

# **Cabinet Member for Resources Overview and Scrutiny Briefing – January 2009**

## **Key elements of the Portfolio**

### **Corporate Finance**

- Strategic Financial Planning
- Financial management and support to budget holders across the council
- Treasury and Pension Fund Management
- Financial accounting and control
- Financial systems support and development
- Strategic debt management co-ordination
- Front line income collection service 'Haringey Payment Service'

### **Audit and Risk**

- Internal audit
- Insurance
- Risk Management
- Helping to deliver good governance across the authority

### **Corporate Property Services**

- Improving the condition and performance of our operational properties
- Accommodation Strategy implementation
- Contributing to Haringey's regeneration
- Improved performance of the Commercial Portfolio and Community Buildings provision

### **Corporate Procurement Unit**

- Construction Procurement
- Supplies & Services Procurement
- Accounts Payable
- Energy & Carbon Reduction

### **Benefits and Local Taxation**

- Bill, collect and recover Council Tax (CT) and National and Non-domestic Rates (NNDR)
- Provide a comprehensive Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) claims service for the local residential, business community and other key stakeholders

### **Organisational Development and Learning**

Organisational Development and Learning Services exists to help the council (and its partners) to plan, organise and develop its workforce effectively to support the achievement of its strategic priorities. The service has particular responsibility for the elements of the CAA use of resources relating to the workforce – i.e. the organisation:

- has a productive and skilled workforce;

- knows in the medium to longer term what staff it will need, with what skills, and has plans to achieve this;
- engages and supports staff in organisational change; and
- has policies which support diversity and good people management.

## **Recent Key Events**

### **Corporate Finance**

- The 2009/10 budget process including overview and scrutiny
- Corporate Performance Assessment – Use of Resources and Data Quality findings to be reported to the Audit Committee on 3 February 2009.

### **Audit and Risk**

- Review of Internal Audit performance and outcomes to 31/12/08 – Deloitte are on target to deliver the Audit Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009
- Insurance - the contract with the Local Authorities Mutual Ltd (LAML) is continuing to deliver value for money for the Council
- The Council's Corporate Risk Register has been updated. Departmental risk registers are being continually updated.

### **Corporate Property Services**

- Systematic approach to the maintenance to our buildings in place, ensuring value for money and buildings fit-for-purpose through the appointment of a 'Managing Agent'.
- Works continue to implement energy efficiency measures in key buildings to drive down the Council's CO2 emissions through a range of technology controls.
- Accommodation Plan being actioned releasing of surplus buildings which will support the social and physical regeneration of the borough and contributing to reduced CO2 targets.
- Space reduction plans in process with RPH being used as the pilot building to further reduce accommodation costs.
- Significant progress made on three major regeneration projects, Tottenham Town Hall, Hornsey Town Hall and Hornsey Central Depot

### **Corporate Procurement Service**

The Council's Category Management Programme has identified sixteen external market segments through which all of the Council procurement spend is channelled. These markets are now being managed with the benefits of better co-ordination of procurement between departments, improved supplier management and improved value for money.

The Council's performance to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days has improved to almost 92% (an increase of 3% on last year) and of those approx 56% were paid within 10 days.

Carbon emissions from Council buildings have been reduced by approx 3%

Major procurement programmes underway include:

- Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Supplies & Services Procurement
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Waste Management

## **Benefits and Local Taxation**

### Value for Money Review

- Completion of a Value for Money Review. A full action plan has been developed and will be implemented in order to ensure that the necessary efficiency savings are met.

### Royal Mail Partnership

- Deciding on the future of the strategy in using Post Offices to assess the validity of claimants' information for claims following The 'Validate' pilot project with the Royal Mail

### Benefits Take up

- Continual work with organisations to provide Benefits Advice and encourage take up of unclaimed benefits to local people.
- Events attended included Area Assemblies and Community Access to Service days such as the Greek Elders Day, Polish Day and Orthodox Jewish Day - all events being under the 'Claim it' banner. The drop in stalls ran in partnership with Citizens Advice, Age Concern and the Pension Service
- In excess of 600 people advised at more than 12 events.
- Partnership with the Pension Service to maximise take up of all under claimed benefits in the borough - £580k of unclaimed benefits identified over a year

## **Organisational Development and Learning**

- Investor in People status retained.
- Leadership Programme won a National Training award in October 2008.
- We were awarded full GO Local Government status in Autumn 2008
- Between April and September 2008 over 1000 staff attended short courses and workshops from the short course programme.

## **Key Issues and Challenges for the coming year**

### **Corporate Finance**

- Closure of accounts process 2008/09
- In March, Grant Thornton start their interim audit work on the 2008/09 accounts prior to the full audit which starts in July
- Next year's budget process, which will be even more challenging given the current economic climate
- The implementation of the new SAP Asset Accounting module is underway and progressing well. This will significantly improve our management information and accounting for our assets.
- Treasury management: –
  - the increasing need to ensure security of our investments; and,
  - bank interest rates fluctuating with a declining trend putting extra pressure on the Council's budget.

### **Audit and Risk**

- Further improvement in the internal audit service through the timely issue of final reports and the implementation of audit recommendations
- Further embedding of risk management across the authority in line with the revised Strategy
- NFI – investigating data matches

### **Corporate Property Services**

- Managing the impacts of the economy and the decline in the property market as it affects the regeneration projects and capital income.
- Driving through the benefits of the Accommodation Plan and the savings and improvements identified.
- Actioning the out come of the Commercial portfolio review and ensure that we maximise the benefits of holding these investment properties.
- Continue the work being done to drive down energy consumption and improve CO2 emissions for the Council.

### **Corporate Procurement Unit**

A key issue is the "credit crunch" and the effect this is having on our supply chains. We have seen a number of suppliers ceasing to trade and others merging or being taken over. Supply arrangements are under constant review.

### **Benefits and Local Taxation**

#### Dealing with the economic downturn whilst maintaining performance

- Impact on collection of CT, Business Rates and increase in volume of benefit claims.
- CT Recovery plan put in place and review of policy engaged to ensure responsiveness to taxpayers' circumstances
- Slowdown in collection of NNDR also due to changes in legislation regarding rates on empty business properties

#### Automated Benefit Claims (ABC)

- Introduction of electronic benefit claims system both at customer service centres (CSC) and the call centre along with a new model of service provision allowing more varied avenues for claiming benefits
- The ABC software will be rigorously tested before implementation and paper claim forms will remain available.

#### Reshape of current Service Provision

- Implementing the findings from the Value for Money review  
Reshaping the department to re-align capacity with demand

### **Benefits and Local Taxation**

- The need to deliver services through partnerships will mean that organisational boundaries become more fluid and blurred and the challenges of delivering through partnerships greater. OD&L currently works across a number of partnerships for adults social care. This trend is likely to increase – with a greater focus on supporting new ways of working; new structures; different organisational cultures; and more opportunities for cross sector learning and development.
- We will use the Value for Money review of learning and development across the council to ensure that as a council we understand and maximise our investment in our staff.
- In 2009 we will use the management standards and other HR matrixes to identify, and take in hand those in a management role who need additional support.