

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board
DATE: 9 November 2011
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & 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

None under the meaning of the Act

Halton Council Efficiency Programme

Progress update - November 2011

Progress to date against each of the current workstreams is given below.

Proposals for Wave 4 of the Efficiency Programme are currently being drawn up.

Review of Operational Fleet & Client Transport (Wave 2)

'As-Is' analysis of the fleet management and maintenance function is continuing. It is expected to be completed in November.

Initial improvement opportunities continue to be followed up as part of the 'To Be' phase. These will feed into the design of service provision going forward.

£99,000 of the £400,000 savings target has been achieved to date.

Transactional / Non-Transactional: Process Review (Wave 2)

Updates on the projects that are currently part of this workstream:

- HR Processes – An IT based 'I want HR' portal has been tested and will be implemented in the last quarter of 2011. This will automate the payment of mileage claims for the majority of users, reducing paper based processing in HR significantly. Further processes will be automated once this piece of work has completed.
- Document Imaging & Workflow – Implementation of a system is starting in the HR Division. This will eliminate the need for paper files, and will facilitate the moving around of work electronically. Implementation to take place over the next few months.
- Review of Invoice Payment Process (P2P) - Reduction of the number of manual invoices to be paid continues. This will be assisted by the implementation of an automated system that has been designed by ICT services, to be implemented in the last quarter of 2011.
- Review of officer authorisation processes – A new rationalised process is in place for the setting up of a Certifying Officer. A review of individual authorisations undertaken by officers at all levels is nearing completion and will free up management capacity across the organisation.
- Review of the use of Outlook & Telephony. This is focussing on better access to information about the availability of people across the organisation. Work will link to the roll out of the new telephony system to enhance productivity.

Following testing, Lync is currently being implemented in the Children & Enterprise Directorate.

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

Savings are to be quantified as they are realised, this will generally be once new processes, procedures and systems have become operational.

Review of Income & Charging (Wave 3)

Work continues to establish the extent of full cost recovery of services that are charged for by the Council.

Review of the Contact Centre (Wave 3)

A 'To-Be' design for the service has now been approved. It is anticipated that consultation on a 'To-Be' proposal will commence on 31st October.

Review of Business Development & Regeneration (Wave 3)

An initial 'To-Be' design has been drawn up for this workstream and is currently being developed.

Work continues to review the operations of the Markets Service and analysis of the utilisation of the Council's Industrial Estate portfolio is continuing.

Review of Development Control/Building Control (Wave 3)

As-Is report is nearing completion. This will illustrate the cost of the service as it currently operates and will highlight opportunities for income generation in the future. Process analysis to establish how we deal with planning applications is being undertaken. This information will be brought together to inform the design of a 'To-Be' model.

Review of Adults' and Children's Social Care Commissioning (Wave 3)

Outline Business Case drafted. Baseline work is continuing.

Review of Community Services (Wave 3)

'As-Is' report has been completed and will be presented to the Efficiency Programme Board in November.

Traded Services Workstream (Wave 3)

Trading opportunities are being considered on a phased basis in line with the Outline Business Case for the workstream.

Crossover identified with other workstreams to capture any additional opportunities.