



CABINET
THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2007
7.30 PM

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3, including the Leader or Deputy Leader)

Chairman: Councillor CHRIS MOTE (Leader of the Council)

Councillors:

1. David Ashton
2. Marilyn Ashton
3. Mrs Camilla Bath
4. Miss Christine Bednell
5. Mrs Kinnear
6. Janet Mote
7. Paul Osborn
8. Mrs Anjana Patel
9. Eric Silver

Issued by the Democratic Services Section,
Legal Services Department

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HARROW COUNCIL
CABINET
THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2007

AGENDA - PART I

PROCEDURAL

1. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:
 - (a) all Members of the Committee, Sub Committee, Panel or Forum;
 - (b) all other Members present in any part of the room or chamber.

2. Minutes
Of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 December 2006 to be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

3. Arrangement of Agenda
To consider whether any of the items listed on the agenda should be considered with the press and public excluded.

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

5. Public Questions
To receive any public questions received in accordance with paragraph 16 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

(Note: Paragraph 16 of the Executive Procedure Rules stipulates that questions will be asked in the order notice of them was received and that there be a time limit of 15 minutes.)

6. Councillor Question Time
Fifteen minutes will be allowed for Members of the Council to ask a Portfolio Holder a question on any matter in relation to which the Executive has powers or duties.

POLICY / CORPORATE ITEMS

7. Forward Plan 1 January - 30 April 2007 (Pages 1 - 10)

8. Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees (if any).
 - (a) Children Looked After - Scrutiny Report and Response to Government Green Paper: (Pages 11 - 48)
Report of the Director of Children's Services

9. Organisational Review (To Follow)
Report of the Acting Chief Executive

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- KEY** 10. Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2007/2008 (Pages 49 - 54)
Report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy

PEOPLE FIRST

- KEY** 11. Outcome of statutory consultations on proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service (Pages 55 - 78)
Report of the Director of Adult Community Care Services
12. LIFT/PFI Project (Pages 79 - 82)
Report of the Director of Strategic Services
13. Corporate Parenting Panel (Pages 83 - 90)
Report of the Director of Children's Services

URBAN LIVING

- KEY** 14. Disposal of Former Allotments at Kenmore Road (Pages 91 - 96)
Report of the Executive Director (Urban Living)
15. "Scores on the Doors" A Pan-London Pilot Scheme to publicise the results of Food Hygiene/Safety Inspection Results (Pages 97 - 102)
Report of the Executive Director (Urban Living)
16. Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service - Re-organisation of Service Structure (Pages 103 - 116)
Report of the Executive Director (Urban Living)

General

17. Any Other Urgent Business
Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

AGENDA - PART II

URBAN LIVING

- KEY** 18. Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) - Outline Business Case (OBC) Approval (Pages 117 - 128)
Report of the Executive Director (Urban Living)

Officers in attendance

Acting Chief Executive
Executive Director (People First)
Executive Director (Urban Living)
Director of Financial and Business Strategy
Director of Legal Services

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London Borough of Harrow

CABINET FORWARD PLAN (1 January 2007 - 30 April 2007)

MONTH:- January

Under the London Borough of Harrow's new Executive arrangements, the Leader must prepare a Forward Plan to cover a period of four months, beginning on the first day of each month. This Plan contains matters which the Leader has reason to believe will be subject of a key decision to be taken by the Executive, Committee of the Executive, individual Members of the Executive, officers, area committees or under joint arrangements in the course of the discharge of an executive function during the period covered by the Plan.

Key Decisions – Definition

A decision related to an executive function which will result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the savings of which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

Or

A decision which is likely to have a significant impact on 2 wards or more. Decisions which will have a significant impact on communities in 1 ward can also be key.

