

7 October 2014

Open letter to the Leader of Harrow Council, Councillor David Perry

Dear David

**Re: Harrow Council 'Take Part' consultation proposals to 'Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector' from April 2015**

The organisations listed at the end of this letter are writing to you to express our deep concern that the impact of the drastic cuts proposed in the 'Take Part' consultation to voluntary sector services would mean that from 1 April 2015 thousands of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in our local community will have no where to go for the help that was offered by the voluntary sector.

**1) The 'Take Part' consultation is fundamentally flawed**

We believe that this consultation process is fundamentally flawed. Without full transparency from the Council to disclose its total budget and all the potential areas of saving across Council departments, we do not have a fair chance to respond to the consultation. Without full transparency of this type, we believe that Harrow residents, including the most vulnerable in our community, are responding to a consultation largely in the dark about what the full range of options and alternatives are.

In addition, the Council in the same timeframe as the budget cuts starting 2015/16 must make provision for the introduction of the Care Act 2014. This fact is not mentioned in the 'Take Part' consultation, a further flaw in the consultation process, because without full transparency about the Council's plans to implement the Care Act 2014 and the budgetary implications, we are totally in the dark also about the what role the voluntary sector could play.

**Feedback on the Take Part Survey**

*"I can't complete the Take Part survey, as I don't understand the questions. I need more information from the Council about the reasons for the cuts and what cuts they are proposing."*

79 year old Harrow resident

*"It's likely to be vocal, articulate people who respond not 'vulnerable' people whom cuts are most likely to affect."*

Older person & Harrow resident

*"The consultation is confusing and does not give me enough information, such as how much each proposed cut would save or what the current spending is.*

*How am I supposed to make choices without this information?"*

Disabled Harrow resident

**2) The impact on the most vulnerable in Harrow**

If the Council cuts all voluntary sector funding as proposed, thousands of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in this borough will lose services which they relied on. The Council will wipe out overnight the vital support safety net provided by the voluntary sector for those most in need.

When these thousands of people cannot cope with their housing situation, become socially isolated, give up hope of employment, find it more difficult to care for their families and their health deteriorates, where will they go to seek help? As well as the very high human and social costs to Harrow's diverse community, the Council is creating vastly higher social care cost for years to come. Over 3,500 Harrow residents are already in debt owing to the reduction

of Council Tax Benefit on top of being adversely affected by the government's welfare reform programme.

As well as the services directly funded by the Council, proposed cuts to core voluntary sector capacity put at risk over £1M worth of additional information, prevention and well-being services funded every year by local social care charities from external income sources (eg Big Lottery, charitable trusts) helping thousands more vulnerable Harrow residents. Where will all these people go to find help, if the voluntary sector is wiped out?

### **3) The Council Administration is at risk of breaking its Election 2014**

#### **Manifesto Pledges**

If the Council cuts all voluntary sector funding, the Council Administration will be at serious risk of breaching its Election 2014 Manifesto Pledges to both Harrow residents and the voluntary sector in its first major decision:

*"We will give our absolute commitment to focus all our efforts on tackling the disparities that exist, in particular, in terms of economic achievement, child poverty, health and well being. We will stand up for those in need by targeting more support towards carers and tackling the increase in domestic violence across our Borough...*

*Crucially we will work with our valued voluntary sector and seek to empower and inspire local people to build upon the many assets that exist at the heart of all our communities."*

For the Council to run on a sustainable basis in the future while having to implement £75M funding cuts, the Harrow Administration are forward thinking in their Election Manifesto to pledge that:

*"We will change the way we deliver our services - critically evaluating everything we do and finding new, innovative solutions with our partners. We will take a leadership role in ensuring key public sector organisations, residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups in the borough work together for the benefit of the residents."*

**We appeal to the Council Administration** to re-consider this drastic proposal to cut all voluntary sector services because of the disastrous and irreversible impact for everyone in Harrow for years to come. While we understand that the council are being forced to make these savings, we appeal to the Council to consider seriously more 'innovative solutions with partners' now and plan for the longer-term. We appeal for you to share with us all the possible options available and not just those listed in the 'Take Part' consultation so that we can work positively together through these challenges for the benefit of Harrow residents.

Yours sincerely

ADHD & Autism Support Harrow

Age UK Harrow

Capable Communities

Harrow Anti-Racist Alliance

Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD)

Harrow Bengalee Association

Harrow CAB

Harrow Carers

Harrow Indian Association

Harrow Mencap

Harrow Tamil Association

Harrow Churches Housing Association Mind in Harrow

Rethink Mental Illness Harrow Support Group

Voluntary Action Harrow



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*Branch Secretary: Gary Martin*

Date 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014

## **Unisons formal response to the Take Part Engagement**

Harrow Unison LG formally responds to the most draconian actions taken by the senior leadership team employed by Harrow council, it appears that the salaries afforded to these captains of industry fail to be reflective in the proposals.

Every local authority across the UK is experiencing the same draconian measures; however the movement towards commercialisation and shared services far surpasses that of Harrow. The other concerning matter is the frontloaded approach to these savings, especially when a general election is looming.

Many of the proposals impact on frontline operational staff, without reasonable justification, or is it a fact that some perverse form of protectionism still exists in the council's employment structure.

Firstly, we have to question the captains of industry or those at the helm of the ship. The poignant question we pose is regarding the **heavy reliance on highly paid consultants and interims in times of economic austerity**. Unison has to wonder whether Harrows captains of industry fall well short of the attributes required to lead this Council through the most financially difficult period to date.

We draw the recipient's attention to each and every Directorate's proposals. We will first concentrate on the Environment and Enterprise Directorate. These savings are no more than a regurgitation of previous MTFs proposals, which identifies a total

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lack of innovation or creative thinking. This is supported by the very fact that many of these services can generate much needed revenue. Has the Directorate no business acumen regarding these services that can support many other less fortunate Directorates. Let view certain facts recycling generated from 2011-2013 approximately £999,000 from resale of recycling materials collected by Harrow Waste services. **The contract for this resale failed to be extended yet no accountability was visible relating to the loss of vital revenue.** Unison will now turn the recipients attention to the loss of trade waste revenue, in the last 12 month, this occurred due to the release of commercially sensitive information to a leading competitor namely Sita, £30,000 per quarter was lost due to **a consultant** releasing information regarding the collection from schools within Harrow, again no accountability for those responsible.

If we also view the direction of housing services who are seeking to conduct works for and on behalf of many of the housing associations within harrow, why has the E&E directorate failed to engage to ascertain whether services provided by E&E cannot be included in the overall contracts with these external providers?

The amount of loss revenue in these times of financial austerity is inexcusable and relates to no more than gross negligence, failure to challenge quangos such as WLWA (west London waste authority) contracts which have increased year on year (£7million) even though the amount diverted from landfill is at an all-time high. The proposal to cease parks locking is yet another example of poor practice or a short sighted approach, this contentious issue could be combined with FPN, (fixed penalty notices) changing the culture of anti-social behaviour littering in Harrow parks and open spaces, however what we actually see from our captains of industry is a short term myopic approach which sadly will increase costs levied against the Council, this is evident from damages incurred by other short sighted councils who seemingly follow Harrow with an easy short term fix. The TE project was designed to reduce the vast amount of managers in this directorate, the 40% reduction is pure fallacy when a retitle of positions was the ultimate result and not the 40% figure reduction.

The last point on the E&E directorate is extremely relevant; the central depot site is a golden opportunity to expand its vehicle operating centre, it is a well-known fact that vehicle depots are extremely scarce in the London area, therefore this presents Harrow with an opportunity to either engage in shared services or space rental, the rates of which are at a premium in the said location. Unison cannot accept the proposals that only identify a lack lustre approach to the economic well-being of Harrow and a possible regeneration of the community, which sadly has been on a downward trend and unable to be an attractive proposition for new businesses.

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## Children's and Families Directorate

This directorate has been disjointed and unable to function to the required standard. Unison believes the reasons behind the problems arise from the removal of funds by the previous coalition leadership of the Tory and ILG administration, and of course the vast amount of interim employees throughout the structure. The current Head of Paid services has been reluctant to address this matter due to the forthcoming Ofsted inspection. This reluctance has only increase the problems which sadly lack any direction. All except one Divisional Director has opted to leave the councils employ. This raises further concerns of abandonment of a sinking ship scenario.

Unison would look to amalgamation of Children's and Families with Adult Services; this would substantially reduce the vast and unnecessary costs associated with highly paid interim staff. We believe it is more beneficial to combine these Directorates when considering the erosion of vast functions of the CS Directorate for example schools. The school programme to convert to Academy status is currently in full flight, with little if no retraction from the Coalitions Governments education agenda.

This amalgamation provides the council with a real opportunity to offset the financial impact on the CS Directorate with the majority of savings being gleaned from the release of highly paid interim staff, who have failed to meet any key achievements within their tenure.

Adult services has the capacity and management capability to ensure services are run more efficient meeting the council commitments on **Value for Money**, however this will not be achieved with the incumbent senior officer leadership due to the aforementioned reluctance.

The staff morale in the CS Directorate is at an all-time low, which has led to recruitment and retention problems. We only have to view children's social workers where other boroughs provide more benefits and achievable caseloads.

## Resources Directorate

This Directorate lacks any commercial foresight when considering the impact on all local authorities due to financial austerity. The change programme is immense for councils. However in contrast to this known fact is the drive on the Minerva project, of reducing the HRD function. Unison would have thought that this known change programme would have enacted a more commercial strategy, by providing HRD support to the vast amount of councils who have adopted the erosion of HRD

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support. This knee jerk reaction identifies a complete lack of strategic aptitude of those at a senior level. This lack of strategic aptitude is not the first occurrence in this employee support area. We only have to return to the academy school programme where the tender process failed to enact a more customer focused service (tailored to the customer) this resulted in a serious loss of revenue, with staffing implications. This inexcusable situation, once again, held no accountability, due to the protectionism culture of senior officers which has increased over the past 8 months. We have to question why there is a known lack of commitment, is it solely because senior staff's reaching the age of 55+ receives a handsome redundancy package which enacts the release of a more financially beneficial pension?

Another area which identifies a knee jerk reaction is the benefit service, which has launched a consultation to reduce salaries of directly employed staff, with issues and changes that have not come to fruition. This appears to be consultation based on 'the cart before the horse'. The Minerva project and associated mini projects have seen the return of interim employees at highly inflated salaries that were responsible for previous debacles in Harrow Council, for example the MMR.

Of on-going amazement to this union, regarding our captains of industry is the lack of accountability, especially when considering the salaries afforded to the higher echelons. We have to question again and again why Harrow has such a vast consultancy spend when reflecting on the above average salaries of Harrows Captains. The extremely high rates of pay (many of which exceed that of MPs and even that of the Prime Minister) should ensure that all on these high rates have all the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes needed to reduce the absurd spend. Sadly it appears the high salaries do not reflect value for money.

The other concerning feature of this Directorate is the fact that the monies obtained to run these services come from other services allocated budget's, therefore, any reduction in support has a knock on affect to the customer. This has not been reasonably addressed which is evident from the lack of consultation to those services affected by the arbitrary actions of others.

### **Adult Services**

This service area has only one real failing which is evident from the introduction of Public Health into the local authority. There has been a lack or reluctance to seek funding from Public Health to support services supplied by Adults, this failure may and will result in serious staffing implications and the need to provide safe services for Harrows most vulnerable. It is a known fact that if the Labour party is successful

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in the forthcoming general election then extra funding for the NHS would be a priority. This in turn provides an excellent opportunity in supporting many of the services adults provide. Unison is of the opinion that any move towards amalgamation would create real benefits to secure services directly provided by the Council.

Housing is moving more towards commercialisation seeking to deliver services for and on behalf of external housing providers within the borough. This we believe can be extended to deliver services for other neighbouring boroughs. Experts have openly stated that there will be a known reduction in London boroughs, due to the concentrated impact on Local authorities by central government. These opportunities need further exploration and a general consensus from the incumbent administration to further enhance Harrows ability to provide services for others.

We would draw the recipient to HAC (Harrow Arts Centre) which again is the perfect service to gain extra funding from other areas; this would need an arm's length approach from the council, lifting restrictions on funding available. This move has been initially approached through the recent review and current consultation. However the consultation at present must be mindful to retain experienced staff across the spectrum in order that this is achievable.

The call centre is another contentious issue when considering the general public's preferred option is to speak to a person rather than an automated system. This has been reflected in many commercial companies approach to gain extra business. Many of the leading banks now advertise the fact that they prefer a more direct customer engagement, therefore enhancing the customer experience. However the council seem to be archaic with this approach with a heavy reliance on the web. No account has been taken of the fact that we have an aging population and many within this sector prefer contact on an individual and personal basis. Technology should complement engagement not replace it.

Finally, unison returns to the reoccurring theme of the captains of industry at the helm of the ship at present. The leadership provided by Harrows senior officers replicate the maiden voyage of the SS Titanic, a disaster waiting to happen if the proposals in 'take part' are taken forward. Unison urges the new administration to take stock and appoint a replacement captain with the necessary skills at the helm of Harrow Council to steer it well clear of the icebergs that appear inevitable if the council continues on its present course.

Harrow Unison L.G. Branch

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6 October 2014

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Dear David

**Re: Response to Harrow 'Take Part' consultation**

Mind in Harrow is responding to the Council's 'Take Part' consultation about the proposed budget cuts totalling £75M over the next four years and £25M in the next financial year 2015/16. We will be providing our response in four sections:

- 1) The 'Take Part' consultation is fundamentally flawed
- 2) The impact on the most vulnerable Harrow residents
- 3) The Harrow Labour Party administration is at risk of breaking its Election 2014 Manifesto Pledges
- 4) Alternative strategies for achieving a sustainable future for Harrow
- 5) Mind In Harrow's indicative assessment of the impact of the proposed cut to all voluntary sector funding (after end of letter)

**1) The 'Take Part' consultation is fundamentally flawed**

**a) Lack of budget transparency in the consultation**

Overall, Mind in Harrow understands that the Council must make these savings which have been forced on the Council by government and voluntary sector organisations, like Mind in Harrow, cannot be immune from being affected.

However, Mind in Harrow believes that some of the proposed list of funding cuts 2015/16 stated in the public 'Take Part' consultation, such as cutting all voluntary sector funding, have been chosen by the Council Administration because the Council does not have adequate time to make well-considered longer-term decisions in the best interests of the Harrow community. Rushed decision-making is poor decision-making, leads to inadequate equality impact assessment and means that the rationale for cuts are those that can be cut quickly regardless of the longer-term impact.

Therefore Mind in Harrow believes that without full transparency from the Council to disclose its total budget and all the non-statutory services which could be cut, we do not have a fair chance to respond to the consultation, which is fundamentally flawed. We also request to see the full list of £30M savings, impact assessments and mitigations proposed so that we have a real and genuine opportunity to respond to the consultation. Without full transparency of this type, we believe that Harrow residents, including the most vulnerable in our community and those who provide services for these residents, are responding to a consultation largely in the dark about what the full range of options and alternatives for the Council are.

Mind in Harrow relies on donations to continue its work. Please help if you can. Contact 020 8426 0929 to make a donation.

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Chief Executive  
Mark Gillham

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## **b) Lack of budget transparency in the consultation about the Care Act 2014 implementation**

In addition, the Council in the same time frame as the budget cuts starting 2015/16 must make provision for the introduction of the Care Act 2014. This fact is not mentioned in the 'Take Part' consultation, a further flaw in the consultation process, because without full transparency about the Council's plans to implement the Care Act 2014 requirements and the budgetary implications of implementation, we are totally in the dark also about the implications in relation to voluntary sector services. For example, the proposal to cut all voluntary sector funding could in our view remove the service capacity essential to deliver the Care Act 2014 new statutory rights or the consequences of those new rights for carers and irreplaceable information, prevention and well-being services run by the voluntary sector.

## **2) The impact on the most vulnerable Harrow residents**

We have been informed by the Sachin Shah, Portfolio Holder for Finance, that the following voluntary sector services are under threat:

- Voluntary sector adult social care SLAs funding of around £700K for services supporting thousands of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems, older people and disabled people.
- The third year of the Outcome-based Grants funding of around £600K 2015/16 supporting many thousands more vulnerable people.
- The majority of the Supporting People funding of around £1.3M for voluntary sector services supporting older people and disabled people.

**Mind in Harrow and other charities are willing to engage positively with new ways of working in response to a changed funding environment, but can only undertake this transformation process if our organisations have sufficient resources to survive and have sufficient time to adapt. The current proposal to cut all voluntary sector funding will wipe out the Harrow sector overnight.**

For example, Mind in Harrow together with other adult social care charities funded by Harrow Council SLAs have submitted an indicative proposal to Bernie Flaherty Director of Community, Health & Well-being to suggest better ways for these SLAs to be managed in the future in view of the Council's financial position.

The proposed cuts to core voluntary sector capacity put at risk over £1M worth of additional information, prevention and well-being services funded every year by local social care charities from external income sources (eg Big Lottery, grant-making trust and national government funds) and could contribute to fulfil the new Care Act 2014 requirements. Mind in Harrow alone has consistently for several years fundraised in the region of £250K per year for information,

prevention and well-being services particularly focusing on BMER communities experiencing mental health problems and their carers in Harrow.

To give an example of the reliance of the Council on the voluntary sector, in the first draft of the Equality Impact Assessment for the Council Tax Benefit cuts, the Council has stated several advice & information services currently offered by voluntary organisations as key to their mitigation strategy. However, as my Mind in Harrow colleague pointed out in the recent EqIA sub-group meeting, if the Council proceeds with its proposed savings plan to cut all voluntary sector funding none of these services will be available in the future. I believe that you will come up against this contradiction in many of the EqIAs.

### **3) The Harrow Labour Party administration is at risk of breaking its Election 2014 Manifesto Pledges**

#### **a) Pledges to the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and poor**

The Harrow Labour Administration made the following Election 2014 Manifesto Pledge to the most disadvantaged Harrow residents, which you are at serious risk of breaching irreparably through your first major decision in setting the Council budget 2015/16:

*“We will give our absolute commitment to focus all our efforts on tackling the disparities that exist, in particular, in terms of economic achievement, child poverty, health and well being. We will stand up for those in need by targeting more support towards carers and tackling the increase in domestic violence across our Borough...”*

In addition, the Health & Wellbeing Board approved priorities for the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 which include as top priorities:

- Mental health & well-being
- Poverty
- Worklessness

#### **b) Pledge to the voluntary sector**

If the Harrow Labour Party Administration proceeds with its proposal to cut all voluntary sector funding, you are at serious risk of breaching irreparably another election pledge:

*“Crucially we will work with our valued voluntary sector and seek to empower and inspire local people to build upon the many assets that exist at the heart of all our communities.”*

I provide following this letter my summary and indicative assessment below of the impact on Mind in Harrow services of the proposed cut to all voluntary sector services. We believe that there will be many costs to cutting our services. As well as the devastating human and social costs, we assess that there will be significant financial costs to the Council.

