

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

At a meeting of the Business Efficiency Board held on Wednesday, 14 November 2012 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors A. Lowe (Chairman), M Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chairman), Cole, Fry, Lea, McDermott, Macmanus, N.Plumpton Walsh, Roberts, Ratcliffe and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: E. Dawson, T. Dean, M. Simpson and C. Williams

Also in attendance: M. Thomas and C. Williams

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

BEB16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2012 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

BEB17 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER - PROGRESS COMMENTARY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which included a copy of the Corporate Risk Register. The report also set out progress made on the management of the governance of corporate risks.

The Council had a responsibility to manage both internal and external risks as a key component of good corporate governance and had prepared a Corporate Risk Register to minimise the risks of damage or loss.

It was noted the original report came to the Board in February 2012 where it was agreed that progress would be reported bi-annually. The report set out the progress and activities that had taken place over the last 6 months.

Members were advised that the report had been to Management Team and was recommended that the Register be updated in April 2013 with an additional risk of

'Maintenance and Management of Community Expectations' being added, in light of the continuing reduction of Government grants.

The Corporate Risk Register was appended to the report for consideration.

Arising from the report the Board discussed how the Council could manage public expectations of the organisation and felt that communicating the message of the Council's capacity and capability to provide services was important.

Members discussed the Risk Register and it was noted that it was available on the website. Members also asked about the effects on resilience and emergency preparedness in the light of reducing resources. It was agreed that this be included in the 'capacity and resilience' section in future.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

BEB18 2011/12 ANNUAL CLAIMS AND RETURNS REPORT

The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Finance which provided the Audit Commission's report following the audit of 2011/12 grant claims and returns. The report was presented by the new external auditors, Grant Thornton, on behalf of the Audit Commission.

The Grant Claims and Returns Report summarised the findings from the reviews of the Council's 2011/12 grant claims and returns completed by the Audit Commission. A copy of the 2011/12 Grant Claims and Returns report was appended to the report for consideration.

Mike Thomas and Colette Williams from Grant Thornton advised Members that the external audit team certified four grant claim returns with a total value of £123.6m, which was detailed in a full summary in the report. A full review was carried out on one claim and a limited review was carried out on two claims. Details of the difference between full and limited reviews was appended to the report together with a brief explanation of the certification regime.

The external audit team reported the following:

- they were able to fully certify all four of the Council's claims and returns;
- they identified no issues relating to the control environment for claims and returns which required reporting to grant paying departments;
- there were no recommendations arising from the certification work; and
- there was no outstanding audit work on 2011/12 claims and returns to transfer to the Council's new audit supplier, Grant Thornton.

Members were advised of two very minor amendments, details of which were set out in the report for information and did not affect the grant entitlement overall.

The Board wished to place on record its thanks to the Finance Management and Revenues and Benefits Section for the hard work carried out over the year.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Commission's report set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

BEB19 DECLARATIONS OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided details of the system used for declaration of gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers of the Council.

It was reported that Democratic Services maintained the Register of Gifts and Hospitality and Members were required to declare and register any offers of gifts or hospitality worth £25 or more received in connection with official duties as a Member, together with details of the person who made the offer or gave the gift. It was noted that this must be completed within 28 days of receipt.

The report further set out details of when the Register was inspected and the Standards Committee received an annual report on its contents, details of Officer's requirement to declare gifts and hospitality, where the information was stored and figures of entries made. It was noted that from May 2011 there had been 12 entries made by Members and 21 entries made by Officers.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

BEB20 EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director,

Policy and Resources, which informed Members of progress made to date with the Efficiency Programme.

The report set out updates on progress to date of current workstreams as follows:

- review of Operational Fleet & Client Transport (wave 2);
- Transactional / Non-Transactional: Process Review (wave 2);
- review of income and charging (wave 3);
- review of the Contact Centre (wave 3);
- review of Waste Management (wave 3); and
- review of Child Protection (Children in Need Service)(wave 4)

It was further noted that As-Is reports for Policy and Strategy, Performance and Improvement and Communications and Marketing (wave 4), had been completed and presented to the Efficiency Programme Board.

The Board also discussed the new telephone systems in the call centre in relation to waiting times and technology issues. In response it was noted that a report providing this information could be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.