

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **MONDAY, 13 JULY 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **MANAGEMENT OF THE WORKFORCE CHANGE PROGRAMME**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To present the internal self-assessment of our performance in managing our first major programme of workforce reduction against the recommendations of the Wales Audit Office in its recent national study of public sector practice and performance.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Following the publication of the Council Fund Revenue Budget for 2014-15 and being mindful of the challenging budget 'gap' of £15M plus in January 2014, the Council took the decision to introduce a Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.

2.02 The Voluntary Redundancy (VR) Scheme was introduced in February 2014. The purpose of the Scheme was to help the Council become more efficient, to achieve its budget targets for workforce scaling and to provide an opportunity for employees to apply to leave the employment of the Council thereby minimising the need for compulsory redundancies. The aim of the Scheme was to balance the wishes of individuals with the need to make budget savings as far as possible and to protect a safe and capable level of resourcing for each and every service. The scheme was open to all employees of the Council as part of the Council's efficiency measures with the exception of those staff employed by a School Governing Body funded via delegated budgets.

2.03 Before launching the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme we researched current practice across Wales and with a number of English Councils with greater experience of managing major workforce reform programmes.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The Scheme was originally open for applications between 3rd

February 2014 and 10th March 2014. A total of 174 applications were received of which 83 were approved. The summary of applications considered by portfolio during Phase I are detailed below:

Portfolio	No of applications considered	No of applications approved	% approved
Chief Executives	5	3	60%
Community & Enterprise	6	6	100%
Education and Youth	25	13	52%
Governance	8	6	75%
Organisational Change 1	11	7	63.63%
Organisational Change 2	16	7	43.75%
People & Resources	9	6	66.66%
Planning & Environment	13	11	84.61%
Social Services	52	14	26.92%
Streetscene and Transportation	29	10	34.48%
Total	174	83	47.70%

Given the scale of the workforce efficiencies required, employees were given a further opportunity to apply for VR through a second phase.

The summary of VR Applications considered during Phase II is detailed below:

Portfolio	No of applications considered	No of applications approved	% Approved
Chief Executives	3	3	100%
Community and Enterprise	30	5	16.66%
Education & Youth	13	9	7.69%
Governance	6	3	33.33%
Organisational Change 1	15	2	13.33%
Organisational Change 2	33	16	48.48%
People and Resources	10	5	50%
Planning and Environment	10	4	40%
Social Services	51	5	9.80%
Streetscene and Transportation	42	9	21.42%
Total	213	61	28.63%

Following Phase II it was agreed that the programme should remain open on a rolling basis. In practical terms, this means that employees who are not already in scope of organisational change can make an application to leave under VR. The panel meets on a

monthly basis to consider any applications received during the period. Deferred or rejected applications from previous phases can be resubmitted in situations where the reasons for deferral or rejection have changed.

3.02 During February 2015 Wales Audit Office published its findings in relation to its national study of public sector practice and performance in relation to the management of early departures across welsh public bodies. The study lists seven proposals for improvement. A summary of the study report is attached at Appendix 1. The full report can be accessed on [W:\Early Departures English 2015.pdf](#). Flintshire undertook a voluntary self- assessment of our performance against each. The Council either met or exceeded each of the relevant recommendations. Our self-assessment is included at Appendix 2. We have submitted our self-assessment to Wales Audit Office as model practice.

3.03 An internal audit of the 2014/15 Voluntary Redundancy / Compulsory Redundancy programme, which included a review of the Workforce Consultation Database found that Management can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage risk are suitable designed, consistently applied and effective.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That the committee is assured of local policy and practice and its effectiveness in managing such a complex change programme.

4.02 That the committee supports the recommendation of Flintshire policy and practice as exemplar practice to Wales Audit Office.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

None.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

None.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

None.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

None.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

Local policy and practice was developed in consultation with the Trade Unions and with the involvement of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Wales Audit Office (WAO), Managing Early Departures Across Welsh Public Bodies Report.

12.02 Appendix 2 – Flintshire response to WAO *Managing Early Departures Across Welsh Public Bodies* Report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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