

COPRORATE SERVICES & PARTNERSHIPS POC - REVIEW TOPICS FOR FIRST MAJOR REVIEW OF 2015/16

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REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to agree a topic to be developed into a draft scoping report to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

The Committee is asked to select a single area within its remit to be developed into a scoping report. This will require the Committee to provide specific rather than broad areas to focus on. By so doing, officers will be able to produce a scoping report that addresses Members' main concerns and put forward an effective plan for the review.

INFORMATION

1. The Committee is responsible for undertaking the 'policy overview' role in relation to the Administration and Finance area of the Council. The full range of services under the Committee's remit is outlined in the terms of reference at the start of the agenda. These are primarily strategic policy and internal functions such as finance, property, personnel, democratic services, legal services, ICT, economic development, as well as equalities and diversity.
2. Previous experience from both Hillingdon and other Councils indicates that the Committee can have the greatest impact by focusing on a work programme agreed at the start of the Council year. Similarly, focusing upon one or two items at each meeting can help Members engage with the major issues and encourage stakeholder engagement.
3. As in previous years, the Committee is recommended to use this first meeting of the year to set a work programme for the next 12 months and select one or two topics for major review.
4. In selecting topics, Members are reminded of the Committee's work in from 2006 to 2015, which included reviews of:

2006/7

- Members' information needs concerning decision-making
- Members' role in Audit

2007/8

- Community cohesion
- Review of Voluntary sector grants

2008/9

- Wireless town centre in Hillingdon

2009/10

- Impact of a Pandemic in Hillingdon and the Effects on Council Services
- The Impact of Public Funded Business Support and the Success of New Business Start Up within Hillingdon and how the Council could improve Business to Business Support with the Borough's Industrial Estates

2010/11

- Census 2011 – to look at how this Council can contribute to improving the population data for the Borough
- Personal Safety of Members of the Council when meeting with members of the public.

2011/12

- Effectiveness of the Audit Committee and its Terms of Reference
- Operation and Function of Hillingdon First Card

2012/13

- Community Cohesion and the Accessing of Council Services
- Crime Prevention Resources

2013/14

- Crime Prevention Resources
- Reducing Our Carbon Footprint

2014/15

- Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure
- Social Housing Fraud

5. At the last meeting of the Committee held on 28 April, 2015, a number of suggestions were made for possible reviews:-

- **Business Rates** - Members were informed that in the Budget, the Chancellor had said that the government would look at reforming the business rates system. As a trial four UK regions had been told they could collect and keep 100 per cent of business rates paid by local shops and restaurants. Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Greater Manchester and Cheshire East would start receiving all the rates paid in their areas from April in a trial that could possibly be rolled out across the country. It was agreed that an information item on this would be submitted to this Committee, and this is on the agenda for this meeting.

- **Financial Implications of Hillingdon Hospital Trust being in deficit** - The Committee was informed that Hillingdon Hospital would be in deficit for this coming year and consideration could be given to the implications of this for the Council.
 - **Town Centre Regeneration**- What has worked and what has not worked? Has it been cost effective?
 - **Blue Badges** and the abuse of the system - Members were informed that in 2015/16 the Corporate Fraud Investigation Team would be recruiting an additional Officer whose work would include targeted Blue Badge operations. These exercises would be conducted in partnership with the police in different areas of the Borough. It was noted that this would be a good area for the Committee to review in 2016/17.
 - **Single Person Discount (SPD) for Council Tax** - The Committee was informed that currently 30,500 people were registered for SPD in Hillingdon which equated to 28% of Hillingdon residents. Since January 2015 the Corporate Fraud Investigation Team had developed 3 work streams to match internal data sources against SPD claims. The Committee asked that consideration be given to this area being the subject of a single meeting review later in the year and would be included in the Committee's work programme.
6. An oral update will be given to Members at the meeting and Members are also asked to give further consideration to other potential areas which the Committee could review.