

Minutes

**Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy
Overview Committee
Thursday, 21 July 2011
Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Beulah East, Neil Fyfe, Raymond Graham, Shirley Harper-O'Neill, Richard Mills, Robin Sansarpuri and Michael White.</p> <p>Apologies: None.</p> <p>Officers: Kevin Byrne (Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Geoff Eldridge (Property Compliance and Projects Manager), Steve Smith (Facilities Manager – Corporate Property Services), Helen Taylor (Head of Audit and Enforcement), Paul Whaymand (Deputy Director of Finance) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p>	
8.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillors Raymond Graham and Richard Lewis declared Personal Interests In Agenda Item 6 – First Major Review – Effectiveness of the Audit Committee and its Terms of Reference – Draft Scoping Report as they were both Members of the Audit Committee. They remained in the room and took part in discussions.</p>	
9.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2011</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
10.	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>	
11.	<p>BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR CENTRAL SERVICES 2012/13</p> <p>The Deputy Head of Finance attended the meeting and informed Members that within the context of the Council's overall financial position, the report set out the main financial issues facing Central Services Group's services and the work which was taking place to respond to them. In addition an update on the Council's performance and risk management arrangements were included in the report.</p> <p>Members were informed that both the Comprehensive</p>	<p>Action By:</p>

	<p>Spending Review 2010 and the two year local government finance settlement in January 2011 set out the financial challenge which faced the Council over the next few years.</p> <p>The budget report to Council in February 2011 identified a savings requirement for 2012/13 of £16.4m with Central Services having a target of £1.6m. Reference was made to the first phase of the savings process where Central Services identified budget savings in 2010/11 of £2.6m across all services. To enable the savings to be made for 2012/13, many of the ongoing restructures were being designed to ensure that the central service functions had the capacity and capability to add the value required by the rest of the Council.</p> <p>Members were informed that the savings being made were efficiency led and would not impact on Council front line services.</p> <p>RESOLVED-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the development of the financial planning process undertaken to date together with the responses to the issues being developed by the Group be noted. 	Action By:
12.	<p>FIRST MAJOR REVIEW – EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE – DRAFT SCOPING REPORT</p> <p>At the last meeting of the Committee, Members agreed that their first major review of the year should be looking at the effectiveness of the Audit Committee and its terms of reference. A draft scoping report was submitted, together with a copy of the Audit Committee’s existing terms of reference and the Audit Committee’s Annual Report to Council which provided a summary of activities of the Audit Committee in the last 12 months.</p> <p>Reference was made to the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the “Future of local public audit” and the proposals as they related to the future structure of audit committees. Members noted that the proposals would not become legislation before completion of this review.</p> <p>The Head of Audit and Enforcement attended the meeting and provided the Members with an overview of the responsibilities of the Audit Committee. Members were informed that the Audit Committee was established some four years ago and a review was therefore timely to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of its terms of reference.</p> <p>Some of the key issues a review could look at included:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at how the Audit Committee fitted into the Council decision-making structure • The independence of the Audit Committee and the experience of the members of the Committee • The implications of the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation on the Future of Local Public Audit on the role of local audit, particularly in relation to the Audit Committee having a role in the appointment and monitoring of the External Auditors • The transparency of the audit process within the Council and giving careful consideration to whether the results of local audit work was easily accessible • How effective were the assurances the Audit Committee received from Council officers that appropriate action had been taken to address risk and control issues and to respond to issues raised by the external auditor? • How does the Audit Committee provide effective challenge across the Council, independent assurance on the risk management framework and associated internal control environment and effective leadership on governance, financial reporting and audit issues? • To look at the workings of other local authority Audit Committees and best practise used <p>Members asked that for the first witness session of the review, the Chairman and Councillor George Cooper of the Audit Committee be invited to attend to provide their perspective on the Audit Committee. The Head of Audit and Enforcement would provide Members with background documents to enable them to build up greater knowledge on the role of the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Officers were asked to update the review's scoping report with the comments and suggestions made at the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1. That the draft coping report be agreed as amended and the Chairman and Councillor George Cooper of the Audit Committee be invited to attend the next meeting of this Committee to provide evidence for the review.</p>	<p>Action by:</p> <p>Helen Taylor</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>RECENT POWER CUT IN THE CIVIC CENTRE</p> <p>Consideration was given to a report which provided Members with the background to the recent power cut which occurred in the Civic Centre on 17 May 2011 and the measures and actions which would be taken to improve the evacuation procedures and the co-ordination / communication arrangements in the future.</p>	

	<p>Members acknowledged the contribution which the voluntary community sector made in the Borough, particularly in the present economic climate, but did not think a review would add any great value to this area at this time.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>1. That the information in the report be noted.</p>	Action By:
15.	<p>PROCUREMENT IN HILLINGDON</p> <p>Members were provided with a report which provided the background and the scope of procurement within Hillingdon. The Deputy Director of Finance attended the meeting and answered Members questions.</p> <p>The Committee asked that a presentation be given by the Head of Procurement at this Committee's next meeting which provides an overview of procurement in Hillingdon and also includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for procurement (simple diagram if possible) • The various authority levels and delegations for contracts • Contract Management and Calendaring • How Procurement interfaces with other Council departments • What have been the changes that have been made to the service under the Hillingdon Improvement Programme • What was the Business Partner Model <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>1. That the report be noted and the Head of Procurement be asked to attend the next meeting of this Committee to provide a presentation which covers the points summarised above.</p>	Bob Alabaster
16.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
17.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>Noted</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed at 9.00pm Next meeting: 13 September 2011 at 7.30pm.</p>	

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Khalid Ahmed on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes are to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public