

Report for: ACTION



Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO - Part I
Title	Policy Committee - Progress to Date and Review of the Work Programme
Responsible Officer(s)	David Scott, Head of Governance, Partnerships, Performance and Policy
Contact officer, job title and phone number	Michael Llewelyn, Cabinet Policy Assistant, 01628 682953
Member reporting	Cllr G Bathurst, Principal Member for Policy
For Consideration By	Policy Committee
Date to be Considered	19 January 2016

REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the work of the Policy Committee to date.
2. It also asks the Committee to select appropriate policy areas they wish to be investigated further during 2016 for possible implementation.

If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

Benefits to residents and reasons why they will benefit	Dates by which residents can expect to notice a difference
Research will commence on how to improve Council services for residents while keeping costs to the taxpayer low.	Ongoing

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION that the Policy Committee:

- i. Notes the progress on work completed, see section 2.
- ii. Considers the longlist of policy suggestions, see Appendix A, and agrees a work programme for 2016.
- iii. Delegates approval of the final work programme to the Chair of the Policy Committee in consultation with the Cabinet Policy Manager.

2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 The Royal Borough's Policy Committee was established in May 2015. Its purpose, as agreed by Council on 23 June 2015, is to "conduct research and make policy proposals on how services can be improved for residents, red tape cut and the costs of government to residents and service users kept low".

2.2 The first meeting of the Policy Committee was held on 15 July 2015. Since then three further meetings have taken place (10 September, 6 October and 1 December 2015) and eight policy areas discussed, see paragraphs 2.3 to 2.23 for an update on the eight policy areas:

- Dynamic purchasing
- Nudge theory
- Outsourcing of statutory functions - planning
- E-consultations
- The Advantage Card
- Incentivisation
- Recycling rates
- Academic grants and scholarships

Dynamic purchasing

2.3 The dynamic purchasing of residential and nursing care packages was discussed by the Committee in September 2015. Dynamic purchasing involves the use of an electronic system to commission services on a case-by-case basis. This method of procurement is being used elsewhere and is delivering both improvements in service quality and reductions in Council expenditure.

2.4 Following a presentation from e-procurement company Adam, the Committee agreed to investigate the topic further. A task and finish group was established to benchmark performance, assess likely impacts and determine the risks of implementing a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) in the Royal Borough.

2.5 The task and finish group presented its outcomes report in December 2015. The report concluded that there was sufficient evidence to suggest the concept of a Royal Borough DPS was viable. It recommended that an outline business case be developed and appended to a future options report for Cabinet. This report is scheduled to be considered in March 2016.

Nudge theory

2.6 Implementing behavioural change/nudge theory at the Royal Borough was first discussed by the Committee in September 2015. The last decade has seen the emergence of new approaches to influencing residents based on behavioural science and psychology. Nudge theory, stemming from behavioural economics,

has enabled public policy makers to incorporate new insights into policy design and implementation.

- 2.7 The Policy Committee considered several ideas ranging from boosting food waste recycling through the use of the EAST¹ behavioural change model to improving home-to-school transport delivery through demand-led budgeting.
- 2.8 A nudge sub-committee was created to identify opportunities to apply nudge theory to service design across the Council with a view to better equipping the Council to understand local need whilst encouraging positive behavioural changes amongst residents. The work programme moving forward in 2016 will focus on: tackling mental illness in men; boosting debt collection rates; updating the Advantage Card; boosting active citizenship/volunteerism; and increasing in-house fostering and adoption numbers.

Outsourcing of statutory functions - planning

- 2.9 The outsourcing of statutory functions was discussed in October 2015. It was explained to the Committee that due to a high volume of planning applications, external company TerraQuest were to be brought in to assist with processing.
- 2.10 TerraQuest started working with the Council on 22 October 2015. Their task is to validate and process minor planning applications over a 16 week period.
- 2.11 Processing performance has remained relatively stable since the appointment. It is expected that the additional resource will become apparent when the existing backlog has been reduced and Quarter 4 performance for 2015/16 is reported to Cabinet in May 2016.

