

Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities
Policy Overview Committee
Tuesday, 8 January 2019
Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge



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Members Present:

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)
Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman)
Lindsay Bliss
Nicola Brightman
Farhad Choubedar
Alan Deville
Jazz Dhillon
Vanessa Hurhangee
Kerri Prince

Officers Present:

Mark Braddock, Senior Manager, Democratic Services
Gemma McNamara, Finance Manager - Transformation, Finance and Chief
Executive's Office
Gary Penticost, Head of Repairs and Engineering
Jacqui Robertson, Service Manager for Community Safety
Mike Talbot, Head of Human Resources
Luke Taylor, Democratic Services Officer
Iain Watters, Financial Planning Manager

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

46. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

47. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was confirmed that all items were marked as Part I and would be considered in public.

48. BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Financial Planning Manager was in attendance at the meeting to introduce the 2019 / 2020 budget proposals for services with the remit of the Committee. Members heard that the budget was presented in the context of the next four years, and during this period £48m total savings were required.

The Committee was informed that the underlying savings requirement has fallen to under £20m due to new one-off social care funding from the Government and a Council Tax increase, although Council Tax for the over 65s remained frozen. The Financial Planning Manager noted that the 2019/20 savings programme requires no reduction in service levels, and any savings were made by efficiencies. Savings over the subsequent three years are expected to total £28m, although this figure may change due to uncertainties such as Brexit and the upcoming Fair Funding Review, the figure will remain in that range.

Members heard that any fees and charges for services were benchmarked against neighbouring local authorities, or competitive if the fees were commercial.

It was agreed that the 2019/20 budget proposals were agreeable, and the report was noted.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the 2019/2020 budget proposals for services within the remit of the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee.

49. PAST REVIEW UPDATE: RECRUITMENT IN HILLINGDON

The Head of Human Resources (HR) was in attendance to present an update on the actions taken with regards to a previous Committee review regarding Recruitment in Hillingdon, which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2017.

The Head of HR confirmed that Cabinet approved ten recommendations made in the review under the proviso that these recommendations were delivered within existing HR budgets. Once the recommendations were agreed, HR looked at efficiencies to ensure that the recommendations could be implemented, and agreed that this could be completed as part of a three-year project to help ease financial pressures, which HR is currently halfway through.

In addition to the details outlined in the report, it was noted that:

Recommendation 1 – A lot of work had taken place with TMP Worldwide to find successful ways to market the Council’s brand and uniqueness. Some of this work focussed on the authenticity of employees’ feelings towards the “Residents First” slogan and how it was central to the Council’s culture.

Recommendation 2 – Work focussed on developing social media as a tool for recruitment, with roughly 52% of potential candidates now using social media in their job search.

Recommendation 3 – A referral scheme has been approved in Children’s Services and will be promoted in early 2019, having been funded by savings made by not using recruitment companies.

Recommendation 4 – Scheduled to take place in 2019/20.

Recommendation 5 – Implementation would take place in 2019/20.

Recommendation 6 – The development of the apprenticeship talent pool has been a huge success. Hillingdon is just one of four London Boroughs to have met government targets on apprenticeships, and a number of apprentices who were hired have now been employed in permanent roles within the Council. Further to this, 68% of the apprentices are residents of the Borough.

Recommendation 7 – Implementation will take place by April 2019. It is currently at the procurement stage, but will lead to modernised practices as writing job descriptions is very time consuming for those responsible.

Recommendation 8 – The new competency framework has been introduced and embedded in the Council’s processes.

Recommendation 9 – This will streamline the selection process and save time spent writing interview questions.

Recommendation 10 – Exit interviews have been introduced, as well as anonymous “entrance interviews” which allow new employees to give feedback on their induction process after six months of employment. This has been helpful in allowing any necessary improvements to be made early in the employees’ career at Hillingdon.

The Chairman noted that a lot of progress has been made, but it was still only halfway through the three-year project, and Members agreed that a further update on the progress of the review be tabled at Committee in 18-24 months.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the update on the past review regarding “Recruitment in Hillingdon”.

