

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

*At a meeting of the Business Efficiency Board held on Wednesday, 5 September 2007
in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Lloyd Jones (Chairman), Cross, Jones, A. Lowe, Norddahl,
Osborne, Philbin and Worrall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Leadbetter, Findon and Sly

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: I. Leivesley, C. Halpin and M. Murphy

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
BEB10 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2007 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
BEB11 PROCUREMENT UPDATE	
<p>The Board was updated on the progress made in introducing better procurement in Halton. The Council's Procurement Strategy for 2006-9 was adopted last year and detailed a number of key objectives, which were outlined in the report.</p> <p>The report also detailed the work undertaken in promoting better procurement, promotion of the procurement methodology, corporate procurement methods and working practices along with work undertaken in relation to the supplier directory, collaboration and regional activities, identified savings and procurement improvement plan and strategic targets.</p> <p>In relation to the Supplier Directory the Board expressed concern at the number of new suppliers set ups being carried out each month.</p>	

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

BEB12 ANNUAL EFFICIENCY STATEMENT BACKWARD LOOK 2006/7

The Board was presented with details of the Annual Efficiency Statement – Backward Look for 2006/7, which had been submitted to Government in July 2007.

A target of £6.45bn in efficiency gains had been set by Central Government for the local government sector. This had to be achieved over a three year period to 31 March 2008. Each local authority was required to make 2.5% efficiency gains each year. For Halton, the target equated to annual gains of £2.5m and a total of £7.5m over three years.

The report detailed guidance from Government explaining how efficiency gains could be achieved, the percentage of cashable gains needed and how this would be achieved.

All Council's were required to submit their 2006/7 AES Backward Look by July 2007. The submission required approval of the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer. To meet the submission timetable, officers of the Efficiency Strategy Group had identified the efficiency gains arising in 2006/7. These had been incorporated into the AES Backward Look, which was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Efficiency Statement – Backward Look 2006/7 be noted.

BEB13 FORMATION OF WORKING GROUPS

The Board received a report suggesting the forming of two small Members sub-groups to examine closely Council Policy and action in one or two key issues of efficiency. The sub-groups would regularly report their activities to the Board.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Two small member groups be established;

(2) The topic areas be agreed as

- shared services developments and procurement

- business efficiency of departmental structures

(3) Members interested in serving on those groups put their names forward to the Chairman; and

(4) Authority be delegated to the Chairman to agree the membership of the two member groups, from the names put forward in (3) above.

BEB14 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100(1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

BEB15 AGENCY STAFF

The Board was advised of the work that had been

undertaken to ensure that the Council had effective procurement arrangements in place when using Agency staff.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

BEB16 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Board received a report which gave a summary of the work undertaken by Internal Audit for the period April to June 2007.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Internal Audit Quarter 1 progress report be noted; and
- (2) that there are no outstanding significant control issues identified through the work of Internal Audit that have implications for the Council's annual governance statement, be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.