

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL

16 DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs' Reports
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Ann McLachlan (Governance & Improvement)
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides Members of the Council with an update on the work carried out by each of the Policy and Performance Committees. The report includes contributions from each of the Committee Chairs. Members of Council are requested to consider any questions they have for the Committee Chairs.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Policy and Performance Committees were established as part of the constitutional changes agreed by Council on 30 April 2013. There are three committees aligned to the Council's Directorates and a fourth Coordinating Committee which is responsible for corporate and cross-cutting work.

2.2 The committees are responsible for discharging the Council's scrutiny function in terms of the following:

- Hold the Executive to account
- Hold partners to account
- Scan the horizon regarding new policy and initiatives
- Review and develop policy
- Examine decisions before and after being taken
- Review performance in terms of service delivery and budgets
- Carry out in-depth reviews

2.3 Formal meetings include performance management, budget monitoring and policy updates as standing items. Each committee has also developed a work programme which includes a combination of reviews conducted by smaller groups of committee members and requested officer reports.

3.0 COORDINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.1 Since the approval of the committee's work programme in September, two scrutiny reviews have been commissioned by this committee. A review into the Council's preparations for Individual Electoral Registration (IER) commenced in October and is now drawing to conclusion with the aim of reporting to the Committee in January. This is a good example of horizon-scanning scrutiny in that IER will not be implemented until July 2014. A second review began on the 18th November to examine a sample of the Council's budget options to help understand the impact they are having.
- 3.2 There was a special meeting of the committee on 13th November to discuss the Improvement Board Review. This report was commissioned by the Wirral/LGA Improvement Board to reflect on the progress the Council has made on its journey of improvement. This was to enable the Board to consider its future role and level of involvement.
- 3.3 There was broad agreement by Members of the Committee that the Improvement Board Review report is very positive. This reflects the significant progress the Council has made in the last 18 months and the Committee acknowledged the contribution of Members and Officers in these achievements. However, the Committee also highlighted the need to avoid complacency, encouraging all Members to engage in the next steps highlighted in the report. The Committee also pledged that it would play its full part in continuing that direction of travel.
- 3.4 The work being carried out across parties on this committee is I feel testament to the improvement of the scrutiny function in Wirral Council and is to be welcomed. As Chair I would like to thank colleagues of all parties and officers for their support.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

4.0 FAMILIES & WELLBEING CHAIR'S REPORT

- 4.1 Since the last Council the Families and Well Being Policy and Performance Committee has considered the Directorate's Budget Options in November and a meeting in December received reports on Fostering, Adoption, the Health and Well Being Strategy and the Leisure review.
- 4.2 The Committee has formed an Attainment Sub-Committee with an initial meeting in early December.
- 4.3 The Committee continues to work hard to meet the challenge of scrutinising a very wide agenda that deals with items of extreme importance to the children and vulnerable people who are at the heart of much of the work this Council undertakes.
- 4.4 **Work in progress**
 - A Scrutiny Review to consider the Implications of the Francis Review for Wirral. This work commenced in June and is due to report to the Committee in January.

- A Task and Finish group on the Quality Assurance Framework and Standards in Care Homes is currently gathering evidence and hopes to report to Committee in January.
- A Task and Finish group looking into Domestic Violence will focus on the 16 – 18 year old cohort, gathering evidence in the New Year.

4.4 Pieces of work completed

- A scrutiny review entitled **The Outcomes for Looked After Children** was presented to the Cabinet in November. The recommendations of this review were all accepted by Cabinet. This review was commenced during the previous municipal year.

Councillor Wendy Clements

5.0 REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT CHAIR'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee met on 5 November. There were two agenda items; the budget options and the report of a Task and Finish Group. There was a wide ranging discussion of all the budget options. The Committee was not however able to make any specific recommendations with regard to the various options. In future, it would be beneficial if a mechanism could be found to enable the Committee to give a clearer indication of its preferences.
- 5.2 The Committee endorsed the findings of the Task and Finish Group which examined the implementation of the current year's budget options and some of the potential savings for 2014/15. Following this report it is now proposed that a Task and Finish Group should do further detailed work on developing the Council's car park strategy. The challenge would be to recommend a strategy that achieves the necessary revenue while also taking account of the impact of car park charges.
- 5.3 Excluding the special budget meeting there is a 4 month gap between the last normal business meeting on September 17 and the next on January 27. This gap clearly emphasises the crucial role of Task and Finish Groups if meaningful examination of the Council's policy is to take place. It is therefore to be welcomed that four Task and Finish Groups are either currently in place or are planned. These groups will examine apprenticeships, street cleansing and the new highways contract as well as car parking. The Committee is also looking at ways to ensure there is adequate monitoring of the Council's response to the recommendations of Task and Finish groups.

Councillor Alan Brighthouse

6.0 TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES CHAIR'S REPORT

- 6.1 Since October, the Committee has met to review the budget options put forward by the Transformation and Resources Directorate. This provided the opportunity for Members of the committee to ask questions to the relevant heads of services in relation to the details behind these proposals. The committee agreed for a special meeting to be convened in December to review the results of the consultation. This is scheduled for December 9th.

- 6.2 A scrutiny review exploring the effectiveness of the Council's process for handling Freedom of information requests has recently started. A further review into the proposals with Cheshire west and Chester to enter into shared services arrangement for back office functions is also due to commence into the near future.
- 6.3 Two reports have been requested and are due to be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee in January. One of these relates to the email service for elected Members following a number of concerns being raised. A further report will provide an update on the Council's performance in terms of sickness absence. This will provide the basis for the committee to decide if it wants to establish scrutiny review into the sickness absence and return to work process.
- 6.4 The work being carried out across parties on this committee is I feel testament to the improvement of the scrutiny function in Wirral Council and is to be welcomed. As Chair I would like to thank colleagues of all parties and officers for their support.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 N/A

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 N/A

10.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

10.1 N/A

11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

11.1 N/A

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

12.1 N/A

13.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 N/A

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(c) No because of another reason which is

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications.

15.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 N/A

16.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 N/A

17.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 Members are requested to consider the contents of this report and whether they have any questions for the Chairs of the Policy and Performance Committees.

18.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

18.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to ask any questions they have relating to this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Michael Callon
Policy, Performance & Public Health
telephone (0151) 691 8379
email michaelcallon@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council – Revisions to the Constitution	30/04/13
Council – Reports from Policy and Performance Committee Chairs	14/10/13