



Virtual Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee

Date: WEDNESDAY, 3
FEBRUARY 2021

Time: 7.30 PM

Venue: VIRTUAL - LIVE ON THE
COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE
CHANNEL: HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting Details: Virtual Meeting

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Councillors on the Committee

Richard Mills, (Chairman)
Vanessa Hurhangee (Vice-Chairman)
Lindsay Bliss
Nicola Brightman
Farhad Choubedar
Alan Deville
Jazz Dhillon, (Opposition Lead)
Scott Farley
Wayne Bridges

Published: Tuesday, 26 January 2021

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Terms of Reference

The Following Terms of Reference are common to all Policy Overview Committees (referred to as “The overview role”):

1. To conduct reviews of policy, services or aspects of service which have either been referred by Cabinet, relate to the Cabinet Forward Plan, or have been chosen by the Committee according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews;
2. To monitor the performance of the Council services within their remit (including the management of finances and risk);
3. To comment on the proposed annual service and budget plans for the Council services within their remit before final approval by Cabinet and Council;
4. To consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on Key Decisions which relate to services within their remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet);
5. To review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Council Committee or an officer.
6. To make reports and recommendations to the Council, the Leader, the Cabinet, a Policy Overview Committee or any other Council Committee arising from the exercise of the preceding terms of reference.
7. In accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consider ‘Councillor Calls For Action’ (CCfA) submissions.

To perform the policy overview role outlined above in relation to the following matters:

1. Democratic Services
2. Localism
3. Central Services, incl. Human Resources, ICT, Communications & Legal Services
4. Capital programme, property, construction & facilities management
5. Financial Planning & Financial Services
6. Enforcement and anti-fraud activities
7. Procurement
8. Performance Improvement
9. Economic development & town centres and regeneration
10. Local commerce, employment, skills and job creation
11. Local Strategic Partnership and Sustainable Community Strategy;
12. Community engagement, partnerships and the voluntary sector
13. Equalities and Community Cohesion
14. Community Safety
15. Public Safety & Civil Protection
16. Climate Change
17. Energy use and carbon reduction
18. Health & Safety

Agenda

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Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities
Policy Overview Committee
Tuesday, 12 January 2021
Meeting held at VIRTUAL - Live on the Council's
YouTube channel: Hillingdon London



Published on:
Come into effect on: Immediately (or call-in date)

Members Present:

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)
Lindsay Bliss
Nicola Brightman
Alan Deville
Jazz Dhillon
Scott Farley
Martin Goddard
Wayne Bridges

Apologies:

Vanessa Hurhangee

Officers Present:

Kevin Byrne, Head of Health Integration and Voluntary Services
Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety
Iain Watters, Financial Planning Manager
Helena Webster, Community Engagement & Town Centres Team Leader
Nathan Welch, ASBET Officer

Also Present

Diane Faichney representing Bell Farm Foodbank
Tunde Balogun representing Hillingdon Foodbank

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Vanessa Hurhangee.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Martin Goddard declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as he would soon be taking up a new Cabinet role. He left the meeting and did not participate in the discussion of this item.

Councillor Scott Farley declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as he had been conducting Ward Councillor surgeries at the Foodbanks in question. He remained in the meeting during the discussion of this item.

30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 4 November 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

31. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that all items were in Part I and would be considered in public.

32. REVIEW: VOLUNTARY SECTOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Diane Faichney, Yiewsley and West Drayton Foodbank Chair and Manager / Centre Director of Bell Farm Christian Centre and Tunde Balogun, Senior Pastor – Kingsborough Family Church – representing Hillingdon Foodbank were in attendance.

Diane Faichney addressed the Committee outlining the work of the Bell Farm Christian Centre foodbank during the pandemic. Key points highlighted included:

- 1) Bell Farm Christian Centre was a Church and registered charity. In the early 1990s they had started working in the local community where there was a lot of deprivation and unemployment. The Centre worked in partnership with the Council, the Police and other agencies to provide employment and training, toy libraries and children's work. The project had grown from there;
- 2) An advice centre called 'Doorway' had been set up approximately 20 years previously. This was similar to the Citizens Advice Bureau and provided advice on debt, housing etc;
- 3) The UB7 Foodbank had been launched in 2017 in conjunction with other churches in the area serving West Drayton, Yiewsley and Heathrow Villages;
- 4) An older person's dining centre provided weekly hot lunches for 80-100 elderly residents from the local area and organised events and holidays for them;
- 5) The Centre also ran parenting groups and holiday clubs;
- 6) During the pandemic, the Centre had adapted quickly to serve the local community. The foodbank and advice centre had remained open and were operating in a Covid secure manner. The foodbank operated at the door and telephone advice was offered to those in need of this service;
- 7) In terms of children's work, this had changed significantly during the pandemic as holiday clubs and toddler groups were no longer possible. The Centre had worked closely with Hasbro who had donated hundreds of toys and crafts. The Centre had organised Zoom classes and Zoom Christmas parties for children aged 5-11 and had arranged for packs of crafts to be sent to their homes. A toy library had been in operation when possible;

