

Report for Information

Report to	Executive 24 June 2009
Report of	Director of Transformation
Subject	Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Programme – progress report

Item
6

Purpose

To update Executive on progress against the corporate improvement and efficiency programme.

Recommendations

To note the report.

Financial Consequences

The financial consequences of this report are nil. However, it is likely that the improvement and efficiency programme will generate a range of proposal to make changes to both the Council's policy and financial frameworks. Any such proposed changes will therefore need to be reported to the appropriate member groups for consideration and approval.

Risk Assessment

The improvement and efficiency programme is comprehensive, and the outcomes could possibly affect all of the council's services. As part of the normal project methodology, each workstream project will carry out a risk assessment to evaluate the potential impact of any proposed policy, financial or service changes and this assessment will be included in relevant reports to members.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Aiming for excellence – ensuring the Council is efficient in its use of resources, is effective in delivering its plans, is a good employer and communicates effectively with its customers, staff and partners".

Executive Member: Councillor Waters - Corporate Resources and Governance

Ward: All

Contact Officers

Paul Spencer, Director of Transformation

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Report

Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Programme – progress report

1. Executive on 8 April 2009 agreed to set up a Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Board (CIEB) to advise on the development of a transformation programme for the City Council. This programme is intended to develop a range of options to close a significant budget gap by April 2010, and to ensure that significant improvements are made to key City Council services.
2. Since April, officers have been working to develop a draft transformation programme. Key developments have been:
 - First meeting of the Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Board (CIEB) on 28 May, including a range of external advisers to provide advice and challenge to our emerging improvement plans. The Executive is represented on the CIEB by Cllr Morphew (Chairman), Cllr Morrey and Cllr Waters
 - Set up a Housing Improvement Board to provide specific advice and challenge for the Council's response to the recent Audit Commission review of the housing service
 - Presentation to all members on 17 June to set out the context for the overall transformation programme
 - Presentation to Scrutiny Committee on 18 June to set out the efficiency and improvement context, and identify how the Committee might support the work programme
 - Challenge sessions held with all Heads of Service to identify potential areas for savings, efficiencies and improvements
 - Consultation with all Council managers on possible ideas for efficiency and improvement
 - Managers have started carrying out similar workshops with all staff
 - Work commenced to review the Council's key HR policies including redundancy and redeployment
 - Creation of a range of project teams to explore and develop options for efficiency and improvement. Guidance provided to all volunteers who have asked to get involved in supporting this work
 - Development of a wide range of initial options to deliver significant efficiency options. Business cases for these will now be developed in order to explore which options will be the most beneficial to pursue, for member approval
 - A range of communications activity including internal information via the staff newsletter. External communication with local people and partners

organisations are planned during July 2009

- Initial informal work with the Executive to start developing a new set of corporate priorities and targets for the 2009-2011 period, which will be consistent with the corporate efficiency and improvement goals
 - External tender exercise carried out for a financial diagnostic project to explore how City Council spending patterns compare with other councils, and where potential opportunities for efficiencies might be found. Experienced independent consultancy Deloitte has been appointed to carry out this work
 - External tender exercise underway for “systems thinking” advice and guidance to support managers in reviewing their services. Tenders received and currently being evaluated.
3. Progress so far has been very good, and in particular managers and staff have responded very positively to the challenges. However, timescales are very tight, and we will need to develop broad options for improvement and efficiencies in the next 2 months. Formal approval for implementation will then need to be sought where necessary.
 4. It is planned to report to Executive on a monthly basis with progress on the transformation programme. An oral update will also be provided where necessary.