

Downtown Liverpool In Business

DLIB

PRESS RELEASE – 30th March 2005

FPB demands 'bonfire' of Liverpool quangos

The Forum of Private Business has lent its backing to a campaign against "excessive government" in Liverpool, saying that there are too many quangos and publicly funded agencies and the city needs more private sector workers and less bureaucrats.

The FPB, a lobby group for 25,000 small and medium sized businesses across the UK, based in Cheshire, says that in addition to the services offered by the city council to help businesses in Liverpool, it has identified at least 17 quangos that are concerned with regeneration and engage with the business community. These include a Liverpool office of Government Office North West (which employs 19 people) and an office for the North West Development Agency.

Downtown Liverpool in Business has launched a campaign against "excessive government" in Liverpool, saying that the business community is fed up with having to deal with so many agencies and quangos, and that the excessive number is a barrier to inward investment, job creation and regeneration.

Len Collinson, national chairman of the Forum of Private Business, and a successful businessman who lives on Merseyside, says that he agrees with the thrust of the DLIB campaign. "We are concerned that the economy of Liverpool is too much weighted towards the public sector", he said. Recent figures showed that 38% of Liverpoolians worked for the state, compared with a national average of 25%.

"We do know", said Mr Collinson, "that productivity in the public sector is falling". A Government report last year found that productivity in the public sector had fallen by 10% since 1997.

"One of the problems in Merseyside is that the increase in gross added value is from the public sector, and gross added value in public sector jobs is lower than gross added value in manufacturing jobs, for example".

Mr Collinson said that one problem was that these organisations took key decisions behind closed doors and there was little opportunity for the business community to make its voice heard before decisions were taken. "Complexity and a lack of transparency and accountability make it hard for local business people and residents to influence events", said Mr Collinson.

"If Liverpool is to prosper, we need more workers in the private sector and less bureaucrats, and a simplified system of Government help and advice that the wealth creators find easy to access".

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