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|---|--|
| JANUARY | | | | | | |
| Street Lighting PFI Procurement | To develop and submit an Outline Business Case to Department of Transport and later PFI Procurement Contract. | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr Mrs Kinnear Andrew Trehern, Executive Director (Urban Living) dave.masters@harrow.gov.uk tel: 020 8424 1580 | - | The Council's Expression of Interest submission to Department of Transport - February 2006 |
| Main Allocation of Grants 2007/8 | Approve the recommendations made by the | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr David Ashton Myfanwy Barrett, | None in relation to this report but Grants officers | None at present. |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|--|---|----------------------|-----------------|--|---|---|
| | Grants Advisory Panel relating to individual reports and approve the overall Grants budget. | | | Director of Financial and Business Strategy parveen.vasdev@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8424 7625 | held two workshops in August 2006 jointly with HAVS to advise the organisations on the grants process. | |
| Outcome of statutory consultation on Meals on Wheels Service | To receive a report on the outcome of the public consultation and to take a decision in relation to the proposals set out in the consultation document. | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr Janet Mote Mark Gillett, Group Manager (Commissioning, Strategic Planning and Health Integration Services) mark.gillett@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8424 1911 | Subject to 12 week statutory consultation. | Consultation documents on Meals on Wheels |
| Section 31 - Integrated Mental Health Services | That (1) the draft Section 31 legal agreement to establish integrated mental health services in Harrow be agreed; (2) officers be instructed to consult with staff and Trades' Unions with a view to achieving a transfer of Council | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr Eric Silver Penny Furness-Smith, Director of Adult Community Care Services lesley.parker@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8424 1022 | A project steering group with senior staff from CNWL and the Council has developed the draft Section 31 Partnership agreement. The Mental Health Partnership is regularly updated about progress having welcomed | None. |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|---------|--|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|
| | <p>staff to Central Northwest London NHS Mental Health Trust through a TUPE arrangement.</p> | | | | <p>the proposal to develop such an agreement.</p> <p>The principle of the creation of a single service with single management supported by a single complaints process is supported and in line with the most recent guidance on management with the NHS and local authorities.</p> <p>The joint commissioning strategy was developed as a participation process with 2 facilitated workshops. A key priority was integrated service with clear and seamless pathways for users.</p> <p>Statutory consultation will be undertaken</p> | |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|---|---|----------------------|-----------------|---|--|---|
| Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2007/08 | To agree the Council Tax Base for 2007/08 | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr David Ashton Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Financial and Business Strategy fern.silverio@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8736 6818 | with staff and trade unions about transfer to CNWL under a TUPE arrangement, if Cabinet agrees this. Statutory consultation will be undertaken if there are any proposals in the future with the integrated service for significant service changes. | The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, SI No. 612 as amended, SI No. 3012 of 2003, LGFA 1992, LGA 2003, Council Resolutions of meetings held on 16/12/03 and 20/10/05, Tax Base Calculation document |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------|--|---|--|
| Implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 | To agree the Implementation Timetable and the Policies decisions to underpin the introduction of Fixed Penalty Notice and related enforcement processes | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr Mrs Kinnear Andrew Trehern, Executive Director (Urban Living) gareth.lywelyn- roberts@harrow.gov .uk tel:020 8736 6230 | Consultation with lead Members and officers, key partner agencies and Council services. Proposals for consultation with residents and stakeholders will be contained within the report. | Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. Guidance on the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 and related legislation. |
| Ex Allotments at Kenmore Road | To approve the disposal of the ex allotments at Kenmore Road | Cabinet | 18 January 2007 | Cllr Chris Mote Philip Loveland- Cooper, Interim Manager (Valuation and Property) (Urban Living) andrew.connell@har row.gov.uk tel:020 8424 1259 | Consultation with ward Members | None. |
| FEBRUARY | | | | | | |
| Capital Programme 2007/8 | Approve the Capital Programme | Cabinet | 15 February 2007 | Cllr David Ashton Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Financial and Business Strategy myfanwy.barrett@ha rrow.gov.uk tel:020 | Internal only | None |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|--|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Revenue Budget 2007/8 and Housing Revenue Account 2007/8 | To recommend the Revenue Budget and approve the Housing Revenue Account | Cabinet Council | 15 February 2007 22 February 2007 | 8420 9269 Cllr David Ashton Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Financial and Business Strategy myfanwy.barrett@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8420 9269 | Internal only | None |
| LMS Formula Changes | To agree the schools funding formula | Cabinet | 15 February 2007 | Cllrs David Ashton and Janet Mote Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Financial and Business Strategy paula.foulds@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8424 1140 | Schools Forum and all schools | Letters and guidance from DfES |
| Prudential Indicators 2007/8 | To approve the prudential indicators | Cabinet | 15 February 2007 | Cllr David Ashton Myfanwy Barrett, Director of Financial and Business Strategy myfanwy.barrett@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8420 9269 | None | None |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet Member/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|---|---|----------------------|------------------|--|--|---|
| Extended Schools Strategy | Approve the strategy | Cabinet | 15 February 2007 | Cllr Janet Mote Javed Khan, Director of Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services kashmir.takhar@harrow.gov.uk tel: 020 8420 9332 | Period of consultation will have taken place during an 8 week period before the report is presented to Cabinet. | None |
| MARCH | | | | | | |
| Determination of Admission Arrangements 2008/09 | To determine the admission arrangements to apply to Harrow community primary and high schools for the 2008/09 academic year, taking into account the recommendations of the Harrow Admissions Forum | Cabinet | 15 March 2007 | Cllr Janet Mote Madeleine Hitchens madeleine.hitchens@harrow.gov.uk tel:020 8424 1398 | Copies of proposed schemes of co-ordination, the current admission arrangements, plus details of the proposals from the Harrow Admissions Forum were circulated to all Harrow schools, all other admission authorities in the relevant area and neighbouring Local Authorities as required under the Education (Determination of Admission | Cabinet report - 6 April 2006 - Determination of Admission Arrangements for 2007/2008 |