E-consultations

- 2.12 E-consultations were considered by the Policy Committee in September 2015. These are electronic exchanges between GPs, medical professionals and their patients. They are considered beneficial as they expedite medical diagnoses. The topic was recommended for discussion at the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.13 On 1 December 2015, the Board received an update on the progress of an e-consultation pilot due to start in the Royal Borough. The pilot, being overseen by Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group, will connect two local care homes with a nearby GP practice via video link.
- 2.14 The aim of the pilot is to reduce the number of ambulance call outs to care homes to take a resident to hospital for a condition that could be better

¹ The EAST checklist; make it 'Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely, is intended to provide an accessible way to apply insights from behavioural science.

understood with visual support or advice. The pilot will be funded by the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund.

- 2.15 An update on how the pilot has progressed will be provided to both the Policy Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board during 2016.

The Advantage Card

- 2.16 A review of the Royal Borough's resident discount card, the Advantage Card, was presented in October 2015. This review looked at other Council smartcard schemes and detailed how the functionality of the Advantage Card could be widened to include such things as incentivisation schemes, payment services and transport applications.
- 2.17 The Policy Committee agreed that the nudge sub-committee was the most appropriate body to continue exploring ways to improve the Borough's Advantage Card offer. Preliminary discussions are being held with a software company in respect of smart technology solutions in the form of an app.

Incentivisation scheme

- 2.18 A presentation on the BetterPoints incentivisation scheme was provided to the Committee in October 2015. It was explained that the reward scheme could be tailored to meet the specific needs of the Council, e.g. improving school attendance or the educational attainment of children in care.
- 2.19 The Committee agreed that work to establish a pilot should commence. Areas the Council wishes to incentivise will be selected before approaching the market in early 2016.

Recycling rates

- 2.20 Possible ways to boost local recycling rates and reduce volumes of waste being sent to landfill sites were discussed by the Committee in October 2015. It was agreed that a task and finish group should be established to investigate the topic further and propose solutions.
- 2.21 An action plan has been devised by the task and finish group; this will be presented to the Committee in January 2016. The action plan will look at options for increasing textiles recycling. It recommends improving provision for textiles recycling to make it easier and more convenient for residents to recycle.

Academic grants and scholarships

- 2.22 A report looking at apprenticeships and academic grants was presented to the Committee in December 2015. Officers are now working the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and other data sets to identify the local skills gaps and shortages being experienced by businesses within the Royal Borough.

2.23 The Community Partnerships Manager is working with Our Community Enterprise to explore the feasibility of using their services to map out existing support and funding opportunities available to residents and develop a mechanism for signposting applicants to the most appropriate opportunity. This may require some additional funding. A follow up report will come back to the Policy Committee in February 2016.

Potential policy areas

2.24 A long list of potential policy areas and ideas for investigation has been produced for discussion, see Appendix A. Members are invited to add their own suggestions to the list.

2.25 Once policy areas are selected for development, members could form sub-committees, set up task and finish groups, visit other Councils or organisations, commission research and formulate options for discussion at future Policy Committee meetings.

2.26 It is recommended approval of the Committee’s work programme is delegated to the Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the Cabinet Policy Manager.

Option	Comments
Members select appropriate policy areas they wish to be further investigated for future discussion at the Policy Committee.	Research can commence on how to improve Council services for residents while keeping costs to the taxpayer low. Recommended option.
Members do not select policy areas for further development.	This option is not recommended.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Defined Outcomes	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date they should be delivered by
Policy areas selected for investigation	0	1-5	6-10	Above 10	19 January 2016

4. APPENDICES

4.1 Appendix A - Policy Area Longlist

5. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held and Department	Date sent	Date received	See comments in paragraph:
Internal				
Cllr D Burbage	Leader of the Council	04/01/16	08/01/16	Comments included.
Cllr G Bathurst	Principal Member for Policy	04/01/16		
Alison Alexander	Managing Director and Strategic Director for Adults, Children and Health Services	04/01/16	04/01/16	Comments included.
Simon Fletcher	Strategic Director for Operations and Customer Services	04/01/16	04/01/16	Comments included.
Russell O'Keefe	Strategic Director for Corporate and Community Services	04/01/16	06/01/16	Comments included.
David Scott	Head of Governance, Partnerships, Performance and Policy	04/01/16	06/01/16	Comments included.
Christopher Targowski	Cabinet Policy Manager	04/01/16	07/01/16	Comments included.

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Key decision	No

Full name of report author	Job title	Full contact no:
Michael Llewelyn	Cabinet Policy Assistant	01628 682953