

CORPORATE SERVICES & PARTNERSHIPS POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE: OPERATION AND FUNCTION OF THE HILLINGDON FIRST CARD

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Improvement Partnerships & Community Safety
Officer Contact	Khalid Ahmed, Central Services
Papers with report	Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee review of the Operation and Function of the Hillingdon First Card

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To receive the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee's report on the review into the operation and function of the Hillingdon First Card.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	Putting our residents first.
Financial Cost	To be contained within budget
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee
Ward(s) affected	N/A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Welcomes the report from the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee (as in Appendix 1) on the review into the operation and function of the Hillingdon First Card.
2. Accepts the recommendations of the Policy Overview Committee as reflected below:

Policy Overview Committee Recommendations

- a) That the Council's webpage for the Hillingdon First Card be redesigned during the general redesign of the Councils' public website.
- b) Officers investigate the use of notice boards around the Borough, such as in town centres, shopping areas, sports centres, libraries to publicise the Card and the businesses which were part of the scheme.

- c) That a re-promotion of the Business Directory part of the scheme take place, with officers working closely with the Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce.
- d) That when undertaking their annual review, Drek Associates be asked to investigate whether businesses on Industrial Estates, self employed businesses such as plumbers, electricians, painters and decorators etc, could be included in the Hillingdon First Card scheme, and report back to the Cabinet Member for Improvement, Partnership & Community Safety.
- e) That officers be asked to investigate whether the Borough's estate agents could be asked to provide home buyers and people looking to rent within the Borough, with information on the Hillingdon First Card scheme.
- f) That officers be asked to look at businesses having the option of promoting offers, rather than discounts as part of the business element of the scheme.
- g) That Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce be requested to consider using their Members' pages on their website for the promotion of the Hillingdon First Card.
- h) That officers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Improvement, Partnership & Community Safety be given flexibility on the ideas and suggestions on promoting Hillingdon First Card, to ensure that these added value and were contained within existing budgets.
- i) That officers be asked to look at introducing Quick Response (QR) codes on marketing material to increase the profile of Hillingdon First Card. This could include the use of QR codes on public notice boards, libraries and sports centres.

Reasons for recommendation

The Hillingdon First Card was launched in June 2009 and the review gave Members an opportunity to assess the impact of the Card and look at any possible areas and opportunities for the Card, which would further increase the success of the Card for residents, and also for those businesses who were part of the scheme.

The review has taken place during difficult economic times for residents and for local businesses and therefore it was an opportune moment to explore possible measures which could be introduced with the Hillingdon First Card which would provide extra help to both residents and to local businesses.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Information

1. The Terms of Reference of the review were as follows:

- To examine the operation of the Hillingdon First Card since it was launched in June 2009.
- To review the services which the card is used for and to analyse data on usage of the card.

- To examine the possible expansion of the card into other areas, particularly in relation to businesses
 - To investigate the uses of other multi-application local authority smart cards and whether there were any uses which Hillingdon could consider
 - To explore with the Borough's Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, residents' groups, national companies and public utilities how the Hillingdon First Card could be used to help local businesses and residents during these difficult economic times
 - To review the publicity for the Hillingdon First Card, particularly in relation to local businesses who provide discounts
 - To explore with the business sector the concept of a business to business card which could provide discounts for businesses
 - To look at further ways of modernising and improving access to Council services through further utilisation of the Hillingdon First Card
 - To make recommendations to Cabinet based on the outcome of this review with the proviso that any proposals maintain the simple card administration and avoid any additional capital expenditure
2. The review took place between January 2012 and April 2012 and received evidence from the Council's ICT Strategist – ICT, Highways and Business Services, Customer Focus Project Officer, the Head of Corporate Communication, from a Marketing Consultant from Drek Associates and from the Chairman of Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce.
 3. The recommendations of the review will necessitate the Council's Communications Team and the Partnership and Business Engagement Team working closely together on the outcomes of the review and having the flexibility to implement the recommendations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Improvement, Partnerships & Community Safety, within existing budgets. Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce participated in the review and were willing to work in partnership with officers of the Council on some of the outcomes of the review.
 4. The review centred on a re-promotion of the Hillingdon First Card scheme and the recommendations will support this promotion.
 5. The review was carried out with the understanding that any suggested recommendations to Cabinet for any possible enhancements or additions to the card, would involve no additional extra costs to the Council. In addition, any possible enhancements and additions to the function of the Card, should not involve any cash handling due to the security issues this would raise.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendations?

The Hillingdon First Card scheme is a hugely popular and successful privilege card for residents of the Borough and the outcomes of the review will add further value to the scheme, for the benefit of both residents and local businesses involved in the business element of the scheme.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee took evidence from a number of witnesses.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

When the Hillingdon First Card was launched back in 2009, the Council relied on the well-being power contained in Part I of the Local Government Act 2000 as the necessary legal power to introduce it for the benefit of Hillingdon residents and businesses.

The well-being power has been replaced by the general power of competence as set out in Part I Chapter I of the Localism Act 2011. This gives a local authority the power to do anything that individuals generally may do and it extends to providing a benefit for the area of the authority or persons resident or present in the area.

The general power of competence is not limited by the existence of any other power of the authority which overlaps it. Any enhancements and additions to the function of the Hillingdon First Card and any steps taken by the Council to promote its wider use would be covered by the general power of competence.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.