- 8) Throughout the pandemic, food parcels, treat and craft bags had been delivered to the elderly - the Centre had checked with the Council to ensure there was no duplication;
- 9) Craft boxes and food hampers had been sent to adults and families in need;
- 10) The local community had been hugely supportive of the Centre's efforts. Local businesses, caterers and residents had volunteered to help. A facebook page with hundreds of members had been set up to co-ordinate this activity. Those who had been furloughed had been keen to help with deliveries and befriending and local children had been involved in making cards for the elderly. The Council had also been very supportive – Grant Officers had allowed the Centre to use the funding flexibly as required;
- 11) A new member of staff had been recruited who had secured £45,000 in funding from London Community Foundation. This had helped to pay for PPE and some of the Centre's overall costs;
- 12) The foodbank continued to be very busy as people were being made redundant;
- 13) Up to 200 asylum seekers and their families had been visiting the Centre needing food, clothes and support –this had been a challenge but churches across Hillingdon had been helping out;

Tunde Balogun addressed the Committee representing Hillingdon Foodbank. Key points highlighted included:

- 1) The Hillingdon Foodbank had been in operation since 2009 and had been the first foodbank in London;
- 2) Although well prepared in many respects, it was clear at the outset of the pandemic that the project would need to adapt quickly to enable it to cope with the unprecedented demand; closure was a real possibility at that time as 80-90% of volunteers were over 70 and needed to shield. Fortunately, the response from the community had been fantastic and the foodbank had been able to continue its vital work. Within 2 weeks all premises including the main warehouse in Denham had been made Covid secure;
- 3) The Foodbank had initially worked closely with the Council Hub to facilitate food deliveries for those in need. Once Council staff had been obliged to return to their usual duties, the Foodbank had assumed responsibility for operations and had continued with the food delivery programme;
- 4) The Centre had been working in conjunction with about 30 churches across the Borough and some 35 schools. The Council had supported the Foodbank to buy food in bulk to supplement donations as demand had increased. In December, the Foodbank had prepared 'Buckets of Joy' – hampers for local families;

- 5) Drivers had volunteered to deliver food across the Borough and food deliveries were completed within a maximum of 48 hours of an email being received;
- 6) The Council's Grants Department had greatly helped with funding to assist with expenses.

Kevin Byrne addressed the Committee confirming that, at the outbreak of the pandemic, a new Hub had been set up. Members were informed that this in-house system had been set up initially to provide a bespoke shopping service and emergency supplies for those in need. It had been necessary to scale up very quickly and ensure the needs of the most vulnerable were met. Once Council staff had been redeployed back to their normal jobs, an exit plan was needed to set up a more sustainable system. In August 2020, conversations had been held with the two foodbanks and funding and support offered to enable them to purchase additional food supplies and to cover admin expenses. This was an entirely new model as previously the foodbanks had relied exclusively on donations. The Council had also helped Hillingdon Foodbank with purchasing fridges and with transportation costs. A grant application under the Council's core grant scheme was being considered to support them in the future. The advice centre at Bell Farm was also being supported by the Council through the core grant scheme and the possibility of a small grant for the older people's dining centre had been agreed.

In terms of the current situation, Committee Members were advised that people with an urgent need who contacted the community Hub were now being referred to the foodbanks. It was confirmed that the numbers of referrals were growing and some of the needs were more complex than previously. However, the partners were very good at working flexibly and adapting their working practices to meet these changing needs. The future model had yet to be confirmed but there was now some resilience in the system and an understanding of how to 'gear up' if faced with another crisis in the future.

In response to Members' requests for clarification, it was confirmed that, unfortunately, some children had been unable to access the Zoom activities as they did not have the equipment to do so. It was acknowledged that, even if the children could be provided with the equipment free of charge, parents did not always have internet access in the home as this was costly. However, Members heard that, in some cases, families had internet access but were obliged to share equipment which was challenging; in these cases additional equipment would be welcomed.

Members noted that unfortunately there was significant disparity between the north and the south of the Borough in terms of the need. The delivery service was welcomed since some people felt ashamed to visit a foodbank and would travel quite a distance to do so rather than use one in their local area. Members heard that, at Bell Farm, foodbank vouchers were distributed by a variety of people / groups including Civic Centre staff, nurses, health visitors and other agencies such as P3. If people arrived at the foodbank without a voucher, they would not be turned away. If it transpired that there was an ongoing need, food vouchers would be provided for as long as they were needed. At Hillingdon Foodbank, vouchers were generally limited to three as the aim was to refer clients to other agencies for assistance and support

if possible. However, if this was not possible within the timeframe, the system would be by-passed and clients transferred to the emergency food provision scheme.

It was noted that the Gurdwara in Hayes, the Muslim Centre and the Salvation Army had been offering hot meals during the crisis. In response to their enquiries, the Committee heard that foodbanks worked in partnership with a number of different agencies, schools, GPs and religious establishments including the Muslim Centre in Hayes to raise awareness and distribute food vouchers. The foodbanks also offered bulk supplies to soup kitchens around the Borough. It was confirmed that Hillingdon Foodbank's drivers covered 15-20 miles every day to reach out to those in need. Members heard that Hillingdon Foodbank had served 7672 clients in 2019 whereas, by the end of 2020, the numbers had climbed to 18,222.

