



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Date: Tuesday 13 February 2024

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Meeting Room 4, First Floor - Harrow Council
Hub, Forward Drive, Harrow, HA3 8LU

Membership (Quorum 4)

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Conservative Councillors: June Baxter
Govind Bharadia
Vipin Mithani
Samir Sumaria

Labour Councillors: Dan Anderson
Graham Henson (VC)
Maxine Henson
Eden Kulig

Representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector: Reverend P Reece / Vacancy

Representatives of Parent Governors: Ms M Trivedi / Vacancy

(Note: Where there is a matter relating to the Council's education functions, the "church" and parent governor representatives have attendance, speaking and voting rights. They are entitled to speak but not vote on any other matter.)

Representative of Harrow Youth Parliament

Conservative Reserve Members:

1. Philip Benjamin
2. Janet Mote
3. Matthew Goodwin-Freeman
4. Kuha Kumaran
5. Salim Chowdhury

Labour Reserve Members:

1. Rashmi Kalu
2. Jerry Miles
3. Sasi Suresh
4. Antonio Weiss

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Scan this code for the electronic agenda:



Useful Information

Joining the Meeting virtually

The meeting is open to the public and can be viewed online at [London Borough of Harrow webcasts](#)

Attending the Meeting in person

Directions by car:

Go along Kenmore Avenue and head towards the Kenton Recreation Ground. When approaching the end of the Kenmore Avenue turn right before reaching the Kadwa Patidar Centre.

You will be admitted on a first-come-first basis and directed to seats.

Please:

- (1) Stay seated.
- (2) Access the meeting agenda online at [Browse meetings - Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- (3) Put mobile devices on silent.
- (4) Follow instructions of the Security Officers.
- (5) Advise Security on your arrival if you are a registered speaker.

Filming / recording

This meeting may be recorded or filmed, and if you choose to attend, you will be deemed to have consented to this. Any recording may be published on the Council website.

Agenda publication date: Monday 5 February 2024

Agenda - Part I

1. **Attendance by Reserve Members**

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from all Members present.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 7 - 16)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2024 be taken as read and signed as a correct record; and

that the minutes of the Special Meeting held on 23 January 2024 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. **Public Questions**

To receive any public questions received.

Questions will be asked in the order in which they were received. There will be a time limit of 15 minutes for the asking and answering of public questions.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, 8 February 2024. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors.

6. **References from Council/Cabinet**
(if any).

7. **Corporate Plan 2023-26: Review of first year and Flagship Actions 2024/25** (To Follow)
Report of the Managing Director.

8. **Final Revenue Budget 2024/25 and final Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27** (To Follow)
Report of the Director of Finance and Assurance.

9. **Any Other Business**

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

Agenda - Part II

Data Protection Act Notice

The Council will record the meeting and will place the recording on the Council's website.

[Note: The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

Deadline for questions	3.00 pm on
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Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special)

Minutes

9 January 2024

Present:

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Councillors: Dan Anderson
June Baxter
Govind Bharadia
Salim Chowdhury
Graham Henson
Maxine Henson
Eden Kulig
Janet Mote

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

Non-voting Co-opted: Harrow Youth Parliament Representative

In attendance (Councillors): David Ashton For Minute 69
Paul Osborn For Minute 69

Apologies received: Councillor Vipin Mithani
Councillor Samir Sumaria

Absent: Harrow Youth Parliament Representative

Reverend P Reece Ms M Trivedi

Resolved Items

67. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Vipin Mithani

Councillor Samir Sumaria

Reserve Member

Councillor Salim Chowdhury

Councillor Janet Mote

68. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Osborn, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a Trustee of the Harrow Cycle Hub on behalf of the Council.

69. Question and Answer Session with the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director of the Council

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Human Resources, as well as the Managing Director to the meeting. This would be a Question and Answer session in accordance with Committee Procedure Rules 43 and 44.

Questions on the Draft Revenue Budget 2024/25 and draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27 could be asked as well as on other issues.

The Leader explained that the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 and draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27 would be submitted to Cabinet again in February 2024 for final approval and recommendation to Council.

Members asked if the uncertainty of not having a multi-year financial funding commitment for adult social care from central Government made planning challenging, and whether longer term funding from Government had been requested.