### **c) Challenging the funding settlement to Harrow**

The Harrow Labour Party administration together with the other parties elected in May 2014 and our MPs have not done enough to challenge the government effectively over the disastrous funding settlement to Harrow. You promised in your Harrow Labour Party election manifesto to take action on this central issue: **“In the first month, a Labour Harrow Council will have:** Re-launched the Council’s campaign for a fairer grant for Harrow’s residents.... Campaign to get a fairer grant from Government - Harrow gets just half the grant compared to Brent Council and only £40 for every £50 Hillingdon Council gets. **This is not fair.”**

Please can you explain what action all the elected representatives of those of us who live and work in Harrow, particularly on behalf of the most vulnerable Harrow residents, are taking to challenge the government’s funding allocation effectively.

## **5) Alternative strategies for achieving a sustainable future for Harrow**

### **a) Example 1: Deliver improved the public health, but not necessarily through a public health service**

I would like to take this opportunity to put forward Mind in Harrow’s suggestions for a fundamentally different approach in Harrow to Public Health mental health promotion, which is being adopted by some other Council’s and is endorsed by the Director of Public Health England as a more strategic application of ring-fenced funds.

For the Council to run on a sustainable basis in the future while having to implement £75M funding cuts, Harrow Labour administration are forward thinking in their Election Manifesto to pledge that:

*“We will change the way we deliver our services - critically evaluating everything we do and finding new, innovative solutions with our partners. We will take a leadership role in ensuring key public sector organisations, residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups in the borough work together for the benefit of the residents.”*

We believe these new, innovative solutions with your partners to create a sustainable support structure for Harrow’s most vulnerable residents must include a radical change in the Council’s service delivery model through

development of community social capital, peer support networks, social enterprise, volunteering and matched income from external sources. These are the capabilities and expertise of the Harrow voluntary sector organisations particularly social care charities supporting the most vulnerable Harrow residents. Indeed, there is good evidence that many Councils across England are adopting the opposite approach to Harrow Council and investing in the voluntary sector and these more sustainable community-based models as a major part of the solution to their financial challenges.

An excellent example of the application of this strategy would be to public health mental health promotion, to achieve a much more sustainable approach which has adopted by more innovative Councils. We believe that it is simply not the best value for money for public health to continue to be delivered on the current model without regard for the unprecedented radical reduction of the health & wellbeing service infrastructure that will result from £75M funding cuts over the next four years.

We recommend that Harrow Council urgently explores, as other Councils, a different approach to mental health public health incorporating the voluntary and community sector, which as the chief executive of Public Health England describes in 2014 is a strategy “to improve the public’s health, not to provide a public health service.” In practice, this means that while funding is ring-fenced for public health, there could be much more effective use of the funding to achieve public health outcomes.

**Duncan Selbie, the chief executive of Public Health England** and the country’s chief officer accountable for monitoring where funds are spent comments (March 2014):

“When money is tight you do have to think harder. We’ve had a shed load of money gone into the NHS. And today we have gaps in life expectancy and quality of life as wide as they were 40 years ago.

I welcome local government reviewing where the money has been spent. Local government [bodies] are pretty advanced in looking at outcome based commissioning, and of course they will be looking for more value.”

Some of this will be uncomfortable. It’s not about maintaining a direct line from where we’ve been before. Where we’ve been before was a shameful [low] level of investment in prevention and early intervention. Local government will not be taking lessons from the NHS on this.

The duty is to improve the public’s health, not to provide a public health service.”

## **b) Example 2: Harrow's housing strategy for vulnerable residents**

A Harrow Council report about the Housing strategy for vulnerable people in Harrow to the Health and Wellbeing Board Executive in July 2014, identified that:-

“A settled home is vital for good mental health and wellbeing. Many groups of vulnerable people, such as people with mental health problems or learning disabilities are far less likely to be homeowners and far more likely to live in unstable environments.

Support with housing can improve the health of individuals and help reduce overall demand for health and social care services. Ensuring service users have a suitable and settled place to live can aid recovery from conditions and aid independent living.

A large number of vulnerable people are currently living in the private rented sector or in local authority housing in Harrow. People in these settings can have difficulties with:

- Homelessness
- Problems with neighbours
- Poor quality housing
- Financial difficulties – need for support to manage money and bills
- Housing not stable, accommodation at risk – this can be made worse by events such as spending periods of time in hospital.”

### **Why is action needed?**

Under The Care Act 2014, there will be a new duty on councils to join up care and support with health and housing where this delivers better care and promotes wellbeing. Integrated commissioning with key partners, including health and housing, is essential to ensure quality as well as value for money and improve user satisfaction. The reforms place a duty on councils to carry out their care and support functions with the aim of integrating services with those provided by the NHS and other health related services, including housing, by 2018...

### **Voluntary & Community Sector partnership – An example**

Mind in Harrow is exploring ways to improve prevention for people experiencing mental health problems with high needs who live alone in private rented properties with limited support. Mind in Harrow believes the voluntary sector can play a central role in creating sustainable solutions for this client group. For example, they are interested in working in partnership with the public sector to purchase properties and offer rental accommodation to this client group, generating income to fund community support services....

We appeal urgently for the Harrow Labour Administration to act courageously and with imagination in partnership with the voluntary sector to find sustainable innovative solutions to these huge social challenges, rather than cut hastily, which will result in long-lasting and irreversible consequences that we impact on all Harrow residents.

I would be happy to meet you to discuss any of Mind in Harrow's feedback in this letter before the Council's full draft budget is presented to the December Cabinet meeting.

Mind in Harrow does expect the Harrow Labour Party's election manifesto commitments to the voluntary sector and to Harrow's most vulnerable residents to mean something when the Council does have a genuine choice in its budget decisions. If all voluntary sector funding is planned to be cut from April 2015, Mind in Harrow and our service users will be forced to take whatever action is necessary to prevent what we believe to be a disastrous decision for Harrow's community.

As I said earlier in this letter, Mind in Harrow as well as other charities are willing to engage in innovative and new ways of working and have a different relationship with the Council to find longer-term solutions to the current financial challenges.

Yours sincerely

## **5) MIND IN HARROW'S INDICATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED CUT TO ALL VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING**

### **1) Service title: Mental Health Carers Respite Service**

#### Service potentially impacted by funding cuts:

This specialist mental health service provides 624 hours of respite per year to enable carers of people experiencing mental health problems to have an improved quality of life and be better able to sustain their caring role. Service funding was reduced by 15% between 2013-15 and so half the service is now delivered by volunteers.

#### Funded from:

Adult social care SLA

#### Impact of funding cut on Harrow Labour administration's Manifesto election pledges:

The Harrow Labour administration will be at risk of breaching this manifesto pledge if this service is cut:

*"Work with the NHS, voluntary sector organisations and carers themselves to develop and strengthen appropriate support for carers - Carers provide an excellent service to Harrow residents, but at times it can be hard to navigate the support available to them."*

#### Impact of funding cut on Council's statutory obligations:

Continuation of the Carers Respite Service will be essential for Harrow Council to fulfil its requirements under the Care Act 2014 to offer support to 30,000 carers who will have a new right to be assessed and offered appropriate services to meet their needs, including the several thousand people caring for people experiencing mental health problems. Respite is one of the most frequently requested services by carers.

#### Impact of funding cut on other Council budgets:

If this service is cut, as well as the Council being less able to meet the requirements of the new Care Act 2014, more carers of people experiencing mental health problems will be at risk of not being able to cope and more people experiencing mental health problems are likely to access FACS eligible resources increasing Council costs.

## **2) Service title: Mental Health User Involvement Project**

### Service potentially impacted by funding cuts:

The Mental Health User Involvement Project is the only service of its type in Harrow and aims to overcome the barriers for people experiencing mental health problems to have a meaningful voice in adult social care service change, development and improvement. The project has been developed a team of 20 people experiencing mental health problems trained and supported to act as representatives of mental health services users in a wide range of adult social care engagement activities. The project runs Forums and special engagement campaigns to involve hundreds of mental health service users in activities such as this 'Take Part' consultation. Without this project people experiencing mental health problems would face a serious inequality in engagement as a group with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

### Funded from:

Adult social care SLA

### Impact of funding cut on Harrow Labour administration's Manifesto election pledges:

The Harrow Labour administration will be at risk of breaching this manifesto pledge if this service is cut:

*"Put consultation at the heart of everything the Council does as we fervently believe that great decisions come from great engagement with the people of Harrow."*

### Impact of funding cut on Council's statutory obligations:

The Mental Health User Involvement Project is essential, being the only project of this type in Harrow, for the Council to meet its public law duty to consult with people experiencing mental health problems and those who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 on changes and cuts to services. The Council would not be able to complete Equality Impact Assessments adequately because essential evidence can only be gathered from these consultations. This duty will continue to be of critical importance as Harrow Council proceeds with its £75M savings plan for the next 4 years with the longer term very serious consequences for the most vulnerable Harrow residents. We understand that Harrow Council has already decided to put out to tender its communications function on a on a budget reduced by 40%, which will affect the Council's ability to engage Harrow residents in consultations and would be weakened further without voluntary sector community capacity and reach.

If the funding for this project is cut, Council will create an inequality for people experiencing mental health problems to be engaged in consultations, and particularly people who have more than one of the protected characteristics



such as BMER communities, because of their additional support needs to overcome barriers to engagement.

Impact of funding cut on other Council budgets:

We believe that the likelihood of legal challenges to the Council's decision-making will dramatically increase and there will be costs to the Council of the negative impact on community relations and poorer quality of decision-making.

**3) Service title: Core Activities**

Service potentially impacted by funding cuts:

Mind in Harrow's Core Activities deliver includes

**a) Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB):**

Mind in Harrow's Chief Executive is an active member of the LSAB representing mental health, which continues to be a priority area of priority action for the Board. Mind in Harrow contributes to multi-agency safeguarding performance as a member of LSAB through attendance at Board meetings and annual awayday, our safeguarding action plans being included in the annual report, community engagement and awareness-raising for people experiencing mental health problems, raising alerts and giving quality assurance feedback to the Harrow Safeguarding Team on any systemic issues arising in relation to mental health safeguarding processes.

**b) Contributing to Harrow Council's forwarding planning and implementation of service change**

In addition to the Mental Health User Involvement Project, as a provider of a wide range of specialist mental health services with a considerable reach and impact in Harrow, Mind in Harrow's Core Activities capacity enable us to contribute to several Harrow Council key strategic working groups, such as bi-monthly meetings with the Director of the Community, Health & Wellbeing Directorate, active participation in the Dementia Task & Finish Group. We are one of the first organisations to sign up as a member of the Harrow Dementia Alliance. Mind in Harrow's engagement in this 'Take Part' public consultation is another excellent example and includes engaging BMER and their families with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 beyond the scope of the Mental Health User Involvement Project.

**c) Additional mental health & well-being service capacity**

Mind in Harrow, as most of the voluntary organisations funded through adult social care SLAs, brings substantial additional new funding into Harrow, in the case of Mind in Harrow to deliver services for the priority client group of people experiencing mental health, and their carers, adding valuable service capacity to the adults social care economy. This additional funding in the region of

£250K per annum is raised through core staffing capacity and expertise invested in funding applications to Big Lottery, charitable grant-making trust and national government sources.

This very significant contribution of the voluntary organisations to the Harrow adult social care economy is often not recognised and its preventative impact often not quantified, through which we recruit and train 100 volunteers, many from Harrow's BMER communities, and help over 1,000 vulnerable people experiencing mental health problems or their carers per annum. For example:

- Nedaye Zai Afghan women mental health empowerment project, funded by Comic Relief
- Hayaan Somali mental health promotion project, funded by Trust for London and Awards for All
- Bridging Cultures faith community & mental health project, funded by Tudor Trust
- Head for Work employment and training project, funded by Big Lottery Fund
- Youth Well-being Project, funded by the Vounteering Fund

Funded from:

Core Activities are funded from Adult social care SLA

Impact of funding cut on Harrow Labour administration's Manifesto election pledges:

The Harrow Labour administration will be at risk of breaching this manifesto pledges if this service is cut:

*"We will give our absolute commitment to focus all our efforts on tackling the disparities that exist, in particular, in terms of economic achievement, child poverty, health and well being. We will stand up for those in need by targeting more support towards carers and tackling the increase in domestic violence across our Borough..."*

*Crucially we will work with our valued voluntary sector and seek to empower and inspire local people to build upon the many assets that exist at the heart of all our communities."*

Impact of funding cut on Council's statutory obligations:

**a) Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB):**

Voluntary sector representatives from organisations support the four priority vulnerable client groups in Harrow (learning disability, mental health, physical disability, older people and their carers) will reluctantly be forced to resign from Harrow Multi-Agency Adults Safeguarding Board with effective from the date of the funding cut, as these organisations will no longer have the core capacity to

fulfil this role nor will the services which were able to contribute to safeguarding awareness and reach to Harrow's diverse communities.

This loss of voluntary sector representation will be at the same time that LSAB is being put on a statutory footing under the Care Act. Safeguarding cannot in practice be 'everyone's business' if there is no capacity for voluntary organisations to participate as adult social care organisations will be devoting their time to ensuring organisations are sustainable and do not shut.

As result, we believe that Harrow residents most at risk will be less safe and more at risk.

**b) Contributing to Harrow Council's forwarding planning and implementation of service change**

If funding cuts to the voluntary sector adult social care SLAs is implemented Mind in Harrow's capacity to contribute to Harrow Council public engagement activities would be removed.

As a result, we believe that the Council would not be able to fulfil its public law duty to consult on service changes, particularly for Harrow residents with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and would not be able to complete Equality Impact Assessments adequately because essential evidence can only be gathered from these consultations. This duty will continue to be of critical importance as Harrow Council proceeds with its £75M savings plan for the next 4 years with the longer term very serious consequences for the most vulnerable Harrow residents. We understand that Harrow Council has already decided to put out to tender its communications function on a on a budget reduced by 40%, which will already affect the Council's ability to engage Harrow residents in consultations and would be weakened further without voluntary sector community capacity and reach.

**c) Additional mental health & well-being service capacity**

The funding raised by Mind in Harrow from external sources provides several preventative and wellbeing mental health services, benefitting vulnerable adults experiencing mental health problems or their families. Provision of this type will be required under the new Care Act 2014 and is currently not funded in any other way by the Council.

Impact of funding cut on other Council budgets:

**a) Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB):**

There will be costs to the Council from reduced voluntary sector capacity to contribute to the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and to community engagement essential to keep the most vulnerable in our community safe.

## **b) Contributing to Harrow Council's forwarding planning and implementation of service change**

We believe that the likelihood of legal challenges to the Council's decision-making will dramatically increase and there will be costs to the Council of the negative impact on community relations and poorer quality of decision-making.

## **c) Additional mental health & well-being service capacity**

From our analysis of two years (2013/14 and 2014/15) external funding levels, we can with some confidence forecast into 2015/16 that the impact of the cut of our Core Activities capacity to deliver preventative services from external funding for people experiencing mental health problems or their carers will be:

- the loss of over £250,000 funding per annum from Big Lottery, charitable grant-making trust and national government sources not being raised for Harrow services.
- as a result 100 volunteers supported by these externally funded projects not recruited and trained to contribute to service delivery.
- as a result over over 1,000 people from the priority vulnerable groups not benefitting from range of preventative outcomes, including improved mental and physical health, increased social integration, better sustained caring role and reduced need for care & support

Even if only 10% of 1,000+ people, supported by Mind in Harrow's services funded from external sources, access FACS eligible personal budget resources following the loss of Mind in Harrow's externally funded services, we estimate the financial impact on the Council could be very significant, totalling over £100K per annum.

## **4) Service title: Mental Health Information Service**

### Service potentially impacted by funding cuts:

Our Mental Health Information Service provides a choice of access points to our specialist service helping in total over 4,500 per year via telephone helpline, online directory of over 350 services (local, regional and national), mental health welfare rights bulletin reaching 1,500 people and face-to-face sessions.

Through our service mapping exercise in 2013 involving the Harrow Council mental health commissioning lead we know that our Mental Health Information Service is unique in Harrow and could not be provided by any other organisation without the many years of investment by Mind in Harrow in our service knowledge base. **Please at the end of this section letter for the summary of this mapping exercise.** The service is accessible by people experiencing mental health problems and anyone wanting information to help them such as family members/carers. The service is provided by a part-time Mental Health Information Worker and a team of trained volunteers and helps

people with a wide range of needs, such as access to counselling services for their mental health & well-being, housing issues and welfare rights support.

Funded from:

Outcome-based Grants Programme

Impact of funding cut on Harrow Labour administration's Manifesto election

pledges:

*"We will give our absolute commitment to focus all our efforts on tackling the disparities that exist, in particular, in terms of economic achievement, child poverty, health and well being. We will stand up for those in need by targeting more support towards carers and tackling the increase in domestic violence across our Borough...*

*Use our resources to protect Harrow's most vulnerable from the cruel and unfair cuts to benefits"*

Impact of funding cut on Council's statutory obligations:

The Care Act 2014 places on Harrow Council a new duty to ensure that there is good quality, comprehensive and accessible information for Harrow residents both for those who meet eligibility thresholds and those who do not.

If Harrow Council cuts the Mental Health Information Service, Mind in Harrow believes that the Council will not be able to fulfil this duty under the Care Act 2014 for the thousands of people experiencing mental health problems as no other public service currently or could offer a comparable alternative service in our 2013 mapping exercise.

We believe that there is an opportunity through the Harrow Advice Together Project, bringing together local voluntary sector information & advice providers to service coordination capacity through a Big Lottery grant, for the Council to work with the voluntary sector to fulfil the Care Act new obligations.

Impact of funding cut on other Council budgets:

The aim of our Mental Health Information Service is to offer timely access to information at the right time to prevent further deterioration of a person's mental health or life situation. If this service is cut, if only 10% of 4,500+ people are more likely to access FACS eligible resources or reach crisis point impacting on local housing services, local neighbourhoods or increase debts there would be very substantial financial impact on the Council.

## **Summary Mapping of Mental Health Information Services 2013**

Mind in Harrow's service mapping indicates that its Mental Health Information Service is unique. Without funding, the impact on Harrow residents would be that they have no alternative comparable service to access.

The Mental Health Information Service offers:

- mental health specialist information, signposting and support to access services
- a comprehensive knowledge-base of Harrow mental health services in statutory, voluntary and private sectors (developed over 10 years) in our online mental health directory;
- instant access via telephone helpline or 1:1 face to face sessions
- a local mental health specialist welfare rights bulletin updated and circulated widely

### **Service Mapping Summary 2013**

<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Mapping of Services Accessible to Harrow residents</b>
Samaritans	Samaritans is 24/7 crisis support helpline service and does not offer an information service.
National mental health helplines (eg Rethink, SANELINE, Mind)	National mental health helplines provide general information to callers, do not hold detailed local service information and regularly refer callers to Mind in Harrow for local service information.
Local charities	No local charity offers a specialist Mental Health Information Service. Some local charities offer specialist welfare benefits or debt advice by appointment to people with mental health problems or information services to targeted groups (eg older people) but are not commissioned to offer mental health information and refer callers to Mind in Harrow.
Commissioned local mental health advocacy services	No local mental health advocacy provider offers a telephone information service or crisis telephone support to facilitate caller access to services.
CNWL NHS Foundation Trust	CNWL NHS Foundation Trust has confirmed that it is not commissioned to offer a public information service and provides services to CNWL patients only.
Harrow Council	Harrow Council has novated mental health provision to CNWL NHS Foundation Trust and does not offer a mental health information service. The Council's Access Harrow Service has confirmed in 2013 that they do not hold any information about mental health service to provide to callers.

