

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

*At a meeting of the Business Efficiency Board held on Wednesday, 22 November 2017
at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors M. Lloyd Jones (Chair), Joe Roberts (Vice-Chair),
J. Bradshaw, C. Loftus, MacManus, McDermott, Philbin and J. Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors N. Plumpton Walsh and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. Dawson, I. Leivesley, M. Murphy and A. Scott

Also in attendance: Mark Heap, Grant Thornton (External Auditors)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Chair reported on the sad passing of Councillor Arthur Cole, who had been a member of the Board and had contributed to its work for a number of years.

The Board stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

BEB19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2017 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

BEB20 PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER 2017/18

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided a progress update of actions in the Corporate Risk Register 2017/18.

The report contained a progress commentary on the management and mitigation of the corporate risk register for the year.

The Board reviewed the robustness of the Corporate Risk Register and the adequacy of the associated risk management arrangements. It was reported that at Directorate level, arrangements were in place for the high-risk mitigation measures on the Directorate Risk Registers to be reviewed and updated at mid-year. Progress on these was reported to Management Team and to relevant Policy and Performance Boards.

Following a discussion by Members, it was agreed that a direction of travel indicator be included in future updates to enable the Board to better consider the risks where there had been significant changes to scoring. In addition, a report would be brought to the Board on how the Council was responding to the General Data Protection Regulations, due to be introduced in 2018.

RESOLVED: That the progress on actions be noted.

BEB21 EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE REPORT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update from Grant Thornton (External Auditors) regarding:

- Progress made in delivering their responsibilities as the Council's External Auditors; and
- A summary of emerging national issues and developments that could be relevant to the work of the Board.

Mark Heap, Engagement Lead from Grant Thornton, attended the meeting to present the report and then dealt with Members' questions.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

BEB22 FRAUD AND CORRUPTION UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which provided an update on the Council's Fraud and Corruption arrangements.

The report provided details of:-

- reported fraud and corruption from 2016/17;
- a summary of whistleblowing complaints received;

- a summary of the results from the 2016/17 National Fraud Initiative; and
- developments in the Council's counter fraud and corruption developments.

Following a discussion by Members, it was agreed that future reports would contain comparative data for previous years.

Operational
Director - Finance

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the fraud and corruption update be received;
- 2) the amended Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and the Fraud Response Plan be incorporated into the next update of the Council's Constitution; and
- 3) the update to the Council's Fraud Sanction and Prosecution Policy be approved.

BEB23 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 item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) 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 outweighed that 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 Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

BEB24 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Divisional Manager, Audit, Procurement and Operational Finance, which provided Members with a summary of internal audit work completed since the last progress report in September 2017. The report also provided details of progress against the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan.

It was noted that a total of eleven Internal Audit reports had been finalised since the last progress report. An overall assurance opinion was provided for each audit engagement. It was reported that there had been a number of unplanned pieces of audit work so far, although this had not had a significant impact on planned work and the audit team remained on course to substantially complete the programme of planned audits by year-end.

It was reported that the Council's internal audit arrangements were subject to a five-yearly external review to assess compliance against the standards. As previously reported, a peer review had been undertaken in September 2017, to review and assess conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The draft report had been received, which concluded that the Council's arrangements conformed with the Standards. The report and associated Action Plan would be reported to the February meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the update on progress against the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan be received.

Meeting ended at 7.33 p.m.