

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28 July 2009

Meeting held in Committee Room 3 at the Civic
Centre, High Street, Uxbridge



1.	<p>Members Present: Kay Willmott-Denbeigh (Chairman) Michael Markham (Vice-Chairman) Lindsay Bliss Paul Buttivant Janet Duncan Judy Kelly</p> <p>Apologies: Apologies had been received from Councillor Lynne Allen. Councillor Lindsay Bliss attended in her place.</p> <p>Officers Present:</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest:</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes:</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by Chairman.</p>
4.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public:</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items of business would be considered in public.</p>

<p>5.</p>	<p>PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET REPORT 2010/2011 AND QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION REPORT 2009 Budget Report 2010/2011</p> <p>The Head of Finance, in introducing the budget report, advised that the introductory statements of the budget reports were generic to both Planning & Community Services and Environment & Consumer Protection Services.</p> <p>Outlining the reports, he explained the main financial issues, within the context of the Council's overall financial position relating to the financial planning process for 2010/2011 for Planning and Community Services and Environment & Consumer Protection Services (ECP).</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Council was well placed to deal with the challenges ahead and had exceeded the £12m target for balances by the end of 2009/10.</p> <p>Members were asked to note the time table for the medium term financial forecast (MTFF) process timetable.</p> <p>A member asked how financial pressures on the Government would impinge on homelessness and whether it would affect the percentage on care inflation.</p> <p>Officers advised that financial pressures on the Government may impinge on homelessness through cuts in subsidies, and that the social care contract was built around inflation and some would be related to Retail Price Index as part of the figure.</p> <p>The member requested officers to email further details in respect of funding for social care contract.</p> <p>Officers highlighted that following the Service Review of Planning and Community Services group, £960k savings had been generated. It was noted that the key area of income streams were in Development Control and the fees for major applications. However, with the current economic situation, this had become a most volatile area given the significant scale of fees and the limited volume of applications.</p>	<p>Action By: Noting</p>
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	<p>It was noted that the challenge for the group was to review, monitor and evaluate the key planning income streams. Areas such as Land Charges were now more tightly operated.</p> <p>In response to a question raised about value for money not being mentioned in the report, officers advised that value for money was integral to the whole process. The balance between agency staff and permanent staff continued to be under review.</p>	
	<p>Quarterly Performance Information Report 2009</p> <p>Officers presented the report to the Committee and the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there were 13 targets in the Local Area Agreement delivered by Planning and Community Services, which included affordable housing. These were all shown as completed at the end of quarter four and were accepted at the Cabinet meeting in April 2009. • That value for money (£750k), with an overspend of 454k from the slippage in the assignment of the leisure contact for golf. All four tasks in the group’s plan to achieve ‘value for money’ had been reported as being either on track or completed. • Members were advised that all the National Indicators (NI) directly relevant to the group for quarter 4 (Q4) had been completed. It was noted that some targets had not yet been set as they were new and had had no previous data against which performance could be measured. • Officers highlighted that the results achieved in respect of NI157 – was an indication that the Council was not only a level Council, but a strong level Council. <p>The following requests and points were made by the Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chairman requested a breakdown of the 30 complaints and Ombudsman enquiries outlined in the report. Further details in respect of the Arts were requested, as Members wanted to ascertain the level and types of complaints given the high level of use of public libraries, visits to the museums and galleries and engagements in the arts. Details to be circulated to Members. 	<p>Action By: Noting</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member asked how officers planned to make money out of the Arts. Officers responded that this area would be delegated to create opportunities for different productions to be staged and new audiences would be explored. It was noted however, that more clarity would be required in this area. • A member commented that Compass Theatre was currently being operated as a letting venue. When it was controlled by the Council, income generated went straight to the Council. <p>The Head of Sports and Leisure advised that she would investigate and provide further details to Members.</p> <p>Resolved – That the planning and Community Services Budget Report 2010/2011 and Quarterly Performance Information Report 2009 be noted</p>	<p><i>Sue Drummond</i></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION BUDGET REPORT 2010/2011 AND QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION REPORT 2009</p> <p>Budget Report 2010/2011</p> <p>The Head of Finance presented the report and pointed Members to the summary of the key financial issues.</p> <p>It was noted that there were 4 Zero Based Budget (ZBB) review areas which the department would be focusing on, and these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Protection - It was that this was a high spend area for the group, and the focus would be on the wider impact of the Council's successful recycling initiatives. • Highway & Green Spaces - Members noted that £2.5m had been spent on highway maintenance and the review would ensure that external funding opportunities and S106 funds were maximised. • Business Services – It was noted that £4m per annum had been spent on fleet vehicles with £780k on fuel at per annum. With the fuel being a volatile area due to the price of diesel, the review would look at the procurement in the purchase of diesel. 	<p>Action By: Noting</p>

