

## Minutes

### Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee



Tuesday 2 February 2016

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

	<p><b>Members Present:</b> Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Richard Mills (Vice-Chairman), Wayne Bridges, Tony Burles, Narinder Garg, Raymond Graham, Allan Kaufman and Robin Sansarpuri.</p> <p><b>Apology for Absence:</b> Councillor Nick Denys.</p> <p><b>Officers:</b> Alex Brown (Corporate Fraud Investigation Team), Garry Coote (Corporate Fraud Investigation Manager), Yvonne Penston (Corporate Fraud Investigation Team), Laura Piggott (Corporate Fraud Investigation Team) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p>
35.	<p><b>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2016</b></p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record subject to the inclusion of Councillor Tony Eginton in the list of those in attendance.</p>
36.	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p>It was agreed that Agenda Item 10 would be considered in private and the rest of the items of business would be considered in public.</p>
37.	<p><b>SINGLE PERSON DISCOUNT IN RELATION TO COUNCIL TAX</b></p> <p>For this meeting, Members were provided with a presentation from officers from the Corporate Fraud Investigation Team (CFIT) on the Single Person Discount (SPD) project which the team had been working on since January 2015.</p> <p>The Committee was informed that the project was producing positive results in terms of reducing the number of SPD claims and generating additional income to the Authority.</p> <p>Members were informed that the number of SPD claims in Hillingdon was now under 30,000 when previously it had been 31,592. Reference was made to the dedication and persistence of the Team which had resulted in this reduction.</p>

The CFIT was operating 4 main work streams to match internal data sources against SPD claims.

Under the first work stream SPD records were being matched against Hillingdon First cards issued since April 2014. The Committee was informed that the matching exercise established if more than one person was registered for a Hillingdon First card at an address where SPD was being claimed.

Members were informed that this had resulted in over 100 SPD cases having been stopped which had resulted in an overpayment of £62k which would be recovered as additional revenue to the Council.

The second work stream was in relation to 'notices of the intention to marry' submitted to the Registrar's Office. The Committee was informed that couples had to include their current residence on these applications and these details had been matched to SPD claims.

The Committee was informed that records from April 2014 were being checked and to date 55 cases had been identified which had resulted in an overpayment of £47k which would be recovered.

The third work stream involved data matching SPD records with the Electoral register. This had resulted in 247 cases being identified which resulted in an overpayment of £194k for recovery. Members were informed that on some occasions parents of children who had reached the age of 18 had mistakenly not informed the Council of these changes which would have meant they would be no longer entitled to receive SPD.

Reference was made to the significant data matching exercise which had taken place with the credit reference agency, Experian. Members were informed that this exercise matched all the Council's SPD claims with credit reference information which was establishing the genuineness of SPD applications. To date with this 72 SPD cases had been stopped, which had resulted in a saving of £62,000.

A general discussion took place on the successes of the Team and Members noted that the project on SPD was publicised through Hillingdon People to help with the prevention of fraud.

Reference was made to further work which was being carried out in relation to SPD around school admission applications which was checking residents' details.

	<p><b>RESOLVED –</b></p> <p><b>1. That the Corporate Fraud and Investigations Team be congratulated on the work they were carrying out in relation to the detection of fraud on SPD.</b></p>	
<p><b>38.</b></p>	<p><b>CONSULTATION WITH PARTNERS (PUBLIC UTILITIES) IN RELATION TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS.</b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that for the next meeting Members would receive a presentation on a possible review on the consultation which takes place with public utilities on major planning applications</p> <p>This to include the likes of BT for telephone and broadband lines, SSE for electrical capacity, gas companies for gas mains, Thames Water for sewerage and drainage and Affinity Water for fresh water mains.</p> <p>The information reported was noted.</p>	
<p><b>39.</b></p>	<p><b>DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016-17 - COMMENTS FROM POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEES</b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that as part of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure), Policy Overview Committees had a role to review the Cabinet's draft budget proposals, which had been set out at Cabinet on 17 December 2015.</p> <p>At each Policy Overview Committee in January, consideration had been given to reports which provided details of draft budget proposals relating to the remit of each Policy Overview Committee.</p> <p>The Committee noted the comments of all Policy Overview Committee's and asked that Corporate Services &amp; Partnerships Policy Overview Committee's comments be amended to read:</p> <p>"The Committee noted the budget projections contained in the report and praised officers for the work which had been carried out in preparing a draft budget which was providing better value for money for the Council, and for residents of the Borough, whilst not impacting on front line services to residents.</p> <p>In addition, the Committee was impressed at the work carried out by officers in making savings in re-tendered contracts, such as the Revenues and Benefits Administration contract, and generally more effective procurement. Particular mention was made of Teams within the Council who had vacant posts</p>	

	<p>removed from the establishment with the workload absorbed amongst existing team members. The Committee praised officers in teams for taking on extra work to enable savings to be made.</p> <p>Members welcomed the increase in revenue from fees and charges, particularly in relation to Registrars where revenue from weddings had increased."</p> <p><b>RESOLVED –</b></p> <p><b>1. That the full set of Policy Overview Committee comments on the budget proposals be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 18 February 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Action By:</b></p> <p><b>Khalid Ahmed</b></p>
40.	<p><b>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</b></p> <p>Noted.</p>	
41.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b></p> <p>The Committee asked that at the next meeting a short presentation be given on the changes which have been made to Procurement practises in the Council which had resulted in savings being made.</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
42.	<p><b>PART II MINUTES - 7 JANUARY 2016</b></p> <p>This item was discussed as a Part II item without the press or public present as the information under discussion contained confidential or exempt information as defined by law in the Local Government [Access to Information] Act 1985 i.e. information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. [paragraph 5 of the schedule to the Act].</p> <p>Agreed as a correct record.</p>	
	<p><b>Meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 8.45pm</b>  <b>Next meeting: 10 March 2016 at 7.30pm</b></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.