Public Health	<p>Our mapping of local mental health information services in 2013 has been validated by the Harrow Council Mental Health Commissioning lead that Mind in Harrow mental health information service is the only resource of its type in Harrow and used widely.</p> <p>Harrow Public Health Service does not offer mental health information telephone services.</p>
<p>NHS Harrow</p> <p>GP and primary care services</p> <p>IAPT Services</p>	<p>NHS Harrow commissioners confirmed that they were not able to identify an alternative comparable service for Mind in Harrow to direct callers to, if the Mental Health Information Service closed or was reduced.</p> <p>There are no mental health information telephone services within Harrow primary care settings. GPs refer patients to Mind in Harrow's Mental Health Information Telephone Service or contact the service directly on behalf of their patients.</p> <p>IAPT Services do not offer an open access mental health telephone information service.</p> <p>IAPT Services offer signposting to patients as an option for Step 2 interventions following assessment and on an appointment basis only. The service operates eligibility criteria limited to patients with mild to moderate anxiety and depression.</p>
HealthWatch	<p>The specification for HealthWatch Harrow includes the coordination of existing information &amp; advice services or the provision of basic health-related information for Harrow residents, such as how to register with a GP or how to make complaints.</p>



COPY

Mr Paul Najsarek  
Head of Paid Service  
Harrow Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Harrow  
HA1 2XY

12 September 2014

Dear Mr Najsarek

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT HEADSTONE MANOR, JUNE-JULY 2014

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to express my gratitude to Harrow Council for combining with the Museum of London in the archaeological dig project over the summer.

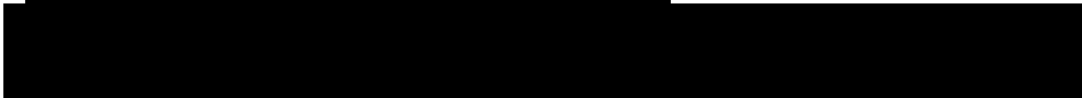
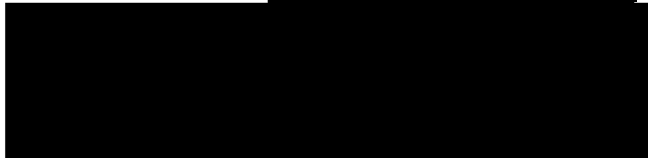
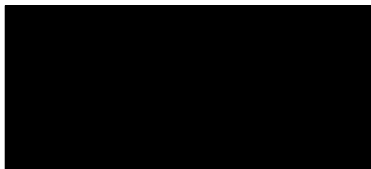
It was an immense success. Around 500 local schoolchildren enjoyed a hands-on 'dig experience'; over 700 local residents and others attended our Open Day; nearly 40 people learned archaeological techniques during the Training Dig; and for a team of around 20 volunteers it was both an enjoyable experience and a self-development opportunity. At the same time, the archaeological findings were spectacular – the clear outlines of a pair of long-lost cottages perhaps going back as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century – and, I hope, these discoveries will inform future management and public presentation of the site.

It was a truly collaborative project, involving the Council's Planning Department, who at several stages helped us with the complicated health and safety matters, as well as the Headstone Manor Museum. The site – which after all comprises the most important group of standing medieval rural buildings in north London – is ideal for inspiring the public with an interest in the past, and Jo Saunders and her team at the Museum were incredibly enthusiastic and helpful throughout. For the record, the funding mostly came from Arts Council (England) as part of the Museum of London's *Opening Up ... Archaeology* project, supplemented by a grant from the Robert Kiln Trust.

I leave you with the words of one primary schoolteacher whose class took part:

*"Fantastic session. All children engaged and interested. One of the best trips I have been on. Thanks! ☐"*

Yours sincerely







15 October 2014

Dear Cllr David Perry & Council Members,

## RESPONSE TO THE TAKE PART CONSULTATION

I am writing to you on behalf of the Governing Body of Priestmead Primary School and Nursery, in response to your Take Part Consultation. We acknowledge in these times of austerity that efficiency savings are required. However, our response addresses primarily the *information* shared during the consultation, the *timescales* for savings to be made and the proposed *proportionate* way in which council savings have been arranged.

### Contextual Information

Your Take Part document lists the options for the first round of cuts (p8-9). As residents, Harrow employees and volunteers we feel being presented with a list of cuts, without monetary values attached, makes this exercise impossible to consider and evaluate in a balanced, rational way. Whereas Children and Family Services have openly met with schools and shared the costs, the Council booklet lacks transparency and leaves too many unanswered questions. The data validating the impact of Early Intervention Teams and Children Centres' reducing costs longer term for the Council (not forgetting the significant life chance increase for children and families) should be made clear - your leaflet makes statements such as "*If you want us to prioritise providing arts and leisure programmes, we will need to spend less on our children's services*" (p6). Our recommendation is that a list of options with monetary values attached is created and shared as a matter of urgency to show the Council is open and transparent. This should include publicly listing costs of Counsellors and their expenses and considerations for amalgamating geographical wards and reducing costs that way.

### Timescales

Our understanding is that £75m worth of cuts need to be made between 2015-2019. The Council has chosen to make the largest cuts in the 2015-16 academic year. This appears a very rushed decision seeing there is a four year window to consult and give detailed information. The impact of a drastically large cut to Children and Family Services in the next academic year, could be catastrophic as the repercussions linked to safeguarding all vulnerable children and families could be costly in both money terms but more significantly the safety of children we are all committed to caring for and protecting. Our recommendation is that minimal cuts are made this year, whilst a more detailed consultation is put together for cuts from 2016-17 onwards.



## Proportion of Cuts

Our understanding is that various services need to make cuts proportionate to the amount of the Council budget they are given ie if Children and Family Services usually receive 35% of the Council's annual budget, they must make 35% cuts. How can the safety and early intervention of our most vulnerable children be comparable to litter collection on the street? Signposting you to cases such as Victoria Climbé or Daniel Pelka is evidence of how an underfunded, overworked service and a lack of collaboration between services, can be fatal for our vulnerable children. **Our recommendation is that an independent review be made of what is acceptable pro rata savings that should be made from each service based on validated quantitative and qualitative data.**

We appreciate this is a difficult time for all of Harrow residents and employees. Our recommendations will enable us to make better informed decisions, based on clearer information and giving more time allowing us to be better informed. It would be disappointing if our view was not acknowledged.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Hartford Avenue  
Kenton, Harrow  
Middlesex HA3

**Telephone:** 020 8907 5434  
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5<sup>th</sup> November 2014

For the attention of

Councillors David Perry Leader of Harrow Council and Margaret Davine Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

Paul Najsarek Acting Head of Paid Services

Cc Gareth Thomas MP, Nick Hurd MP, Bob Blackman MP

Alexandra School's Governing Body would like to voice their concerns over some of the Council's proposals for cuts to its services in the Take Part Consultation.

Alexandra is a Special School for primary children with moderate learning difficulties, many of our children are particularly vulnerable and we are aware that the Labour Group was elected with a mandate to support vulnerable groups within Harrow's residents and this includes a social responsibility for children with Special Educational Needs.

Whilst realising that in the bid to save 75 million over the next three years there will be inevitable cuts to some of Children's Services, we would like to urge the Council to carefully consider the impact of closing Children's Centres. Vulnerable children and their carers, including those with SEN, are supported by Children's Centres. Research at Oxford Brookes shows that early intervention has a cost benefit and for every £1 invested in a child at 2 it will save £10 when they are youths; hence early intervention is crucial in a cost saving exercise.

Our Children's Centres also provide a venue for 80% of midwifery services, health visitors as well as Occupational therapy and Speech and Language therapy. They provide parenting courses so valuable for needy families. We understand that 5000 families use the Centres regularly and 12½ thousand families have visited on at least one occasion.

Caring for a child with additional needs can put a great strain on families and sadly in many cases can lead to a breakdown in relationships. The families of children with Special Needs really benefit from the opportunities respite care and short breaks offer. We note that supporting carers is an area recognised by the council and we would urge you to consider protecting the support that this affords.

We are also aware that there is a proposal to close some of Harrow's libraries. Some of our less well off families are encouraged to use their local library to support their children's literacy skills. Again, an area where there is support for vulnerable groups of Harrow residents.

We are aware that Harrow receives a disproportionately small Government grant despite having areas of deprivation; some of our children come from these areas in Harrow. We applaud any efforts that the Council take to Central Government to defend services to local residents and we have copied this to our local MP Gareth Thomas, as well as Harrow's other MPs Bob Blackman and Nick Hurd.

Executive Office  
Stephenson House  
75 Hampstead Road  
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NW1 2PL  
Tel: 020 3214 5767  
Fax: 020 3214 5761

Paul Najsarek  
Head of Paid Services and Corporate Director  
of Community Health & Wellbeing  
Harrow Council  
Station Road  
HARROW  
HA1 2XY

Friday, 31 October 2014

Dear Paul

**Re: Harrow Council Proposed Budget Cuts**

On behalf of the Safeguarding Children/Adult service in CNWL, I write to express grave concerns regarding four of the Harrow budget cut proposals:

1. Close or reduce some of the Council's Early Support services to families, including Children's Centres

Reducing funding for early support will result in greater spending in future years for the Council. Instead of addressing family problems early, these will become intransigent and it will result in more children being taken into care, and other poor outcomes like increased criminal behaviour, and reduced educational attainment, impacting on Harrow communities.

Children Centres are a vital part of the early help offer providing non-stigmatising family-friendly centres where families can see staff for a variety of interventions. These centres are often staffed sessionally by health staff who work closely in partnership with CSC staff (early help staff to prevent family problems or deal with them at the earliest point.) Closing these will have the ramifications as described above.

2. Reduce the short respite breaks to children and carers

Reducing respite breaks for children and carers will also result in increased breakdown of families in supporting children with disabilities/challenging behaviours. This will again impact in a greater amount of funding required to deal with the children/adults concerned. Carers provide a huge support to both health and social care budgets by looking after children/adults at home. Reducing the respite breaks is both cruel, inhumane and counter-intuitive.

3. Cut some support to older and disabled people in harrow under the Supporting People Programme

The Supporting People Programme aims to provide vulnerable adults with relevant support for them to maintain independent living in the community including maintaining their tenancies. These people already are dealing with significant problems in their lives. To reduce support will impact directly on their health and wellbeing and again is inhumane.

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Page 2

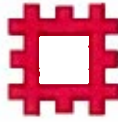
31 October 2014

4. Cut funding provided to the Voluntary Sector

Voluntary Sector agencies provide excellent support to services across a huge range of issues including vulnerable children and adults. They often provide value for money and so cutting them at this time would again appear to be counter-intuitive.

Yours sincerely

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

Councillor David Perry  
Leader of the Council  
Harrow Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Harrow  
HA1 2UW

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3488

6 October 2014

Dear Councillor Perry

I am writing to you to express my concern over the potential closure and 'mothballing' of the Harrow Museum and Arts Centre at Headstone Manor.

Headstone Manor is a Grade I listed moated medieval manor house, that together with the Grade II\* and Grade II listed barns forms a picturesque group of exceptional architectural and historic interest. They are amongst the most important buildings in Harrow and, incorporating the local museum and arts centre, add greatly to its historical and cultural richness. I am sure they would be greatly missed by the local community were they to be shut.

I understand that such buildings are a financial responsibility and that Headstone has had financial difficulties in recent years. English Heritage has also been concerned about the site, and it is on our 'Heritage at Risk Register' in recognition of its deteriorating condition and uncertain future. I have therefore been encouraged by the excellent work done over the last year by Jo Saunders, the manager of the museum, and her team in preparing a masterplan, and associated Heritage Lottery Funding bid, to not only repair the buildings but ensure their future viability, thus reducing the Council's future financial obligations and potentially removing the site from our 'Heritage at Risk Register'.

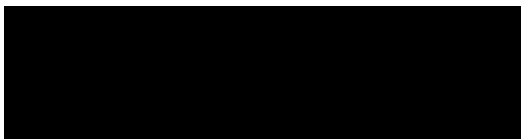
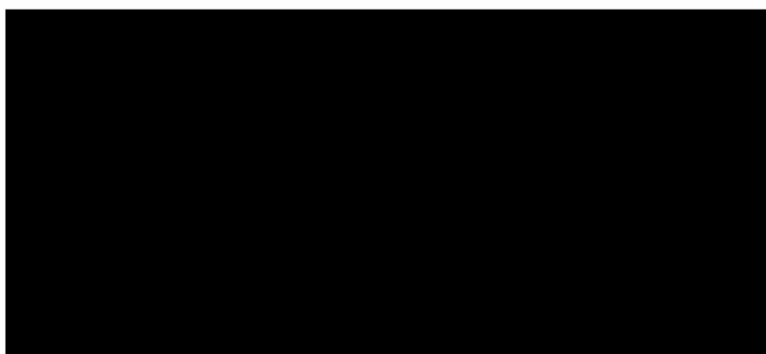
This process is some considerable way along, with £225,000 already having been awarded by the HLF and the Stage 2 bid for the full £3.6 million grant well underway. This funding would obviously be lost if the site were to be closed and the opportunity might not be available again in the future.

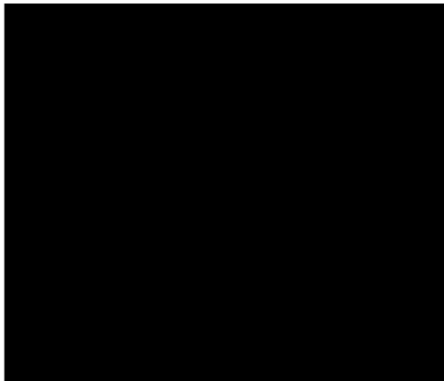
Mothballing sites brings its own, sometimes considerable, costs, as empty buildings are very vulnerable to decay as well as vandalism. I understand that no figures have been prepared for this option but I can advise that these buildings would be particularly vulnerable, and therefore potentially incur high ongoing costs, due to their age, fragility and location by the park. The process would mean that the buildings would have to be put into a good state

of repair before the site was carefully shut up, with very good security and regular inspections carried out in the future.

I would therefore urge you to reconsider the site's closure, or at least, not to take the decision to do so until proper costings can be undertaken for 'mothballing' so that you can be aware of the future financial responsibility you will be imposing on the Council. English Heritage officers would be happy to meet with your officers to facilitate this process.

Yours sincerely

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City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA  
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000  
Minicom: 020 7983 4458  
Fax: 020 7983 4187

Date: 21 October 2014

•  
Cllr David Perry  
Leader of the Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Harrow HA1 2XY

*Dear David*

**Harrow Heritage Museum**

I write concerning the above issue. I understand the council recently invested significant money and time into this site: restoring one of the buildings which is now able to be used for community and educational activities, refurbishing a separate toilet block, and applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund to pay for the restoration of the manor house - the final decision on which is expected shortly.

I'm told the council had allocated funds to restore a large barn on the site, and that the business plan is for the site to become self-funding within the next four years.

As a former archaeologist I was particularly excited to hear that the Archaeology Department of the London Museum recently carried out a dig on the site involving 500 children and 300 adults which made some important findings.

With this in mind I was surprised to hear of the council's proposal to close the museum, its site, and remove funding to restore the barn. The Heritage Museum is the oldest historic site in the borough and is the only working moated manor house in London, it would be a tragic shame to close this site to the public particularly after the council has invested so much into it. I am aware of the brutal cuts to local government funding, however I urge you to reconsider the decision and to preserve this site for the long-term benefit of the community.

*Best wishes*





**Take Part- Budget Consultation Questions**

The Council is calling on all residents to 'Take Part' and join the conversation about the kind of Harrow we are shaping. With the need to reduce £75 million from our budgets over the next 4 years, we will be turning to Harrow residents to help shape how to make these cuts.

We need to make a decision about the budget for 2015-16 by February 2015 and have outlined a list of proposed cuts, which we want to speak to you about. You can find more detail on these by visiting [www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart)

We will also be working more closely with specific service users and interested parties about savings proposals. We want to understand on a deeper level how the cuts will affect the direct users of the services and work with them to find a way to deliver cuts with minimal impact.

Please *Take Part* in the conversation and complete and return this survey by 5pm, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2014. You can return to the council via the Freepost address indicated at the end of the survey. This survey will also be made available online at [www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart)

**1. Are you completing this survey as a? (Please tick as many as apply)**

- Resident of Harrow
  - Resident outside of Harrow
  - Representative of a Harrow business
  - Representative of a business outside of Harrow
  - Representative of a group or organisation
  - Local councillor
  - Member of Harrow Council staff
  - Other (specify)
- [REDACTED] **HARROW HERITAGE TRUST (HHT)**

**2. We hope that you have found the information we have provided about the budget useful and informative. How much, if at all, do you now feel that you personally know about why the Council is proposing to make cuts of £75 million in the next 4 years?**

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all

**3. If you would like further information, what would you like to know and how would you like to receive the information?**

FURTHER DETAILS AS TO HOW THE CUTS WILL BE APPORTIONED ANNUALLY, AS THIS HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED

**4. There are many things the Council is doing to make Harrow a better place to live. For more information visit [www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart). Select your top 3 priorities. (Please tick no more than 3 options)**

- Improvements to Harrow town centre
  - Supporting carers
  - Build more affordable housing and homes for rent
  - Tackling domestic violence
  - Expanding schools to provide additional places for children
  - Don't know
  - Attracting major developers
  - Other ( please specify)
  - Delivering over 3,000 new jobs and 500 new apprenticeships
  - Supporting people into work
  - Bringing together health and social care services so the public can have a better experience
- BUILD MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND HOMES TO RENT TOGETHER WITH ALL NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE I.E. SCHOOLS, MEDICAL FACILITIES, RUBBISH COLLECTION, AMENITIES, AREAS ETC

**5. Considering the proposed cuts themselves, which four or five (if any) of the following do you think will have an impact on you and your family the most? (Please tick no more than 5 options)**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce grass cutting in public spaces.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards.      | <input type="checkbox"/> Move to community management of parks.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the number of senior managers in the Council.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the number of Council committees.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Close some of Harrow's libraries.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closure of the Emergency Relief Scheme due to removal of Government grant.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the costs of maintaining Council buildings.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate with suppliers to cut what they charge the Council.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Close the Harrow Museum.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide fewer short respite breaks to children and carers than we do now.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Review Fees and Charges charged by the Council, including parking charges.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch off some street lights, or reduce the hours that they are on for.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove additional road/pavement sweeping near shopping parades.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce the number of staff answering calls to Access Harrow. (This means the average waiting time will increase.)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charge for fortnightly collections of garden waste. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop funding community festivals.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Removal of the Friday and Saturday night Environment Health noise nuisance response service and a reduction in the size of the team (maintaining minimum service levels for Environmental Health). | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop locking park gates, increase biodiversity in parks and cut the number of times litter is picked up.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Share Council services with other boroughs.   |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above will impact on me and my family.  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know.   |

N/A

**6. And which five, if any, of the proposed cuts do you think will have the biggest impact on your local community as a whole? (Please tick no more than 5 options)**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce grass cutting in public spaces.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards.        | <input type="checkbox"/> Move to community management of parks.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the number of senior managers in the Council.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the number of Council committees.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close some of Harrow's libraries.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closure of the Emergency Relief Scheme due to removal of Government grant.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres.     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut the costs of maintaining Council buildings.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiate with suppliers to cut what they charge the Council.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Close the Harrow Museum.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide fewer short respite breaks to children and carers than we do now.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Review Fees and Charges charged by the Council, including parking charges.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Switch off some street lights, or reduce the hours that they are on for.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove additional road/pavement sweeping near shopping parades.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce the number of staff answering calls to Access Harrow. (This means the average waiting time will increase.)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charge for a fortnightly collections of garden waste. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop funding community festivals.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Removal of the Friday and Saturday night Environment Health noise nuisance response service and a reduction in the size of the team (maintaining minimum service levels for Environmental Health). | <input type="checkbox"/> Stop locking park gates, increase biodiversity in parks and cut the number of times litter is picked up.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Share Council services with other boroughs.   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above will impact on the local community.   |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know.   |

NEGATIVE

7. One of the ways the Council could protect services from cuts would be if more people volunteered their time to support services and the local community. For example, residents could help run local parks, volunteer at a local library or help run an arts programme. Would you be personally willing to volunteer if it meant retaining some aspects of our local services?