In response to their enquiries, the Committee heard that all staff at the Bell Farm foodbank had been trained in mental health first aid as recommended by the Council. It was recognised that, in the future, their business plan would need to be re-examined and more resources would be required. It was a matter of concern that funding to local charities would reduce or disappear completely. It was confirmed that the support of the Council would be needed in some form; this would be clarified at a later stage. Tunde Balogun of Hillingdon Foodbank advised the Committee that a volunteer Life Coach had been recruited to support clients in the future. It was confirmed that the Foodbank had a robust team of volunteers; some of these were professionals with mental health experience who were willing to help those in the community who needed support.

Members suggested that the local community, the Council and charities should work together to help people through the next phase of the pandemic. In response to this, it was confirmed that a small grant had been made available by Central Government to support, through H4All, a package of training for volunteers in the community to help disseminate messaging around Covid, vaccinations etc. This would be rolled out by the end of March 2021. An article in Hillingdon People was proposed outlining the work of the charities and their future needs – it was hoped that this would assist in recruiting more volunteers.

Members were informed that, as part of the grants programme agreed by Cabinet in December 2020, a project funded through H4All had been approved to embark on this type of activity and assist in capacity building. ex

At the request of Councillors, it was agreed that Kevin Byrne would source further data regarding the increase in foodbank usage and would share this information with the Committee. It was also suggested that a representative of Hillingdon MIND be requested to attend a meeting of the Committee to provide further evidence.

The Committee thanked the charities for all their hard work noting that their business operations had improved and they had become more resilient and better able to cope with the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Kevin Byrne, Head of Health Integration and Voluntary Services source further data regarding the increase in foodbank usage to share with the Committee; and
- 2) the verbal update regarding the foodbanks' response to the Covid-19 pandemic be noted.

33. 2021/2022 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF CORPORATE SERVICES, COMMERCE & COMMUNITIES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Martin Goddard had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item therefore left the meeting prior to the presentation and discussion.

Iain Watters, Financial Planning Manager, presented the budget report. Members were informed that Cabinet had agreed the budget proposals in December 2020; these were not out for public consultation. Key headlines in the report included:

- 1) The Chancellor's spending review 2020 had set out a £1m uplift in grant funding for the local authority;
- 2) An extra 1% had been added to the Social Care Precept to assist with the impact of the pandemic;
- 3) The Chancellor had set out a pay freeze in terms of the inflationary element of salary for all public sector workers;
- 4) Hillingdon's budget gap which had stood at £19m in September 2020, had reduced to £16m following these changes.

In terms of the Cabinet's budget proposals, Members heard that £8m of savings were proposed; these were mainly efficiency savings based around transformation of services. The only item which was a shift in policy was a £500,000 saving from winding down the local first-time buyers' scheme. A 4.8% uplift in Council tax was proposed which included the additional 3% in the Social Care Precept and a 1.8% increase in core Council tax. A release of £2m from balances was proposed. The older people's discount for Council tax would be protected but Council tax would not be frozen for this group. It was reported that the Council was less reliant on general balances than had been expected in September 2020. It was expected that there would be £28m of general balances going forward. Looking beyond the 2021-22 financial year, it was expected that some 12.6m of savings in 2022/3 and 2023/4 would be required which was a high number but not an impossible target.

In terms of the services within the Committee's remit, savings were proposed mainly around back office efficiencies. These related mainly to revenues and benefits automation to make back office processes more efficient, a review of the technical administration and business support services, energy savings and efficiencies around printing and mail.

In terms of new investment, an uplift in spending on CCTV was proposed and charges were proposed when people requested CCTV footage for example for insurance purposes.

In response to questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that the revenues, benefits and technical administration departments were services which had been the subjects of substantial bid reviews some 4 or 5 years previously. Members were informed that the previous reviews had been around management structure whereas the current proposals related to efficiencies in business processes. It was reported that in the current year an approximate £3m underspend had been recorded; primarily as a result of new working practices due to the pandemic. It was confirmed that the budget for 2021/22 had not been predicated on the basis of this continuing. It had been assumed that, overall, the local authority would be able to secure funding from Central Government to cover the net additional costs relating to Covid-19. If the Government funding did not cover this, £9m had been set aside as a safety net.

In response to the Committee's requests for clarification, it was confirmed that, in terms of business rates, the impact on the public purse was primarily being borne by Central Government. Rates continued to be collected from Heathrow despite the current difficulties experienced in aviation due to the pandemic. Safety net mechanisms were in place to protect individual local authorities. In terms of CCTV cameras, it was confirmed that obsolete CCTV cameras were gradually being replaced.

It was agreed that the POC's comments regarding the budget proposals be drafted by the Chairman for consideration by the Committee at the meeting in February 2021.

