

**Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee  
Review Topics 2011/12**

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**REASON FOR ITEM**

To enable the Committee to agree the reviews it wishes to undertake in the 2011/12 Council year.

**OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE**

1. Agree topics for in-depth reviews in 2011/12

**INFORMATION**

1. The Committee is responsible for undertaking the 'policy overview' role in relation to the Central Services 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 2010, 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.

## **Possible Review Topics**

5. The Chairman has suggested that the POC revisits the terms of reference of the Audit Committee and reviews how effective they have worked over the last 3 years. This would be topical as the Department for Communities and Local Government has recently issued a consultation document on the future plans for local audit after the Audit Commission is disbanded. Contained in this document are proposals to alter the structure of Audit Committees.
6. The Compact and Third Sector Commissioning – The Compact was originally launched in 1998 and is an agreement between the statutory and voluntary and community sectors which sets out the principles of a good working relationship. The Compact outlines a number of key steps to improve service design and delivery and when these are followed this will help the voluntary and community sector deliver a wide range of services on behalf of Councils. In these difficult economic times which have resulted in public sector cuts, the voluntary and community sector has been suggested as an alternative to local service delivery.
7. Big Society - This is one of the Coalition Governments main policies and its aim is to create a climate that empowers local people and communities to build a big society that will improve peoples' lives, putting more power in peoples' hands by transferring power from Government to communities. A possible review could be looking at what this Council and its strategic partners can do to help fulfill this big society.

## **SUGGESTED SCRUTINY ACTIVITY**

Members agree one or two topics for in-depth review, using the selection criteria below suggested by the Audit Commission and their knowledge of residents' priorities.

**Selection criteria recommended by the Audit Commission**

**(A) Possible Reasons for Scrutiny**

Strong public interest  
Government pressure  
Included in the council plan or Hillingdon Improvement Programme  
Inspection report recommendation (e.g. performance below target)

**(B) Scope for Making an Impact**

Area within Council's control/influence  
High impact on residents  
Expertise available on which to draw  
Good practice available elsewhere