

Minutes

**Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy
Overview Committee
Wednesday, 19 January 2011
Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



	<p>Members Present: Councillors Richard Lewis (Chairman), Raymond Graham, Shirley Harper-O'Neill, Anita MacDonald, Robin Sansarpuri and Michael White.</p> <p>Apologies: Councillor Carol Melvin (Councillor Shirley Harper-O'Neill substituting).</p> <p>Officers: Fran Beasley (Deputy Chief Executive), Kevin Byrne (Head of Policy and Performance), Peter Malewicz (Senior Finance Manager – Central Services), Christopher Neale (Director of Finance & Business Services), Paul Whaymand (Head of Accounting) and Khalid Ahmed (Democratic Services Manager).</p>	
36.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None.</p>	
37.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2010</p> <p>Agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
38.	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>It was agreed that all items of business were considered in public.</p>	
39.	<p>BUDGET PROPOSALS REPORT FOR CENTRAL SERVICES (DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE (DCEO) AND FINANCE & BUSINESS SERVICES (F & BS)) 2011/12 TO 2014/15</p> <p>The report set out the draft revenue budget and capital programme of Central Services (comprising both Deputy Chief Executive's Office and the Finance & Business Services Directorate) for 2011/12, along with indicative projections for the following three years.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Council was looking to make significant savings of £22m. This saving target included an additional savings target of £2m for Area Based Grant (ABG) funded services which was added following the post election budget when a £3.6m in year cut was imposed by central government, and also included a £3.8m worsening of the estimated formula grant funding for 2011/12 caused by the front loading of savings.</p>	

Action By:

The total savings for DCEO and F & BS was £4.151m. The development of savings proposals concentrated on more efficient delivery methods and the new operating model and focused on core services. Front line services were not affected and as far as possible there would be no impact on the residents of the Borough.

Deputy Chief Executive's Office

The key financial issues were:

- DECO would continue to play a key role in developing a strong and robust core strategic support function for the Council and providing resources to carry out the transformation that would come out of Business Improvement Delivery (BID) reviews
- The outcomes of BID reviews in 2010/11 had resulted in the centralisation and unification of a number of common functions such as the HR function, the Policy and Performance function and the addition of the Audit and Enforcement role
- Hillingdon Homes had been incorporated back into the Council which had impacted on a number of services within DCEO
- A number of significant restructurings had taken place with HR, Legal Services, the combining of the Registration of Electors and Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Team under one manager, the combining of the Policy and Performance Teams which had resulted in the deletion of one Head of Service post, and the Corporate Communications Service
- The reduction in ABG funding has had a major impact and has required a number of significant reviews of service provision in the Policy and Performance teams and the Learning and Development team
- The outcome of the review of voluntary sector grants had resulted in savings proposals of £296k

Issues raised by Members were:

- London Borough Grants Scheme – The current draft Development and Risk Contingency included this item which could generate a saving of £429k, subject to a majority agreement by the London Councils. Hillingdon would receive a share of this
- Restructurings – It was re-iterated that as far as possible front line services to residents would be protected and these restructurings had contributed around £2m in savings. Efficiencies had resulted in

Action By:

- better print management, the Training budget etc
- Democratic Services and Legal Services – The restructurings in these service areas would not mean a reduction in service. In relation to Democratic Services, Electoral Services and Registrars had merged which had resulted in the loss of a manager post. Staff would be multi-skilled in both service area disciplines which would improve efficiencies
- BID – It was difficult for Members to understand this as the structure of Teams and their functions was not fully understood by Members
- Health and Safety training savings – Officers reported this was about getting the Council the best outcome at the best price for these courses. Courses now took place when full and to those officers who required the training as a statutory requirement of their post
- Corporate Communications - The savings of £220k in this area had resulted from an in-depth review of the team which would result in a number of posts being deleted. The services provided would be rationalised and focus would take place on the top priorities of this Council

Finance & Business Services Directorate

The key financial issues were:

- F & BS would continue to play a key role in developing a strong and robust core strategic support function for the Council and providing resources to carry out the transformation that would come out of Business Improvement Delivery (BID) reviews
- The main drivers for delivering efficiencies and savings would be through a planned investment in ICT, which would be developed through the Single Development Plan and a full review of all financial systems and processes
- The outcomes of a number of BID reviews had resulted in the centralisation and unification of services such as ICT, Debtors and Creditors, the transfer of Business Services into the Directorate, Procurement and P2P teams and transferring out of the Internal Audit function and Business Support Services team
- Hillingdon Homes had been incorporated back into the Council which had impacted on services within the Directorate
- Restructurings had taken place within ICT, the Revenues services, Debtors and Creditors, the transferring in of Business Services
- The Directorate included the Contact Centre where there was a continuing programme of service migration

	<p>and the development of more effective and efficient technology to manage the contact the Council had with residents</p> <p>Issues raised by Members were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit transfer to DCEO- This was welcomed and the service also included an Enforcement role which included the Housing Benefit Fraud team • Under the proposed changes to the Revenue Budget 2011/12 for the Directorate “Corporate Items” of £530k was as a result of the non-payment of Local Area Agreement award grants • Savings on the cost of External Audit would deliver a saving of £71k – This was the saving for the first year and Members noted the high costs of the Council’s External Auditors • Retendering of the Insurance contract would deliver Directorate savings of £116k – This was being achieved through better management of the Council’s claims by having higher excesses and by putting aside monies for potential claims. • Cessation of Team Bonus fund – Staff at the Staff Road shows agreed that the Team Bonus fund be discontinued as it was felt that it was inappropriate to award staff bonuses when the Council was having to make huge savings • Contact Centre – Members emphasised the importance of this service to all users and officers reported that the direction of travel of the service was to get service levels better. Progress of performance was monitored. <p>The Chairman thanked officers for their attendance and for answering Member’s questions.</p> <p>Members noted that as part of the budget consultation process, this Committee would consider all other Policy Overview Committee comments on their service areas, at a meeting to be held on 9 February 2011, before submitting all Policy Overview comments on the budget to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the budget projections put forward by Central Services be noted. 	<p>Action By:</p>
<p>40.</p>	<p>DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THIS COMMITTEE’S REVIEW ON THE CENSUS 2011</p> <p>Discussion took place on the Draft Final Report of the review into the Census 2011 and how this Council could contribute to</p>	

	<p>improving the population data for the Borough. Members noted the Council's draft Census Engagement and Communications Strategy which contained many activities and tools which had been covered during the review. The point was made that the strategy would align with the national communications strategy and the Council would be working jointly with the Area Manager for the Office for National Statistics.</p> <p>Reference was made to making better use of Hillingdon People to get the Census message across and Members were assured that future articles in this publication would be more prominent.</p> <p>Discussion took place on the five recommendations of the review which were contained in the final report and minor amendments were suggested and officers were asked to update the recommendations accordingly.</p> <p>Members asked that an additional recommendation be added to the report to ensure that residents were made aware that the information which they would be providing in the Census questionnaire would be completely confidential and would not be used for any other purpose, other than for the Census.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>1. That approval be given to the detail contained in the final report on the Census review, subject to the amendments suggested, and that the final report be agreed by the Chairman of the Committee in consultation with Democratic Services, before its submission to Cabinet.</p>	<p>Action By:</p> <p>Khalid Ahmed</p>
41.	<p>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE AUDIT</p> <p>An update was provided on one of the recommendations contained in this Committee Pandemic review which related to a Skills and Knowledge Audit for the workforce of the Council.</p> <p>Resolved –</p> <p>1. That an officer from Strategic HR be asked to attend the next meeting of this Committee to update Members on the progress made in implementing the outstanding recommendation of the Pandemic review.</p>	<p>Strategic HR / Khalid Ahmed</p>
42.	<p>SECURITY CONTRACT</p> <p>Members asked that an officer be invited to the next meeting of this Committee to provide Members with details of the Security Service for the Council.</p>	

43.	<p>TOPICS FOR SECOND MAJOR REVIEW</p> <p>Members were asked to email the Democratic Services Manager with potential topics for this Committee's next major review and if possible a briefing paper be submitted to this Committee's next meeting.</p>	Action By:
44.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
45.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME</p> <p>Noted.</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed at 9.10pm Next meeting: 9 February 2011 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. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.