| Subject | Nature of decision | Decision making body | Decision date | Cabinet/Lead officer | Consultation required | Background Documents |
|---|---|----------------------|---------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | Arrangements) Regulations 1999. In addition, consultation specifically n the sibling link was undertaken through the Harrow People magazine and the full consultation report was posted on the Harrow Council website. | |
| APRIL | | | | | | |
| Harrow's Integrated Property Services Partnership | To receive and agree the recommendations of the HIPSP project board and appoint the property partnership contractor/s | Cabinet | 19 April 2007 | Cllr Chris Mote Eddie Collier, Interim Head (Property and Facilities Services) (Urban Living) eddie.collier@harro w.gov.uk tel:020 8424 7670 | Details of the project consultation process will be contained within the report | Harrow's Integrated Property Services Partnership report to Cabinet - 6/4/06 |

If you have comments on any of the issues raised in the Forward Plan please contact the lead officer whose details are indicated. Alternatively contact Alison Atherton, Senior Professional Democratic Services (Corporate) on telephone no. 020 8424 1266 or by email: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk

CONTACT DETAILS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

| Portfolio | Councillor | Address | Telephone no. | Email |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------|--|
| Strategic Overview, External Affairs and Property | Chris Mote | Riverside Cottage 15 Eastcote Road Pinner HA5 1EA | 020 8868 0315 | Chris.Mote@harrow.gov.uk |
| Finance and Business Matters | David Ashton | Chestnut Cottage Tanglewood Close Stanmore HA7 3JA | 020 8950 7977 | djashton@hotmail.com |
| Planning, Development and Enterprise | Marilyn Ashton | Chestnut Cottage Tanglewood Close Stanmore HA7 3JA | 020 8950 7977 | marilynashton@hotmail.com |
| Housing | Camilla Bath | Shelleys 14 Holland Walk STANMORE HA7 3AL | 020 8954 3921 | Camilla.Bath@harrow.gov.uk |
| Lifelong Learning, Cultural Services and Issues facing Older People | Christine Bednell | 56 St. Edmunds Drive Stanmore HA7 2AU | 020 8427 5047 | Cbednell@aol.com |
| Urban Living – Community Safety and Public Realm | Eileen Kinnear | 12 Angel Road Harrow HA1 1JY | 020 8861 4775 | Eileen.Kinnear@harrow.gov.uk |
| People First – Children's Services | Janet Mote | Riverside Cottage 15 Eastcote Road Pinner HA5 1EA | 020 8868 0315 | Janet.Mote@harrow.gov.uk |