- Yes *ALREADY HEAVILY INVOLVED*       No       Not sure

8. Do you have any ideas about how residents in the borough could volunteer to help save the council money? (Please attach additional pages if required)

HAT SUGGESTS THAT THE COUNCIL DISCONTINUES PROMOTING DEMORALISING IDEAS WHERE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALREADY ACTIVE E.G. HARROW MUSEUM AND OPEN SPACES

9. Raising Council Tax by up to 2% (41p a week for a band D property) would give the Council approximately £2 million each year. After deductions, this means the Council would have £840K more to provide services each year. To what extent, if at all, would you support an increase in council tax if it meant that some of the services listed in the 2015-16 proposed cuts would not be as severely impacted?

- Strongly support       Tend to support       Tend to oppose       Strongly oppose       Don't know

10. Do you have any ideas or proposals about how the Council can save money in ways other than those identified in our 2015-16 budget cut proposals? (Please attach additional pages if required)

EMPLOY SENIOR STAFF WITH THE EXPERIENCE NECESSARY TO AVOID THE EXPENSE OF OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS

11. This is just the first part of our consultation. We will be consulting further with residents and local organisations to discuss the impact of the proposed budget cuts. For information about how to 'Take Part' in those consultations visit [www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart) or if you would like us to contact you directly please enter the details below:

- I would like to continue to be involved in consultations on the budget cuts  
 I would like to be contacted about volunteering opportunities

Name: [REDACTED] Surname: [REDACTED] *HARROW HERITAGE TRUST*  
 Email: [REDACTED]  
 Postal address: [REDACTED]

**Equality monitoring**

Harrow Council has a legal responsibility to promote and advance equality. To help us to do this, it is important that we have a good understanding of our communities, how our services are being accessed and who is using or would like to use our services. With up-to-date and accurate information we are able to:

- Better understand our service users and residents and shape services to meet their specific needs
- Identify and address any barriers or issues individuals may experience when accessing our services (including information about our services)
- Make sure that our policies and services are accessible to everyone who uses them

The information will also enable us to monitor our progress in addressing inequality and allow our employees, service users and residents to see how we are performing on equality.

1. What is your age group? (Please select)

- Under 16       16-24 years       25-44 years       45-64 years       65 years & over

*HARROW HERITAGE TRUST HAS RANGE OF VOLUNTEER FROM 16 years & UPWARDS*

7<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Take Part Team,

**Take Part Budget Consultation Questions**

Harrow Heritage Trust (HHT), which has no paid staff, has been active in the Borough, since it was formed in 1985.

Our aim is to protect and enhance both our built and natural environment, for the benefit of our residents in equal measure.

We accept the scientific warnings that unless we protect our natural environment, our descendants will inherit a bereft and dying civilisation.

We have a mandatory duty to halt the appalling failure of our policy makers to grasp this dire situation.

We encourage all our citizens to enjoy the wonderful open spaces with which our Borough is blessed.

Many HHT volunteers are constantly managing and improving all these major open spaces as well as some parks and smaller green areas.

HHT financially assists with the repair and restoration of the Borough's historic and listed buildings, and runs competitions which encourage the creation of "new builds" to the highest architectural standards.

During the period of the Iconic Ming Dynasty some 50% of resources were devoted to scholarly activities.

Recently, Birmingham City Council, faced with the prospect of lower central government grants, announced that the protection of art and culture was their A1 priority.

Our attached reponse to this Budget Consultation reflects the statements above.

Best wishes,

Take Part,  
Harrow Council,  
Civic 1,  
Station Road  
HARROW  
HA1 2XY

## Response to Harrow Council's 'Take Part' Survey 2014

### Received Online from the Pinner Association

The Pinner Association Registered Charity 262349 Response to the Harrow Council Take Part - Help Shape the Future of Harrow November 2014 THE PINNER ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity number 262349) is an amenity society founded in 1932. Its aims are to conserve and enhance the quality of life in Pinner, and it has a membership of some 3,500 households in the Pinner and Pinner South Wards. The Pinner Association Executive Committee has reviewed the proposals in the Harrow Council consultation document Take Part - Help Shape the Future of Harrow and has the following comments:

1] Percentage Reduction in Budget and Actual Monetary Savings to be achieved by the Different Options Proposed: On page 4 of the consultation document it is stated that the Council is seeking cutting £75 million over 4 years from a current discretionary budget of £141 million per annum. It is then stated that this leaves a budget of £141 million from which the Council needs to save £75 million over four years, a saving of 53. These statements are ambiguous and do not give a clear indication of what exactly the amount to be cut in each of the next four years is to be, nor of what the actual amount of the Councils discretionary budget will be in each of the next four years. After making enquiries with Harrow Council officers and councillors, which still did not unambiguously resolve the exact figures for the cuts to be made, this response from The Pinner Association has been written from data supplied by Carol Yarde, Head of Transformation and the Business Support Service, Community, Health and Wellbeing, Harrow Council, to Bernard Wainwright of the Hatch End Association:

Year	Annual budget reduction	Cumulative budget reduction	Annual budget reduction	Cumulative budget reduction
Y1 by 31/03/16	£24.740m	£24.740m	17.5%	17.5%
Y2 by 31/03/17	£20.765m	£45.505m	14.7%	32.2%
Y3 by 31/03/18	£15m	£60.505m	10.6%	42.9%
Y4 by 31/03/19	£14.495m	£75m	10.2%	53%

This means that over the next four years the actual discretionary budgets would be would be (assuming no increase or decrease in Council Tax nor in Harrows grant from central government), from the figures given in the table above: 2015/16 £116.260 million 2016/17 £95.495 million 2017/18 £80.495 million 2018/19 £66.000 million In the consultation document none of the twenty three different options for services that may be cut give any indication of what level of monetary saving may be achieved by cutting the service as proposed. Without such figures it is very difficult to have a sound basis on which to make considered decisions between the different options proposed, particularly as the cut in the Council discretionary budget is proposed to be so severe.

2] Comments on Proposed Options for Budget Reductions: (Based on the information in the Take Part leaflet and the Harrow Council document Options for first round cuts.) Reduce grass cutting in public spaces. Response: We strongly oppose this proposal. When the Council has previously tried reducing the frequency of grass cutting of verges and open spaces this has resulted in problems: the grass cutting mowers broke down because they were not designed to cut long grass; the hay of uncollected cut long grass formed into clods which then blocked the street drains; people were unable to use open spaces for sports or walking due to the over long grass and it being impossible to see dog faeces left by irresponsible owners hidden in the long grass. We suggest that due to the above problems very little money would actually be saved by this measure and strongly oppose this option. Home owners should be asked to

cut the grass verges outside their properties which would reduce the need for regular cutting of street verges. Cut the number of senior managers in the Council. Response: We support the reduction in the number of senior managers in the Council; to justify the re-appointment of a Chief Executive at a very high salary plus on costs, this expense and much more must be saved by reducing the layers of management below this top level. Closure of Emergency Relief Scheme due to removal of Government grant. Response: We oppose this option. As is stated in the Council's own document on the Options for first round cuts that there are not many users of this scheme this would save only a very small amount of money, but the effect of withdrawing these grants would be disproportionately severe on those who would do urgently require short term support. Negotiate with suppliers to cut what they charge the Council. Response: We strongly support this option, but this should have already been done and it should be an ongoing process. Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector. Response: This option is strongly opposed and we feel it would be false economy. The voluntary sector has already taken on much of the work in Adult Social Care that in the past was done by local councils, and to now cut their funding may result in real hardship for those who are dependent on their assistance. It is stated that these are largely prevention focussed services which provide information and advice, but without this preventative information and advice many of their clients may find themselves in real difficulties and may require the input of Harrow Council's Social Services, resulting in additional expense for the Council. The voluntary organisations already find it difficult to recruit volunteers, as people are retiring later in life and those in work do not have enough free time, and to cut the training and volunteer support structure by closing Harrow Community Action would compound this problem. Switch off some street lights, or reduce the hours that they are on for. Response: We support the option of dimming street lights and the phased installation of efficient LED across the borough. Reduce the number of staff answering the main switchboard. This means the average waiting time will increase. Response: The proposed reduction of up to 22% in the number of staff answering calls at Access Harrow is regrettable but would be acceptable if really necessary. If this cut is made the Harrow Council website must be improved to be fully searchable, clearly laid out, and kept up to date. E-mail enquiries must be allowed (and not just questions or reports from predetermined menus) and must be answered in a short time period. With these provisos we support this option. Removal of the Friday and Saturday night Environment Health noise nuisance response service and a reduction in the size of the team (maintaining minimum service levels for Environmental Health). Response: Again if this service is not cost effective then it should be reduced, but residents must be able to access Environmental Health via the Harrow Council website and get a timely and personal response to e-mails. Sufficient staff should remain to deal with problems that arise, so that residents in these areas can have their amenity restored if a nuisance is caused. With these provisos we support this option. Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards. Response: The Pinner Association strongly objects to the proposal to close the Harrow Arts Centre in Hatch End. We agree with the response from the Hatch End Association to this proposal. The transport links to the Hatch End site are exceptional and moving the Arts Centre to another site (even if that really happened) could lead to many of the users of this facility no longer being able to attend classes, etc.. Some of the users of the Harrow Arts Centre are potentially vulnerable older persons, and without the stimulation and human contact that their classes and clubs provide, they may well become lonely and depressed and hence would require substantial input from Harrow Social Services, which would negate any money saved from closing or moving the Arts Centre. We agree with the Hatch End

Association that the Arts Centre could be run more efficiently and commercially to reduce the running costs and retain it in Hatch End; e.g. promote even wider use of the Elliott Hall for weddings, events, conferences, etc.; increase room hire rates; arrange management by a not for profit organisation. If the Arts Centre closed in Hatch End what would happen to the listed and other buildings on the site? The Hatch End Library is now housed in these buildings, so would that close? Would the Council seek to sell off the Arts Centre site to a developer for redevelopment, which would be a great loss of an important, much used and loved, facility for all the residents of the borough? Cut the number of Council committees. Response: Strongly support that committees that do not have a specific purpose or statutory requirement to exist should be reduced. However, would much money be saved by closing many committees such as the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, which is manned and chaired by volunteer professional persons who freely give of their own time to assist the Council? Committees such as the Planning Committee are essential to ensure that local democracy is maintained and so that residents may have their views heard in a public forum. Close or reduce some of the Councils early support services to families, including Children's Centres. Response: We strongly oppose the closure of Children's Centres. These facilities provide a good start for children who may otherwise require interventions by Social Services, together with accessible places where parents of young children can gain advice and support. More use could be made of these centres; for example the registration of births could take place at Children's Centres, so that Health Visitors and Social Workers could identify any babies who may benefit from early intervention and thereby prevent more serious problems which may cost much more to the Council in the future. Children's Centres should be used as the one-stop contact point on all matters relating to early years education and development, and thus may save having duplicated efforts in other Council facilities. Close the Harrow Museum. Response: Strongly oppose. On 23rd October 2014 Harrow Council submitted a planning application (P/3797/14) in part to allow Repairs And Accessibility Alterations For Conversion Of Headstone Manor House To A Public Museum Headstone Manor is a Grade 1 Listed Building, and we agree that it would be good to find an ongoing use for this historically important local asset. Using the building to house the Harrow Museum, thus freeing up the Great Barn to be hired out for commercial uses such as weddings, would seem to be a very good use of these resources. The money raised from the hire of the Great Barn, and other proposed commercial uses of the Headstone Manor buildings, should cover any costs of running the Harrow Museum. Harrow Museum has been manned by volunteers for many years, so the cost to Council must be minimal, and the Council would have to maintain the structure of Headstone Manor in any case, so little would be saved in money terms by closing the Harrow Museum. However, much may be lost to cultural life in the borough if the Museum was to close. Don't provide as many short respite breaks to children and carers as we do now. Response: We feel that sufficient respite care should continue to be provided to avoid carers suffering from excessive fatigue and stress, hence avoiding extra costs falling upon Harrow Council Social Services and the local health services. However, if there are some savings that could be made without causing additional problems then these should be considered. Without the benefit of being informed of the proposed amount of money to be saved and what proportion of the respite care currently available would be discontinued, it is not possible to make a considered judgement on this proposal. Remove additional road/pavement sweeping near shopping parades. Response: We oppose this proposal. Much effort is being expended by local traders and community groups to promote local shopping areas, and reducing the street cleaning in these areas resulting in an untidy, litter strewn, appearance, would do much to undo this good work.

However, would support an initiative to encourage local traders to clean the street in front of their premises and to take a pride in their local shopping area. Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charging for a fortnightly collection of garden waste. Response: We strongly oppose these options. The bin stores designed to comply with recent planning consents for residential houses have been constructed to accommodate three standard sized wheelie bins only. To introduce yet another bin to be stored on the premises of individual houses would create even more clutter in front gardens, to the detriment of the street scene, and many houses would not have the space to store even a small additional wheelie bin. At least one Brown wheelie bin of garden waste is generated weekly by employed gardeners at many houses with larger gardens, so a fortnightly collection of garden waste would mean even more bins being stored (two or more Brown bins), often in front gardens. Charging for the collection of garden waste would possibly be not cost effective if the charge for this service was modest, and if a large charge was required this could greatly increase the incidence of fly tipping and bonfire nuisance. How would Brown bins for which a charge had been paid be correctly identified, and as the bins must be left out early in the morning (effectively overnight) and are not lockable, how would the illicit deposition of another houses garden waste into a Brown bin be prevented should the waste be charged by weight or volume? Stop locking park gates, increase biodiversity in parks and cut the number of times litter is picked up. Move to community management of parks. Response: We strongly oppose these options. In the past when park gates were not locked problems arose with vandalism and anti-social behaviour in parks after dark. If parks become less pleasant places to visit due to graffiti and damage then they will be less well used by the general public, thus lessening the multiple health giving aspects of parks and open spaces. If increasing biodiversity means a complete lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces, this will not result in the idealised description in this proposal. Wildlife friendly landscapes require specialised management when in constrained sites. Harrow Council would have to re-employ a Biodiversity Officer to oversee the management of these areas. Litter picking from parks should be maintained at least at the current level, and preferably at more frequent intervals during busy periods such as school holidays, bank holiday weekends, etc. The Pinner Association has liaised and cooperated with Harrow Council over the maintenance and enhancement of Pinner Memorial Park since the 1950s, so community involvement in the management of parks and open spaces is not new. The Harrow Heritage Trust manage and do practical work in many open spaces in the borough and Friends □ groups at other sites likewise are actively involved with their local parks. However, to expect a volunteer group to become responsible for all the maintenance of a park would be a great burden, as they would have to directly employ professional services to cut grass and maintain shrubbery, etc., with all the insurance and other problems that this may incur. The long term commitment of the volunteers who took on such a task may be sorely tried and recruitment of new volunteers may be a problem as voluntary organisations are already finding it difficult to recruit volunteers, as people are retiring later in life and those in work do not have enough free time. Harrow Council would have to give complete control to the Friends of groups while continuing to provide access to professional advice and services such as grass cutting. Close some of Harrow libraries. Response: We strongly oppose this option. The option below: Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage would require constant, affordable, assisted and reliable access to computers for those in the community who do not have access to their own internet service. This means that all the boroughs libraries should remain open, and have increased opening hours. Libraries should be used as the local interface hub to all Council Services, with officers from other



departments deployed to libraries where appropriate. The costs of providing the libraries should be offset by making them more commercial by charging for the private use of computers for non-essential matters, and providing print out and copying facilities, etc., at competitive rates. Cut the costs of maintaining Council buildings. Response: We strongly support this option. Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme. Response: We strongly oppose this option. It is in Harrow Council's financial interest to keep the elderly infirm in their own homes for as long as possible, and therefore it may not be cost effective to reduce the support provided to help them to do so. We suggest that some Council staff could be trained to be able to work flexibly and be multi-tasking to maintain these support services in concert with other departments. Review Fees and Charges charged by the Council, including parking charges. Response: We strongly oppose any increase in parking charges. Parking charges, in car parks, on-street parking and for Residents Parking Permits are far higher in Harrow than in neighbouring Hillingdon, and are still too high to encourage shoppers to use the local retail areas. Additional money gained by Harrow Council obtained by raising car parking charges could only be used within the allowable purposes provided for by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, under which any monies raised from parking in excess of the cost of administration has to go back to transport purposes, for example repairing with potholes, improving road management, or investing in public transport to encourage people to free up the roads. The slight increase of cemetery charges to be in line with those charged by neighbouring boroughs would appear to be reasonable, and we support this part of this option. Likewise, increasing the minimum charge for Trade waste at the Civic Amenity Site from £65 to £80 would seem to be reasonable, so long as the enforcement of penalties for fly tipping is maintained, and we support this part of this option. Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage. Response: With the proviso that all the local libraries remain open for reasonable hours (see above) and assistance would be given for vulnerable persons who may find it difficult to access the internet, we support this option. Stop funding community festivals. Response: We support this option. The Pinner Association has for many years been organising local community events without any grants from Harrow Council, and Pinner Panto Evening is organised and sponsored by local traders and businesses and The Pinner Association without any grant from Harrow Council, and therefore we support this option. Harrow Council, at odds with other boroughs, has not sponsored London Open House for the past 3 years. If local or specific religious groups wish to organise an event then they should fund raise and bear the expense themselves. If only one event was to be sponsored by Harrow Council then it should be Under One Sky as this is intended to be for all the residents of Harrow. Share Council services with other boroughs. Response: Where Council Services could be merged without any loss of efficiency or without restricting Harrow resident's access to Council Officers where appropriate, then we support this option. 3] Top three priorities for Harrow Council to make Harrow a better place to live: Building affordable Housing and homes for rent Delivering over 3,000 new jobs and 500 apprenticeships Bringing together health and social care services so the public can have a better experience 4] Top five options would make the most negative effect on life in our area: Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards. Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres. Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charging for a fortnightly collection of garden waste. Close some of Harrow's libraries. Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme. 5] Suggestions for other ways for Harrow Council to save money or to raise the funding of

the discretionary budget: A reduction in the number of councillors from three to two per ward would save in the region of £200,000 per annum (21 fewer ward councillors x approximately £8,500 allowance for each councillor + on costs). We understand that an application to the Electoral Commission would be required to achieve this saving, but the application process could be started as soon as possible. Many voluntary bodies are finding it difficult to recruit and retain volunteers, as people now retire later in life and those in employment work for long hours. Potential volunteers are more likely to be willing to undertake tasks that would enhance the amenity of fellow residents in ways that they do not consider it to be the duty of the local council to provide. A modest increase in Council tax, in line with inflation, may be preferable to reducing or removing the Council services accessed by the most vulnerable in the community. The Pinner Association would therefore support the option of increasing Council Tax, so long as this was in line with inflation (approximately 2%) and the extra money was used to maintain Council services, as in our responses above. Additionally, Harrow Council should lobby central government extremely strongly, and ask for support from the three MPs whose constituencies cover the borough, for an increase in the Government Grant for Harrow, to reflect the changed demography and loss of large employers in the borough over recent years. The Pinner Association. 7th November 2014. 10, Crest View, Pinner HA5 1AN info@pinnerassociation.co.uk 020 8868 3988

# The Pinner Association

Registered Charity 262349



## Response to the Harrow Council “Take Part - Help Shape the Future of Harrow”

November 2014

THE PINNER ASSOCIATION (Registered Charity number 262349) is an amenity society founded in 1932. Its aims are to conserve and enhance the quality of life in Pinner, and it has a membership of some 3,500 households in the Pinner and Pinner South Wards.

