

**BEST VALUE ADVISORY PANEL****22 MARCH 2005**

Chair: \* Councillor Idaikkadar

Councillors: \* D Ashton \* Omar (1)  
 \* Burchell \* Osborn (1)  
 \* Currie \* Pinkus

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Members

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS****RECOMMENDATION 1 - Best Value Review - Harrow's Economy**

The representative of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy introduced the report and identified the objectives of the Review. He referred to a second review relating to a survey of employees in the Borough.

He added that the final report, detailing the findings of both the surveys, would be submitted to the Panel in September 2005. He informed the Panel that both surveys would be funded from the revenue budget of £185k. He clarified that £100k would be used to fund the two reviews and that the remaining £85K would be used to fund work with hard to access groups. He undertook to respond to Members about the suggestion relating to enterprise development.

Members asked a number of questions and made the following comments:

- that the Review(s) ought to link into the Local Development Framework (LDF)
- that the Review(s) need to link in with some of the Council's Scrutiny bodies.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (To the Portfolio Holder)

To approve the scoping document for the Best Value Review on Harrow's economy.

**Reason for Recommendation:** To ensure that the Best Value Review has clear objectives from the start and that there is a plan in place to conduct the review. To ensure that Harrow's relationship with businesses develops in an effective way

**PART II - MINUTES**145. **Appointment of Chair:**

**RESOLVED:** That the appointment of Councillor Idaikkadar as Chair of the Best Value Advisory Panel for the remainder of the 2004/05 Municipal Year, as agreed at the Cabinet meeting held on 16 December 2004, be noted.

146. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

Ordinary Member

Councillor Bluston  
 Councillor Vina Mithani

Reserve Member

Councillor Omar  
 Councillor Osborn

147. **Declarations of Interest:**

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interest made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.

148. **Appointment of Vice-Chair:**

**RESOLVED:** To note the appointment at the last meeting of the Panel on 25 November 2005 of Councillor Burchell as Vice-Chair of the Panel for the remainder of the 2004/05 Municipal Year.

149. **Arrangement of Agenda:**  
The Chair asked Members to note that item 14, Best Value Review – Procurement, had been withdrawn from the agenda. He added that this matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Panel, and that, in the meantime, officers would be circulating additional information on the report.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) all items be considered with the press and public present; and  
(2) item 14, Best Value Review – Procurement, be withdrawn from the agenda.
150. **Minutes:**
- RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
151. **Public Questions:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part E of the Constitution).
152. **Petitions:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
153. **Deputations:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of the Advisory Panel and Consultative Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
154. **First Contact - Progress Report:**  
The Executive Director (Organisational Development) introduced the report and made a presentation on the work being done in relation to the Business Transformation Partnership and First Contact. She reported on the progress made on procurement of a partner and the development of First Contact.
- In her presentation, the Executive Director (Organisational Development) highlighted the following:
- that it was intended to secure a long term partner for the Council to work with on a whole series of projects and that, so far, the following 3 projects had been identified:
    - FC – First Contact – provision of one-stop shops and multi-channel contact centre(s)
    - ERP – Enterprise Resource Planning
    - MIS – Management Information - means by which the Council would receive meaningful/better information which would allow it to better manage its systems
  - that these projects, when implemented, should bring about a fundamental change in the way the Council operates and delivers its services
  - that the Council was working with two companies – Capita and Fujitsu – in refining the Invitation to Negotiate
  - that the bids were due on 1 April 2005
  - that the bids received would be evaluated during April 2005 and that separate evaluation teams for each of the projects had been set up with an overall team which would oversee the work of each of the evaluation teams
  - that the visits to other local authorities which had implemented some of the projects had taken place

- that a report recommending which of the two bids should be accepted would be submitted to the June 2005 Cabinet meeting, following which work would start on the detailed process of agreeing and implementing the contract
- that the key driver of these changes was the poor perception of the Council's customers who experienced difficulties in accessing services
- that radical changes, as requested by Members, were being proposed
- that CRM technology would link the Contact Centre(s) (CCs) to the One Stop Shop(s) (OSSs)
- that the benefits to customers would be immense and would revolutionise the way the Council delivers its services
- that there would be economies to be made and increased efficiency
- that the whole organisation would need to change and adapt
- that the systems would support Members and allow them to track their constituents' cases.

The Executive Director (Organisational Development) stated that there was some advantage in not having implemented such systems/changes already and that benchmarking had shown that many systems were out of date and "clunky". She added that the Council would be able to take advantage of the latest technology and that the strategic advice through the partnership with the private sector would drive further innovation and re-organisation.

In response to questions from Members, the Executive Director (Organisational Development) stated that:

- the majority of the services could be provided through OSSs or CCs and that the Council would be taking a risk-based approach by providing the less risky services first through the Centres
- in her opinion, it was not necessary to pilot a high risk service in order to test the system because the number of calls received in relation to high risk services were very low
- various locations for the OSSs were being examined and the key determinants would be good transport links, parking provision and accessibility
- Garden House and the Civic Centre sites were being examined as short term options for the OSSs pending the redevelopment of the town centre
- the CCs could be located anywhere.

The Executive Director stated that this was a huge project, which would be overseen by the Partnership Board comprising Members and officers. She added that the work would be split with the Partner appointed and that it was intended to appoint a Programme Manager to drive change within the organisation. Members commented that the skills required for such a post were unlikely to be found from existing resources and that a consultant might need to be appointed.

In response to further questions and concerns from some Members, the Executive Director (Organisational Development) stated that:

- Bolton Council had set up OSSs/CCs within a period of two years and that Harrow should aim to complete its implementation of this project within that timescale
- the partnership approach with other local authorities had been investigated but were considered to be risky
- OSSs would not be restricted to the Town Centre
- highly sophisticated systems were available to help determine the number of staff necessary for CCs.

Members made the following comments:

- that the project might appear ambitious but that change was necessary
- that the input from the private sector would help drive the project
- that all services could be delivered through OSSs/CCs
- that the provision of effective emergency services on Sundays should be looked into
- that the locations of the CCs should be subject to detailed consideration at a later stage.

**RESOLVED:** To note the progress made with regard to the Best Value First Contact.

**Reason for Decision:** To ensure implementation of the original Best Value Review. To develop One Stop Shops and a multi-channel Contact Centre to fundamentally improve the service provided to its customers.

155. **Best Value Review - Harrow's Economy:**

See Recommendation 1 above.

156. **Cultural Services Inspection:**

A representative of the Executive Director (People First) reported on the Cultural Services Inspection and informed Members that the inspection into Library Services and Sports and Leisure had been carried out by the inspectors (Deloitte) during March 2005. He reported that the inspection had involved a tour of the borough and that the inspectors had visited parks, libraries and other Council-owned sites. He added that staff, Members, Portfolio Holders and users of the services had all been interviewed.

Members were also informed that the auditors had been asked by the Council to focus on sport, leisure and library facilities. Members noted that:

- the inspectors had submitted a draft report to the Audit Commission and the Council would receive the report on 20 April 2005
- the report would set out the quality of the Council's services and identify improvements necessary
- after receipt of the report, the Council would have 10 working days to respond to the findings but it could also challenge the findings
- a round table meeting would take place on 25 April with the inspectors to challenge and seek clarification on the draft report
- the deadline for final comments from the Council was 3 May.

The officer reported on the consequences and that an improvement plan would be required by the Audit Commission.

**RESOLVED:** To note the report.

**Reason for Decision:** To inform the Panel of the Inspection.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.29 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR THAYA IDAIKKADAR  
Chair