessions for all Members to shape the Council's vision and transformation priorities. However, some activities under this priority, specifically the Leadership and Cultural Change Programmes have been deferred until the autumn once the organisational restructure (currently being implemented) is complete.
- 1.8 There has been good progress under Priority 2 'Corporate Governance and Decision-Making,' specifically in terms of the completion of a constitutional review that delivers a number of improvements in Council governance. Areas under this priority that now require significant attention include improving the Council's arrangements for Risk Management and Procurement.
- 1.9 Overall, progress against Priority 3 'Corporate Plan' and priority 4 'Budget and Financial Stability' has been very strong in view of the business need to meet the challenges of reduced funding whilst also rectifying historical issues in terms of base budget setting and debt recovery. The success of the 'What Really Matters' consultation has provided a foundation upon which to develop our new Corporate Plan and Council priorities. The consultation also provided local residents with a say in determining the budget options which deliver over £40 million worth of savings in 2013/14.
- 1.10 In terms of Priority 5, the Improvement Board acknowledges that the Council's Investment Strategy and approach to economic development are an area of high achievement. Progress has also been made in relation to safeguarding in Adult Social Services with the implementation of an action plan in response to a safeguarding peer review in 2012.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

- 2.1 The Improvement Plan was approved by Cabinet on 6th September. This approval effectively provides the start date for the Improvement Programme. In line with the reporting arrangements agreed, progress reports have been submitted to Cabinet in November and to Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November and January. The progress set out in this report has been reviewed in collaboration with the relevant senior managers.

3.0 SUMMARY BY PRIORITY AREA

PRIORITY 1 – Leadership: Political and Managerial

- 3.1 Effective leadership, based on a positive working relationship between politicians and management which is based on trust and respect is a key ingredient of being able to establish a strong corporate culture and a sense of organisational cohesiveness. Success in delivering this priority would mean that:
- We have politicians who feel able to act with confidence in their decision-making

- We have a senior management structure that exemplifies and sets standards for good behaviour
- We have an embedded and effective scheme of delegation
- We have strong partnerships, evidenced by joint working arrangements
- Our community knows what we are doing on their behalf, how to connect with us and is engaged with the development of our proposals

3.2 Progress is acknowledged by the Improvement Board with a new culture at the top of the organisation. New Member briefing and decision-making processes have been implemented and regular Cabinet briefing and development sessions are held, supported by individual Portfolio Holder briefings. The more structured briefing arrangements has meant that Portfolio Holders now feel confident in presenting reports at Cabinet meetings.

3.3 Progress has been made in developing a new Member Training and Development programme. However, the collaborative leadership and cultural change programmes have been put on hold until the new management and organisational structures are in place.

3.4 A series of Member sessions have been delivered to promote discussion, develop ideas and identify Members' priorities. These events have also helped shape the Council's new vision, governance arrangements and transformational projects. There has also been a review of neighbourhood working and the Council's scrutiny function resulting in proposals for Constituency Committees and Policy and Performance Committees.

3.5 Whilst full implementation of activities to improve the support services for members, including a new members' toolkit, enquiry and case management system have been delayed, these are being rolled out on a phased basis.

3.6 The senior management restructure is now complete with three new Strategic Directors in place. The wider organisational restructure is well under way and across the organisation, selection processes are going on to support the move to the new structure.

3.7 Relevant supporting documents to evidence progress include:

- New leadership behaviours (set out on page 15 of the corporate plan): <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/council-performance/corporate-plan>
- Skills for Wirral Councillors – Member Training and Development Programme.
- Revised Member/officer protocol (as part of revised constitution). Cabinet report: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4447&Ver=4>
- A vision for the borough set out in the Corporate Plan (see link above).
- New organisational management structure in place.