The Pinner Association Executive Committee has reviewed the proposals in the Harrow Council consultation document “Take Part - Help Shape the Future of Harrow” and has the following comments:

### **1] Percentage Reduction in Budget and Actual Monetary Savings to be achieved by the Different Options Proposed:**

On page 4 of the consultation document it is stated that the Council is seeking “Cutting £75 million over 4 years” from a current discretionary budget of £141 million per annum. It is then stated that “This leaves a budget of £141 million from which the Council needs to save £75 million over four years, a saving of 53%.”

These statements are ambiguous and do not give a clear indication of what exactly the amount to be cut in each of the next four years is to be, nor of what the actual amount of the Council’s discretionary budget will be in each of the next four years.

After making enquiries with Harrow Council officers and councillors, which still did not unambiguously resolve the exact figures for the cuts to be made, this response from The Pinner Association has been written from data supplied by Carol Yarde, Head of Transformation and the Business Support Service, Community, Health and Wellbeing, Harrow Council, to Bernard Wainwright of the Hatch End Association:

Year	Annual budget reduction	Cumulative budget reduction	Annual budget reduction	Cumulative budget reduction
Y1 – by 31/03/16	£24.740m	£24.740m	17.5% (£24.740/£141m)	17.5%
Y2 – by 31/03/17	£20.765m	£45.505m	14.7%	32.2% (£45.505/£141m)
Y3 – by 31/03/18	£15m	£60.505m	10.6%	42.9%
Y4 – by 31/03/19	£14.495m	£75m	10.2%	53%

This means that over the next four years the actual discretionary budgets would be would be (assuming no increase or decrease in Council Tax nor in Harrow's grant from central government), from the figures given in the table above:

2015/16	£116.260 million
2016/17	£95.495 million
2017/18	£80.495 million
2018/19	£66.000 million

In the consultation document none of the twenty three different options for services that may be cut give any indication of what level of monetary saving may be achieved by cutting the service as proposed. Without such figures it is very difficult to have a sound basis on which to make considered decisions between the different options proposed, particularly as the cut in the Council's discretionary budget is proposed to be so severe.

## **2] Comments on Proposed Options for Budget Reductions:**

(Based on the information in the "Take Part" leaflet and the Harrow Council document "Options for first round cuts".)

- **Reduce grass cutting in public spaces.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** this proposal. When the Council has previously tried reducing the frequency of grass cutting of verges and open spaces this has resulted in problems: the grass cutting mowers broke down because they were not designed to cut long grass; the hay of uncollected cut long grass formed into clods which then blocked the street drains; people were unable to use open spaces for sports or walking due to the over long grass and it being impossible to see dog faeces left by irresponsible owners hidden in the long grass. We suggest that due to the above problems very little money would actually be saved by this measure and strongly oppose this option.

Home owners should be asked to cut the grass verges outside their properties which would reduce the need for regular cutting of street verges.

- **Cut the number of senior managers in the Council.**

Response: We **support** the reduction in the number of senior managers in the Council; to justify the re-appointment of a Chief Executive at a very high salary plus on costs, this expense and much more must be saved by reducing the layers of management below this top level.

- **Closure of Emergency Relief Scheme due to removal of Government grant.**

Response: We **oppose** this option.

As is stated in the Council's own document on the "Options for first round cuts" that "there are not many users of this scheme" this would save only a very small amount of money, but the effect of withdrawing these grants would be disproportionately severe on those would do urgently require short term support.

- **Negotiate with suppliers to cut what they charge the Council.**

Response: We **strongly support** this option, but this should have already been done and it should be an ongoing process.

- **Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector.**

Response: This option is **strongly opposed** and we feel it would be false economy.

The voluntary sector has already taken on much of the work in “Adult Social Care” that in the past was done by local councils, and to now cut their funding may result in real hardship for those who are dependent on their assistance. It is stated that “these are largely prevention focussed services which provide information and advice”, but without this preventative information and advice many of their clients may find themselves in real difficulties and may require the input of Harrow Council’s Social Services, resulting in additional expense for the Council.

The voluntary organisations already find it difficult to recruit volunteers, as people are retiring later in life and those in work do not have enough free time, and to cut the training and volunteer support structure by closing “Harrow Community Action” would compound this problem.

- **Switch off some street lights, or reduce the hours that they are on for.**

Response: We **support** the option of dimming street lights and the phased installation of efficient LED across the borough.

- **Reduce the number of staff answering the main switchboard. This means the average waiting time will increase.**

Response: The proposed reduction of up to 22% in the number of staff answering calls at “Access Harrow” is regrettable but would be acceptable if really necessary. If this cut is made the Harrow Council website must be improved to be fully searchable, clearly laid out, and kept up to date. E-mail enquiries must be allowed (and not just questions or reports from predetermined menus) and must be answered in a short time period.

With these provisos we **support** this option.

- **Removal of the Friday and Saturday night Environment Health noise nuisance response service and a reduction in the size of the team (maintaining minimum service levels for Environmental Health).**

Response: Again if this service is not cost effective then it should be reduced, but residents must be able to access Environmental Health via the Harrow Council website and get a timely and personal response to e-mails. Sufficient staff should remain to deal with problems that arise, so that residents in these areas can have their amenity restored if a nuisance is caused.

With these provisos we **support** this option.

- **Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards.**

Response: The Pinner Association **strongly objects** to the proposal to close the Harrow Arts Centre in Hatch End. We agree with the response from the Hatch End Association to this proposal.

The transport links to the Hatch End site are exceptional and moving the Arts Centre to another site (even if that really happened) could lead to many of the users of this facility no longer being able to attend classes, etc.. Some of the users of the Harrow Arts Centre are potentially vulnerable older persons, and without the stimulation and human contact that their classes and clubs provide, they may well become lonely and depressed and hence would require substantial input from Harrow Social Services, which would negate any money saved from closing or moving the Arts Centre.

We agree with the Hatch End Association that the Arts Centre could be run more efficiently and commercially to reduce the running costs and retain it in Hatch End; e.g. promote even wider use of the Elliott Hall for weddings, events, conferences, etc.; increase room hire rates; arrange management by a not for profit organisation.

If the Arts Centre closed in Hatch End what would happen to the listed and other buildings on the site? The Hatch End Library is now housed in these buildings, so would that close? Would the Council seek to sell off the Arts Centre site to a developer for redevelopment, which would be a great loss of an important, much used and loved, facility for all the residents of the borough?

- **Cut the number of Council committees.**

Response: **Strongly support** that committees that do not have a specific purpose or statutory requirement to exist should be reduced.

However, would much money be saved by closing many committees such as the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, which is manned and chaired by volunteer professional persons who freely give of their own time to assist the Council?

Committees such as the Planning Committee are essential to ensure that local democracy is maintained and so that residents may have their views heard in a public forum.

- **Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** the closure of Children's Centres.

These facilities provide a good start for children who may otherwise require interventions by Social Services, together with accessible places where parents of young children can gain advice and support. More use could be made of these centres; for example the registration of births could take place at Children's Centres, so that Health Visitors and Social Workers could identify any babies who may benefit from early intervention and thereby prevent more serious problems which may cost much more to the Council in the future.

Children's Centres should be used as the one-stop contact point on all matters relating to early years education and development, and thus may save having duplicated efforts in other Council facilities.

- **Close the Harrow Museum.**

Response: **Strongly oppose.**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 Harrow Council submitted a planning application (P/3797/14) in part to allow "Repairs And Accessibility Alterations For Conversion Of Headstone Manor House To A Public Museum". Headstone Manor is a Grade 1 Listed Building, and we agree that it would be good to find an ongoing use for this historically important local asset. Using the building to house the Harrow Museum, thus freeing up the Great Barn to be hired out for commercial uses such as weddings, would seem to be a very good use of these resources. The money raised from the hire of the Great Barn, and other proposed commercial uses of the Headstone Manor buildings, should cover any costs of running the Harrow Museum. Harrow Museum has been manned by volunteers for many years, so the cost to Council must be minimal, and the Council would have to maintain the structure of Headstone Manor in any case, so little would be saved in money terms by closing the Harrow Museum. However, much may be lost to cultural life in the borough if the Museum was to close.

- **Don't provide as many short respite breaks to children and carers as we do now.**

Response: We feel that sufficient respite care should continue to be provided to avoid carers suffering from excessive fatigue and stress, hence avoiding extra costs falling upon Harrow Council Social Services and the local health services.

However, if there are some savings that could be made without causing additional problems then these should be considered. Without the benefit of being informed of the proposed amount of money to be saved and what proportion of the respite care currently available would be discontinued, it is not possible to make a considered judgement on this proposal.

- **Remove additional road/pavement sweeping near shopping parades.**

Response: We **oppose** this proposal.

Much effort is being expended by local traders' and community groups to promote local shopping areas, and reducing the street cleaning in these areas resulting in an untidy, litter strewn, appearance, would do much to undo this good work.

However, would support an initiative to encourage local traders to clean the street in front of their premises and to take a pride in their local shopping area.

- **Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charging for a fortnightly collection of garden waste.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** these options.

The bin stores designed to comply with recent planning consents for residential houses have been constructed to accommodate three standard sized wheelie bins only. To introduce yet another bin to be stored on the premises of individual houses would create even more clutter in front gardens, to the detriment of the street scene, and many houses would not have the space to store even a small additional wheelie bin.

At least one "Brown" wheelie bin of garden waste is generated weekly by employed gardeners at many houses with larger gardens, so a fortnightly collection of garden waste would mean even more bins being stored (two or more "Brown" bins), often in front gardens. Charging for the collection of garden waste would possibly be not cost effective if the charge for this service was modest, and if a large charge was required this could greatly increase the incidence of fly tipping and bonfire nuisance. How would "Brown bins" for which a charge had been paid be correctly identified, and as the bins must be left out early in the morning (effectively overnight) and are not lockable, how would the illicit deposition of another house's garden waste into a "Brown bin" be prevented should the waste be charged by weight or volume?

- **Stop locking park gates, increase biodiversity in parks and cut the number of times litter is picked up. Move to community management of parks.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** these options.

In the past when park gates were not locked problems arose with vandalism and anti-social behaviour in parks after dark. If parks become less pleasant places to visit due to graffiti and damage then they will be less well used by the general public, thus lessening the multiple health giving aspects of parks and open spaces.

If "increasing biodiversity" means a complete lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces this will not result in the idealised description in this proposal. Wildlife friendly landscapes require specialised management when in constrained sites. Harrow Council would have to re-employ a Biodiversity Officer to oversee the management of these areas.

Litter picking from parks should be maintained at least at the current level, and preferably at more frequent intervals during busy periods such as school holidays, bank holiday weekends, etc.

The Pinner Association has liaised and cooperated with Harrow Council over the maintenance and enhancement of Pinner Memorial Park since the 1950's, so community involvement in the management of parks and open spaces is not new. The Harrow Heritage Trust manage and do practical work in many open spaces in the borough and "Friends" groups at other sites likewise are actively involved with their local parks. However, to expect a volunteer group to become responsible for all the maintenance of a park would be a great burden, as they would have to directly employ professional services to cut grass and maintain shrubbery, etc., with all the insurance and other problems that this may incur. The long term commitment of the volunteers who took on such a task may be sorely tried and recruitment of new volunteers may be a problem as voluntary organisations are already finding it difficult to recruit volunteers, as people are retiring later in life and those in work do not have enough free time. Harrow Council would have to give complete control to the "Friends of" groups while continuing to provide access to professional advice and services such as grass cutting.

- **Close some of Harrow's libraries.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** this option.

The option below "Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage" would require constant, affordable, assisted and reliable access to computers for those in the community who do not have access to their own internet service. This means that all the borough's libraries should remain open, and have increased opening hours.

Libraries should be used as the local interface hub to all Council Services, with officers from other departments deployed to libraries where appropriate.

The costs of providing the libraries should be offset by making them more commercial by charging for the private use of computers for non-essential matters, and providing print out and copying facilities, etc., at competitive rates.

- **Cut the costs of maintaining Council buildings.**

Response: We **strongly support** this option.

- **Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** this option.

It is in Harrow Council's financial interest to keep the elderly infirm in their own homes for as long as possible, and therefore it may not be cost effective to reduce the support provided to help them to do so.

We suggest that some Council staff could be trained to be able to work flexibly and be multi-tasking to maintain these support services in concert with other departments.

- **Review Fees and Charges charged by the Council, including parking charges.**

Response: We **strongly oppose** any increase in parking charges.

Parking charges, in car parks, on-street parking and for Residents' Parking Permits are far higher in Harrow than in neighbouring Hillingdon, and are still too high to encourage shoppers to use the local retail areas. Additional money gained by Harrow Council obtained by raising car parking charges could only be used within the allowable purposes provided for by Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, under which any monies raised from parking in excess of



the cost of administration has to go back to transport purposes, for example repairing with potholes, improving road management, or investing in public transport to encourage people to free up the roads.

The slight increase of cemetery charges to be in line with those charged by neighbouring boroughs would appear to be reasonable, and we **support this part** of this option.

Likewise, increasing the minimum charge for Trade waste at the Civic Amenity Site from £65 to £80 would seem to be reasonable, so long as the enforcement of penalties for fly tipping is maintained, and we **support this part** of this option.

- **Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage.**

Response: **With the proviso that all the local libraries remain open for reasonable hours** (see above) and assistance would be given for vulnerable persons who may find it difficult to access the internet, we **support** this option.

- **Stop funding community festivals.**

Response: We **support** this option.

The Pinner Association has for many years been organising local community events without any grants from Harrow Council, and Pinner Panto Evening is organised and sponsored by local traders and businesses and The Pinner Association without any grant from Harrow Council, and therefore we **support** this option.

Harrow Council, at odds with other boroughs, has not sponsored “London Open House” for the past 3 years.

If local or specific religious groups wish to organise an event then they should fund raise and bear the expense themselves.

If only one event was to be sponsored by Harrow Council then it should be “Under One Sky” as this is intended to be for all the residents of Harrow.

- **Share Council services with other boroughs.**

Response: Where Council Services could be merged without any loss of efficiency or without restricting Harrow residents’ access to Council Officers where appropriate, then we **support** this option.

### **3] Top three priorities for Harrow Council to make Harrow “a better place to live”:**

- Building affordable Housing and homes for rent
- Delivering over 3,000 new jobs and 500 apprenticeships
- Bringing together health and social care services so the public can have a better experience

### **4] Top five options would make the most negative effect on life in our area:**

- Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards.
- Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres.

- Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charging for a fortnightly collection of garden waste.
- Close some of Harrow's libraries.
- Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme.

**5] Suggestions for other ways for Harrow Council to save money or to raise the funding of the discretionary budget:**

A reduction in the number of councillors from three to two per ward would save in the region of £200,000 per annum (21 fewer ward councillors x approximately £8,500 allowance for each councillor + on costs). We understand that an application to the Electoral Commission would be required to achieve this saving, but the application process could be started as soon as possible.

Many voluntary bodies are finding it difficult to recruit and retain volunteers, as people now retire later in life and those in employment work for long hours. Potential volunteers are more likely to be willing to undertake tasks that would enhance the amenity of fellow residents in ways that they do not consider it to be the duty of the local council to provide.

A modest increase in Council tax, in line with inflation, may be preferable to reducing or removing the Council services accessed by the most vulnerable in the community. The Pinner Association would therefore **support** the option of increasing Council Tax, so long as this was in line with inflation (approximately 2%) and the extra money was used to maintain Council services, as in our responses above.

Additionally, Harrow Council should lobby central government extremely strongly, and ask for support from the three MP's whose constituencies cover the borough, for an increase in the Government Grant for Harrow, to reflect the changed demography and loss of large employers in the borough over recent years.

The Pinner Association.

7<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

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# The Hatch End Association



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31 October 2014

Councillor David Perry  
Leader of the Council  
Civic Centre  
Harrow HA1 2UZ

Dear Councillor Perry

## **TAKEPART Consultation 2014 – Future of Harrow Arts Centre, Hatch End.**

This Association strongly objects to the proposal in Harrow Council's TakePart Consultation to consider closing Harrow Arts Centre in Hatch End to help meet the reduced government grant over the next four years when setting the Budget.

The site in Hatch End has been in educational use for nearly 160 years. Since becoming Harrow Arts Centre in the late 1980's, it has provided a hub for all kinds of educational activities for the local and borough wide, multi-ethnic community which benefits all ages from 5 to 90 year olds. These activities are multicultural and enjoyed by children to the University of the Third Age (U3A). All kind of subjects are on offer; for example, Indian and modern dancing, painting, art appreciation, choirs, British brass bands to yoga and Tai Chi .These help to keep participants healthy in mind and body. There is also very good gallery space for exhibitions of local and national art including the new Cube room. Elliott hall is used by several ethnic groups for religious events and it is also used for shows and concerts.

Where in central Harrow is there such a site which could do all of the above ?

The Hatch End site has good access links by rail – the Overland trains run north- south and the station is five minute away. There are two bus routes which stop outside Elliott Hall and run east, west and south across the borough and link up with various underground stations. The centre also has a car park and is allowed to use Morrison's supermarket car park nearby.

We are also concerned about the future of Hatch End public library which is in the Elliott Hall complex. This also attracts a large number of young children, parents and the elderly.

We offer below several measures the council should consider to reduce the running costs of Harrow Arts Centre and retain it in Hatch End:-

Promote even wider use of Elliott Hall for weddings, events, conferences

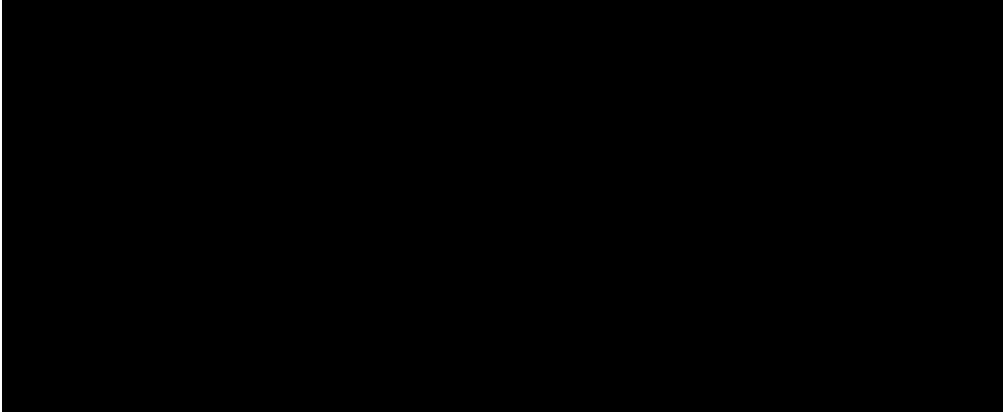
Obtain sponsorship; increase room hire rates

Arrange management by a not for profit organisation/charity; college/university or even a commercial organisation.

