

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Ann McLachlan
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Governance, Commissioning and Improvement
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Graham Burgess, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

1. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The final version of the Annual Governance Statement was approved at the Audit Risk Management Committee on the 17th September. The statement outlined the significant progress that the Council had made throughout 2013-14, to address all 15 significant governance issues that were identified in 2012-13.

2. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

The North West Employers Member Development Charter

- Wirral council was assessed against the criteria of the North West Employers Member Development Charter in April 2014 and has successfully achieved Level One Review.
- The assessing panel were impressed with the submission and the evidence presented to them. They were particularly impressed with the Councillors and officers they met during the interviews carried out as part of the assessment process.
- Wirral Council will be formally awarded the Charter at a ceremony held in November 2014.
- The Member Development Steering Group are now beginning to focus on the next level of the Charter (Level Two) and what is required to achieve this.

The Elected Member Development Programme

- The current Wirral Councillors "Community Leadership Programme" is now underway. The programme has a deliberate focus on the core skills required by councillors to support working via Constituency Committees. It also features new sessions such as "Social Media", "Commissioning for Elected Members" and "Asset Based Community Development" to stimulate and encourage new ways of working and thinking.
- The Induction Programme for new Councillors has now concluded and all nine new Councillors participated in the sessions provided. They will now be supported and encouraged to attend the wider development programme and to identify any further training needs via the Personal Development Plan process (PDP) currently taking place. The Induction Programme will now be evaluated and reviewed in readiness for the next intake of new councillors in Spring 2015

Elected Member Development Strategy

- The Member Development Steering Group has commenced a piece of work to review and update the strategy around Elected Member Development.
- The revised strategy once finalised will be shared with all councillors via the steering group along with a forward plan of activity and improvements to be made throughout the year.

- The Terms of Reference for the Member Development Steering Group will also be reviewed to ensure the work of the group effectively delivers the agreed priorities of the strategy.

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICIES

A new Equality Plan 2014-2017 agreed by Cabinet in July 2014, which includes all of the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and the Equality Framework for Local Government (Reaching 'excellent' level).

The Plan is split into 5 themes:

- Knowing our communities
- Leadership and partnership commitment
- A modern and diverse workforce
- Responsive services and customer care
- Community engagement and satisfaction

A 3 year operational work programme is currently being finalised based upon the above 5 themes.

2014/2015 priorities include:

- Identifying Wirral's priority inequalities via the Wirral Public Service Board
- A review of how we involve marginalised and more vulnerable individuals and communities in service development and delivery
- Development of best practice models, for example equality profiling, addressing under-representation within the workplace, skills improvement and career pathways, reasonable adjustments
- Ensuring the promotion of equality and diversity is included within staff performance appraisals
- Commencing a review of Wirral's anti-hate crime activities
- Further embedding equality impact assessments into corporate business planning
- Developing a platform for sharing our best practice and experiences with others

4. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE UNIT

Over recent years Wirral Council has been the subject of a series of high profile case reviews into corporate failures. A common theme running throughout all these case reviews was criticism of the Corporate Governance and Compliance. The Future Council project offers an opportunity to redesign how we deal with these most important aspects of the Councils business.

In simplistic terms the Corporate Compliance Unit will deal with the Councils Internal Controls - the plans, methods, policies and procedures used to meet the Councils goals and objectives. One of the key success factors in achieving both short and long term success is to approach compliance and internal controls in an organised and controlled manner. A common more recognisable model is to view Governance, Risk and Compliance as an integrated function.

The proposal for a Corporate Compliance Unit builds on the 'stronger centre model' which underpins the current direction of travel. If agreed it will bring together the following functions into a single, centrally located team, with a leaner management structure:

- Internal Audit
- Risk & Insurance
- Records & Information Management (Fol)
- Scrutiny
- Health, Safety & Resilience
- Community Cohesion – Community Safety & ASB

5. COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

The Commissioning Strategy is currently in draft form and will be reported on at Cabinet in November. Strategic Commissioning will involve a move away from the commissioning of services, to commissioning for outcomes, which in turn will necessitate a major shift in how the council works, both culturally and operationally. The strategy will set out the Councils commissioning vision and objectives and our approach for achieving them whilst aligning to the overarching vision for the borough from our Corporate Plan. The establishment of a new, whole system approach which embraces Elected Members, the wider Council, partnership and third sector organisations and the local community will be pivotal in shaping our commissioning intentions.