RESOLVED: That the 2021/22 budget proposals for services within the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities POC be noted and comments be drafted by the Chairman in advance of the February meeting.

34. ALLEY GATING SCHEME

Helena Webster, Community Engagement and Town Centre Improvements Manager, presented the report.

Members were informed that, within the Chrysalis programme, around £30k was earmarked each financial year to support alleygating and community safety schemes to enhance public safety. The private alleygating scheme had been introduced about 15 years previously and about 13 schemes had been completed in total. Chrysalis funding contributed up to 90% of the cost of alley gates to successful applicants but responsibility for maintenance and ownership lay with the residents themselves. Businesses could also apply for funding and would be expected to contribute 50-70% themselves. Electronic gates were rarely installed as evidence would be required that a management company would fund the ongoing maintenance of the gates. A framework agreement was in place up to March 2024 for a preferred fencing / gating contractor, so residents no longer needed to provide 3 quotes to support their applications. Information about the scheme was available on the Council's website.

Members heard that the private alleygating scheme was well-known whereas the Housing-owned Alleygating Scheme was less well-known. Each year gating

schemes were implemented on Housing-owned land as part of the Better Neighbourhood Fund. £156k of Better Neighbourhood funding was available each year for improvements on LBH Housing-owned land, to benefit the wider community. For these schemes, keys were held by the Tenancy Management Officer.

With regards to the Chrysalis scheme, the Committee was advised that, over the last 3 years, 23 applications had been received; 19 of which had been approved and 378 households had benefited. The total cost to the Council was £65,366 and £8,609 had been contributed by residents. In terms of the Better Neighbourhood Fund Data, 14 alleygating schemes had been approved and 311 households had benefited. The total cost to the Council was £65,613.

It was confirmed that, for private schemes, responsibility for ongoing maintenance lay with the residents themselves. When people moved on, they were responsible for handing over the keys to the new occupiers. Members heard that it was a very popular scheme. Many of the more straightforward schemes had already been implemented and new applications were becoming more complex.

Members observed that this was a fantastic scheme from which many residents had benefited. However, it was noted that it was now quite old and gaps may have appeared in terms of ownership and management. It was important that the Council kept accurate records to assist residents when problems arose.

It was suggested that officers wrote to lead residents on a yearly basis to ensure contact details were correct and up-to-date.

In response to questions from the Committee it was confirmed that the team worked with the police and ASBET officers who on occasion recommended alleyways that should be gated. The police safer neighbourhood team often advised victims of crime such as burglary to contact the Council to request alley gates. The team was also contacted by ASBET officers. Residents were advised to report all antisocial behaviour through the contact centre so a full picture could be built up.

Members suggested that officers could approach estate agents about the concept of alley gates as this would be a positive selling point and could assist in ensuring that keys were handed over to new owners. The matter could also be discussed with private landlords. In response to queries from Councillors, it was confirmed that property searches would reveal the title of the ownership of a piece of land but would not show any additions, therefore gating schemes would not show up.

It was recognised that the matter of absentee landlords was a problem and it was sometimes difficult to obtain alley gating contributions from households. Such matters were considered on a case by case basis. A briefing note would be prepared for the Cabinet Member to enable him to take a view. It was agreed that this was an area that needed to be monitored in the future.

Members requested further clarification regarding the BHF funding scheme. It was confirmed that gated land continued to be Housing-owned land. More information was available on the Council website and the scheme had also been publicised within Hillingdon People. It had previously been an underused scheme.

Councillors welcomed the alleygating schemes and thanked officers for their hard work in dealing with them so efficiently.

RESOLVED: That the Alleygating Scheme information report be noted.

35. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN LOCKDOWN

The Chairman noted that ASBET matters normally fell within the remit of the Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee. However, the Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities was at liberty to consider this matter in terms of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nathan Welch, ASBET Service Manager, presented the Anti-Social Behaviour in Lockdown report.

In terms of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Members heard that the ASBET team had been working in partnership with licensing and the police. A team of 4 dedicated officers with delegated powers had been working 12 hour shifts 7 days a week to enforce on the business front and the night-time economy, particularly in terms of breaches of social distancing and businesses not adhering to restrictions. The workload had increased significantly as more people were at home leading to increased noise levels, rubbish accumulation, misuse of communal areas and neighbourhood disputes. The ASBET team had continued to deliver a service throughout the pandemic.

Members enquired whether data regarding the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) could be made available. Nathan informed the Committee that he would source these figures from Stephanie Waterford in the Licensing Team. In response to Members' enquiries, it was also confirmed that Covid marshalls fell within Stephanie's team.

In terms of hotspots, the Committee heard that there had been issues with repeat offenders all over the Borough. Businesses such as car washes, vape shops and takeaways tended to be repeat offenders as they often did not manage social distancing and mask wearing very well. People congregating in parks often failed to adhere to the rules around masks and/or social distancing. In response to Councillors' questions, it was confirmed that Stephanie and Nathan worked very closely together to tackle these problems.

The Committee was informed that everything was now in place to tackle the issues that arose including joint patrols with police, enforcement action, the issuing of warnings and FPNs, 4 officers working 24 hours a week. The team was doing all it could within the powers and the resources it had.

