

Leader's Portfolio Briefing Overview and Scrutiny

The Leader's portfolio covers the areas highlighted in this briefing paper for Overview and Scrutiny's consideration.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruitment controls

A recruitment freeze has been introduced to help reduce expenditure on staff salaries. A post may be advertised internally but external adverts have only been released for posts, such as social workers. This has reduced recruitment advertising levels from a level of approx 310 to a current predicted level of 120 advertisements for this year.

Progress on discretionary spend

An exercise was undertaken jointly with finance to highlight to managers the level of discretionary expenditure on paybill items such as honoraria payments and overtime, with a view to reducing this. This has proven successful with a reduction in expenditure of 47k per month in July.

Consultants

The use of consultants and interim managers is regularly monitored. A recent review will mean by the end of September this year it is predicted that there will be a reduction of consultants from 82 (June 2010) to 55 employed by the Council.

Agency staff

A review of agency staff including numbers and rates of hire is underway. As a result of this exercise the number of agency staff has reduced by 75 between April and July which has reduced the cost by approx £63k per month.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING

Key areas of activity for the April-September period include:

- Summer Events: 4 half day sessions attended by 550 front line staff to hear from the Leader and Chief Executive about the changes ahead – and seek staff views for improvement and innovation.
- Support Functions Reviews: Change planning and consultation with staff and managers who commission or deliver policy, performance, marketing, business support and finance functions.
- Staff survey: This year's survey sought staff opinions about the council's values; staff readiness for change; attitudes to customers; and levels of engagement.
- Staff suggestion scheme: An online staff suggestion scheme was launched in August ideas are being compiled for assessment and action.
- Developed proposals for the OD programme for 2010-13 – looking at how the leadership of the council can lead, support, and involve staff and partners in meeting the challenges ahead.

COMMUNICATIONS

Haringey People

Residents' continue to rate the magazine their main and preferred source of news about the council and it remains more important than the local newspapers combined (Annual Residents' Survey). .

Internal communications

Electronic distribution of the cuttings (from April) and Smart Talk (September) brings both in line with the council's Greenest Borough strategy and offers a more cost effective approach.

Consultation

Consultation on the public's preferred spending priorities will take place during October and November. The results from this, together with the outcome of the CSR, will help the Council set its budget in January 2011.

Online

The Online Strategy Board has recently been formed to improve Haringey's online services and increase the number of self service opportunities for residents - resulting in efficiency savings for the council. The Board is drafting a programme of work covering areas such as web design, content management, mobile web and online engagement. This work will form part of the Haringey Efficiency and Savings Programme.

PERFORMANCE & POLICY

Corporate Policy

The Sustainable Community Strategy Summary Progress Report is available on the website. The report gives a flavour of the achievements of the Haringey Strategic Partnership (HSP) between January 2009 and March 2010 and looks ahead to some of the activity planned for 2010/11. An article will go out in Haringey People, letting residents know that they can access the report online.

A new style Policy Bulletin is now available on the website. It is being prepared monthly by the Corporate Policy Team. The Bulletin is a round up of emerging national and regional policy issues drawn from new Government legislation, guidance and consultations plus other relevant emerging information.

Corporate Performance

- Performance reports- period 3 Quarter 1 to June 2010 went to CEMB on 10 August and will go on to Cabinet on 14 September. We have just had the period 4 challenge meeting (16 August) but there will not be a report specifically for period 4, instead it will be combined with period 5 and report to the next Cabinet meeting on 12 October.
- New Survey Data Tool: The Performance Team have developed a new Survey Data Tool, which allows the user to search historical survey data across a range of surveys conducted in Haringey in the last five to ten years.
- Benchmarking: The team has recently completed a Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy value for money questionnaire which will enable comparison of council's cost and performance data.
- Performance Newsletter: The August edition of the performance newsletter has been produced and provides an interesting read along with updates of what is happening both nationally and locally in the world of performance.

LEGAL SERVICES

Legal Services retain Lexcel accreditation

Following a two day inspection by external auditors Legal Services retained their Lexcel accreditation without any minor non conformities. This was the first time Legal Services obtained the accreditation, which an excellent result.

Key projects for Legal services working in partnership with directorates and corporate centre include:

- Building Schools for the Future contracts – legal services worked on all key building contracts successfully and now continue to be involved in monitoring the performance under these contracts.
- Legal Services continues to assist in advising on waste collection contracts including pension and property aspects of this contract.
- Planning advice on major regeneration projects including Haringey Heartlands, Tottenham Football Club, Tottenham Hale.
- Wards corner Court of Appeal judgement finding Council at fault for not conducting equality impact assessment.
- Social Care legal team is currently managing in excess of 140 care proceedings as well as a number of legal planning meetings and has been able to meet the client demands within the existing team.
- Legal's assistance in debt recovery has led to £405k being recovered this financial year made up of fees owed in the Adult Social Care arena and commercial rent arrears owing to the Council.
- Assisting in the drive to reduce temporary accommodation – property team in legal continues to work on a large number of private sector leases in short period of time and has responded to the Department of Work and Pensions decision to cap rent levels by dealing with the consequent variations and renewals.

At a corporate level

- Post elections – legal have involved in supporting training programme for new members and particularly the training of Standards Committee members.
- Legal are co-ordinating the Council's involvement in a proposed London Local Authorities Bill through London Councils. The bill will be seeking to amend legislation around the freedom pass. The purpose is to create greater flexibility around the hours of the use of the freedom pass in relation to any additional national rail services taken on by TFL.