PRIORITY 2 – Corporate Governance and Decision-Making

3.8 Being able to show clear outcomes relating to our responsibility as an accountable organisation, and supporting us being a learning organisation is important to us. We will also ensure that we have good systems to support decision-making. Success in delivering this priority would mean that:

- We regularly review our performance and take action when things aren't right
- Decisions are made in a transparent way, and information is more easily available to the public
- We have open discussions about what we are planning to do in the right way at the right time e.g. pre-decision scrutiny
- We assess our risks and put in place proportionate responses
- We encourage innovation (i.e. managed risks)
- We ensure that citizen engagement and empowerment in transforming the areas where they live is continuously improved
- We have strengthened the ways in which people can raise their concerns, e.g. our Whistleblowing Policy

3.9 A new Code of Corporate Governance was agreed in April 2012 and reflects the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. Work to map the Council's various plans, policies and strategies that underpin this code is on-going. Dedicated training is scheduled to be included in the revised Members Training and Development Programme for 2013 and will be incorporated into the collaborative leadership programme to be launched later this year.

3.10 The Council's Scheme of Delegation and Member Officer protocol have been updated as part of the wider constitutional review. These were approved by Cabinet on 18th April and Council on 30th April.

3.11 The Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations have been updated and have been approved in principle by Council.

3.12 A review of the Council's internal audit function and the development of a three year action plan has been undertaken and agreed by Audit and Risk Committee. A similar review of the Council's corporate risk management arrangements is underway and is now being taken forward as a priority.

3.13 The Council's policy unit has been consolidated within the Policy, Performance and Public Health Function.

3.14 A Local Public Service Board has now been established and meets regularly to explore integrated approaches to meeting community needs and service design.

3.15 Relevant supporting documents to evidence progress include:

- Revised Code of Corporate Governance.
- Revised Scheme of Delegation (as part of revised constitution). Cabinet report: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4447&Ver=4>
- Enhanced neighbourhood working through Area Committees. Cabinet report: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3869&Ver=4>
- Revised Member Briefing and Decision-Making Process
- Proposals for revised Contract Procedure Rules. Report to Audit and Risk Management Committee: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=119&MId=4448&Ver=4>
- Revised procurement toolkit
- Public Service Board (Terms of Reference)
- Liverpool City Region Welfare Reform Event

PRIORITY 3 – Corporate Plan

- 3.16 Setting a clear, sustainable direction and vision for the future is the basis of making sure that our actions as a Council, and with our partners translates into action through a golden thread that leads from the Corporate Plan through to individual objectives. The recent Peer Challenge highlighted the need to fully implement a performance system and culture. This will be set in the context of our ambitions for our Borough set out with our partners. Success in delivering this priority would mean that:
- We have a clearly articulated vision, understood by all
 - We are clear about what we are in the business of, and how we intend to go about it
 - Corporate planning will demonstrate evidence of our improvement activities
- 3.17 A new Corporate Plan was approved by Cabinet on 18th February, informed by the What Really Matters consultation. The consultation was successfully delivered alongside a programme of service reviews to engage members of the public in determining the budget options which are now being taken forward within the efficiency programme.
- 3.18 Work is now progressing to develop Directorate business plans in line with the new organisational structure agreed. These are scheduled to be signed off with Portfolio Holders at the end of May and the associated performance management framework will be submitted to Council for approval in May.
- 3.19 Our new performance appraisal system will be integral to strengthening our performance culture and will be rolled out through the management tiers and the wider workforce during the year. Further work to review and update the Council's HR policies is being undertaken on a phased basis to support the organisational restructure and delivery of the budget options.
- 3.20 Relevant supporting documents to evidence progress include:
- Outcome of What Really Matters Consultation: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3870&Ver=4>
 - Corporate Plan 2013-2016: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/council-and-democracy/council-performance/corporate-plan>

PRIORITY 4 – Budget and Financial Stability

- 3.21 We have made significant headway in stabilising our finances. We are conscious that we still have substantial risks that need to be addressed. Our budget and financial stability is critical to the future. We look to be able to show that we use our resources wisely to meet our future challenges. We would expect to be able to demonstrate that:
- We have a strong grip on budgetary control and financial planning
 - We have rationalised our assets and have designed the use of them to get the most out of our people and other resources
 - We have good systems for outcome-based commissioning supported by effective procurement and contracting of services
- 3.22 The Council has recently delivered the most challenging budget the local authority has ever faced. The budget for 2013/14 which delivers over £40 million in savings was approved by the Council on 5th March. A strong governance and reporting model has also been adopted for delivery of the budget options within the efficiency programme.