Members heard that offenders were generally quite receptive to guidance and officers stayed on site until the premises closed if necessary. The matter would be followed up a day or two later.

The Committee thanked Nathan for the thorough report and expressed its gratitude to the ASBET Team for continuing to work exceptionally hard throughout the pandemic despite the risks involved.

RESOLVED: That the report and verbal update be noted.

36. PAST REVIEW UPDATE: LOCAL POLICING REVIEW

Jacqui Robertson of the Community Safety Team presented the update on the Local policing review. It was noted that the review recommendations had gone to Cabinet in July 2019 and, since then, significant progress had been made. Zubin Winter – the new Partnership Inspector was also in attendance.

Members were informed that there had been a number of changes - the original two police teams had now amalgamated into one. During the pandemic work had been done to deliver services more efficiently e.g. the annual White Ribbon conference had been held in Microsoft Teams on 26 November 2020 and had been very successful. Presents had also been delivered to domestic abuse survivors and their children.

In terms of CCTV, the service had been maintained 24/7 throughout the pandemic. The CCTV room was now Covid secure and progress had been made in upgrading cameras. ANPR cameras were in daily use throughout the Borough providing information on fly tipping, suspect vehicles etc. The priority going forward was to ensure the Council had ANPR cameras on all main arterial routes. There was a good flow of information into and out of the CCTV room and the Council had been able to help the police with information on some serious offences.

The Committee heard that there was now only one Partnership Tasking team with one sergeant and 8 constables. Jacqui Robertson and Zubin Winter worked closely together and spoke on a daily basis. Fortnightly tasking meetings with the sergeant in charge were held and departments such as Licensing, Planning, ASBET, Corporate Fraud and Tenancy Management were invited to attend and present their case to the tasking team. Although there was now only one partnership team, this had not presented a problem to date. If the tasking team was not on duty, Zubin could be contacted directly. Members were advised that the tasking team had been ring-fenced to work exclusively in Hillingdon.

Members welcomed the update and were pleased to note that the recommendations had been successfully implemented.

RESOLVED: That the Local Policing Review update be noted.

37. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

38. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

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REVIEW D: THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN HILLINGDON

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Mike Talbot, Director – Corporate Resources and Services
Papers with report	None.

HEADLINES

This item will focus on the third witness session regarding the Committee's review into the Voluntary Sector's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic in Hillingdon.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee note the evidence heard at the witness session.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At the October 2020 meeting, Members agreed the scoping report for the next Committee review on the Voluntary Sector's Response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Hillingdon.

The review will hear from key witnesses on the response and consider how the voluntary sector and Council worked together to help Hillingdon residents; in particular the Borough's most vulnerable residents, during the pandemic.

At this meeting, the Committee will hear evidence from Hillingdon Mind - an external body which played a vital role in response to the pandemic.

- Angela Stangoe MBACP – Director and Head of Psychotherapeutic Services, Hillingdon Mind

Council officers who played an important role in the Council's response will also be present to answer relevant questions. Mike Talbot, Director - Corporate Resources and Services will provide an update on the Council's co-ordination of the H4All Hub.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference were noted for this review, subject to any changes agreed by the Committee:

1. *To consider how the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Hillingdon was able to respond to needs of residents during the Covid-19 lockdown period.*
2. *To hear how the pandemic impacted on the VCS sector and its ability to deliver services, raise funds, and recruit volunteers.*

3. *To review how the Hillingdon Community Hub worked with the VCS to meet emergency needs.*
4. *To make any recommendations that would increase resilience of VCS to respond to any future lockdown or restrictions.*

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Policy Overview Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations from the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.

HILLINGDON FIRST LIMITED

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Iain Watters, Corporate Finance & Hillingdon First Limited
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This report provides an overview of the establishment, governance, operations and performance of the Council's wholly owned subsidiary housing development company – Hillingdon First Limited. The company was established in April 2018 to deliver high quality housing and generate a sustainable revenue stream for the Council, with the sale of units from the firm's first development adjacent to South Ruislip Library on Victoria Road, Ruislip currently underway.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee note the performance to date of Hillingdon First Limited.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Establishment and Governance of Hillingdon First Limited

1. In November 2017, Cabinet approved the establishment of a housing development company in order to support delivery of new homes for residents and support the Borough's wider economy within the Council's role as a strategic housing authority. The company was expected to contribute towards the delivery of quality housing for residents while generating a long term revenue stream greater than could be secured through disposal of surplus land alone.
2. Hillingdon First Limited was incorporated in April 2018 as a Company Limited by Shares, with 100% of the share capital retained by the Council. As sole shareholder, the Council will retain control of the Company, including the flexibility to change aspects of its purpose and operation or even cease, transfer or dispose of the Company in the future. This control is exercised in a variety of ways, from the appointment of directors, provision of funding, Articles of Association and a Shareholder Agreement which sets out performance levels required and tolerances (e.g. financial and decision making) within which the company may operate.
3. Alongside establishment of the company, a Shareholder Committee of the Cabinet was established to fulfil the shareholder function of the Council and oversee the company's activities. On creation, this committee consisted of the Leader of the Council and the then

Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, which was revised to reflect the new Cabinet structure in January 2021 with a membership consisting of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property & Infrastructure and Cabinet Member for Finance.

