

Minutes

**Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy
Overview Committee
Monday, 6 February 2012
Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Beulah East, Neil Fyfe, Roshan Ghei, Raymond Graham, Shirley Harper-O'Neill, Richard Mills and Michael White.</p> <p>Apologies: Councillor Robin Sansarpuri (Councillor Roshan Ghei substituting).</p> <p>Officers: Ozan Hassan (Customer Focus Project Officer), Darryl Wallace (ICT Strategist – ICT, Highways and Business Services) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p> <p>Witnesses: Emma Hallett (Marketing Consultant – Drek Associates) and David Holdstock (Head of Corporate Communications).</p>	
55.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None.</p>	
56.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2012</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
57.	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business would be considered in public.</p>	
58.	<p>BUDGET PROPOSALS 2012/13 – COMMENTS FROM POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEES</p> <p>Members were reminded that as part of the Council's Constitution, Policy Overview Committees had a role to review the Cabinet's budget proposals which had been agreed at Cabinet on 15 December 2011. Each Policy Overview Committee had given consideration to budget proposals relating to the service areas within their remit and their comments were submitted to this Committee for comment and to be referred to Cabinet.</p> <p>The comments made were as follows:</p> <p>Residents' & Environmental Services POC – 17 January 2012</p>	<p>Action by:</p>

Action By:

In noting the 2012/13 budget proposals for Planning, Environment and Community related services, Members of the Committee congratulated the Directorate for achieving the £4.3m budget savings that had been seen without adverse effects to Hillingdon residents. It noted in particular, that so many fees and charges had been held at constant prices and most prices preserved were below inflation, and that the Capital Programme had remained constant.

The Committee noted the budget projections contained in the report, and on the combined budget proposals put forward by the Directorate, within the context of the corporate budgetary position.

There were no specific comments.

Corporate Services & Partnerships POC – 18 January 2012

Members praised officers for the work which had been carried out in the preparation of the budget and the work which had been carried out in relation to efficiency savings, which had had a minimal impact on front line services.

The budget projections and the combined budget proposals put forward by the Central Services Directorate were noted and officers were congratulated for the work they had carried out in preparation of the budget.

There were no specific comments.

Education & Children's Services POC –19 January 2012

The Committee welcomed the budget proposals and noted with pleasure the overall stability of available expenditure. In challenging economic times it was noteworthy that the Education and Children's Services related budgets were clearly healthy and well managed – and budgets that the Committee would continue to monitor.

There were no specific comments.

Social Services, Health & Housing POC – 25 January 2012

In noting the proposals, Members of the Committee thanked officers for the comprehensive report setting out the budget proposals for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing related services within the context of the corporate budgetary position. The Committee noted the ongoing challenge for Adult Social Care and Housing in managing budgets in the current economic climate.

	<p>The Committee endorsed the key priorities as set out in the report but expressed concern about pressures created by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The increasing number of dementia cases• The increase in transitional children due to demographic changes• The significant implications of an ageing population• Changes to Housing benefits <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>1. That this Committee submits all Policy Overview Committee comments on the Cabinet’s budget proposals to the Cabinet for their meeting on 16 February 2012.</p>	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
59.	<p>MAJOR REVIEW - OPERATION AND FUNCTION OF THE HILLINGDON FIRST CARD – WITNESS SESSION</p> <p>For the first witness session of the review Members heard evidence from Emma Hallett, Marketing Consultant of Drek Associates and David Holdstock, Head of Corporate Communications.</p> <p>The Head of Corporate Communications provided Members with the background to the consultation which took place before the Hillingdon First Card was introduced, together with details on the promotion and publicity around the scheme. Issues raised during the presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2007 the Council undertook formal and informal consultation with residents and local businesses to find out views on a residents’ privilege card. Three focus groups were held to see what should the card offer, what should the card be called, its appearance etc• Residents helped design the appearance of the card and very much shaped its purpose• There was a three phased marketing and promotional campaign for the card• The business element of the scheme was introduced around the time of the change in the economic climate• Businesses were included in the scheme to get residents to shop locally• Reference was made to face to face interviews with 500 residents which took place with 80% of residents saying they had used their card, with 61% using the card at least once a week• The main use of the card was for parking and for use in the Council’s libraries• A Hillingdon First Card Business Directory was produced which was welcomed by residents• Some residents were unsure as to which shops and	