- **Income Generation** – Members noted that the review in this area would look at how the Borough compared with other boroughs. Following a challenge session, a report would be submitted to Cabinet in December

The Chairman questioned how officers would generate income, given the Council's desire to keep costs low.

A member commented that the Council was already three months into the financial year and officers would need to look at measures already in place, managing and monitoring very closely.

Officers advised that no decisions had been made, except to look robustly at better ways of providing services and look for efficiencies in high income generating areas.

In response to comments made, it was noted that work was underway through bench marking to compare against other local authorities. In addition, a corporate grant funding software was now in place, which would assist in applying for more funding.

The Director of Environment and Consumer Protection added that the focus would be on areas which created best opportunities and that this would be an ongoing process for next year and subsequent years.

Quarterly Performance Information Report 2009

Officers brought Members' attention to the following areas of performance:

- Members' enquiries - 96.5% had been answered within 10 working days. It was noted that the improvement was due to a vacant post now being filled.
- All 15 targets in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) to be delivered by the department were shown as being on track at the end of quarter four.
- The department was working closely with Hillingdon Homes to extend estate based recycling facilities.
- Phase1 of town centre improvement had been completed.

Four additional Green Flags had been awarded bringing the total to 14, which exceeded the 11 required to meet the LAA target.

	<p>A 'Place Survey' had been introduced in early October 2008 as part of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment. Feedback from this survey would be reported to the next meeting for information.</p> <p>There had been some minor slippages on 2008/09 Transport for London (TfL) 20mph and Bus Priority programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Medium Term Financial Forecast against the value for money National indicator 179 was on track following the whole service review.• Officers advised that all four tasks in the group plan in respect of the Council of achieving 'value for money' were shown as being on track. <p>Councillor Janet Duncan asked whether there had been an increase in fly tipping following the closure of the waste disposal facility in Rigby Lane; and whether finding alternative measures had been considered.</p> <p>The Director of Environment and Consumer Protection advised that fly tipping was not as bad as had been expected since the closure of the site. The timescale for completing work on the site had been far exceeded by Sita and discussions were still on going.</p> <p>It was noted that the Committee would be updated as soon as work on the site had been completed.</p> <p>The Committee requested further details to be circulated separately in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fly tipping• Complaints breakdown• Unclassified roads needing maintenance (annual survey) <p>Resolved – That Environment and Consumer Protection Budget Report 2010/2011 and Quarterly Performance Information Report 2009 be noted</p>	
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<p>9.</p>	<p>2009/10 WORK PROGRAMME: DRAFT SCOPING REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS</p> <p>Following discussion of the draft scoping reports (detailed below), the Chairman proposed that the Committee select a main topic for review at this meeting, and a select the second topic for review at a later date.</p> <p>On being put to the vote, Members unanimously agreed to choose Street Lighting as the main topic for review in 2009/2010.</p> <p>It was noted that that detailed breakdown of budget information on street lighting would be required and officers would be sent some questions and responses to be included on the agenda for the meeting on 8th September 2009.</p> <p>Members noted that as there had been a review on Anti-social Behaviour in 2006/7, an update would be more appropriate to see what impact there had been and what systems had been put in place following the review. A member added that having an update would not adequately cover the topic and therefore a review should be considered in the future.</p> <p>It was further noted that an update on the School Travel Plan would be reported to the meeting on 8 September 2009.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The Committee resolved that :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Street Lighting be approved as the main review topic for 2009/2010 and selection of a second topic to be decided a future meeting; 2. A revised scoping report on Street Lighting including detailed breakdown of budget to be reported to the meeting on 8th September 2009; 3. Relevant officers, including a Street lighting officer from a neighbouring borough be invited as witnesses to the meeting on 8th September 2009; 4. An update on the School Travel Plan to be reported to the meeting on 8th September 2009; 	<p>Action: Nadia Williams</p>
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	<p>5. For a future meeting, the Committee receive an update on progress so far on its 2006/7 Anti-Social Behaviour Review and their recommendations approved by Cabinet.</p> <p>6. That the Work Programme for 2009/10 be agreed.</p>	
	<p>Draft Scoping Reports for Review in 2009/10</p> <p>Appendix A - Zero Tolerance for Anti-Social Behaviour: Hillingdon's Role</p> <p>The Community Safety Manager introduced the report and explained that nuisance from a neighbour may be classed as anti-social. He advised that however, such nuisance would not be classed as anti-social behaviour in the Community Safety Team.</p> <p>It was noted that the statistics on the Metropolitan Police website showed Hillingdon with the best results in dealing with anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The Chairman asked whether the new youth centres had had any effects in reducing the level of anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Officer's responded that whilst there had been a noticeable change in groups of youths hanging around street corners, there had been no effect in the level of serious anti-social behaviour. To ordinary residents, anti-social behaviour would be greatly dependent on their perception.</p> <p>In response to a question as to whether there had been a reduction in knife crimes in Hillingdon. Members were advised that knife crime in Hillingdon was so low; it would be very hard to measure. Three knife bins had been placed around the Borough and positioning of the knife bins were now intelligence led.</p> <p>In answer to a question about the effect of anti-social behaviour on other services such as housing, Members were informed that in finding a satisfactory resolution would be dependent on individual situations. For example, if people were being extremely anti-social to their neighbour, they would be moved but would need to be re-housed elsewhere. It was noted also, for example, it would be difficult to deal with someone suffering from mental health, but posed no danger to anyone.</p>	