We understand some housing may be under consideration for the site. There are restrictions, for example, surrounding green belt and listed buildings. Also we would like to mention that in the last review of the Local Plan (2011- 2013) a proposal for 65 houses on the site was withdrawn and the Harrow Arts Centre was designated for Arts and Leisure. Please keep it this way.

Finally, we will be presenting a petition of over 5000 signatures from the people of Harrow who use and appreciate Harrow Arts Centre in Hatch End and do not want it closed.

Yours sincerely



# Budget Submission to Harrow Council.

## 2015-16 to 2018-19.

### 1.0 Introduction.

- This submission is made by Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD). We welcome the Council's decision to consult on its high level budget proposals two months before the publication of the detailed budget.
- HAD welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Council's budget proposals 2015-16 and the medium term financial position covering the four years up to 2018-19.
- We take the view that Government funding reductions through the loss of Revenue Support Grant coupled to restrictions on the Council to raise finance via the Council Tax will penalise vulnerable people and communities.
- We are concerned that the impact of budget reductions will be counter productive and not deliver Value for Money in the long term.
- We are specifically concerned about the cumulative impact of austerity on Disabled people.
- We make 7 proposals to the Cabinet.

### 2.0 HAD and the voluntary sector.

- HAD believes the voluntary sector has the potential to work with the Council to develop alternative models of service delivery that will allow it to provide better more responsive services at a lower cost without eroding workers rights.
- **Proposal 1 : That reductions to voluntary sector funding should be phased in over the four years of the Medium term budget reduction plan.**
- **Proposal 2 : That the Council and voluntary sector establish a review to identify services and assets that could be transferred to new models of organisation establish with voluntary sector partners and that the budget reduction targets not be implemented until October 2015.**

### 3.0 Disabled and Vulnerable Residents

- HAD is concerned about the cumulative impact on disabled people from Government austerity related cuts and from possible Council cuts to services for disabled and vulnerable people.
- Inclusion London, a London wide pan disability organisation has highlighted that disabled people have been hit nine times more than other citizens by austerity measures.
- Inclusion London also highlights that 40% of disabled children live in poverty. See:

<http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/four-in-ten-disabled-children-in-the-uk-live-in-poverty>

The evidence of the cumulative impact of welfare reform and related measures highlights the financial pressures upon disabled people:

[http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/domains/inclusionlondon.co.uk/local/media/downloads/welfare\\_benefit\\_cuts\\_impact\\_on\\_disabled\\_people\\_factsheet\\_final\\_2\\_1.doc](http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/domains/inclusionlondon.co.uk/local/media/downloads/welfare_benefit_cuts_impact_on_disabled_people_factsheet_final_2_1.doc)

- We would further highlight that the national charity Scope has established a Commission to look at the high costs of living faced being disabled.

<https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/research-policy/formal-evidence-commission>

- Our concern is that the Council cuts will push even more disabled and vulnerable people into poverty.
- HAD exists to empower people and to help them take control of their lives through personalised services and being able to make choices about their lives.
- We are concerned that budget reductions in the social care realm will undermine Independent Living.
- If the Council reduces spending on the promotion of Independent Living the consequence, in our view, will be more institutional high cost care. It would be a false economy.

**Proposal 3: We want the Council to promote independent living and minimise cuts by working with the Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group and using the Better Care Fund.**

**Proposal 4: Social Care commissioning should reflect the emphasis placed on voluntary sector partnerships and on the involvement of disabled and vulnerable people in such models. (User led models)**

These models are promoted by the Cabinet office, Known as Disabled Peoples User Led Organisations. (DPULO) See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/strengthening-disabled-peoples-user-led-organisations>

We support models of co-production.

We want to see the Council reduce spending on all institutional forms of care and to reduce the gross profits of home care providers through limiting the percentage profit mark up within any contract to 20 per cent.

**Proposal 5: That the Council should reduce spending on residential care provision in favour of supporting people in their own homes.**

**Proposal 6: That the commissioning of home care should include a 20% cap or mark up limit on the profits of home care providers.**

- HAD wants to see a partnership based approach to promoting independent living and would argue that new models of service delivery with the voluntary sector could achieve this.
- HAD also wants to help the Council develop early intervention practices to help disabled people remain independent.
- It is false economy to cut early intervention work and focus solely on those in most need. There has to be a balance. By cutting early intervention, disabled and vulnerable people may end up requiring more expensive services as they deteriorate and slip into the higher care bands of care support.

**Proposal 7: That the Council should direct resources over the medium and long term to promoting home and community based services. Many of these can be developed with the voluntary sector and linked to GP practices.**

#### **4.0 Respite breaks for children and carers.**

- Again, this cut would be false economy and probably lead to higher costs if children end up in care or carers are no longer able to provide care.
- Respite offers a way of taking pressure off both parents and carers.

#### **Conclusion.**

- HAD values its partnership with the Council and supports the Council in making the difficult choices needed to produce a balanced budget as required by law.
- Our submission sets out 7 proposals that we believe should be adopted by the Cabinet.
- The proposals offer an alternative way to deliver services over the medium term.



7 November 2014.



7 November 2014

Councillor David Perry  
Leader of the Council  
Harrow Civic Centre  
Harrow

Dear Councillor Perry

**Re: Harrow Council Take Part Consultation**

Harrow CCG recognises the need to support Harrow Council in this difficult process and would like to understand how we can assist with this exercise further regarding the recent Take Part consultation. Harrow CCG recognises the challenging position our local economy faces. However to date, Harrow CCG continues to be un-assured on both the details and the impact of the proposed changes contained within this consultation exercise.

Alongside reviewing the information which is available on the Council's website, there have also been two discussions held at our CCG Seminars in October 2014. The first discussion covered the overarching consultation with limited details on the impact/scale of proposals by service line, followed by a second discussion with regard to specific impacts on Children's Services.

The CCG would like you to note that the outcome of the 7th October 2014 discussion was that the CCG was not in a position to support the proposals in the consultation due to the very limited information made available to the group in order to have an informed understanding as to the impact of the proposals to residents/service users and to the CCG. A list of discussion points was

As a consequence, on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014 the CCG emailed the consultation project manager Alex Dewsnap with a list of discussion points, information to which would enable the CCG to give consideration to and thereby make an informed response to the consultation. This list as emailed on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014 highlighted the following areas for further information:

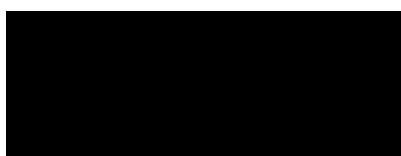
- Harrow CCG seeks assurance on how the proposed cuts will impact services and the impact it will have on residents.
- Details on the impact of £56m cut from adult social services.
- The affected populations where these reduced services will impact are likely to affect residents with ill health. The CCG requests additional detailed information to understand the impact and the potential cost pressures for the CCG.

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## ***Clinical Commissioning Group***

- What provision is there to safeguard vulnerable groups once funding has been cut?
- The CCG has requested the following information to support this consultation:
  - The total 14/15 budget for each element of the £25m targeted savings as part of the Take Part information issued.
  - The number of service users receiving each of these services targeted in the consultation on an annual basis.
  - The financial value and percentage of the proposed budget reduction for each of the targeted services.
  - The completed EQIAs for each of the services identified for proposed changes.
  - Details on what the intended changes are for each service area i.e. '*what does reducing services targeted older adults*' mean and what cohort will be affected.
  - A rationale for how the reduction of respite support for carers aligns to the proposals within the Better Care Fund.
  - What assurances can the Council make that service users will not suffer and the changes will not result in contributing to or causing future safeguarding risks.
- In our Commissioning Intentions, the consistent question from the Council is that "How can you ensure that these commissioning intentions, or a consequence of these, directly or indirectly, doesn't mean a cost shunt back to the Council". As a CCG we now ask Harrow Council how you could give us the assurance that a consequence of these, intended or unintended, doesn't mean a cost shunt to the CCG?
- What modeling has the Council completed to inform the impact of the cuts on the vulnerable and needy groups, including outcomes?
- As part of the consultation, the CCG would like to understand the impact on Health Visiting services with effect from April 2015, given this is a mandatory spend.
- What is the existing budget allocated to staffing costs within this financial year for the pre and post consultation period? In addition, what is the total cost of administrative services for each of these services i.e. Children's Centres?
- Please provide details for the wider £50m savings plan which has not been included in the consultation information.
- On discussion with our commissioned providers, maternity services were not aware of the intended plans to close a high percentage of Harrow's Children's Centres until last week. Harrow CCG would like to have assurance of who has been consulted as there may be a range of key partner organisations that have not been engaged to date.
- The CCG is aware that detailed modeling has been completed by Harrow Council to inform these high level proposals and financials within the published consultation. When will the detailed modeling be released to the CCG for discussion? As a key partner organisation and given that the Council would need our support, the CCG would need further detailed information in order to make an informed response to these proposals.
- The CCG are keen to understand how the Council will evidence that you have changed your views based on these comments from the CCG and wider stakeholders.

It is important to bring to your attention that despite the above points being made both face to face and in writing, Harrow CCG has yet to receive a response to these comments. However we did have a useful discussion with Chris Spencer in relation to Children's Services, where a level of greater



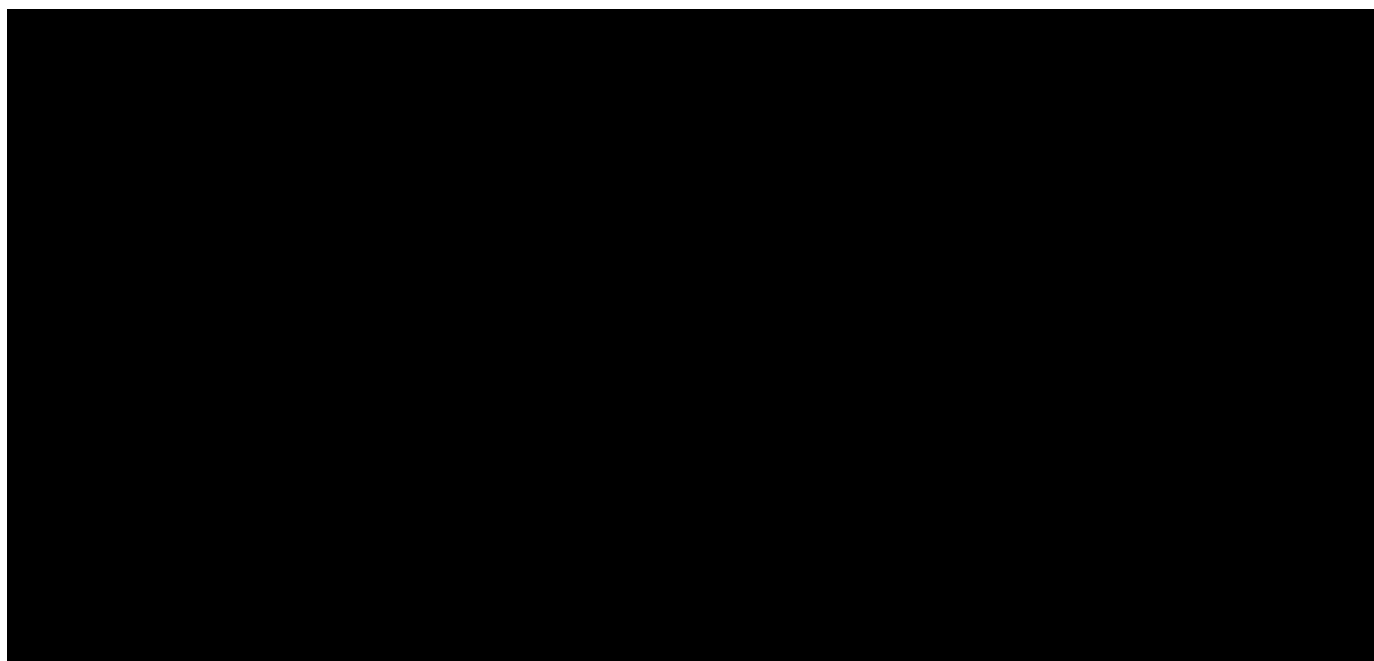
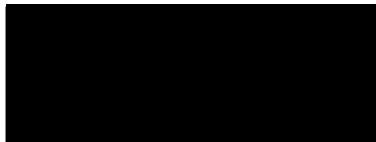
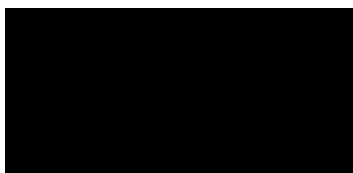
## **Clinical Commissioning Group**

detail was made available. The plans to significantly reduce the number of Children's Centres will have a detrimental impact of primary care services. This is due to a range of services that have been taken out of GP Services over a number of years, and have been placed in Children's Centres. If these are being closed, the GP Practices may not have the capacity to deal with the increased demand. Given that NHS England has responsibility for the commissioning of primary care services, the CCG would like assurance of NHS England's engagement in this process. This is due to the potential impact on all of Harrow's 35 practices should Children's Centres be closed without adequate alternative resources being made available for the provision of the existing range and volume of services offered to Harrow residents.

The CCG would like to reiterate that it recognises the need to support Harrow Council in this difficult process and would like to understand how we can assist. However to date, Harrow CCG continues to be un-assured on both the details and the impact of the proposed changes contained within this consultation exercise.

In conclusion and based on the above, Harrow CCG urges Harrow Council to strongly consider the impact that any decisions within this consultation may have relation to the health and wellbeing of our local residents of harrow and your partner organisations. We look forward to receiving a response.

Yours sincerely,



**NHS**  
**Harrow**  
**Clinical Commissioning Group**

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[www.harrowccg.nhs.uk](http://www.harrowccg.nhs.uk)

7 November 2014

Councillor David Perry  
Leader of the Council  
Harrow Civic Centre  
Harrow

Dear Councillor Perry

**Re: Harrow Council Take Part Consultation**

As you may know Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group is a member organisation and is responsive to the 35 general practices in Harrow.

As part of the local health community and being involved in the needs of the people of Harrow as patients on a daily basis it is therefore not surprising that the GP practices have been interested in the Council's public consultation "Take Part"

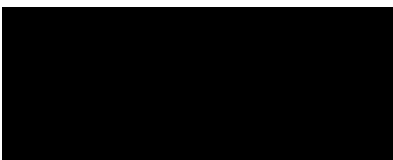
All of the 35 Harrow GP practices, which includes over 150 GPs and many practice nurses have had the opportunity to review the consultation. They acknowledge that you have a very difficult challenge which naturally results in complex decisions. Harrow CCG is living with a similar difficult financial landscape. GPs therefore are keen that they voice their concerns that the public consultation contains proposals that are likely to affect the most vulnerable in Harrow.

Unanimously the Harrow GPs have asked for the CCG to write to you and advise you that they are very concerned about the impact these cuts will have to the health of the people of Harrow.

In particular we are concerned about:

- Proposed cuts to the funding provided to the voluntary sector.
- Suggested closure or reduce some of the council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres.
- Proposed cuts to some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme.

In our surgeries we see the impact that these services have on the population. We are able to see the benefit that families derive from Children Centres and the support they provide to parents and their children. We see these locations to be the centre of provision for midwifery services and the health



## ***Clinical Commissioning Group***

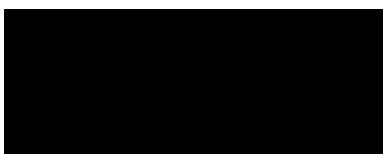
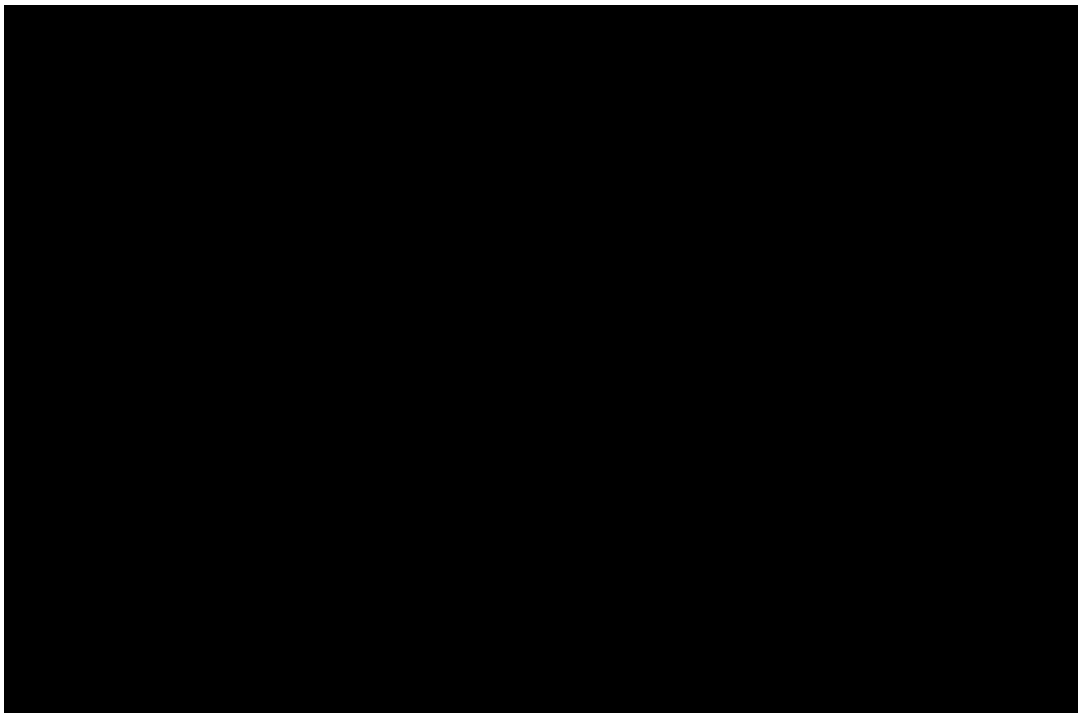
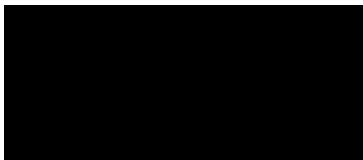
visitors as well as giving families who have additional needs an opportunity to seek help in a non stigmatising way.

The work of some of the voluntary sector is only ongoing due to the funding that both the Council and the CCG provide. We, as GPs, are concerned that with the suggested reduction, some of these organisations will no longer be sustainable. This will reduce the fabric of community provision at a time when we need to empower people to take an interest in their own health and wellbeing.

In addition we are most concerned about the reduction of support provided to older and disabled people. These are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society and fall within the 25% of patients who utilize 75% of health resources. It is for this group that we need to consider increasing funding if we are to realise the possibilities articulated in the Better Care Fund initiative. We feel that the Council's proposals could be perceived as a "cost shunt" to Health which completely reverses the excellent work that Health and Social Care teams have undertaken through the Integrated Care Project.

