

Minutes

Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy

Overview Committee

Wednesday 16 July 2014

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Richard Mills (Vice-Chairman), Wayne Bridges, Tony Burles, Narinder Garg, Becky Haggar, Raymond Graham, Carol Melvin, and Robin Sansarpuri.</p> <p>Officers: Bharat Jashapara (Principal Accountant - Finance and Administration), Dan Kennedy (Head of Performance and Improvement) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p>	
9.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 26 JUNE 2014</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 would be considered in public.</p>	
11	<p>BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE DIRECTORATES</p> <p>The Principal Accountant for Finance and Administration attended the meeting and informed Members that the report set out the main financial issues which faced the Group's services and the work being undertaken to respond to them.</p> <p>Members were informed that the budget report to Council in February 2014 had identified the savings requirements for 2015/16 of £20.3m and the Committee was informed that work was underway to refresh this figure. The finance settlement for the Council would be announced towards the end of the year.</p> <p>The Committee was informed that the Group was given a savings target for 2014/15 of £1.5m and had already delivered £1.4m of these.</p> <p>Members asked what was the percentage of savings made in relation to the overall Council savings and to overall costs.</p> <p>Subsequent to the meeting, Members were informed that Administration & Finance savings equated to 12% of the Council's overall savings and that the savings for the Group equated to 6.74% of the net budget for the Group.</p>	<p>Action By:</p>

<p>In relation to the impact of the Better Care Fund (BCF), Members asked how the Council's funding of £17,991k was calculated. Subsequent to the meeting, Members were provided with background to the BCF.</p> <p>The Disabled Facilities Capital and Social Care Capital figures were currently received directly by LBH. Section 256 of the National Health Act allowed Primary Care Trusts and their successor Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) to enter into arrangements with local authorities, for local authorities to carry out social care activities with health benefits. This is what the Section 256 funding listed above related to.</p> <p>The further NHS funding transfer included funding for carers and intermediate care/ Rapid Response, currently received by the CCG.</p> <p>The total BCF funding was not new money into the local economy; it was either committed to existing ongoing spend within LBH or the CCG; or, alternatively it was expected to be released from commissioning for hospital services.</p> <p>The BCF was also linked to new duties that come into being from April 2015 as a result of the Care Act, resulting from new entitlements for carers and the introduction of a national minimum eligibility threshold as well as better information and advice, advocacy, safeguarding and other measures in the Care Act.</p> <p>Members asked about emerging pressures within the Group and were informed that there were two key areas which required closely monitoring. There was the management of the vacancy factor given the significant staffing budgets and the number of restructures that were at various stages across the Group. The second key area related to the ongoing achievement of income targets, particularly those that had been increased for 2014/15 through the MTFF process.</p> <p>A general point was made regarding whether the savings targets had been challenging and subsequent to the meeting, it was reported that the Group was continuously seeking to identify efficiencies and savings and these were put in place as quickly as possible. This strategy had assisted in an early delivery of savings for 2014/15, some of which had been based on efficiencies put in to place during 2013/14. The majority of the budget of the Group related to staffing and most of the savings had been the result of restructures.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>1. That the development of the financial planning process undertaken to date be noted, together with</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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	the subsequent responses given to the issues raised.	
12.	<p>MAJOR REVIEW - THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE</p> <p>The Council's Head of Performance and Improvement attended the meeting and provided the Committee with a presentation on the Corporate Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>Members were also provided with a scoping report for the review which provided details of the objectives of the review and background analysis.</p> <p>Members were informed that there were four complaints procedures which operated within this Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints made by children or on their behalf were governed by the Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738). • Adults' services complaints were managed in line with the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'. • All other complaints were dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. • All complaints received by the Council regarding its public health functions were handled in accordance with The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangement Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012. <p>The Committee was informed that the first three complaint procedures were set by statute and the Council was required to follow legislation with little scope for doing otherwise.</p> <p>The Corporate Complaints procedure which was the subject of the review was different because it was agreed locally. Members were informed that this procedure currently operated under the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Complaints (Service requests) <p>At this stage, officers tried to resolve enquiries and concerns as quickly as possible by discussing the problem with the complainant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – Response from the Head of Service or Deputy Director <p>Officers acknowledged Stage 1 complaints within 3 working</p>	Action By:

<p>days of receipt of the complaint and the deadline was for complainants to receive a full response within 10 working days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 – Response from the relevant Director <p>If a complainant was dissatisfied with the response, he/she could ask for their complaint to be reviewed at Stage 2 stating the reason for their dissatisfaction with the response.</p> <p>Officers acknowledged Stage 2 complaints within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint and the deadline was for complainants to receive a full response within 10 working days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council <p>If a complainant was dissatisfied with the response, he/she could ask for their complaint to be reviewed at Stage 3 by the Chief Executive. The complainant had to state the reason why they were dissatisfied with the response given at Stage 2.</p> <p>The Chief Executive acknowledged Stage 3 complaints within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint and the deadline was for complainants to receive a full response within 15 working days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 4 - Designated Person for the Council (for housing complaints only) <p>If the complaint was about a tenancy, leasehold or other housing management issue, this could be referred to a 'Designated Person'. If a complaint was still not resolved, the complainant was advised to take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for Housing complaints with all other complaints being directed to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).</p> <p>Members were informed that the Council service areas which were covered by the Corporate Complaints Procedure were:- Housing, Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Education Services, Resident Services (Planning, Environment, Anti social behaviour, etc), Administration and Finance and Legal services.</p> <p>The Head of Performance and Improvement provided Members with a number of relevant statistics and the stand out ones were that there had been a 42% increase in housing stage 1 complaints and a large increase in Finance complaints. Members were informed that these complaints had increased because of the recent changes in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy and the recent Welfare changes.</p> <p>The Committee was also informed that the LGO received 93</p>	<p>Action By:</p>
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enquiries / complaints about Hillingdon last year which had been less than the average for London (151 enquiries / complaints on average - nearly 40% less in Hillingdon than average).

Members were informed that the LGO received a similar numbers of enquiries / complaints about adult social care and benefits/tax about Hillingdon to other London Boroughs, but much fewer than the London average for housing, transport and education / children's services.

In terms of the outcomes from complaints, 55% of those referred back to this Council for resolution were upheld - which was the average for all London Boroughs.

The Committee was encouraged to hear that the statistics indicated that the Council was doing more than many other London Boroughs to resolve issues at an earlier stage. This was evidenced by the LGO receiving fewer enquiries about this Council than others.

Discussion took place on particular aspects of the Complaints Procedure and Members asked that the review examine the following:-

- How does the Council learn from complaints?
- How does the Council use complaints from residents to implement improvements on service delivery?
- Any trends in complaints which may indicate a problem in a service
- What intervention takes place to mitigate against complaints being escalated?
- To review the literature and information contained on the Council's public website
- To examine the compensation policy relating to complaints
- What training is given to Council managers on dealing with complaints?
- Best practice from other local authorities which could be applied to this Council's Complaints Procedure

Members would be provided with the full breakdown of the last three years worth of complaints statistics and trend analysis to enable the review to examine if there appeared to be any problem areas.

In addition the Committee would be provided with the Annual Complaints Reports which were considered by other Policy Overview Committees.

Action By:

Dan Kennedy / Khalid Ahmed

Dan Kennedy / Ian Anderson

Dan Kennedy / Ian Anderson

	<p>It was agreed that the issues outlined above be examined at future witness sessions.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the presentation and the information provided be noted and officers be asked to explore the areas outlined above. 2. That the scoping report be noted and be amended to reflect discussion during the meeting. 	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Dan Kennedy / Khalid Ahmed</p>
13.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15</p> <p>Noted. It was agreed that a single meeting review take place at the October meeting on Members Enquiries.</p>	<p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
14.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
	<p>Meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.55pm Next meeting: 16 September 2014 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.