	<p>Following a question as to whether there were policies in place to deal with this issue. Members were informed that there were policies in place within various departments and it was confirmed that the Community Safety Team worked closely in partnership with other departments.</p> <p>Work with the Early Intervention Panel and Parenting partnership were noted as areas with which the Community Safety Team worked closely. It was noted that officers regularly attended the London wide monthly meetings and worked closely with the Hillingdon Anti-Social Behaviour Team.</p> <p>In answer to a question, Members were advised whilst anti-social behaviour was worst (more widely known) in the South of the borough, more complaints were received from the north of the borough.</p> <p>A Member expressed concerns about an area in Hayes where drug dealing took place and groups of youths regularly congregated, leaving local residents so terrorised that only two complained. Nothing had been done as residents were told that the Council could not divert resources.</p> <p>In response, Officers advised that in dealing with concerns about anti-social behaviour, it should not make any difference whether 2 or more complaints had been received, and that the 'SARAH' system required a response to all complaints.</p> <p>It was noted that Hillingdon Homes had a different way of dealing with issues of complaints and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked officers for Attending.</p>	
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	<p>Appendix B – Street Lighting</p> <p>The Director of Environment and Consumer Protection advised that officers who would have presented the report were unfortunately off sick. Members were informed that all the information that would be required was set out in the report and suggested that responses to any questions or issues raised would be circulated to members after the meeting.</p> <p>A member commented that it would be interesting to learn how much was being spent on street lighting, what new technology there was and what Hillingdon should be doing to improve efficiency.</p> <p>The Chairman added that this was an area that the Committee could make a difference in, as it affected everyone, and there was potential for making savings.</p> <p>It was noted that there may be different companies doing the same job and there may also be an issue of lack of communication.</p>	
	<p>Appendix C – Planning Enforcement - It's Increasing effectiveness in a non-compliant world</p> <p>The Chairman sought clarification on Section 215 Notices.</p> <p>Officers advised that such notices dealt with adverse impact on the amenity to a vicinity. This included untidy and overgrown areas and properties in severe condition.</p> <p>A Member added that Glebe Farm in South Ruislip appeared to be in a state of disrepair and requested officers to look into the situation.</p> <p>Officers advised that under Building Control, the building could well be a dangerous structure and may be unsafe but it does not necessarily follow that a dilapidated building constituted an unsafe building.</p> <p>It was noted that the Planning Enforcement Team worked in partnership with other internal departments using a holistic approach to deal with problems.</p> <p>A Member asked how long it could take for an enforcement order to be processed.</p>	