4. Key company decisions such as the commencement of projects and approval of the annual Business Plan are presented to the Shareholder Committee, alongside updates on performance and matters arising as necessary. The company's Business Plan sets out specific projects to be undertaken alongside financial projections for the current and future financial years, and provides a key mechanism through which the Council can direct the company's activities.
5. The company is only permitted to raise finance from the Council, through either the issue of share capital or borrowing at a commercial rate through the Loan Facility approved by Cabinet on incorporation of the company. Funding is only released to the company for schemes identified within the Business Plan and is subject to the standard Capital Release democratic controls, ensuring that Members retain an appropriate level of oversight over the company's operations.
6. To date, the company has not directly employed any staff and alongside the commissioning of specialist external services – for example employer's agents – relies primarily upon support of existing Council services for which the company fully reimburses the Council. This support includes but is not limited to – the three company directors, major projects team, legal, finance and procurement services.

Operations and Performance of Hillingdon First Limited

7. The first project undertaken by Hillingdon First Limited was the construction for open market sale of 31 flats on the site adjacent to South Ruislip Library on Victoria Road (referred to as South Ruislip Plot B prior its sale to the company) and pictured below. This project is nearing completion, with practical completion having been achieved in January 2021 and reservations in place for 25 of the 31 units – leveraging in support to date from the Government's Help to Buy Scheme to assist residents in securing their new homes.



8. The March 2020 Business Plan outlined an estimate of £10,045k of initial investment in this scheme, with an expected profit of 10% or circa £1m before interest and corporation tax representing the financial return on the project. As final accounts are tallied it is expected that this level of return has been secured and following completion of sales is to be repatriated to

the Council after allowing for overheads, financing charges and corporation early in the 2021/22 financial year. This development has been undertaken on surplus land sold to the company by the Council at open market value, with the Council securing both the proceeds of this land transaction and ultimately this additional profit.

9. While it had originally been expected that this scheme would be completed in summer 2020, the well publicising impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the construction industry – in terms of both working arrangements and supply chain – resulted in delays to the build programme. In line with in-house Council schemes, the company has worked closely with the appointed contractor through regular monthly reviews and other mechanisms to minimise these impacts in terms of extension of time and avoid cost pressures on the project.
10. A second smaller development consisting of five houses at St Helen's Close, Cowley has also been worked up within the business plan and recently subjected to competitive tender to secure a design and build contractor. Subject to the outcome of this procurement exercise and the approval of the Council via the Shareholder Committee, this second project would be expected to commence during the coming months.

Next Steps for Hillingdon First Limited

11. It had always been intended for the first development to act as a proof of concept, demonstrating that the company would be able to design, build and sell quality housing units at a profit, which would then enable expansion of the business model to increase both the delivery of quality housing and associated financial returns. With the successful completion of this first project, albeit later than planned due to COVID-19, the company is now in a position to confidently take on further projects – with the annual refresh of the Business Plan during February and March 2021 providing an opportunity to identify and scope potential development opportunities.
12. In contrast to a number of other local authority property companies, Hillingdon First Limited (in line with its objectives as set by the Council) has remained focused upon in-borough residential development – recognising the consistent demand for quality housing from a growing population within the Borough and the risks associated with commercial and / or out of borough development.

Implications on related Council policies

13. A role of the Policy Overview Committees is to monitor services within its remit and make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

14. None at this stage, pending any findings by the Committee and any recommendations forwarded to Cabinet.

Legal comments

15. None.

Financial Implications

16. These are set out in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

FORWARD PLAN

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Liz Penny, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Forward Plan

HEADLINES

The Committee is required by its Terms of Reference to consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on key decisions which relate to services within its remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet or by the Cabinet Member).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee note the Forward Plan, and comment on any items coming before Cabinet if they see fit.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Forward Plan is updated on the 15th of each month. An edited version to include only items relevant to this Committee's remit is attached as Appendix A.

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Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
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SI = Standard Item each month

Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance

Cabinet meeting - Thursday 21 January 2021

001	Disposal of 2 dwellings and 2 former garage sites	Cabinet will be requested to dispose of 2 single dwellings (one a former caretaker house and the other a vacant Council house with planning consent to build an adjoining house on the side). Cabinet will also be requested to dispose of former garages sites at Great Benty in West Drayton and Bartram Close, Brunel Ward.	Brunel, Cavendish, Townfield, West Ruislip		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Julie Markwell		NEW	Private (3)
004	2020/21 Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement	A report to Cabinet regarding the agreement under section 75 of the National Health Service Act, 2006, that will give legal effect to the 2020/21 Better Care Fund plan, including financial arrangements.	All		Cllr Jane Palmer	SC - Gary Collier			Public
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand			Public
SI	Reports from Policy Overview, Scrutiny & Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		TBC	CR&S - TBC	TBC		Public

