<u>Minutes</u>

Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee Tuesday 12 November 2013 Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Lindsay Bliss, Wayne Bridges, Beulah East, Raymond Graham, Richard Mills and Carol Melvin. Officers: David Fisher ((Transport Services Manager), Jo Gill (Energy Efficiency Officer), David Haygarth (Council's Energy Manager), Nancy Leroux (Deputy Director – Strategic Finance), Mike Talbot (Organisational Development Manager) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).		
25	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2013		
	Agreed as an accurate record.		
26.	EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC		
	It was agreed that all items of business would be considered in public.		
27.	SINGLE MEETING REVIEW – COUNCL'S HOLIDAY LEAVE MANAGEMENT The Committee gave consideration to a scoping report which provided Members with details of the Council's current holiday leave management for Council employees, together with the details of the alternative of 'variable leave year' holiday leave management. The Council's Organisational Development Manager attended the meeting and presented information on the advantages and disadvantages of both systems of holiday management. The key issues were:-	Action By:	
	 What is the Current Holiday Leave Procedure which this Council had for Council employees? Looking at the distribution of holiday leave across the Council and to see if there were patterns which may have caused problems in any particular service area. To look at the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches to 'Fixed Annual Leave Year' and 'Variable Leave Year' Holiday. What were the cost implications and HR system changes which would be needed if the holiday management system and procedure changed? 		

Action By:

The Committee was informed that the Council currently operated a fixed annual leave year for all employees synchronised with the financial year starting on the 1 April and continuing until 31 March. Reference was made to Council policy allowing employees to 'carry over' up to 5 days holiday leave into the following annual leave year.

Members were informed that leave entitlement, holiday requests and manager authorisation for leave was administered through an online self-service module of the Council's current HR system, ResourceLink. The system served the Council very well, although effective management was needed to ensure that service delivery was not compromised when employees planned to take leave.

Members were provided with a bar chart which illustrated the distribution of employees annual holiday for 2012/13. The obvious peaks of leave taken were during the school holiday months of July and August, during December and the Christmas and new year period.

There was a third peak at the end of the holiday period in March but this was a gradual trend progression, rather than a significant 'spike'.

The Committee asked that officers provide a breakdown of patterns of leave across all directorates and service areas to assess whether there were any distinct areas of the Council where there were exceptional 'peaks' which may impact on the delivery of services.

The Council's Deputy Director for Strategic Finance attended the meeting and provided Members with her experience within the Finance Directorate where the financial year end coincided with employees' end of leave year. Members were informed that managers were attuned with the responsibilities of the service and of the end of the financial year, so management of leave of staff was less of a problem. A move to a more flexible and variable leave year would cause more problems in terms of enabling managers to manage their staff annual leave requests.

Reference was made to the arrangements which existed in Teams throughout the Council whereby staff used Google Calendar to indicate holiday leave. This was a useful tool for managers to ensure sufficient officer cover within Teams.

Members were informed that the primary argument for an annual leave year was simplicity of managing and administering the process. Service planning and scheduling was simplified where there was only the single leave year to consider, rather than managers having to consider each employee's individual

leave year.

Action By:

The Council's Organisational Development Manager informed Members that if the annual leave for employees was moved to a personalised leave year, the Council's HR system would require reconfiguration to enable the changes to be made to the leave year. This would result in obvious cost implications.

Reference was made to the plans for the Council to move to a new HR Platform (Oracle) in 2015 so any changes to ResourceLink would have a diminished return in value for any development investment made to the system.

Discussion took place on the evidence which had been presented and Members concluded that it would be inappropriate to consider implementing a change to the holiday leave management system at this moment in time. However, consideration could be given to revisiting this once the new Oracle HR system was implemented.

In view of the usage of Google Calendars by Teams within the Council, Members asked whether the new Oracle HR platform could link into Google Calendars. Also reference was made to a previous review recommendation relating to a Council held skills database, and Members asked if officers could investigate if the Oracle system had a skills capture element to it which include skills of all Council employees.

Mike Talbot

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the information provided in the scoping report, together with the evidence provided by officers, be noted.
- 2. That consideration of the Council's holiday leave management procedure be revisited when the new Oracle HR platform has been implemented.

28. MAJOR REVIEW 2013/14 - REDUCING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

This was second witness session of the Committee's review into Reducing the Council's Carbon Footprint. Members received information on the following areas:-

Anaerobic Digestion (AD) - This was where organic waste, food, grass, slurry etc, was mixed and broken down to form gas. The gas was then used to power an engine which generated heat and electricity, which was then sold to the grid and local users through a district heat and power network. Reference was made to a new AD plant which had opened in County Durham. This new plant produced 1.56MWh which was enough energy to power 2,000 homes from processing up to

50,000 tonnes of commercial food waste.

Action By:

Members were informed that the plant in County Durham cost £8m to construct.

Members were informed that a comparable facility within this Borough would provide enough power for a facility such as the Civic Centre.

The Council's Energy Manager referred to the number of farms within the Borough which could be used for this anaerobic process. Discussion took place on the use of residents' kitchen caddies and the possible use of food waste for this anaerobic digestion.