The Committee were advised that it would be preferable to have a 3-4 year commitment for adult social care to be certain that it would continue to receive funding for that time-frame. Other Councils in London were equally concerned. Furthermore, there was a need to balance funding for inner-London and outer-London boroughs.

Members inquired about the funding formula, whether Harrow was getting an appropriate amount to match its needs and what discussions were being held with central Government on revising the funding formula.

The Committee were advised that there was need to revise the funding formula to consider actual needs in Harrow, as the current model was outdated and did not reflect the needs in the borough. Furthermore, as far back as 15 years ago, discussions had been held with central Government but nothing much had changed. Harrow remained one of the lowest funded Councils both within London and nationally. The Council did not benefit from large reserves compared with the rest of London and was in the lower end of the lower quartile for reserve balances held. The Leader and senior Council officers continued to hold discussions with ministers and civil servants on revising the funding formula.

Members wanted to know what the biggest risks were to the Draft Revenue Budget 2024/25 and draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27, and how any unexpected expenditure would affect the budget.

The Committee were advised that the three biggest risks were: adult social care; children's care; and homelessness. All were demand-led and therefore it was difficult to predict what changes would occur in the future. Moreover, the borough was likely to have an Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection during the year, which could have a further impact on the Council if there was an adverse change in the Council's judgement. Furthermore, the Council did not receive specific funding to meet demographic growth and demand-led pressures. In addition, inflation had increased substantially and this created unfunded budget pressures.

Members wanted to know what discussions had been held with central Government to protect statutory services if there were more demands on finances and some services were to be cut.

The Committee were advised that the Leader and senior management team continued to hold discussions with ministers and senior civil servants on the need to protect statutory services with increased funding. Furthermore, Members of Parliament representing Harrow constituencies were lobbied to present the borough's issues to ministers.

Members asked about installing more electric charging points and pothole mending.

The Committee were advised that 200 extra on-street charging points would be installed, including 10 ultra charging ones. Resources had been allocated for pothole mending in the borough.

Members requested an update on the active transport strategy.

The Committee were advised that the strategy was out for consultation. It was envisaged that more cycle lanes and routes would be opened. However, it

was important to consult residents as such measures would impact on traffic flow in Harrow.

Members wanted to know how fly-tipping in Harrow, particularly in South Harrow, was being addressed and whether better enforcement could stop the problem.

The Committee were advised that a new borough-wide enforcement Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was due to take effect to deal with persistent anti-social behaviour, which was detrimental to the community's quality of life. Furthermore, it had been established that the waste being dumped was mostly house-hold, implying it most likely came from unlicensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), without sufficient bin capacity. Enforcement of HMOs would therefore be enhanced to clamp down on illegal ones.

Members were concerned about the effect of homelessness on children and questioned whether the Council had houses where homeless families could go when declared homeless.

The Committee were advised that there were houses that homeless families could utilise. There was a lack of adequate supply but increased demand, which meant that some families were housed in temporary accommodation and hotels.

Members asked about the "Right To Buy Back" (RTBB) scheme from the Mayor.

The Committee were advised that "Right To Buy Back" scheme was a historic fund through the Greater London Authority. This was to buy back ex-council properties sold under RTBB. Properties had to be completed by March 2023.

It was further advised that an update would be provided after the meeting.

Members wanted to know if the Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport review had been completed, and whether a SEN school would be established in Harrow to reduce the cost of transporting students to facilities outside the borough. The use of taxis in transporting SEN students was increasing, and this could be reduced by having a local SEN school.

The Committee were advised that SEN transport was still being reviewed, and proposals had been submitted for a SEN facility in Harrow to the Department for Education.

Members queried the household support fund which would end in March 2024, and whether this would be extended.

