

CHOOSING TO CHANGE – UPDATE REPORT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Elaine Woodburn

LEAD OFFICER: Chief Executive

REPORT AUTHOR: Keith Parker

Summary: Full Council on 8 December agreed a Communication and Engagement Plan in relation to the Choosing to Change Programme. One action arising from this plan is to provide Council with a regular update on progress. This report outlines progress since 8 December.

Recommendation:	Council is asked to note this report and endorse the work of the Choosing to Change Board.
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council on 8 December agreed to a number of recommendations in relation to the Choosing to Change Programme, including the Terms of Reference for the Choosing to Change Board, roles and responsibilities, Critical Success Factors, the Communication and Engagement Plan and the overarching Objectives for the programme. It also delegated responsibility to the Choosing to Change Board to make funding applications to the North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (NWIEP) and others in order to support the objectives of the programme.
- 1.2 Since Full Council met progress has been made in a number of areas:
- a) The support agencies reference group has been extended and now includes the Audit Commission (in addition to Government Office North West, North West Employers Organisation, NWIEP and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA))
 - b) The reference group has proposed Gillian Bishop, Chief executive of NWIEP, as the non-executive member of the Choosing to Change Board.
 - c) The IDeA have offered additional support to the Council and Corporate Team have accepted an offer of mentoring and coaching, as individuals, through this mechanism.
 - d) A separate meeting is programmed with the IDeA to determine how they can tailor further initiatives to meet the requirements of the Choosing to Change Programme
 - e) An initial application was made to the NWIEP Partnership Commission to a very tight deadline on 18 December. This has gained an interim award of £50,000 to support the programme.
- 1.3 Feedback from the NWIEP Partnership Commission has been favourable. The Commission have made the Council an interim award as an expression of commitment from NWIEP towards the Council's improvement journey. However, the initial application needs further development, especially so as the Commission is revisiting its priorities now that the regions Comprehensive Area Assessment results have been published, with a clear prioritisation towards the poor performing authorities, which do not include this Council. However, the £50,000 NWIEP award provides the opportunity for the Council to continue the employment of the interim scrutiny consultant and to extend her commission to include revision of the Council's governance arrangements together with the associated standards and protocols agreed in the last report. To ensure appropriate skills transfer the commission will include a

requirement to effect this skills transfer to other members of the Legal and Democratic Services Team and full time scrutiny officer when appointed. The £50k award exceeds the funding requirement for the interim scrutiny consultant and the 'steer' from NWIEP is that the Council should use the residual element of the award to 'buy-in' the capacity to develop the Council's next application to NWIEP. Given the strain on existing capacity within the organisation this is seen as sound advice and is being progressed through the Choosing to Change Board.

- 1.4 The Choosing to Change Board is meeting on 12 January, after preparation of this report. This is likely to be a common feature of the Choosing to Change programme with both Council and the Board meeting monthly. Therefore the Chair of the Board will provide a further verbal update to this report should this be required.

2. CONCLUSIONS

List of Consultees:

Choosing to Change Board, Corporate Team

Background Papers:

NWIEP Partnership Commission Application Dec 09