| Portfolio | Councillor | Address | Telephone no. | Email |
|---|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Legal Services and Issues facing young people | Paul Osborn | 2 Vaughan Road Harrow HA1 4EE | Mob – 07786 968657 Bus – 020 7463 6422 | Paul.Osborn@harrow.gov.uk |
| Community Development | Anjana Patel | 187 The Ridgeway North Harrow HA2 7DE | 07946 586017 | Anjana.Patel@harrow.gov.uk |
| Adult Community Care Services and Issues facing people with special needs | Eric Silver | 6 Grantham Close Edgware HA8 8DL | 07812 405560 | esi1023321@aol.com |

| | |
|--|---|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | Children Looked After – Scrutiny report and response to Government Green Paper |
| Key Decision: (Executive-side only) | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Paul Clark – Director of Children’s Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Janet Mote |
| Exempt: | Public |
| Enclosures: | Appendix A: Mike Stein writing in the Guardian, December 6 2006 Appendix B – Report considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee Appendix C – Reference from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to consider the recommendations of scrutiny, the responses of the consultation to the Green Paper and endorse the scrutiny proposals and agree the Portfolio holder response to the consultation.

Purpose

This report informs cabinet of the work of Children’s Scrutiny Panel, the views of young people and officers regarding the Green Paper on Children Looked After and summarises Harrow’s position on these matters.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

Introduction

This report provides a brief outline of the Government's Green Paper Care Matters – Transforming the Lives of Children and Young People in Care.

Published October 2006

It also links the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny sub committee, the Light Touch Review of the Education of Children Looked After published September 2006 and included 2 consultation events held in Harrow to consider and inform our response to the Green Paper.

1. Participation Officers and Children Looked After had a consultation event on the 30th November
2. A multi-agency consultation event involving members, officers, carers, young people, headteachers, police officers and health colleagues was held on the 11th December see

Background

The green paper sets out proposals for actions by a range of agencies and staff to improve the life chances and outcomes for Children Looked After. Over the last few years the achievements, attainments and Life Chances gaps between Children Looked After and rest of the population has been cause for serious concern. The proposals outlined in the Green Paper seek to improve the manner in which the existing services are delivered to this vulnerable group. They propose a range of options for authorities and other agencies to consider and comment on.

The Light Touch Scrutiny considered our services to Children Looked After with regard to educational attainment and achievement. The consultation events focussed mostly upon the proposals in the Green Paper but gave an opportunity for Carers, staff and Councillors and young people to comment on the general principles, activity and outcome that services to Children Looked After should deliver.

The failure of the National system to deliver good outcomes for Children Looked After is rather exaggerated. Many young people come to the Care System from difficult, disruptive and debilitating family backgrounds, it is not possible for a year or two stay in a good foster home or residential unit to balance out the years of difficulties and deprivation that the young person has suffered. However it is fair to say that the Looked After Children system has had and continues to have a number of successes for children. Indeed many children looked after go on to live happy and successful lives. Appendix A is a recent article by Professor Mike Stein setting out the concerns with the green paper argument and also making clear the successes of children looked after across the country.

The bulk of this report sets out in summary the proposals of the green paper, the recommendations of scrutiny group and the commentary of the consultation events together with an update on Harrow's work in this area.

Green Paper on Children Looked After (Government Summary with linked scrutiny and consultation response)

1) The case for reform

Chapter 1 sets out the statistics on the education of children in care. Few children in care attained 5 good GCSEs in 2005 compared with all children, and similar performance gaps exist at all ages both before and after Key Stage 4.

A lot of progress has been made for children over the last decade. There has been an increase of eleven percentage points in the proportion of all young people gaining 5 A*-C GCSEs, and the proportion of young people in education, employment or training by 19 now stands at 87% – the highest it has ever been.

There have also been a range of steps to address directly the problems experienced by children in care, and progress has been made through a number of reforms including:

- Quality Protects in 1998;
- The Care Standards Act 2000;
- The Prime Minister's adoption initiative;
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000;
- The Social Exclusion Unit 2003 report on the Education of Children in Care; and
- The duty in the Children Act 2004 for local authorities to promote the education of children in care.