We, the GPs of Harrow ask the Council to strongly consider the impact that your decisions will have on the health of the people of Harrow. We look forward to receiving a response.

Yours sincerely



# Rescue

**The British Archaeological Trust**

**15a Bull Plain, Hertford  
Hertfordshire, SG14 1DX**

**Telephone: 01992 553377**

Office hours:: Tuesday and Friday mornings.  
Otherwise please leave a message on the  
answerphone.

*rescue@rescue-archaeology.freeserve.co.uk*

*www,rescue-archaeology.org.uk*

7<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Councillor David Perry  
PO Box 2  
Harrow Council  
Civic Centre  
Station Road  
Harrow  
HA1 2XY

Dear Councillor Perry

I am responding to the Harrow Council budget consultation on behalf of RESCUE, the British Archaeological Trust who are very concerned to see the closure of Harrow Museum as one of the money saving options being considered. RESCUE is a non-political organisation dedicated to supporting archaeology ([www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.rescue-archaeology.org.uk)). We do not receive any state support and are entirely dependent on the contributions of our members to support our work. It is our policy to post all correspondence about heritage issues on our webpages unless there is a specific request for privacy.

The council has invested significant sums in the Museum complex in recent years and we are nonplussed by the suggestion that this should effectively be thrown away by the closure of the Museum. In addition the Council and Museum successfully bid for Heritage Lottery funds to prepare a Stage 2 application for a substantial sum of money to invest in the Museum, a bid that appears likely to be successful. We note that in the Council documentation there is no indication of the monies that might be saved by closing the Museum, and certainly no mention of the potential millions of £s in lottery funding that might be lost to the Borough as a result of this action. And are you certain that if the Museum is closed and the Stage 2 lottery bid not submitted, Harrow Council will not be liable to repay the funds already received?

Harrow Museum is part of nationally important complex of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments and RESCUE notes that Harrow Council has previously shown real commitment to this extraordinary Heritage Asset. The Council funded restoration of the Great Barn offers commercial opportunities to support the Museum which provides the people, and in particular the school children of Harrow, with a range of excellent services, activities and opportunities to engage with their past.

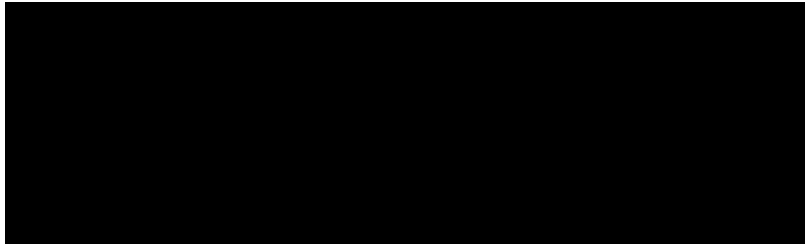
We understand that the council has a master plan for Harrow Museum and Headstone Manor and that this may include alternative options for the future of the museum, including Charitable Trust status. RESCUE members are concerned that it appears that the proposal to close the Museum is mooted before such options have been properly researched and that

this runs the risk that any alternative options will not be afforded sufficient time or resources to prepare a plan that will ensure its success.

RESCUE would also like to know how the Council proposes to discharge its ongoing responsibilities for the curation of the Museum archives and exhibits and maintaining access to researchers in the future, if the Museum is closed.

There is enormous current public interest in history and archaeology, as evidenced by the growing number of active members of local history and archaeological societies. The cultural sector is an important part of the international tourist industry and it is widely acknowledged that British museums and galleries hold collections which attract a significant number of visitors to this country. Given these facts, RESCUE would suggest that the closure of the Museum and Headstone Manor complex is shortsighted, and far from helping to meet budget savings, will take money out of the local economy, costing the Council money.

RESCUE asks Harrow Council to maintain this valuable asset for the people of Harrow and not to risk the economic loss that would result from its closure, including the loss of considerable HLF grant funding.





[REDACTED]  
Harrow LSCB  
Harrow Civic Centre  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, South Wing  
Station Road, Harrow  
HA1 2UL

**Tel: 020 8424 1147**

Councillor David Perry  
The Leader of the Council  
Harrow Council  
Harrow

5<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Councillor Perry

I am writing on behalf of Harrow's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to respond to the Harrow Council "Take Part" public consultation.

The LSCB has been in an interim period between the Chairmanships of Deborah Lightfoot and Chris Hogan and so the Board agreed that I would write on its behalf to outline our concerns about some aspects of the proposed cuts in service. The new Chair has had sight of this letter and has agreed to its contents.

As you will be aware, Harrow LSCB is a statutory body and one of its roles is to act to highlight issues that impact on the safeguarding of children and young people in Harrow. We appreciate that the Council has some very difficult choices to make and that no reduction in service is an easy choice. However, the Board is very concerned about the impact that some of the suggestions will have on potentially vulnerable children and young people.

We wish to highlight the proposals of:

- Close or reduce some of the Council's Early Support services to families, including Children's Centres
- Reduce the short respite breaks to children and carers

The impact of possible closures of some Children's Centres would, we feel, be detrimental to the future outcomes for children. Early intervention activities, as are provided at Children's Centres, are strongly evidence based as being effective interventions for children. Children's Centres have been a place of provision of multi-agency services in the borough for many years and have provided support for vulnerable families from pre-birth to early years. These centres are, we believe, essential in the work that partners undertake to fulfil one of the



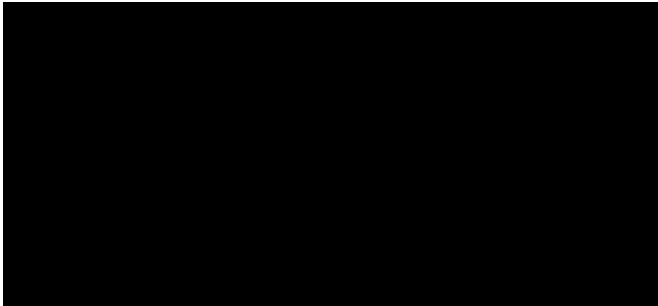
Health and Wellbeing's priorities; namely supporting parents and the community to protect children and maximise their life chances.

The Board is also concerned that it will be increasingly difficult for Children's Services to provide their statutory functions without the Children's Centre settings. Service provision is likely to be stigmatising and isolating for these families. We strongly feel that it would be counter-productive to minimise these early support services and we urge the Council to reconsider these proposals.

The provision of short respite breaks to children and their carers can often be a fundamental element in the support of these vulnerable families. Professionals know that these breaks can often encourage families to maintain a home environment for children with challenging circumstances. Without a good provision of respite the Board is concerned that this may result in more costly and less desirable provisions such as looked after placements.

Harrow LSCB feels that the current Council proposals unfairly impact on children and young people and would urge the Council to work with the Board to consider how the difficult decisions that are to be made could be made with the children of borough at the centre.

Yours sincerely



[REDACTED]

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29<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

Anne Whitehead, Council Member  
Take Part

Freepost PO Box 730  
Harrow Council Civic 1  
Station Road,  
Harrow HA1 2XY.

Dear Anne Whitehead

**Re: Proposed closure of Harrow Arts Centre**

Whilst I am not a resident of Harrow I am very involved in the Harrow Arts Centre. I am a qualified Level 3 teacher and national trainer of The Keep Fit Association and as such have been teaching classes at HAC well before Harrow Council took over HAC. Not only do I teach private classes I also made a deliberate decision to become part of the Adult Education at HAC to promote classes and wellbeing of local people. Around 30-40 people come to my classes every week enjoying the exercise and dance movements, coming together for social interaction and "getting out of the house"!

As such, I believe I am contributing to the wellbeing of local people and HAC is a hub for these activities. From the smallest children to the mature adults there are opportunities and activities taking place in every room at the centre. It is a vibrant, lively place and closing it would destroy this community. Have a look at the brochures, the classes that are on offer, U3A has (I believe) over 100 regular events. Have a look how engaged the children are from 3-years upwards, the commitment of teachers, helpers and carers. I cannot see how you could set up an alternative venue to accommodate all these activities, let alone re-create the sense of community which are generated by these lovely buildings.

Please reconsider and save the Harrow Arts Centre.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

7<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Dear Sirs,

**Response to Take Part – budget consultation questionnaire.**

The Community Voice was established in 1990. Its' members are residents in Harrow, Hillingdon and South West Herts. At its monthly meeting on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November it was unanimously agreed that Community Voice write to Harrow Council about the proposed options for the first round of budget cuts.

Community Voice is concerned about the scale of budget reductions envisaged. It would wish to encourage Harrow Council to follow the example of Harrow CCG and to challenge the basis of their allocation. Progress with getting a fairer allocation of funding to provide for the population now served would in turn impact on the scale and timescale for the cuts currently envisaged over the next four years.

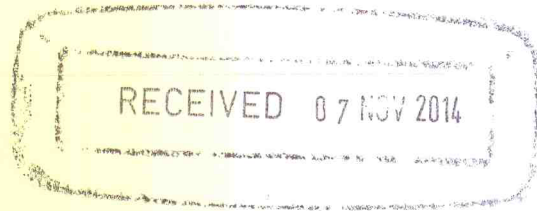
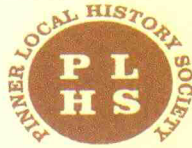
Turning to the questions within the consultation

- We would prioritise (Q4)
  - safeguarding support for the vulnerable and disadvantaged within Harrow
  - bringing together health and social care services
  - support to carers.
- Of the proposed cuts the following are likely to have the biggest impact on our Harrow members/local community. (Q6)
  - Cutting support to older and disabled people under the supporting people programme. (eg shopmobility)
  - Cutting the funding provided to the voluntary sector
  - Reduction of early support services to families, including children's centres
  - Removal of the Friday and Saturday night noise nuisance response service
  - Switching off /reduction in hours of street lighting.

Harrow has long stressed its' support for enterprise and we would like the Council to consider innovative ways of raising more income - including from its existing assets such as Harrow Museum. Finally we would urge the Council to consider additional ways to reduce expenditure which does not directly impact on services provided to Harrow residents. (eg the reduction in allowances paid to Councillors).

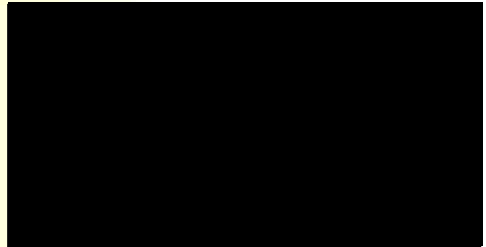
We would like to be involved in further consultations on budget cuts.

Yours sincerely,



# **PINNER LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

**Registered Charity No. 285842**



The Rt. Hon. Gareth Thomas, MP *(Harrow West)*  
House of Commons  
Westminster,  
London SW1A 0AA

5.11.2014

Dear Mr Thomas,

## **Harrow Local History Collection at the Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre**

Pinner Local History Society was founded in 1972 in response to interest in local history and has been active in promoting continued interest. We have produced some thirty publications on various aspects of our local history, and contributed these, and other items to the **Harrow Local History Collection**. The Collection comprises a multitude of archives, illustrations and research, and has been of invaluable use to our members. We know it to have been equally invaluable to students, schoolchildren and other researchers.

This society is particularly troubled by the possible closure of the Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre, referred to in the current consultation about cuts to local services, because the Centre currently includes the Harrow Local History Collection, to which the public has access under certain conditions. We have been unable to discover whether, if the Museum and Heritage Centre is closed, this collection will be kept open for public access, or even whether it will be dispersed. This is not at all clear from the consultation questionnaire 'Take Part'.

Is it necessary to state that a cultural resource such as the Harrow archives and related material is essential to the present and future education of the people and students of Harrow? How can they study the history of Harrow without this vital facility? It provides the straw for their bricks.

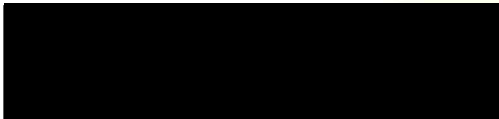
As one of Harrow's foremost local history societies, Pinner Local History Society is alarmed that there is no assurance that this important and publicly valuable collection will remain in being and available. We wish to place our alarm on record.

We should be most grateful for your response to the question of whether firm assurances can be given about the protection and accessibility to the public of the Harrow Local History Collection.

We should welcome your comments, and any information you may be able to obtain for us.

We have also written to Nicholas Hurd, MP for Northwood and Pinner, Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East, and Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder, London Borough of Harrow.

Yours sincerely,

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**From:** THOMAS, Gareth R  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed cuts to Harrow Council Budgets  
**Attachments:** letter to council re proposed cuts..doc

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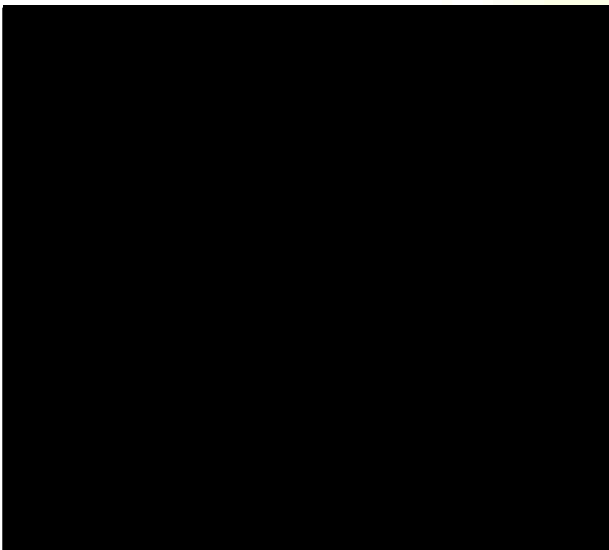
**Sent:** 07 November 2014 09:03

**To:** david.perry@harrow.gov.uk; margaret.davine@harrow.gov.uk; paul.najsarek@harrow.gov.uk

**Cc:** THOMAS, Gareth R; BLACKMAN, Bob; HURD, Nick

**Subject:** Proposed cuts to Harrow Council Budgets

Please find attached a letter from our Governing Body who are concerned about some of the proposed cuts to Children's services.





5<sup>th</sup> November 2014

For the attention of

Councillors David Perry Leader of Harrow Council and Margaret Davine Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

Paul Najsarek Acting Head of Paid Services

Cc Gareth Thomas MP, Nick Hurd MP, Bob Blackman MP

Alexandra School's Governing Body would like to voice their concerns over some of the Council's proposals for cuts to its services in the Take Part Consultation.

Alexandra is a Special School for primary children with moderate learning difficulties, many of our children are particularly vulnerable and we are aware that the Labour Group was elected with a mandate to support vulnerable groups within Harrow's residents and this includes a social responsibility for children with Special Educational Needs.

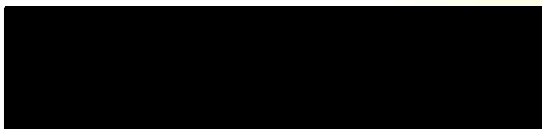
Whilst realising that in the bid to save 75 million over the next three years there will be inevitable cuts to some of Children's Services, we would like to urge the Council to carefully consider the impact of closing Children's Centres. Vulnerable children and their carers, including those with SEN, are supported by Children's Centres. Research at Oxford Brookes shows that early intervention has a cost benefit and for every £1 invested in a child at 2 it will save £10 when they are youths; hence early intervention is crucial in a cost saving exercise.

Our Children's Centres also provide a venue for 80% of midwifery services, health visitors as well as Occupational therapy and Speech and Language therapy. They provide parenting courses so valuable for needy families. We understand that 5000 families use the Centres regularly and 12½ thousand families have visited on at least one occasion.

Caring for a child with additional needs can put a great strain on families and sadly in many cases can lead to a breakdown in relationships. The families of children with Special Needs really benefit from the opportunities respite care and short breaks offer. We note that supporting carers is an area recognised by the council and we would urge you to consider protecting the support that this affords.

We are also aware that there is a proposal to close some of Harrow's libraries. Some of our less well off families are encouraged to use their local library to support their children's literacy skills. Again, an area where there is support for vulnerable groups of Harrow residents.

We are aware that Harrow receives a disproportionately small Government grant despite having areas of deprivation; some of our children come from these areas in Harrow. We applaud any efforts that the Council take to Central Government to defend services to local residents and we have copied this to our local MP Gareth Thomas, as well as Harrow's other MPs Bob Blackman and Nick Hurd.



Draft Response of the Headstone Residents Association (HRA)  
to Harrow Council "Take Part" Consultation on Budget Cuts  
November 2014

The HRA developed from a ratepayers' association formed in the late 1920s and today represents residents in Headstone North and Headstone South and the neighbouring wards of Harrow West and Pinner South. It is non-sectarian and non-political and is run by elected unpaid volunteers.

The Association would like to express its regret that the council is in its current financial position. Generally we would like to be assured that the council is managed efficiently as possible and that savings both in the administration of the Council and in the way that it delivers its services are at their optimal.

We would also like to raise questions about the information provided in the consultation leaflet:

- 1) On pages 4-5 the leaflet refers to "cutting £75 million over 4 years". In plain English, this would seem to mean "cutting a *total* of £75 million over 4 years". Yet the pie chart appears to indicate that 53% of the *annual* discretionary budget must be cut i.e. £75 million *per year* over 4 years. What is the correct figure?
- 2) The suggested service cuts given on pages 8 & 9 provide no indication of the level of savings that each cut could produce; this makes it extremely difficult for our members to provide a meaningful response.

The Association would like to make the following general points:

- \* above all, services to the vulnerable, disabled, and elderly must be preserved
- \* where practical, the Council to move to a community model to deliver services, developing close partnerships with local community groups
- \* the Council to consider, not only financial effects, but effects on community morale
- \* sufficient resources to be retained for enforcement; we must not see a general degradation in our environment

The Association is concerned that any cuts to the support for vulnerable people within both the Children's and Adult services will be counter-productive, leading to more expense both in lost life-opportunities for those individuals and their carers and in knock-on effects in other parts of the caring services (e.g. an additional cause of bed blocking within the NHS).

We see any reduction of children's centres and the reduction or removal of paid work commissioned by the council with the voluntary sector in Harrow as short sighted; it will push the cost of care to other parts of the care services.

The Association would like to see more use of locally owned organisations (local companies or the "Third Sector") to deliver council services in line with "best practice" within regeneration areas. This could not only deliver services at optimal cost but help to circulate wealth within Harrow.

The council could be more active in encouraging local park user groups, allowing them to take on more of the running of the parks whilst the council provide equipment and training to increase the skills of volunteers. This model might also be made to work with some libraries that might otherwise be scheduled to close.

We appreciate that this approach has its difficulties - it requires long-term commitment from volunteers and issues such as maintenance and insurance must be considered - but we would like to cite two instances where we believe Harrow Council could have done more to support a sense of partnership.

- 1) The Kenton Recreation Ground Friends Group renovated a derelict bowls pavilion and removed the overgrowth from the bowls green sufficient for it to be used as an area to sit peaceably. From Harrow Council website dated 22 August 2013:  
[http://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/67/volunteers\\_help\\_harrow\\_to\\_win\\_national\\_park\\_awards](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/67/volunteers_help_harrow_to_win_national_park_awards)  
*"Volunteers are helping Harrow's parks to be recognised as some of the best in the country after the borough scooped five Green Flag Awards.*

...