	<p>Officers informed members that the key was to help people to understand the planning enforcement process, as the process could not be speeded up.</p> <p>In respect of the Human Rights Act. It was noted that consideration of proportionality was quite significant when taking enforcement action, as issues such as; the action to be taken, whether the action would require the person to leave where they were residing.</p> <p>It was note that a questionnaire had been devised and served on people to complete. From this questionnaire problems such as children that may be on statement would be highlighted. Any statement made in the questionnaire would need to be tested by the Local Authority and judged against the Porter criteria.</p> <p>A member commented that enforcement was a complex issue and asked whether this area had been included in the whole service review of Planning and Community services in March 2009.</p> <p>Officers advised that the issue of partnership working had not been covered by the review, and Planning and Community Services had now started looking at this.</p> <p>Members were informed that there was scope for more improved way of working in looking at areas such as, the issue of duplication of effort, which needed to be addressed.</p> <p>The Chairman, on behalf the Committee, thanked the officers for attending.</p>	
	<p>Appendix D – Sport for Young Children and Elderly and those with Special Needs</p> <p>The Head of Sports and Leisure introduced the report and emphasised that the focus was in trying to create better opportunity for people to be active.</p> <p>It was noted that together with the two new complex; Hillingdon Sports and Leisure centre, the sports centre at Botwell Green, other key organisations and the voluntary sector (for example sports clubs), the Council was trying to build capacity across the Borough, to ensure that Hillingdon became a more active, healthy and successful sporting Borough.</p>	

The committee heard that 47.5% of the adult population did not engage in any sport or physical activity at all. The Council had invested and continued to invest in slow bound activities (informal exercises such as walking and cycling).

In answer to a question about the number of sports facilities in some areas of the Borough and the issue of transport for those living in isolated areas of the Borough; it was noted that the way forward was to create positive intervention in order to create an interest and to engage people, thus building lifetime positive habits.

A Member asked how children could be influenced in participating in physical activities.

Officers responded that promotion of both a healthy and an active lifestyle was the key. Schools were required to provide a least 2 hours of activity per week as part of the curriculum.

In response to a question from members about the available of facilities to disabled people. It was noted that the new facilities being built would be accessible to disabled people (although there was much more work to done in that area). It was noted that living a healthy lifestyle was not always about people's physical abilities and being able to access sports facilities.

Members were advised that adverts had been placed in the Hillingdon People, the Council's free monthly magazine to raise residents' awareness.

The Committee noted that swimming (particularly for the over 60s) was still quite high.

In response to comments about some schools not having playgrounds, it was noted that the Council was trying to arrange for those schools without playgrounds to go to other schools and to help the schools to use the space they had as best as they could. More work was needed to be done to create a partnership and to try and engage more schools.

A Member commented that this would require good communications between departments. Members were advised that there were close links between School Sport Partnerships which was funded through Youth Sports and there was increasingly positive links with the Primary Health Care Trust. It was noted that there were plans to set up an intervention programme, but there was other work to be done before reaching this stage. The idea of the intervention programme

	<p>was to intervene at an earlier stage in order to prevent problems later.</p> <p>The Chairman, on behalf the Committee, thanked officers for attending.</p>	
10.	<p>FORWARD PLAN 2009/10</p> <p>The Committee discussed and noted the items on the Forward Plan. Members were keen to see how the Council would deal with gritting in the winter and requested a briefing note to be circulation in respect of the item on Winter Service Plan.</p> <p>RESLOVED:</p> <p>That the reports going to Cabinet on 24 September 2009 be noted and a briefing note be prepared on the Winter Service Plan.</p>	<p>Action: Nadia Williams</p>
	The meeting closed at 9.30pm	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nadia Williams on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.