The outcomes of the 60,000 children in care at any one time have improved in recent years: the proportion gaining 5 A*-C GCSEs has risen from 7% in 2000 to 11% in 2005 and the proportion known to be participating in education, employment or training at age 19 has increased by 8% since 2002, when the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 came into effect. But it is clear that they are not improving at the same rate as those of all children.

Children in care are a group who are especially deserving of our help precisely because they are in care. As their corporate parent the State cannot and must not accept any less for them than we would for our own children.

2) Children on the edge of care

While most of the proposals in this Green Paper are aimed at children who are already in the care of the local authority, it is important also to recognise that many children come in and out of care in a short space of time, and several spend more than one period in care. Chapter 2 looks at the sorts of interventions which can help to prevent children needing to come into care in the first place, and to resettle them with their families after being in care where that is the best option for the child.

This means – in line with reforms of children's services through the Every Child Matters programme – identifying problems early and responding to them quickly by offering sustained, multi-disciplinary support.

Proposals include:

- New research on identifying and responding to neglect;
- Testing out a model of intensive whole family therapy which aims to keep families together where possible;

- Improving the links between adults' and children's services in order to ensure that professionals working with either group see the family as a whole; and
- Creating a Centre of Excellence for Children's and Families Services in order to identify and spread evidence-based solutions to the problems experienced by families whose children are on the edge of care.

Chapter 2 also launches a national debate on the future of care. The Green Paper will explore who care is for, whether there are any groups of children for whom care is not an appropriate response, and what the population of children in care should look like in the future.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Harrow has produced a "Research Handbook for Social Workers", and are working on a follow-up that focuses on the latest evidence around neglect.
- Harrow has recently carried out a full review of family support services across the borough. The development of nine Children's Centres in Harrow will provide a range of flexible family support services at the point of need and in the child's locality. There will be new targeted and specialised family support services in social care, with a phased integration beginning in November. This will all be based strongly on the benefits of early intervention.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommendations

- Information that can identify children who are at risk of being taken into care should be given special attention and monitored regularly with the aim of this Council supporting these children and their families through preventative work. As this covers a spectrum of issues across children's services, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee should consider this matter for its future work programme.

Harrow consultation event comments

- We welcome the support for Family Group Conferences, particularly on children on the verge of care.
- However, further detail would be welcome in relation to early intervention and exploration of how the Government can invest in preventative work.
- Identifying the causes of neglect may be better served through drawing on existing research rather than commissioning new research into this area.
- Disseminating best practice is critical. However, a new centre may not necessarily be the best route.
- Harrow has developed work based seminars and discussions to support evidence based practice.
- We would welcome nationally led briefings to support practice in this respect.
- Consideration can be given to the use of aide memoirs as work is recorded and planned by way of the integrated Children System.

3) The role of the corporate parent

Children have told the government that the lack of a consistent adult in their lives is a major and harmful feature of being in care. Chapter 3 sets out in detail how the corporate parenting role should be carried out in order to address this gap.

Proposals include:

- Exploring the feasibility of piloting new independent ‘social care practices’, small independent groups of social workers who contract with the local authority to provide services to children in care;
- Piloting the use of individual budgets for each child in care to be held by their lead professional – the social worker;
- Clarity over the role and use of care plans; and
- A revitalisation of the independent visitor scheme in order to provide ‘independent advocates’ for children in care.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Care plans are scrutinised at both the Child Care and Permanency Tracking Panels. Harrow has a very good record of Children Looked After participating at their reviews. The Independent Reviewing Officers monitor the effectiveness of the Care Plans and ensure that the views of Children Looked After are considered through the reviewing process.
- Harrow is well placed to meet lead professional and social worker requirements, with a very good performance history of allocating a qualified social worker to all Children Looked After.
- The Harrow Corporate Parenting Group was established in its current format in 2002. However, as this was an unconstituted body with no advisory function, Elected Members were of the view that the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel as an advisory panel would publicly demonstrate the Council’s commitment to fulfil its Corporate Parenting role. It would also place the Panel formally on the Executive side, and differentiate it clearly from the Scrutiny function.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommendations

- That each political group ensures that every member of its group attends at least one LAC event per year to ensure they remain in touch with looked after children and young people and in fulfilling their responsibilities as corporate parents.
- That the Member Development Panel organises a seminar on corporate parenting for the current intake of councillors, and considers the valuable input that the Corporate Parenting Group can play in this training.

