

**REPORT TO:** Business Efficiency Board

**DATE:** 12 November 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

**TITLE:** Development of the Efficiency Programme

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To outline and discuss the Board's role in the delivery of the Efficiency Programme following the recent presentation to members.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That:**

- (1) the Board receives the detailed delivery programme at its next meeting; and**
- (2) a report on progress against the programme be brought to subsequent meetings of the Board.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Executive Board has agreed to the engagement of KPMG to assist the authority in developing a long term efficiency programme given the financial challenges the authority will be facing over the next three years. Working with the Council, the brief was to look across all areas to identify ways of making cashable efficiencies in such a way to ensure that service reductions were avoided.

3.2 The conclusion of the work identified six work streams where it was felt that by doing the business differently the Council would be able to meet the challenge of achieving cashable efficiency savings but also maintaining and, indeed, enhancing service standards. These areas are detailed below:

- The potential to reduce overheads through a rationalisation of current management structures.
- To improve the Council's approach to the provision of its administrative support services.
- To take the opportunity to refine the balance between corporate and directorate roles in a number of core areas and improve resource deployment.
- Review the Council's third party spend and develop its procurement expertise.

- To deliver a programme of option assessments to determine the most suitable form of delivery for all services.
- To use the opportunities provided by technology and the Council's infrastructure to make services more efficient.

3.3 These six areas will be developed into individual projects to run over the next three to four years. That development work will take place between now and Christmas in order for the programme to commence from January 2009. The sum of those projects will form the Efficiency Programme. The Executive Board at its meeting on 20 November 2008 will be asked to approve the operational arrangements required to deliver the programme.

3.4 In developing a programme, a communications strategy will also be developed to keep staff informed of how the programme may affect them and full consultation with the Trade Unions will take place at all stages.

3.5 This Board will have an important role in overseeing the delivery of the programme and ensuring that the cashable efficiency savings are realised. In order to do that the Board will need to be aware of the overall programme in order to support its effective delivery. The timetable will be presented at the next meeting and from thereon in, the Board will receive a report at each subsequent meeting, to ensure the programme is delivered on time and meets its overall objectives.

3.6 Like all local authorities the Council faces significant challenges over the coming years in balancing its budget and maintaining and enhancing service standards. Careful monitoring of the programme will play a key role in achieving those objectives.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The development of the programme is fully in line with the Council's sixth priority "Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency" – "To improve continuously the quality and efficiency of services".

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The full involvement of staff and Trade Unions in the delivery of the programme will be essential if it is to be delivered successfully. The Council has existing processes which work well which will be fully utilised as part of the process.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Efficient use of the resources the Council has available will ensure that they are directed at delivering the priorities identified by the Council.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Efficient use of the resources the Council has available will ensure that they are directed at delivering the priorities identified by the Council.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Efficient use of the resources the Council has available will ensure that they are directed at delivering the priorities identified by the Council.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Efficient use of the resources the Council has available will ensure that they are directed at delivering the priorities identified by the Council.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Efficient use of the resources the Council has available will ensure that they are directed at delivering the priorities identified by the Council.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The key risk is that given the overall pressures on the Council's finances that this will start to have a negative impact on service performance and lead to public dissatisfaction with Council services. The efficiency programme is aimed at avoiding this by challenging the way things are currently undertaken, being innovative in the way services are delivered in the future and ensuring that resources are directed to supporting and delivering front line services.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 Equality impact assessments will be undertaken on each element of the programme.

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

- 9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.