50. REVIEW B: BROADCASTING OF POLICY OVERVIEW, SCRUTINY & SELECT COMMITTEES ON YOUTUBE

The Chairman noted that at the previous Full Council meeting it was considered that the scope of broadcasting Council meetings was extended, and that the Council resolved to request the Committee to consider this as a review topic and report back to Cabinet.

The Senior Democratic Services Manager was in attendance to introduce the report, which aimed to initiate a review on whether the Council should extend broadcasting to overview and scrutiny meeting.

It was confirmed that, should the Council agree to progress the review, an options paper will be presented to the next meeting including financial information, YouTube

analytics and a demonstration of how the system works. Members heard that since the Council started filming, over 260 meetings have been broadcast, with high resident viewing rates, more recently improved due to better promotion.

Responding to questions from the Committee, the Senior Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the Council used YouTube to broadcast as, when the original broadcasting options were explored, alternative platforms either proved too expensive or were less versatile than the free service offered by YouTube.

The Committee agreed to progress the review as set out in the report, and the Chairman stated that if there were any additional considerations that Members wished to be included in the report, could they please send these to the Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed to progress the review regarding “Broadcasting of Policy Overview, Scrutiny and Select Committee meetings” to the next stage.

51. REVIEW A: POLICING IN HILLINGDON

The Head of Repairs and Engineering attended the meeting and addressed the Committee regarding the improvement of the CCTV system in the Borough.

The Committee heard that the Council had invested £1.65m in over 800 state-of-the-art cameras, which store recorded data for 32 days across the Borough, and the project also involved a major upgrade of the borough’s CCTV control centre, which a number of Committee Members had recently visited. Councillors heard that the new CCTV control room has been a resounding success and the Police are very happy with it.

Members heard that the CCTV infrastructure was identified in 2017 as in need of replacement and upgrade as the current system was at its end of life with a number of faulty cameras producing either no images, or very low quality images. The upgrade included Town Centres, housing estates or fly-tipping hotspots. The Head of Repairs and Engineering noted that he met with the Police before Christmas, and the new CCTV was being used on a daily basis.

Councillors were informed that the program will be extended across the Borough to include automatic number plate recognition, to review mobile camera positions, and to introduce body cameras for Enforcement Officers in ASBIT. A demonstration of facial recognition cameras is planned and will be looked to roll out in the future to assist Council officers and Police. These additions will reduce crime and the fear of crime, which in turn assists in developing the economic well-being of the Borough and encourages greater use of the town centres, green space and community facilities.

Responding to questioning from Members, the Head of Repairs and Engineering confirmed that a number of housing estate cameras have been linked in to the CCTV control room, and when the cameras were required on estates, they would be able to track people using the areas to evade police or commit crimes. Furthermore, there

had been attempts to smash CCTV cameras, but these were unsuccessful as they are so robust. As such, the cameras can continue to record without damage, producing images to assist in identifying individuals.

The Head of Repairs and Engineering stated that some systems were not linked back to the control room via WiFi, but can be viewed locally on the ICT network in the Control Room.

Members noted that they were very encouraged by the system following their visit to the control room, and that facial recognition would be an excellent development. The Committee heard that facial recognition would be achieved from both frontal and side images, and initial indications were that the system is very good and could be used in both town centres and targeted areas at first, before being rolled out to the rest of the Borough, and it should lead to further successful prosecutions. Councillors questioned whether the system could be used to help in the cases of missing children, and the Head of Repairs and Engineering noted that he would seek further information on this.

The Head of Repairs and Engineering also confirmed that the summarised numbers of cameras, measures to mitigate WiFi jammers, and further information on the body cameras for officers would be provided to Members in a written update. The Committee noted that the body cameras would be similar to those used successfully by the Police.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Repairs and Engineering for his testimony, and noted that this witness session concluded the evidence stage of the review. As such, the review would now be progressed, and Members were encouraged to submit any potential recommendations or contributions to the Democratic Services Officer.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and progressed the review, and written updates would be provided to the Committee regarding:

- 1. Whether facial recognition could be used to help in cases of missing children;**
- 2. Summarised numbers of cameras;**
- 3. Measures to mitigate WiFi jammers; and,**
- 4. Technology regarding body cameras that would be used by ASBIT officers.**

52. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the forward plan was noted.

53. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/2020

RESOLVED: That the work programme was noted.