Harrow consultation event comments

- The inspection of CLA education should not increase the burden on councils.
- A move to an “independent practice” would create an additional move for the child.
- In addition, the logistics involved and how case accountability can be maintained may prohibit a move to an “independent practice”.
- Evidence does not support the view that independent agencies are more able to recruit and retain permanent staff.
- We would welcome further analysis around how social care staff in particular can be attracted to permanent positions within Local Authorities to offset competition from Independent Agencies.
- We do question how the budget holding lead professional model can deal with issues of

4) Better placements

Evidence shows that frequent moves between care placements have a drastic effect on the ability of children and young people to succeed both in education and in other areas of their lives. Currently children in care are moved between placements far too frequently.

Chapter 4 sets out proposals radically to reform the placements system, improving the number and quality of foster carers and ensuring that children are only placed in residential children's homes which meet high standards of care.

Proposals include:

- Introducing a tiered framework of placements to respond to different levels of need, underpinned by a new qualifications framework, fee structure and national minimum standards;
- Piloting for younger children the use of intensive foster care with multi-agency support;
- Improving the recruitment of foster carers through specially-tailored recruitment campaigns;
- Extending the use of specialist foster care for children with complex needs; and
- Introducing new regional commissioning units to secure better value for money and introduce placement choice for children.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Harrow has always acknowledged choice as a key factor in placement stability, with placement officers scoping a wide range of alternatives for each child. Harrow is in the process of building up its range of in house fostering provision to meet the needs of CLA, which will sit alongside our in house residential units and range of independent providers to ensure the best alternatives for every Harrow child.
- Out-of-authority placements are tightly managed at Group Manager level, and are only ever used if capacity does not exist locally. We are also reviewing all current out-of-authority placements to determine whether they meet the child's long term care needs.
- Harrow has engaged the services of an independent PR company and a foster care recruitment campaign is well underway.

Harrow consultation event comments

- Green Paper proposals and guidance to address the shortfall of places would be welcomed.
- We would welcome further guidance on how to develop the remit of regional initiatives such as the London Consortium in order to recruit and retain a high quality pool of local carers.
- We would welcome greater emphasis on meeting the needs of Children with Disabilities.
- We would welcome greater consideration around how best to review the needs of children who are in 52 week residential schools as well as those children who are living away from home for long periods.
- It is anticipated that there will be a resource issue, but it is important that this cohort is reviewed independently of line management.

5) A first class education

While the experiences they have in their placement are critical to children in care, the school environment and the way in which teachers and other school staff work with them are also vital to their chances of success. But many children in care currently have a poor

experience of school: they tend to be in lower performing schools, be moved round between schools too often, and receive insufficient support within school to flourish.

Chapter 5 sets out how the government will work with local authorities as corporate parents and with schools to secure the very best education for these children. Every child in care should be in a good school, and be given the support they need to make the most of being in that school. The government is committed to ensure that children in care also fare well in the further education system.

Proposals include:

- A 'virtual headteacher' in every local area responsible for driving up the performance of schools in relation to children in care;
- Providing local authorities with the power to direct schools to admit children in care, even where the school is fully subscribed;
- An enhanced entitlement to free school transport to ensure that where children do move placement they do not necessarily also need to change school;
- Better support in school to prevent exclusions of children in care; and
- A dedicated budget for each social worker to spend on improving the educational experience of every child in care.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Although there is currently no formal policy to place Children Looked After in the very best schools, Harrow is fortunate that so many of its schools are classified as top performing. Indeed, a recent evaluation from the Gatsby project showed that even where children are not in the very best, they are still receiving very good pastoral support – at times better than those in the top schools.
- Harrow has produced a "Compact" to reduce the rate of exclusions, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, signed by representatives of the Council, PCT, Police, Councillors, Head Teachers and Governors. This has been very successful.
- The Project Manager of the Gatsby Project has performed a similar role to that of "virtual headteacher" in Harrow for several years – the introduction of a formal role would empower this work further. Proposals for the nomination to the post are in hand.
- Under the Local Public Service Agreement of 2004, a range of initiatives were carried out, including the payment of bursaries to Harrow schools to support Children Looked After.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommendations

- That the list of all teachers and governors in the borough with designated responsibilities for LAC within their schools includes details of peers who can be contacted to share advice and experience. This development is practical, feasible and affordable and could tie in with the training already provided to support these roles.

