

**REPORT TO:** Business Efficiency Board  
**DATE:** 29 September 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Resources  
**SUBJECT:** Efficiency Programme Update

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:**

To inform the Board of progress made to date with the Efficiency Programme (refer to Appendix 1).

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

The board is asked to note the contents of the report.

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

None

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None identified at this stage. Activity within the Efficiency Programme may result in recommendations to change policies as individual workstreams progress.

**5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None identified at this stage

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

The Efficiency Programme is designed to improve the effectiveness of services across the authority and reduce costs associated with service delivery. This affects all of the Council's priorities.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

Given the financial constraints facing the Council in the immediate and medium terms, failure to continue to progress Efficiency Programme workstreams into future stages may result in the Efficiency Programme not achieving its objectives – primarily service improvement and cost reduction. This could result in services being underfunded, with departments unable to meet the costs of staff and other resources required to deliver to the community of Halton.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

N/A

## **9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

N/A

## **Halton Council Efficiency Programme**

### **Progress update; September 2010**

The programme is now well into Wave 2 with a number of workstreams established and others starting. Each of these is bringing its own challenges.

To summarise, progress to date against each workstream is given below.

### **Transactional Support Services Workstream**

Workstream now closed – residual work being picked up by a manager group in the Resources directorate, along with the Wave 2 Process Review workstream detailed below.

### **Non-Transactional Support Services Workstream**

Workstream now closed – residual work being picked up by a manager group in the Resources directorate, along with the Wave 2 Process Review workstream detailed below.

### **Review of Open Spaces**

Work continues on ongoing elements of the transition plan to ensure that savings are sustainable. The workstream implementation team is now meeting quarterly in line with financial reporting periods. Quarter 1 of 10/11 has been reviewed. Next meeting 12<sup>th</sup> October.

### **Review of Property Services**

Redesign and restructuring of the function is currently in progress. The cleaning service aspect is to be market tested. Efficiency Programme Office and Operational Director are working together to ensure that savings are realised and recorded.

### **Review of Revenues & Benefits & Halton Direct Link**

A range of improvement options have been developed as this workstream has progressed. A number have been implemented and savings of £74,000 have been recorded to date.

In response to one of the improvement opportunities – front line service delivery, an Action Based Research Project to trial a different way of front line service delivery was conducted during June / July. An evaluation of this has been completed and considered by workstream board. A range of options have subsequently been drawn up are currently being considered.

Work continues to pursue other outstanding improvement opportunities that the workstream board has committed to.

## **ICT Support Services Review**

Following the close of consultation on a new structure for the service (17<sup>th</sup> July), consultation responses were considered and a final structure drawn up and agreed. The recruitment process commenced early September and is ongoing.

Next step for the workstream is to draw up a baseline of systems, hardware and software operated across the authority. This will be evaluated and opportunities for rationalisation and subsequent savings are to be identified.

## **Review of Contracted Services to Schools**

'To-Be' proposal report completed. This contains details of proposed changes to SLA charges where cost recovery is not being achieved.

Proposed charges to be agreed. To be confirmed for publication in November following consideration by the Efficiency Programme Board. Consultation arrangements to be agreed.

## **Review of Operational Fleet & Client Transport**

Outline Business Case and Project Initiation Document agreed. Work continues on the creation of baselines: vehicles, plant and transport contracts. Exploration of opportunities for collaborative working has commenced.

Project plan to be drawn up for each area of scope:

- The usage of operational fleet across Council departments
- The fleet management function (procurement, maintenance, fuelling, etc)
- Client Transport arrangements (use of contracts and transport suppliers)

Each of the above areas will be managed as a separate project within the workstream.

## **Transactional / Non-Transactional: Process Review**

An Outline Business Case has been produced and presented to Programme Board on 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. A workstream board has been convened (Lead is Strategic Director – CYP). Projects will operate on a task and finish basis within the workstream.

First four 'task and finish' projects have commenced, these will cover;

- HR Processes – to streamline across the organisation
- Implementation of Document Imaging & Workflow to enable more reliable and cost effective movement of documentation around the organisation.
- Review of Invoice Payment Process (P2P) to streamline and adopt a common process
- Review of officer authorisation processes

Each of the above projects will result in more efficient working practices with a reduced resource requirement.

Project plans are being drawn up for each project with outcomes, resources and risks defined.

Analysis work to commence with a view to drawing up proposals to take each project forward.

### **Review of Income & Charging**

An Outline Business Case has been produced and presented to Programme Board on 16<sup>th</sup> Sept.

The workstream will look at three aspects of income and charging:

- Do services that we currently charge for achieve cost recovery?
- Are there services provided that we do not charge for, but should consider doing so?
- Are there income generation opportunities available that we could exploit?

A baseline of existing income streams is currently being drafted.

Analysis of charges to commence to establish extent of cost recovery.