

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2007  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Flexible Working  
**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of the Board the work of the North West Flexible Working Group.

To seek approval from the Board for Halton to develop a programme of flexible working as an exemplar for local government best practice.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) The report be noted;
- (2) The Executive Board approves the proposed actions outlined in this report;
- (3) Halton develop a programme of flexible working as an exemplar for local government best practice.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The attached documents set out the objectives of the NW Flexible Working Group. The need for the Group was identified out of the "Home-working in England's Northwest" project supported by the NWDA. The Group is chaired by Peter Connor from BT, and Redbrick Enterprises Ltd. acts as secretariat.

The Chief Executive has been asked to represent Local Authority interests on the Group.

### **3.2 The Mission**

To create social and economic prosperity – and contribute to tackling the developing climate change agenda – by increasing opportunity through flexible working.

### **3.3 Targeted Outcomes**

To raise awareness of the benefits of flexible working.

To receive and share best practice.

To showcase exemplar projects through case studies.

To develop new flexible work opportunities.

To signpost to recognised support groups and networks those who wish to develop new and existing flexible working opportunities.

To achieve a step change in thinking in respect of flexible working.

### 3.4 **Prospectus**

The attached Prospectus is “work in progress” and seeks to develop the NW Flexible Working Initiative.

### 3.5 The NW Flexible Working Group are asking partners a number of questions. These are:

**“We would welcome your views on the Prospectus.**

Across Local Government and the public/private/third sector there are many examples of ground-breaking projects and best practice in flexible working. The NW Flexible Working Group is keen to showcase these to celebrate progress to date and share best practice.

**Please tell us about your experiences.**

**Do you have any exemplar projects we can showcase?**

We are also keen to work with those who wish to develop new and existing projects to maximise the opportunities from Flexible Working and support new starts.

**Do you have any new ideas or projects utilising flexible working?**

**What support do you need to deliver these ideas/projects?**

**How can we help?**

**We would also welcome any other ideas you have to develop the flexible working agenda.**

**Are you aware of any other existing groups who are working in this area and who we could work with to share ideas and resources?”**

## **4.0 IMPACT ON HALTON**

- 4.1 Halton has a number of flexible working pilots operating at present. These are regularly monitored and evaluated.
- 4.2 A “Home/Work Balance” Officer Group is also exploring how best to maximise flexible working to enhance service quality and efficiency and at the same time improve terms & conditions for employees. A “win-win” scenario.
- 4.3 Halton has an excellent track record of innovation (e.g. The Benefits Bus) and is continually striving to develop new ways of working. This programme will add value in this respect.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Flexible working can deliver significant efficiency gains in addition to raising staff morale and creating new opportunities.

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 As an equal opportunities employer Halton sees real benefit in developing innovative flexible working patterns.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 Flexible working presents different challenges and all home working or alternative methods of working are fully risk assessed prior to implementation.

## **8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

- 8.1 Flexible working provides real opportunities to those who find normal working patterns and arrangements difficult. Flexible working will enhance considerably opportunities for many groups currently disadvantaged and out of employment and training.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- (1) NW Flexible Working Group – Leaflet
- (2) NW Flexible Working Group - Prospectus