Harrow consultation event comments

- Directing schools to take a child in care are helpful, but guidance is essential to support both the school and the child to ensure a successful transition and to deal with problems in order to minimise the risk of exclusions.
- We would welcome consideration to schools being included under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 "statutory guidance on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children in care"
- The proposed £500 per year grant to each child in care must be new money, not a diversion of the child's mainstream support in school through standard DSG.
- The creation of a virtual headteacher is a helpful development but must be costed as is the provision of free school transport.

6) Life outside school

The Green Paper is not only about the part which education and social services have to play in improving the lives of children and young people. It is truly a cross-Government agenda. Taking as its starting point the aim of securing for children in care the kind of happy, fulfilled childhood which we would want for our own children, the Green Paper also has a range of proposals for ensuring that children in care access all the other types of positive activities and support which children generally tend to enjoy.

Proposals include:

- Encouraging local authorities to provide free access for children in care to all their facilities including leisure centres, sports grounds and youth clubs;
- A new model of comprehensive health provision for each child in care;
- Better training for a range of professionals including paediatricians on how to work with children in care;
- Improved access for children in care and their foster parents to Children's Centre provision;
- Enhanced opportunities for them to participate in stimulating and rewarding personal development activities and volunteering.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Harrow has produced a "Resource Directory" for all parents in the borough, hard copies of which have been sent to all foster carers. This sets out a variety of support and activities available for young people in Harrow.
- Harrow has a concessionary leisure pass for Children Looked After and foster carers' own children to use the leisure centre and Bannisters Sports Centre. The library service have also removed penalties for overdue books borrowed by Children Looked After and foster carers' own children. Harrow has also run a variety of free pilot sport and leisure events for Children Looked After, including dance and trampolining projects.
- Children and young people in care have opportunities to participate in a range of artistic and cultural activities. Indeed, the "Journey Around My World" project was highlighted in the Green Paper as an example of best practice and, together with the "All Change for Harrow", was shortlisted for the national Children and Young People's Services awards.
- Harrow has a designated nurse for Children Looked After in post.
- 82.1% of Children Looked After have up to date health assessments and 86.9% have up to date dental checks.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee recommendations

- That this authority continues rewarding LAC for their achievements and that the views of LAC are sought in exploring the best ways to celebrate these successes in an awards ceremony – whether an inclusive event for all children and young people or an event especially for LAC. The Review Group recommends that following this consultation a costed proposal is developed on the options for such an event, including details on funding options (e.g. corporate sponsorship). Work on Youth Achievement Award ceremony is underway.

Harrow consultation event comments

- We would welcome further guidance around how the different agencies can cooperate to ensure robust allocation of resources to meet all the health needs of children are looked after.
- We would welcome guidance on how best to meet the health needs, and in particular, the mental health needs of children looked after who are in transience or placed in other LAs,
- The provision of free access to leisure and other facilities for children in care are welcomed but will have to be costed.
- "Soft targets" can be encouraged within the Health Plan of each child looked after, which are owned by relevant professionals and the child

7) The transition to adult life

We know that the long-term outcomes of many people who were in care as children are distressing: care leavers are overrepresented in some of our most vulnerable groups of adults including young parents, prisoners, and the homeless. They are also under-represented in further and higher education, and the proportion of young people leaving care aged 19 without any form of purposeful activity such as employment, training or education is much higher than that of their peers.