David Haygarth

Members expressed interest in this area and asked that for the next meeting a paper be produced providing an outline of how such a facility could work in this Borough, utilising the farm waste and food waste within the Borough.

Decentralised Energy – Heat and Power- the Committee was made aware of the recently set up Energy Centre and heat network at Bunhill, in the London Borough of Islington. The Centre provided a heat network in the Bunhill ward and provided cheaper, greener and locally produced energy. The heat network was fed by a local energy centre which produced electricity and heat.

The Committee was informed that this Energy Centre produced more efficient electricity than the central power stations because the normally wasted heat which occurred in central power stations was captured and piped around the heat network in the Energy Centre. The Energy Centre was generally much more efficient, cheaper and greener and provided residents with affordable warmth and helped reduce carbon emissions.

Members expressed an interest in this facility and it was agreed that a site visit be arranged to enable further information to be gathered for the review.

Jo Gill Khalid Ahmed

In addition, the Council's Energy Manager agreed to provide information on the feasibility of such a facility within the Borough.

David Haygarth

Helping Residents switch energy supplier – Members were reminded that at the last meeting reference was made to what could the Council do to broker the best energy deals for residents. Officers reported that a press release would be shortly released which would inform residents that practical advice on switching energy providers and getting the best energy deals would be available from a Council backed

helpline. The Council had teamed up with the Energy Helpline to provide this free and impartial service.

Action By:

Residents who were worried about the impact of rising energy prices which had recently been announced by gas and electricity suppliers would be encouraged to find out if they could save money by swapping to a different company. The Council's website contained information for residents on energy efficiency and savings which could be made.

Members were informed that this press release would be passed to local newspapers and consideration could also be given to producing flyers for local libraries and for street champions to distribute.

Officers were also asked to give consideration to extending the initiative to local businesses but it was acknowledged that those businesses that rented or leased their premises could not make decisions on energy suppliers. However, it was agreed that where possible, local businesses, perhaps with the help of the local Chambers of Commerce be included in the initiative.

Jo Gill

Council's Vehicle Fleet - The Council's Transport Services Manager reported that the Council's vehicle fleet comprised of around 170 vehicle and included 40 Large Commercial vehicles, 75 Light Commercial vehicles, 18 Passenger Vehicles, 26 items of Plant, 5 Diesel Cars, 3 Petrol Cars, one Electric Car Peugeot I on, two Electric Vans Ford Transit Connects and one Hybrid Car Toyota Prius.

Members were informed that all the Council's large commercial vehicles were compliant with Transport for London (TfL) low emissions zone, with some vehicles having been fitted with particulate filters to comply.

Reference was made to vehicle procurement over the last 2 years which had led to a number of new vehicles on the Fleet with Euro 5 engines and reductions in emissions. These included new vehicles for the Waste Collection Service, Street Cleaning and Highway Maintenance.

Fuel Information – The total fuel usage for the Council's vehicle fleet was around 65,000 litres per month, with the vehicles calculated at undertaking 1.5 million miles per year.

The Committee was informed that the fuel was supplied under a procurement contract from Hall Fuels and was an ultra low sulphur diesel and was stored at Harlington Depot. Reference was made to the new refuse vehicles which had shown improved miles per gallon figures compared to the older vehicles (up to 10%).

Reference was made to a possible alternative fuel which could be derived from anaerobic waste and officers were asked to provide more information on the feasibility of this at a future meeting.

Action By: David Haygarth

Electric Car Charging Points – The Committee was provided with information on the usage of these points throughout the Borough. There were 15 electric vehicle charging point sites in Hillingdon available for the public to use and details of their location were provided. These units were provided and managed by two companies; Chargemaster and Elektromotive.

Over the past three years £14,893 had been spent towards facilitating the use of electric vehicles with the funding coming out of the Transport for London, Local Implementation Plan budget. With regard to the electric charging points, the original cost of installing these had been funded by the Government's Technology Strategy Board and by Scottish Southern Electric. This had been part of the Ford Battery and Electric Vehicle Project of which this Council was a partner.

The Committee asked for more information on electric charging points, particularly more detail on the use of each charging point and the levels of ownership of electric vehicles within the Borough. In addition Members thought it would be useful for information on what facilities other neighbouring local authorities provided, together with information on any electric car dealerships which were in the Borough.

Alan Tilly

Procurement - Energy Contracts 2013/14 – The Council's Energy Manager provided Members with the background to the Council's current energy contracts and the proposals for the Council to procure energy on a greener tariff. This would have obvious consequences of reducing CO2 and reducing this Council's Climate Change Levy. The Committee was encouraged by this strategy and the move to greener energy.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the information provided as part of the witness session be noted and form part of the evidence for the review.
- 2. That officers be asked to undertake the actions outlined above for the next and future meetings of this Committee.

29. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee discussed possible single review topics which could be undertaken at future meetings. Officers were asked to investigate the feasibility of undertaking these reviews.

	Noted.	
30.	CABINET FORWARD PLAN The Committee expressed an interest in receiving information	
	on the report which was on the Forward Plan for Cabinet on 23 January 2014 – Promoting Economic Development and Regeneration in Hillingdon – Update.	
	Noted.	
	Meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.20pm Next meeting: 14 January 2014 at 7.30pm	

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.