

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board
DATE: 26 November 2014
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://hbc/Teams/EFFIC/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 nearly £12m. 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 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 have worked together, and continue to do so 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 – November 2014

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

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

The findings of the review indicated that the service delivers quality care in a flexible way. Potential for savings was found to be low. Accordingly activity on this workstream has been de-prioritised.

The review remains in the programme on the basis that there is scope for improvement in some business processes.

Review of Library Services (Wave 5)

This review is now in the 'To-Be' phase. Following a period of consultation with the public, Executive Board agreed a new opening hours' model to be implemented in April 2015.

A revised structure has been drawn up and staff were formally consulted on this between 13th October and 12th November 2014. The consultation responses are being analysed and a final structure will be developed and communicated to staff in early January.

The Mobile Library service has been subject to a further, specific, consultation which ended 31st October 2014. Executive Board will take a decision on future provision during December, and that decision will feed into the review.

It is anticipated that the new structure will be implemented mid-April 2015. Savings in the region of £450,000 are sought from this review.

Review of Learning & Achievement (Wave 5)

This review has focussed on the aspects of the 0-19 Division; which provides school improvement services and support, and the Portage service.

Some structural revisions have been developed, and are now being implemented to generate additional capacity within the service, but within existing budget provision. Some nominal savings will be achieved as a result (circa £20,000 per annum for 2015/16)

Review of Halton Supported Housing Network (Wave 5)

A range of To-Be options for this service were considered by Efficiency Programme Board in early November.

Further work has been directed on a revised staff structure, designed to generate savings and optimise capacity within the service. This work will be completed through December 2014 / January 2015. A revised service model will be taken forward as the 'To-Be' model following that work.

Supplier Relationship Review (Wave 5)

As part of the review, a number of the Council's external contracts have been selected on a pilot basis to be examined in order to establish the potential for efficiencies within existing contracts.

This links to Procurement activity and the workstream is being delivered jointly by the Efficiency and Procurement functions.

As a result of this review, the Council's Childcare Voucher scheme for staff has been re-procured. Savings of circa £5,000 per annum have been secured.

The Council's security contracts have been reviewed. The findings of the review have informed the process procurement process which is now underway to seek a new contracts from the market place when the current contracts end in May 2015. There is also scope to generate some incidental savings within the current contracts prior to them ending. These are currently being considered.

The review is now focussed on the Council's Mechanical, Electrical and Building Maintenance contracts.

Review of Highways Services (Wave 5)

Service areas to be in scope are Bridge & Highway Maintenance Division, Highway Development Division, and Traffic.

Due to the profiling and prioritisation of activity within the Programme, this review remains at Outline Business Case stage.

An assessment of potential savings is to be taken by the Efficiency Programme Board. This will inform any future activity and priority for this review.

Reviews of Premium Pay, use of Agency Workers and use of Casual Staff (Wave 6)

These three reviews have passed Outline Business Case stage, and are now in progress.

They will be delivered separately, but are interdependent in their nature as they focus upon additional payments made to staff for a range of duties associated with a variety of roles, the payment of overtime in a range of services, and the use of peripheral staff to augment the Council's regular workforce where peaks and troughs occur in workloads.

Initial As-Is reporting is due back to the Efficiency Programme Board in early 2015.