*"Kenton Recreation Ground, Harrow Recreation Ground, Cannons Park, Pinner Memorial Park and Roxeth Recreation Ground were all honoured after coming up trumps in eight areas including cleanliness, sustainability and conservation. The first four Parks have volunteer 'friends of' groups that help to maintain and promote the parks, and act as a sounding board for Harrow Council by providing feedback and suggesting improvements that matter to users.*

...

*This month, the Friends of Kenton Rec opened a café in a disused bowls clubhouse with the support of Harrow Council and other volunteers, using it as a hub for Park life and looking for volunteers to help out. Eugene said 'I am absolutely delighted that we have won a Green Flag Award. We actually gave the inspectors a preview of the café*



*before it officially opened to impress them and it must have worked. When we found out they were coming we only had a couple of weeks to get it painted and get the hot and cold water working.’ “*

However, when the Friends group told Harrow Council that they wished to use the site permanently as a café, it was closed down and put out for tender as a business.

From Harrow Observer 29 January 2014:

[www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/volunteer-eugene-callinan-sets-out-6644446](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/local-news/volunteer-eugene-callinan-sets-out-6644446)

*“The Friends of Kenton Recreation Ground learned last week that any new tenant of the Old Bowls Club will have to take on responsibility for a full repairing lease, public liability insurance, building-and-contents insurance, utilities and general running expenses. We would be unable to bear that level of expense and so we are now canvassing support for a partnership project with the Council or perhaps a local charity, which would allow us to run the café on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of all park users, as a focal point in the community. We are still hopeful of negotiating better terms with the Council that would allow us to operate the café on a not-for-profit basis.”*

2 The Harrow Rifle Club meets in Bisley House in North Harrow Car Park. Originally they were given a parcel of land at a pepper-corn rent. The club raised the money themselves to build Bisley House. It is purpose built as a rifle range and would be difficult to be used as anything else, yet in a recent rent review the pepper-corn rent was reassessed as a commercial rent that included the value of the building that the club had funded itself. This is not unique across the Borough, several organisations in the voluntary sector have had a similar experience. The rifle club that has existed for over 100 years is bleeding to death and will soon exhaust its reserves and is likely to close.

Cannot the council develop a more flexible approach to support and sustain the level of enthusiasm and sense of partnership amongst these very worthy (but now disillusioned) volunteers?

Finally, we would like the reassurance that those that create a mess are made to pay for the consequences of their actions; fines for dropping litter and prosecution of fly tippers.

We would also like to know that there are sufficient planning enforcement officers available to ensure that the blights of “beds in sheds” and of multiple small leased self-contained flats do not reach the four year limit that allows them to be automatically legitimised by a “Certificate of Lawful Existing Development”.

The Association would like to see a genuine partnership developed with the voluntary sector which recognises the immense contribution that people’s time, freely given, has on the quality of life in Harrow. We would like to see the Council make available to the voluntary sector, spare capacity within its buildings and actively develop closer bonds between officers and the voluntary sector to deliver council services more efficiently.

The HRA strongly supports the Pinner Association’s call for Harrow Council, with support from the three MPs whose constituencies cover the borough, to lobby central government for an increase in the Government Grant for Harrow.

The Association awaits with interest, the outcome of this survey and looks forward to taking part in future consultations.

***Sent On behalf of the residence of Hereford Gardens, Pinner (via email and postal address)***

Dear Take Part team,

Re: proposed council cuts <http://www.harrow.gov.uk/takepart>

The residents of Hereford Gardens, Pinner held a meeting on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and have taken time to consider at length each of your proposed 'options' for the first round of Harrow council cuts. We understand cost savings are an inevitable part of life and are mindful that trade-offs and compromises need to be made. It would be extremely useful to understand for each of the twenty three options, the costs that would be saved by reducing or cutting the service – so we can make a rational decision based on the need for £25 million to be cut.


We object to the councils 'laundry list' approach to tackling cost cuts which are designed to divide up the community over causes to 'champion'. The scheme should be called 'Take **Apart** – help dismantle your Harrow of the future'.

As mentioned above, we have considered each of the options as although we are especially opposed to the non-closure of park gates (as this will impact us directly); we feel strongly that ALL options need consideration.

1. Reduce grass cutting in public spaces

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- The council has a responsibility to cut publicly owned grass in urban / residential areas to ensure that people can use roads and pavements safely. Although environmental issues are of paramount concern, grass cutting is actually carried out for highway safety reasons rather than environmental purposes.
- What is the current schedule for grass cutting in Harrow and the proposed new frequency? (i.e. 30 mph roads /areas cut 3 times a year)
- Will the new frequency ensure the grass lengths are in line with environment and highway safety standards?
- If the specialist machinery required for industrial grass cutting is council owned – what will happen to this?
- If the machinery is hired, can the rates not be renegotiated to make recognise further cost efficiencies; or purchased for longer term savings?
- Has the council considered getting more businesses to sponsor grass verges and green spaces (e.g. roundabout sponsorship)

2. Cut the number of senior managers in the Council

- We welcome the proposed elimination of any roles in the council where a proper evaluation has been conducted and concluded that the role does not bring sufficient value.
  - Further information of why the Chief Executive position has been reinstated (at a cost of £160k) would be appreciated as this seems to be contra the proposed cuts in senior roles.
  - It would be beneficial to introduce a Clerk of Works (CoW) role to represent the interests of the residences of Harrow, to ensure the work being carried out (both in terms of materials and workmanship are fit-for-purpose
- 

and efficient). Residents noted anecdotally of situations where they had observed council employees taking a sub-optimal stance to work.

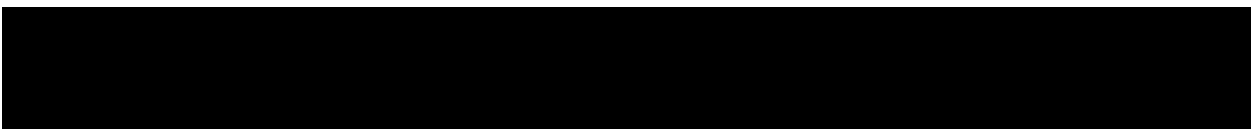
- Consider reducing the employee benefits as an alternative method of cost savings, for example; the mayor's company car, final salary pension schemes.

3. Closure of Emergency Relief Scheme due to removal of Government grant

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- How many Harrow residents benefitted from this scheme in the last year?
- The Emergency Relief scheme was introduced in April 2013 to replace Community Care Grants and Crisis loans in order to provide short term support to people who are experiencing a risk to their health or safety because of an emergency situation. How will the people who need the assistance be supported if the fund is removed?
- Will it be a case of introducing a new 'fund' in its place or moving the money to other alternative relief payment schemes (in which case, surely cost-savings will be further eaten up by having to publicise, promote and raise awareness of the new fund / other schemes)

4. Negotiate with suppliers to reduce the amount they charge the Council

- This should not be a one-off activity in light of needing to cut council expenditure costs. This should be a business-as-usual activity to ensure that the borough is receiving the best service with regards to quality, reliability, speed, flexibility and value for money. Suppliers and contractors should be continuously challenged and evaluated and we are concerned to learn that this isn't the case and only something initiated when purse strings need to be tightened.



5. Cut funding provided to the voluntary sector

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- The voluntary sector plays an essential role in providing vital services to the community and building a sense of community. It is interesting to note that while an option to propose cuts to volunteering is being made; at the same time a move to more community management is being made (in the interest of saving costs).

6. Switch off some street lights or reduce the hours that they are on for

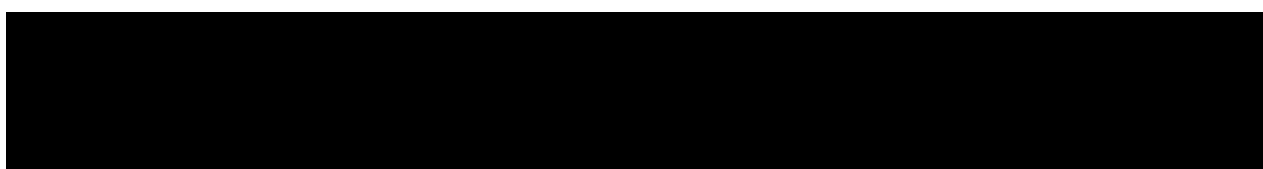
- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving – especially in light of the # of exceptions that would need to be considered:
  - Sites where there are a large number of conflicting traffic movements (e.g. roundabouts) which are on significant routes (generally those lit by columns greater than 6m high)
  - Sites where street lights are installed as a result of accident remedial measures
  - Town Centre areas where there is one or more of the following features:
    - Publicly maintained CCTV
    - High proportion of high security premises (e.g. banks, jewellers)
    - Areas of high crime risk
    - High concentration of people at night such as transport interchanges, nightclubs etc.
  - Main approaches to town centre areas where there is a mix of development between residential and commercial/industrial (e.g. not exclusively residential)
  - Sites where the police can demonstrate that there is likely to be an increase in crime if the lights are switched off during part of the night (or that there will be a decrease in crime if the lights are switched back on)
  - Remote footpaths and alleys linking residential streets
  - Where there is a statutory requirement to provide lighting.
  - Lighting for road signs, traffic bollards etc., will not be affected.
- An AA (Automobile Association) study has shown a reduction in night-time accidents in the last 5 years (down 21.8%); but, where street lights have been switched off or are not present, the fall is just 2.0%,
- Far fewer people have 9-5 jobs and need to be out at later periods of the night.
- A compromise would be to consider alternating lights (one off, one on) during the night.
- As a side, on Hereford Gardens, there is a new LED light (that doesn't work) while an old street light has been retained (which works).

7. Reduce the number of staff answering the phones in Access Harrow. (This means the average waiting time will increase)

- Most of the residents haven't experienced considerable delays in the switchboard staff providing assistance. The notable delays are when they transfer the caller to the appropriate department, where the call can be left unanswered for 20 minutes+ or goes directly to a voicemail where messages are scarcely followed up.
- A more transparent and open Service Level Agreement (SLA) is needed to be shared by the council re: their commitment to respond to the Harrow residents' needs.

8. Removal of the Friday and Saturday night Environment Health noise nuisance response service and a reduction in the size of the team (maintaining minimum service levels for Environmental Health)

- The out-of-hours community safety team, noise service currently only supports Friday and Saturday nights. It is assumed that if a Harrow resident encounters an anti-social neighbour, (potentially with a history of violence) they will be expected to call the police if this service is eliminated by the council.
- Has this cost-saving been discussed with the Harrow borough police force with regards to the impact on them – especially on Friday and Saturday which are typically busy days / nights for the police?



9. Close the Harrow Arts Centre and look for an alternative space for it to continue from 2016 onwards

- What is the proposed 'saving' here?
- If the Harrow Arts Centre is to be rehoused in an alternative venue, there will be cost implications associated with this. Is the rehousing necessary due to its popularity? (Nearly 200,000 people visited HAC in 2011/2012 according to their website). Will the new venue allow more of Harrow's residence to benefit from its services?
- The current venue of the (HAC) is a grade II listed building – what is the council proposing to do with this property? It should remain as part of the borough's heritage and be repurposed in a way which enables the local community to still benefit from it directly – rather than be sold off.

10. Cut the number of council committees

- We welcome the proposed elimination of any council committees that do not provide sufficient, tangible value to the community.

11. Close or reduce some of the Council's early support services to families, including Children's Centres

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- How many Harrow residents benefitted from these services in the last year?
- What are the implications of removing the support?

12. Close the Harrow Museum

- Harrow Museum is located in the historic buildings and grounds of Headstone Manor. The site includes a moated manor house, dating back to 1310 and Grade One listed; a Tithe Barn, built in 1506 and Grade Two listed; and two smaller agricultural buildings. What is the council proposing to do with this property? It should



remain as part of the borough's heritage and be used in a way which enables the local community to benefit from it directly – rather than be sold off.

- The museum has strong community involvement and an active Friends organisation in place. Closing the museum is seems counterintuitive when the council are proposing to make cuts in other areas by increasing community involvement.

13. Reduce the short respite breaks to children and carers as we do now

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- How many Harrow residents benefitted from these services in the last year?
- What are the implications of removing the support? Have more economical breaks / activities been considered to provide respite provision?

14. Remove additional road/pavement sweeping near shopping parades

- 'Additional' road/ pavement sweeping is to be removed; what is the standard sweeping provision frequency and why was the standard provision not considered to be adequate that additional sweeping needed to be introduced?
- Consider making commercial areas and businesses responsible for the cleanliness of the area outside their property.
- Introduce supervised community 'Payback' schemes for individuals given a community sentence.

15. Introduce a separate weekly food waste collection and charging for a fortnightly collection of garden waste
- Concerns that this will encourage fly-tipping that will lead to an increase in costs to curtail and clean sites that have been illegally used.
16. Stop locking park gates, increase biodiversity in parks and cut the number of times litter is picked up. Move to community management of parks
- We welcome the encouragement of biodiversity in flora and fauna; however, this needs to be carefully managed and should not be brandished as a reason to let Harrow's award winning green spaces become mismanaged wastelands.
  - The residents feel a sense of déjà vu, as a proposal was made by the council to stop locking park gates last year which we successfully fought. All the reasons given to oppose this cost-saving suggestion last year still stand ([http://www.twitlonger.com/show/n\\_1rl16gb](http://www.twitlonger.com/show/n_1rl16gb)).
  - The costs that will be saved in not locking the park gates will be simply increase the costs incurred by other organisations and council departments - so it's an inaccurate saving being purported.
  - Getting local residents to 'volunteer' to lock / unlock gates is being considered as a solution. As part of your consideration of this approach; please share what will be done with regards to:
    - Health and Safety - the park close to us (Pinner Village gardens) has no lighting and an easily undetectable pond. If a volunteer is expected to check all visitors have left the park - will suitable lighting be installed in each park? Has a risk assessment been undertaken for each park?
    - Security - Will the 'volunteers' be provided self-defence training and an alarm in instances where park users fail to leave the park when requested?
    - Insurance - will each volunteer be suitably insured? Volunteers can be found legally liable if something goes wrong. Volunteers risk personal injury, or liability arising from the course of their volunteering.
    - Illness / holiday cover - it is quite likely that a number of volunteers will need to be trained up for each park. How will the logistics of a rota be handled?
  - By the time a health and safety, risk assessment has been conducted for each park; self-defence courses and suitable insurance provided and volunteer co-ordination set-up -what cost savings are envisioned?
  - How does the Harrow police force feel about having to potentially increase patrolling the parks and attending to being called out when anti-social behaviour and crime is reported in the parks due to them not being locked?



17. Close some of Harrow's libraries

- Libraries provide powerful social hub for residents – young and old.
- Consider diversifying the use of libraries to support further community activities, for example, reading groups for children and adults (to assist in countering growing illiteracy in this country).
- Consider increasing community involvement in the management of libraries.

18. Cut the costs of maintaining Council buildings

- As with point #4, this shouldn't be a one-off activity in light of needing to cut council costs. This should be a business-as-usual activity to ensure that the borough is being managed and maintained in the most efficient and cost effective way.

19. Cut some support provided to older and disabled people in Harrow under the Supporting People Programme

- What contribution will this make to the required £25 million saving?
- How many Harrow residents benefitted from these services in the last year?
- What are the implications of removing 'some' of the support? Surely the support provided is tailored to the situation and needs of the recipient receiving the assistance; how can it be predetermined what support will / will not be provided in the future?
- The scheme according to the harrow.gov website supports: disabled people, older people, people who are homeless and people fleeing violence from others.  
Why are the cuts only being proposed for a sub-section of the people the programme currently supports?



20. Review Fees and Charges charged by the Council, including parking charges

- We welcome a review of the charges for parking in Harrow. Currently, the parking situation seems to vary greatly across the borough. While many areas (for example, Rayners lane, North Harrow) allow people to park for free for 20 minutes, other areas – like Pinner charge for the entire duration
- We'd welcome a levelling out and introduction of the park free for 20 minutes scheme across the borough to help boost the commercial economy across the borough.

21. Do more online and by email to cut the costs of postage

- We welcome this as one option and route available to residents of Harrow to interact with the council; however, the option to continue to communicate and interact via letter, telephone and in person should be retained.

22. Stop funding community festivals

- Community festivals are paramount in creating a 'community'. The council are proposing to reduce costs by having a residents manage more services directly – in order to facilitate this, it is essential that they continue to assist in creating a sense of community – which festivals play an integral role in doing,
- Consider increasing the involvement of local businesses involved to support and sponsor community events.

23. Share Council services with other boroughs

- This option is welcomed if it leads to increased cost-savings and reduction of duplicated efforts as long as the service levels of support and care provided by the council are not impeded in any way.

We look forward to hearing from you after you carefully consider and make note of our views.

Kind regards,



13<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Cllr. David Perry  
Leader, Harrow Council  
Harrow Council  
Civic Centre  
Harrow  
HA1 1HS

Dear Cllr. Perry  
RE: Take Part Consultation 2014

Harrow Shopmobility was set up in 1994 to support disabled people by providing them with the free loan of wheelchairs and scooters so that they could undertake day to day activities associated with normal living. Our voluntary service provides equipment for use just for a day or it may be kept by the User for 2-3 weeks. A small charge is made for the latter.

As you are aware, we are partly funded by Harrow Council and we are grateful for this support. However, if the Take Part Budget proposals are adopted as they currently stand, the impact on Harrow Shopmobility's service will be to drastically reduce or indeed terminate this vital service altogether.

The importance of this service cannot be stressed enough since Disabled people utilise the service for the following purposes:

- To access hospital and medical appointments
- To access banks, shops, post offices.
- To engage in family occasions such as funerals, weddings, holidays and social functions.
- To integrate with society as a whole through meeting friends, attending clubs and cultural groups.
- Visitors to Harrow from the UK and Overseas use the service - enhancing Harrow's economy and reputation as a welcoming Borough.

The Benefits to the Users are:

- Disabled people achieve independence and their opportunity of choice is widened through enabling them to access goods and services. This promotes their integration within society.
- Disabled people become contributors to the local economy. They are able to access educational and employment opportunities alleviating poverty and contributing to skills in the society.
- Indirect results include the enhanced sense of wellbeing for disabled people through engaging in a normal life and social interaction, rather than being isolated in their homes. This positively impacts on their need for medical services too.

- The majority of Users are elderly but all ages are assisted, for example younger people with Sport injuries using the equipment to attend schools and colleges.

By cutting this service Harrow Council would condemn many Disabled people to isolation and a worthless life. Hard fought gains in equal rights would be washed away in the name of savings.

Harrow Shopmobility accepts that Local Government needs to make some cuts. However, totally cutting funding which supports disabled, mainly elderly, people would be counter -productive in that it would provide greater pressure on Local Government services which are already struggling.

**Harrow Shopmobility is the only organisation providing this unique service in Harrow.**

The people we help come by personal recommendation and public awareness but also by direct reference from the Council Social Services and from Northwick Park Hospital. Frequently it will be an emergency need. Other organisations which previously offered this service, such as the Red Cross, no longer provide a service. We are now the only port of call for disabled people in Harrow who do not have funds to afford their own wheelchairs or have an emergency situation. Closure would be disastrous.

We urge you to seriously consider the importance of continuing to fund this service. You would be very welcome to visit us, don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely

