

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Ann McLachlan
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Governance, Commissioning and Improvement
CO-ORINDATING CHIEF OFFICER	Joe Blott, Strategic Director-Transformation and Resources

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 Council's draft Annual Governance Statement for 2014/15 was presented to Audit and Risk Management Committee in June 2015. The statement evidences the continued progress to further strengthen our internal governance controls and demonstrates the improvement the Council has made during 2014-15 to address the Council's existing governance issues. The Council's improved position was also highlighted through our success in winning the 'Most Improved Council' award at the 2015 LGC Local Government awards in March 2015, which enabled us to showcase and receive recognition for our improvements by our peers.

The Council has identified four remaining governance issues which include business continuity arrangements, corporate procurement arrangements, absence management and culture. Further work is required to sufficiently improve these issues and plans have been developed to deliver these improvements. A final version of the Annual Governance Statement with an action plan to address the governance issues will now be signed off by the Leader and Chief Executive and reported to Cabinet and Audit and Risk Management Committee in September 2015. I will continue to receive regular reports on the progress that is being made to address these issues to ensure that improvements are being delivered.

2. POLICY PAPERS

The Policy and Strategy Team have established a new policy package. The policy package encompasses three Directorate policy briefings, which will be brought to the relevant Policy and Performance Committees four times throughout the municipal year, in alignment with key updates released by Central Government. The directorate policy briefings will provide Members with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the committees work programme and future scrutiny work. This is a great new initiative which will help keep Members informed and will assist in driving policy discussions at Policy and Performance Committees.

3. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Council's Corporate Risk Management Policy was fundamentally re-written in 2013/14 as part of the Council's wider improvements to corporate governance and to support our objective of being an organisation that is 'risk aware, not risk averse'. The refreshed Corporate Risk Management Policy was formally adopted by Cabinet in June 2015 and sets out our overall attitude to risk, confirms our commitment to managing it, provides a high level view of the risk management process and sets out our corporate requirements around how risk is to be handled.

An example where effective risk management has delivered tangible results in Wirral is relation to the Council's exposure to legal liability. Wirral's arrangements for managing liability risk, which are respected nationally, involve a holistic approach- from the early identification of exposures, right through to the effective management of litigated claims. The Council's Senior Risk & Insurance Officer has been key to the development of this approach. The success of Wirral's arrangements, and the benefit which authorities across the country have gained from him sharing his expertise, have been recognised in him winning the 2015 'Professional of the Year' award issued by Alarm (the national forum for risk management in the public sector).

The refreshed Corporate Risk Management Policy will be updated annually to reflect changes within the Council itself and to incorporate improvements in risk management practice.