Cabinet Member Decisions expected - January 2021

008	Redevelopment of the site at rear of 113-125 Moorfield Road and 117 Moorfield Road, Cowley	Cabinet Members will consider the appointment of a contractor to build 5 x 3 bedroom homes at Moorfield Road, Cowley. Delegated authority has been granted from Cabinet in October 2017 on this matter.	West Drayton		Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Pardeep Gehdu		NEW	Private (3)
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Upcoming Decisions				Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
Ref	Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance										
SI = Standard Item each month											
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	CR&S - Democratic Services	Various				Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 18 February 2021											
015	The Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2021/22 - 2025/26 (BUDGET FRAMEWORK)	Following consultation, this report will set out the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF), which includes the draft General Fund reserve budget and capital programme for 2021/22 for consultation, along with indicative projections for the following four years. This will also include the HRA rents for consideration.	All	TO FULL COUNCIL 25/2/21	Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE & Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand	Public consultation through the Policy Overview Committee process and statutory consultation with businesses & ratepayers				Public
016	The Schools Budget 2021/22	Cabinet will asked to agree the Schools Budget for the next financial year, following a recommendation from the Schools Forum.	All		Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cllr Jonathan Bianco & Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE	FD - Graham Young	Schools Forum				Public
SI	Voluntary Sector Leases	Regular report on discounted leases to voluntary sector organisations that benefit residents and the wider community.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson / Michele Wilcox					Private (3)
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand					Public

Upcoming Decisions				Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
Ref	Further details			Ward(s)	Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance				
SI = Standard Item each month									
SI	Reports from Policy Overview, Scrutiny & Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		TBC	CR&S - TBC	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - February 2021									
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	CR&S - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 18 March 2021									
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand			Public
SI	Reports from Policy Overview, Scrutiny & Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All		TBC	CR&S - TBC	TBC		Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - March 2021									
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various		All	CR&S - Democratic Services	Various		Public
Cabinet meeting - Thursday 22 April 2021									
SI	Voluntary Sector Leases	Regular report on discounted leases to voluntary sector organisations that benefit residents and the wider community.	All		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Michael Patterson / Michele Wilcox			Private (3)

Upcoming Decisions				Further details				Ward(s)		Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
Ref	SI = Standard Item each month														
	Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance														
SI	Monthly Council Budget - monitoring report	The Cabinet receives a monthly report setting out in detail the Council's revenue and capital position.	All			Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Paul Whaymand								Public
SI	Reports from Policy Overview, Scrutiny & Select Committees	Reports, findings and recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet, when referred from the appropriate Committee.	All			TBC	CR&S - TBC	TBC							Public
Cabinet Member Decisions expected - April 2021															
SI	Standard Items taken each month by the Cabinet Member	Cabinet Members make a number of decisions each month on standard items - details of these standard items are listed at the end of the Forward Plan.	Various			All	CR&S - Democratic Services	Various							Public
Cabinet Member Decisions: Standard Items (SI) that may be considered each month															
SI	Urgent Cabinet-level decisions & interim decision-making (including emergency decisions)	The Leader of the Council has the necessary constitutional authority to make decisions that would otherwise be reserved to the Cabinet, in the absence of a Cabinet meeting or in urgent circumstances. Any such decisions will be published in the usual way and reported to a subsequent Cabinet meeting for ratification. A fuller notice period for any key decisions to be taken will be given, where practicably possible. The Leader may also take emergency decisions without notice, in particular in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be ratified at a later Cabinet meeting.	Various			Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE	CR&S - Democratic Services	TBC							Public / Private

Upcoming Decisions				Further details	Ward(s)	Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private (with reason)
Ref	SI = Standard Item each month										
Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance											
SI	Expenditure Approval: ICT Equipment, Furniture and General Equipment	To approve or not, the release of funds for certain types of discretionary expenditure, following new expenditure approval controls agreed by Cabinet on 21 January 2016 to enable greater scrutiny of expenditure in these areas, further enhancing the Council's strong financial management.	N/A			Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE and Cllr Jonathan Bianco	FD - Corporate Procurement	None			Public
SI	Ward Budget Initiative	To approve the spending of Ward Budgets following applications from Ward Councillors - this will be done on a monthly or regular cycle.	All			Cllr Douglas Mills / Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE	RS - Helena Webster	Local consultation within the Ward undertaken by Ward Councillors			Public
SI	Business, shops and commercial rents, leases, surrenders and renewals	To approve various rents, leases, surrenders and lease renewals for a variety of businesses, organisations, properties or via commercial transactions, as per thresholds for decision-making set out in the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.	Various			Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Mike Paterson				Private (3)
SI	To consider rent reviews	To consider rent reviews of commercial and other premises.	tbc			Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Mike Patterson				Private (1,2,3)
SI	Appointment of Consultants & agency staff	To consider the appointment of consultants where the cost is between £5,000 and £50,000. To appoint individual temporary and agency workers between this value for senior management posts. To also accept the appointment of any consultants delegated by Cabinet.	N/A			Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE	various				Private (1,2,3)

