

**REPORT TO:** Business Efficiency Board  
**DATE:** 20 January 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy  
**SUBJECT:** Efficiency Programme Update  
**WARD(S):** Boroughwide

### **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: That the board is asked to note the contents of the report.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

3.1 None

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified at this stage. Activity within the Efficiency Programme may result in recommendations to change policies in the future.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified at this stage

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

6.1 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**

7.1 Given the financial constraints facing the Council in the next three years, and beyond, failure to progress the Efficiency Programme 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**

8.1 N/A

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

9.1 N/A

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Halton Council Efficiency Programme**

#### **Progress update; January 2010**

#### **General overview of the Efficiency Programme:**

Workstreams currently underway as part of Wave 1 of the programme are;

- Management Structures
- Transactional Support Services
- Non-Transactional Support Services
- Service Delivery Options (Pilot – Open Spaces)
- Customer Relations & ICT improvement
- Property

Across the Council, a large number of vacancies have been held which together with the Management Structures savings detailed below will achieve the £500,000 saving for 2009/10 set out in the Budget.

A progress report on each of the Wave 1 work-streams are detailed below.

#### **Management Structures Workstream:**

Following consultation in the autumn of 2009, revised Management Structures were agreed. Assimilations to posts at Operational Director and Divisional Manager level were completed in December, and recruitment to the remaining posts is nearing completion.

A number of post holders have expressed an interest to leave the Council under the provision of the Voluntary Severance Schemes, and the first of these has now left.

A report to the Efficiency Programme Board in December 2009 indicated that initial savings generated by the work-stream to date are £270,000 for 2009/10 and £836,000 for 2010/11. (derived partial implementation)

#### **Next Steps:**

Complete recruitment process to management structures.  
New Management Structures to be operational 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

## **Non-Transactional & Transactional Support Services workstream:**

These two workstreams are being delivered together. All support service functions across the Council have been reviewed.

These services are:

- Human Resources;
- Finance;
- Administration;
- Policy, Strategy and Performance Management;
- Democratic Services;
- Project & Programme Management
- Procurement and Contract Management; and
- Communications and Marketing.

Following consultation with staff and trade unions, new structures have been drawn up and approved. These new structures contain significantly fewer posts than the existing structures.

At the end of December 2009, staff who held posts that remain broadly unchanged were assimilated into posts in the new structures.

Recruitment to new posts on these structures has commenced, and staff who are 'at-risk', have been formally notified and are now being invited to apply for posts on the new structures.

Expressions of interest from staff who wish to leave the Council under the provision of the Voluntary Severance Schemes are currently being processed.

### Next Steps:

Complete recruitment process to new structures.

Process expressions of interest for voluntary severance

Configure and implement new 'Centres of Excellence', to be operational 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

## **Service Delivery Options Workstream – Open Spaces (Pilot):**

This was the first 'service review' undertaken as part of the Efficiency Programme. The transition plan adopted by the Council detailed 5 areas to be targeted to achieve savings and improvement over a three year period. (Structure, Improved Financial Management, Productivity Improvements, Flexible Service Delivery and Charging Arrangements)

Following consultation with staff and trade unions, a new structure has been approved. Appointment to the new structure has been practically completed.

The other elements of the transition plan are being progressed by a dedicated workstream team.

Savings have been identified totalling £531,000. This is in line with target.

Next Steps:

Progress activity on the Improved Financial Management, Productivity Improvements, Flexible Service Delivery and Charging Arrangements elements of the Transition Plan.

**Customer Relations & ICT Improvement Workstream:**

This work-stream was part of Wave 1 of the Programme and has now been largely completed and was been formally closed in November 2009.

One requirement of this work-stream was the introduction of a rationalised ICT services. This is now being progressed as a standalone work-stream in Wave 2 of the Programme – Review of ICT Support Services (see below).

Savings generated from the renegotiation of hardware and software contracts have been recycled into the Council's commitment to meet obligations under the governments 'Code of Connection' requirements.

**Property Workstream:**

Following an assessment of the Property management function by CIPFA Property Services and an evaluation of the outcome of that review, it has been agreed that the operational Property Management function will be soft market tested.

Preparations for this market testing process have now commenced.

Next Steps:

Enter into and complete market testing exercise to determine future provision arrangements for operational Property Management services.

## Wave 2 work-streams

The work-streams outlined above are Wave 1 work-streams. These have been running since the commencement of the Efficiency Programme in early 2009 and are now well advanced.

There are a number of work-streams scheduled for Wave 2 of the Efficiency Programme. The first of these started in October 2009, and several more are scheduled to start in the near future.

The table below sets out the timescales for these work-streams. Further updates will be made available to the board in due course.

<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Status</b>
Revenues & Benefits and HDL	Sep 2009 to Mar 2010	In progress
Review of ICT Support Services	Sep 2009 to Mar 2010	In progress
Review of Contracted Services to Schools	Dec 2009 to Mar 2010	Initial start-up stage
Review of Asset Use	Feb 2010 to May 2010	Planned
Review of Vehicle Fleet Management	Apr 2010 to Jul 2010	Planned
Shared Support Services – 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase: review of Centre of Excellence processes	May 2010 onwards	Planned
Review of Income & Charging	Aug 2010 to Nov 2010	Planned