The Committee were advised that the Council was lobbying for the fund to continue beyond March 2024 – preferably for another year. However, it was important to recognise that the scheme would end at some point.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Human Resources, as well as the Managing Director, for their attendance and responses.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's comments be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.43 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Amir Moshenson
Chair

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special)

Minutes

23 January 2024

Present:

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Councillors:	June Baxter	Maxine Henson
	Philip Benjamin	Jerry Miles
	Govind Bharadia	Samir Sumaria
	Graham Henson	

Apologies received:	Councillor Dan Anderson	Councillor Vipin Mithani
	Councillor Eden Kulig	

70. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Vipin Mithani
Councillor Dan Anderson

Reserve Member

Councillor Philip Benjamin
Councillor Jerry Miles

71. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- Councillor Philip Benjamin declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he is the Portfolio Holder Assistant for Planning and Regeneration,

however, that has had no involvement in this business plan. He remained in the room whilst the item was considered.

- Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that as the former leader of the Council, had been heavily involved with the previous Harrow Strategic Development Partnership. He remained in the room whilst the item was considered.

Resolved Items

72. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP) Report - Business Plans

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council Councillor Paul Osborn and the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration Councillor Marilyn Ashton.

The Chair invited Councillor Osborn to present the item. He confirmed that he was pleased with the initial proposals which had been submitted on the HSDP.

The Corporate Director of Place highlighted that in July 2021 the Council entered into a Joint Venture agreement in partnership with Wates Residential as the development partner following an extensive procurement process. As part of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership, it was planned to deliver over 1000 new homes across three Council sites: Poets Corner, Byron Quarter (ph1) and Peel Road. It was confirmed that Peel Road development had been paused partly due to costs and viability of the site.

The planning submission for Byron Quarter PBP (Ph1) was expected to be May 2024, which aimed to Deliver 30% affordable (approx. 44 new homes). It was also noted that Poets Corner PBP (Ph1) was expected to deliver 15% affordable (approx. 159 new homes), with 6% in first phase (approx. 30 new homes).

It was reported that due to the new safety regulations and viability of the scheme, it was decided to lower the storey of the buildings in order to avoid the two-staircase regulation, ultimately improving the viability of the scheme. Poets Corner was currently planned for a build to rent scheme and would be 'forward funded'. It had been planned to build a Primary school as part of the site. However, in March 2022, the decision had been taken that the school was no longer needed.

Milton Road was also a 100% affordable scheme, and was redesigned to reduce from seven stories to six stories. This was already under construction and due to complete later this year.

It is anticipated that the planning permission for Byron Quarter would be submitted by Summer 2024 and for Poets Corner in late Autumn 2024. Members raised questions on the quality of the new accommodation. It was confirmed that once approved Business Plans were in place, work could begin to develop more detailed proposals and designs, including responses to any

new standards. Parking for residents was discussed and it was noted that there would be parking available, however, the area was well connected and in accordance with the London Plan residents would be encouraged to make use of public transport, particularly at Poets Corner.

Concerns were raised over the costing elements and the unpredictable interest rates, however, members were assured that independent financial advice has been sought to reduce financial risk and safe assumptions had been made. The Leader and Deputy Leader pointed out that risks had been properly assessed and mitigated against as much as possible to reduce the level of risk to the Council. It was also pointed out that as Poets Corner would be forward funded, this would mitigate some of that risk exposure to the Council. It was estimated that if the sites progressed well, the first properties could be completed in 2028 based on the current programme.

It was reported that the scheme was sustainable as reductions have been made to the height and the entity of the development making the plan viable, achievable, sustainable and affordable.

Questions were raised regarding the number and sizes of flats, energy costs, the rent structure. It was confirmed that such factors would be discussed in greater detail in the next detailed phase of work on detailed plans for the development where further engagement would be made with planning, the market and various other bodies such as the Greater London Authority.

It was agreed that Cabinet be requested to include the voluntary sector in the list of consultees as part of the development and that officers review project milestones and the milestones to be proposed before the HSDP and present to Scrutiny Leads or the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee. The Committee also requested further information from officers on financial information in relation to the development.

RESOLVED: That the comments of the Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

73. Exclusion of the Press Public

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
5.	Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Business Plans	Information under paragraph 3 (contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Information under paragraph 1
(contains information relating to
any individual).

Information under paragraph 5
(contains information relating in
respect of which acclain to legal
professional privilege could be
maintained in legal proceedings).

74. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Business Plans

Members received confidential appendices to the report.

RESOLVED: That the confidential appendices be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.26 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Amir Moshenson
Chair