Upcoming Decisions				Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Private (with reason)
Ref	Further details			Ward(s)	Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance				
SI = Standard Item each month									
SI	Release of Capital Funds	The release of all capital monies requires formal Member approval, unless otherwise determined either by the Cabinet or the Leader. Batches of monthly reports (as well as occasional individual reports) to determine the release of capital for any schemes already agreed in the capital budget and previously approved by Cabinet or Cabinet Members	TBC		Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	various	Corporate Finance		Public but some Private (1,2,3)
SI	The purchase of ex Council properties or new private properties for the Council's housing supply	The Leader of the Council may determine, as and when required, the purchase of new properties using HRA capital funds to increase the affordable housing stock within the Borough. Such acquisitions will be reported back to Cabinet.	TBC		Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Jean Palmer OBE			Private (1,2,3)
SI	Petitions about matters under the control of the Cabinet	Cabinet Members will consider a number of petitions received by local residents and organisations and decide on future action. These will be arranged as Petition Hearings.	TBC		All	CR&S - Democratic Services			Public
SI	To approve debt / write offs	To approve individual case of debt / write offs that are in excess of £5000 but under £50,000.	n/a		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	various			Private (1,2,3)
SI	To approve compensation payments	To approve compensation payments in relation to any complaint to the Council in excess of £1000.	n/a		All	various			Private (1,2,3)
SI	All Delegated Decisions by Cabinet to Cabinet Members, including tender and property decisions	Where previously delegated by Cabinet, to make any necessary decisions, accept tenders, bids and authorise property decisions / transactions in accordance with the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.	TBC		All	various			Public / Private (1,2,3)

Upcoming Decisions

Further details

Ref

Ward(s)

				Final decision by Full Council	Cabinet Member(s) Responsible	Officer Contact for further information	Consultation on the decision	NEW ITEM	Public or Private (with reason)
SI = Standard Item each month				Council Departments: RS = Residents Services SC = Social Care CR&S = Corporate Resources & Services FD= Finance					
SI	Sale, and conversion, of loft space to leaseholders and also extension of Leasehold Interests of flats under the 1993 Act	To consider any issues in relation to loft space and also consider an extension of the leasehold interests for several flats where the Council as freeholder has received an application under the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993. The report will recommend grant of the extensions in each case where the Notice is valid and in accordance with legislation.	TBC		Cllr Philip Corthorne / Cllr Jonathan Bianco	RS - Mike Paterson			Private (1,2,3)
SI	External funding bids	To authorise the making of bids for external funding where there is no requirement for a financial commitment from the Council.	n/a		All	various			Public
SI	Appeals in relation to business rates (NNDR)	To determine appeals in relation to business rates following a decision by the Council.	TBC		Cllr Jonathan Bianco	Maureen Pemberton			Private (1,2,3)
SI	Response to key consultations that may impact upon the Borough	A standard item to capture any emerging consultations from Government, the GLA or other public bodies and institutions that will impact upon the Borough. Where the deadline to respond cannot be met by the date of the Cabinet meeting, the Constitution allows the Cabinet Member to sign-off the response.	TBC		All	various			Public

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WORK PROGRAMME 2020 - 2021

Committee name	Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Liz Penny, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix A – Work Programme

HEADLINES

To enable the Committee to track the progress of its work in 2020-2021 and forward plan its work for the current, and next, municipal year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee note the Work Programme 2020 – 2021 and agree any amendments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Committee's meetings start at 7.30pm (unless stated otherwise below), and the meeting dates for the next municipal year are as follows:

Meetings	Room
17 September 2020	Virtual
13 October 2020	Virtual
4 November 2020	Virtual
12 January 2021	Virtual
3 February 2021	Virtual
4 March 2021	Virtual
6 April 2021	Virtual

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Multi Year Work Programme

May 2018 - May 2022

2020

2021

Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee	September 17	October 13	November 4	December CABINET	January 12	February 3	March 4	April 6	May CABINET
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Review D: Voluntary Sector Response during COVID-19 Pandemic

Topic selection / scoping stage

Scoping Report

Witness / evidence / consultation stage

Witness 1

Witness 2

Witness 3

Findings, conclusions and recommendations

Findings

Final review report agreement

Final report

Target Cabinet reporting

Regular service & performance monitoring

Mid year Budget Update

X

Annual complaints & service update report

X

Biennial Safety Review - Sports Grounds

Cabinet's budget proposals for next financial year

X

All POCs

Cabinet Forward Plan Monthly Monitoring

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

One-off service monitoring

Performance Improvement

X

Safety of Council-Owned Properties & Buildings

X

Alley Gating Scheme

X

Hillingdon First Limited

X

Anti-Social Behaviour during Lockdown

X

Carbon Reduction

X

Prevent

X

Future Review Topics

X

Past review delivery

Recruitment

X

Homophobic, Biphobic & Transphobic Bullying

X

Local Policing & Community Safety in Hillingdon

X

Local Commerce, Employment, Skills & Job Creation

X

Internal use only

Report deadline

Agenda published

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Document is Restricted

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