

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board
DATE: 27 February 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources
PORTFOLIO: Resources
SUBJECT: Efficiency Programme Update
WARDS: All

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

Up to date workstream information is available via the Efficiency Programme Office's team site at: <http://intranet/sites/Teams/Efficiency/Pages/Home.aspx> .

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

It should be noted that since commencing in 2009, the Efficiency Programme, and activity associated with it, has identified savings in the region of over £11m. This has assisted the Council in the difficult task of dealing with the budget gap.

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.

As resources become ever more restricted, the organisation should remain aware of the possibility of ‘double counting’ of savings. The Efficiency Programme Office and Financial Management Division will work together to manage this risk.

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 – February 2013

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

Review of Operational Fleet & Client Transport (Wave 2)

This workstream is on track to achieve its total stated savings target of £400,000 by end of March 2013 (£200,000 of this was achieved in 2011/12).

The feasibility of an Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) has been considered as part of this workstream. The total integration of all transport functions and budgets would not appear to be viable for a variety of reasons. As the council's transport functions are closely linked to service delivery anyway, the opportunity for significant savings is not apparent.

Review of Income & Charging (Wave 3)

Programme Office resources have been deployed to other workstreams so progress on this one has been limited. There is nothing new to report at this point in time.

Review of the Contact Centre (Wave 3)

On-going monitoring of operations through normal management activity continues.

An evaluation of the new service delivery model, which considers operational data for the first six months of operation (from 1st April to 30th September 2012) along with qualitative feedback is nearing completion. The qualitative aspect of the evaluation is being carried out independently by a colleague from the Merseyside Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

Savings achieved: £418,000 net (against a target of £110,000)

Review of Waste Management (Wave 3)

Efficiency Programme Office is working with Waste Management Divisional Manager and senior officers to progress initial improvement options.

Commercial Waste service, School Waste collection and Bulky Waste service are being examined in detail with a view to ensure that service delivery arrangements are appropriate and all costs incurred are recovered.

Procurement of a waste disposal contract for the period 2013 to 2015/16 is in progress. Once complete, a view can be taken on reconfiguration of rounds.

Savings target for this workstream is £300,000

**Review of Policy & Strategy,
Review of Performance & Improvement,
Review of Communications & Marketing (Wave 4)**

Following the development of options for future delivery of these services, a consultation period was held with staff and trade unions. This concluded on 4th January 2013. Final structures have been drawn up and the following changes will be made:

- Policy & Performance activity will be streamlined and devolved to the three directorates to be incorporated into existing management arrangements. The Centres of Excellence for Performance & Improvement and Policy & Strategy will be discontinued.
- The Communications & Marketing Division will be discontinued. A Customer Intelligence Unit will be set up alongside a Marketing, Design & Communications Unit. This will streamline and refocus activity.

The new structures will come into effect at the end of April 2013.

There is a savings target of £125,000 across the three areas. Anticipated savings are in the region of £580,000.

Review of Child Protection (Children in Need Service) (Wave 4)

Following production of the As-Is report in August 2012, a range of 'To-Be' options were drawn up and a number of measures have been implemented to minimise risk across the child protection system. These include temporary addition of resource to some areas to generate more productive social worker time. The impact of this is currently being evaluated.

Work is on-going to progress the remaining options.

There is no savings target for this workstream.

Review of Employment, Learning & Skills (Wave 4)

This review covers all activity within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division. The As-Is position is currently being drawn up. A savings target will be confirmed as that stage is completed.

Review of Intermediate Care (Adult Social Care) (Wave 4)

This is a new workstream and is currently at scoping stage. This will broadly cover pathways in place for people discharged from hospital who require rehabilitation prior to returning home, or require 'reablement' support in order to regain independence.

Savings target to be confirmed.