

Review of the Council’s Consultation Arrangements

Committee name	Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee
Officer reporting	Anisha Teji, Democratic Services
Papers with report	Minutes from the meeting on 19 October 2023

HEADLINES

This item will encompass the witness session regarding the Committee’s review into the Council’s Consultation Arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee:

- 1. notes the evidence heard at the witness session.**
- 2. considers any findings that it may wish to present to Cabinet.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

At the Committee meeting held on 19 October 2023, Members discussed a motion referral from the Full Council in September 2023 asking the Committee to review the Council’s consultation arrangements, focusing on how the Council engaged with diverse communities and ensured geographical parity:

Motion approved: on 28/09/23 “That this Council regrets a low response rate to its public consultations and asks the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee to review the Council’s consultation process to ensure the voices of our diverse communities are heard, working towards geographical parity.”

The Committee heard from the Council’s Customer Engagement Manager who provided an outline of the Council’s consultation arrangements. Members were interested in analysing response rates and comparing them with similar demographics in neighbouring rates.

The Committee agreed to hold a single meeting review on this area where further information could be provided, and suitable findings could be recommended to Cabinet.

At this January witness session, Members will hear from the Council Customer Engagement Manager and other possible witnesses who will provide details requested at the October meeting and answer any questions. A presentation will also be provided at the Committee meeting in support of the review.

Further information may also follow and a copy of the minutes of the October meeting are attached for background.

Terms of Reference for review

1. To investigate the Council's Consultation Arrangements as requested by the Council motion; and
2. To review how the voices of our diverse communities are heard, working towards geographical parity.
3. To make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet based on the Committee's findings.

Possible Lines of Enquiry

1. How does Hillingdon compare with other similar boroughs on response rates?
2. Analysis of key universal consultations to understand the overall response rates (the demographics and sex of who responds).
3. Innovative approaches for universal consultations that the Council and other public bodies have conducted.

Implications on related Council policies

Select Committees are integral to how the Council shapes policy, making recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

The review will seek to ensure that the Council's consultation arrangements engage satisfactorily with residents prior to making decisions.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.