	<p>businesses provided discounts or incentives as part of the scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at the consultation which took place for local businesses had been poor • Marketing material had been sent to all signed up businesses but there had been varied levels of usage of this material • Reference was made to the Hillingdon First Card's webpage on the Council's internet site which provided residents with details of how to apply for a card, managing the card, how to use the card and also details on the Hillingdon First Directory <p>Emma Hallett explained that the brief of Drek Associates with the Hillingdon First Card was to recruit business members to the scheme.</p> <p>Issues raised during her presentation were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In challenging economic times as at present, people look for some benefit in owning the Hillingdon First Card • There has been a favourable introduction of the card with the predictable major usage being discounted car parking charges. • Of the current uses of the card, the use of the card by residents in local businesses was the least used. This did not constitute a failure as the business element of the card was not the primary use • In relation to businesses that were part of the scheme; they were generally appreciative of the initiative and many would like to support it. However some businesses held back from either committing to a fixed term incentive or giving a too good an incentive, as this may only be giving a benefit to existing customers. This would not attract additional business or footfall to compensate for the loss profit from discounts given. In the present economic climate, this was even more of an issue • Members were informed that over 1,000 Hillingdon businesses were spoken to and over 300 businesses in the High Street, trading areas and small shopping parades had signed up to the scheme • The Committee noted and praised the work of Drek Associates for exceeding their target in relation to business involvement • Reference was made to Drek Associates widening their recruitment of businesses on industrial estates and self employed businesses • Business owners overall made positive statements about the scheme but there were some negative comments. These included: 	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a need for the continual promotion of the scheme • The internet was important but many recognised that customers responded best to visual promotions in shops • In many businesses total flexibility of offer was needed to reflect changing economic times and seasonal footfall • Some businesses on the Borough's boundaries had expressed concern that their existing customers from adjoining local authorities were aggrieved at not receiving discounts and they may decide to shop elsewhere • Within the existing budget and resources there could be further opportunities to raise awareness and appreciation both for the businesses and residents • National businesses such as Insurance companies, motor vehicle breakdown services etc were generally not receptive to joining the scheme because the card would result in regional differentials in terms of price <p>The Committee discussed some of the issues raised and these were summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council was in the process of redesigning the public website and this could be an opportunity to revisit the Hillingdon First Card web pages and look at its design • The organisation of promotion awareness days to jog residents' awareness of the benefits and uses of the card • The use of Council notice boards within sports centres and libraries to display information about the card and businesses which were part of the scheme. Possibly leaflets being produced • The linking of the promotion of the Hillingdon First Card with events such as Hillingdon Pride which could showcase local businesses which were in the scheme. This could increase the footfall for local businesses • A focus on district promotions • Continuation of the use of Hillingdon People to publicise the card • The investigation of the use of application software (Apps) and the introduction of QR codes on marketing material to increase the profile of Hillingdon First Card. Would have to be within existing resources • The featuring of businesses that Hillingdon First Card has brought increased business to which would be a good incentive for other businesses to join • Making it easier for businesses to update offers in the scheme • The targeting of self employed businesses who operate 	<p>Action By:</p>
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	<p>from their home address within the Borough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with businesses in the Manor Farm Re-development <p>Members thanked the two witnesses for the information they had provided the review.</p> <p>Members asked that for the next meeting a representative(s) from one of the Borough's Chambers of Commerce be invited to provide the review with their views on the Hillingdon First Card scheme and find out how the Council and local businesses could work together to increase the number of businesses who were part of the scheme.</p> <p>Officers were also asked to provide a report to the next meeting on some of the suggested IT and telecommunications initiatives which could be used for the purpose of increasing the profile and promoting further the Hillingdon First Card.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the information provided by the witnesses be noted and be included as part of the evidence for the review. 2. That a representative from one of the Borough's Chambers of Commerce be invited to the next meeting and officers be asked to provide a report detailing some of the suggested IT and telecommunications initiatives which could be used for the purpose of increasing the profile and promoting further the Hillingdon First Card. 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p> <p>Darryl Wallace/ Ozan Hassan</p>
60.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
61.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
	<p>Meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 9.00pm Next meeting: 14 March 2012 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. These minutes are circulated to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.