3.23 Detailed work undertaken to establish the Council's financial position has also led to:

- Steps being taken to address historical base budget issues resulting from increased demand for services and the failure to meet income targets.
- The provision of training for all budget holders on the Council's financial management and budget delivery arrangements, including the need to sign off agreed budgets.
- Development of a budget strategy and timetable for 2014-16 in order to identify the further savings required based on comprehensive consultation with residents.

3.24 The section 151 officer has implemented weekly budget review meetings and monthly monitor reports to Cabinet to create a more open and transparent approach.

3.25 Initial scoping of the work required to develop the Council's commissioning strategy has been undertaken including a review of the Council's existing commissioning framework. Steps to build further capacity are now being pursued through a submission to the Commissioning Academy.

3.26 Key transformational projects have been brought forward and will be developed further so that they are aligned with an overall vision of the council of the future. The Strategic Change Programme has now been designed around the Efficiency Programme arising from the budget options.

3.27 Relevant supporting documents to evidence progress include:

- Budget Cabinet 18th February:
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=3872&Ver=4>
- Budget Council 5th March 2013:
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=20942#mgDocuments>
- Planning the Budget Process 2014/17. Cabinet 18th April 2013:
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&MId=4447&Ver=4>

PRIORITY 5 – Critical Services Areas: Safeguarding and Developing the Economy

3.28 While the critical service areas identified have been addressed, we will ensure we keep oversight of them as issues through our scrutiny arrangements. As a point of principle we will ensure that we are a customer-focused organisation. This would be illustrated by measures such as:

- We regularly review customer satisfaction with our services to ensure its is improving
- We design our services around the customer, not around the organisation
- We engage with and are visible to our local communities
- There is widespread community/stakeholder involvement in the development of our services

3.29 A Safeguarding Peer Challenge has taken place and the Adult Social Care team have also undergone Peer Review. The findings of these reviews have been reported internally to the Council and to the Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Adult Protection Strategy meetings ensure the recommendations from the safeguarding Peer Review are implemented.

3.30 In terms of Developing the Local Economy, a report and presentation were delivered to the Improvement Board in October 2012 and it was agreed that the Investment Strategy Board is the most appropriate forum to continue its successful work in championing this priority for the Council.

3.31 Relevant supporting documents to evidence progress include:

- Outcome of Safeguarding Peer Challenge and Adult Social Care Peer Review. Health and Well Being O&S Committee 10th September 2012:
<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=531&MId=3911&Ver=4>
- Implementation of recommendations from AKA Report. Health and Well Being O&S Committee 10th September 2012 (see link above).

4.0 RELEVANT RISKS

4.1 Our corporate risk register has been reviewed and will be considered by Cabinet in May. It includes risks relating to our capacity to deliver our ambitions for change.

5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Our approach to tackling the issues facing the Council was recognised by the Peer Challenge (October 2012) as the only option for the Council and as such, no other options have been considered.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The development of the Improvement Plan has been undertaken in consultation with the Improvement Board and elected members. Activity within the plan has been informed by consultation with staff through the staff surveys undertaken this year.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

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

8.1 The initial resource requirements for delivering the Improvement Plan were assessed and reported to Cabinet 06 September 2012. No further resource requirements have been identified at this stage.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Delivery of the Improvement Plan involves reviewing and refreshing a number of core documents including the Council's constitution, the Scheme of Delegation and the Member / Office protocol which will be / have been reported to Cabinet as required.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(a) No – an EIA is not required.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Cabinet is requested to reflect on the progress made within the plan and to provide any comments or observations.

13.2 It is recommended that the Improvement Plan shifts its focus to outcomes as described in the priority sections above.

13.3 That a further progress report is brought to Cabinet in September.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 The people who live, work and enjoy leisure on the Wirral deserve excellence from their Council. Significant changes have been made in the last six months which are providing a good foundation for the future. Having made these changes there will be benefit in changing the emphasis from process actions, to outcomes and to being able to show how the changes we have made are being embedded into the normal business of the local authority.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Milestones Progress Report / Red/Amber/Green/Blue Status

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	6 th September 2012
Cabinet	29 th November 2012
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27 th November 2012
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee	30 th January 2013