This Green Paper signals a turning point in the way young people in care are treated as they grow older. The government wants to abandon a system where young people are forced to leave care as early as age 16. They want an approach which continues to support them as long as they need it, which ceases to talk about 'leaving care' and instead ensures that young people move on in a gradual, phased and above all prepared way.

Proposals include:

- Piloting a veto for young people over any decisions about moving on from care before they turn 18;
- Piloting allowing young people to continue to live with foster carers up to the age of 21, receiving the support they need to continue in education;
- Providing a top-up to the Child Trust Funds of young people in care;
- Creating more supported accommodation for young people; and
- Introducing a national bursary for young people in care going to university.

Work underway in Harrow

- Young people "Leaving Care" can remain with their foster carers.

Harrow consultation event comments

- Allowing young people to remain with their foster families up until the age of 21 is an ideal, which needs to be considered if children looked after are to be treated as "our own". However, there are substantial resources associated with proposals for a veto around leaving care and extending foster care up to 21.
- Similarly, a top up of the child trust fund and the national bursary are commendable, but Local Authorities cannot bear the brunt of the cost.
- Children looked after do not have the same "back up" as other children going to university. Consideration is important around grants rather than loans and on going support from a named professional.

8) Making the system work

The government is confident that the proposals set out in this Green Paper will deliver a step change in the outcomes of children in care. But as the corporate parent of children in care, we cannot rely on expectations alone: we need to take decisive action in instances of failure. Chapter 8 sets out a new accountability framework which works with the grain of the forthcoming Local Government White Paper to ensure that failure for this group of vulnerable children is identified and addressed.

Proposals include:

- Asking Ofsted to carry out a regular inspection of how each local authority is meeting the educational needs of children in care;

- Introducing an annual national stock-take by Ministers of the progress of children in care;
- Expecting every local authority to set up a 'children in care council';
- Making Independent Reviewing Officers more independent; and
- Making the education of children in care one of the DfES's key national priorities for local government.

Work already under way in Harrow

- Harrow has an established "Young Voices" group for Children Looked After to influence decisions relevant to their care. This group have attended Corporate Parenting Meetings with Members, and also formed part of a group of young people who presented the Young People's Participation Strategy to Cabinet.
- Children Looked After, together with other children and young people, are also given the opportunity to affect wider decision making through participating in "APSIG" events with senior Councillors and Council decision makers.

Harrow consultation event comments

- The proposals for local authorities intervening around the poor performance of schools for children in care will be welcomed if it results in closer cooperation and strategies for improving the outcomes of all children, including children looked after.
- The review of the role and independence of the Independent Reviewing Officer will be welcomed.
- However, it is important to consider how the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer can be strengthened within the present arrangements in the first instance.
- The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer should be considered in relation to the role of the Independent Advocate to ensure that the roles complement each other and ultimately "champion" the needs of the child.

Recommendations

- Cabinet endorse the proposals of the Children and Young Person's Scrutiny sub committee however bearing in mind the extensive workload of councilors, Cabinet is recommended to encourage rather than ensure "members of each political group to attend Looked After Children Events" (recommendation 3)
- Cabinet authorize the Portfolio holder to respond to the Green paper in line with the scrutiny and consultation responses.

Equalities Impact Consideration

The proposals from scrutiny will assist all Harrow's diverse groups in improving their achievement if they become looked after.

The consultation group included children and young people representative of the borough's diverse population.

Financial considerations

The scrutiny proposals can be delivered within existing resources. The response to the Green paper will make plain the need for adequate funding.

Legal considerations

The proposals do not require any legal advice to implement.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act Considerations

The scrutiny proposals will support our work to reduce offending.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name: ...Paula Foulds..... |
| | | Date: 20.12.06..... |
| Monitoring Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name: ...Helen White..... |
| | | Date:21.12.06..... |

Contact: Paul Clark, Director of Children’s Services, tel 020 8424 1356

Background Papers:

Green Paper – Care Matters

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8424 1356

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Consultation | YES |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | E – Empowering Harrow Youtn |

Appendix A: Mike Stein writing in the Guardian, December 6 2006

Wrong turn

The consensus that children in care are failing, and that the system is to blame, is plain wrong

Mike Stein

Wednesday December 6, 2006

[The Guardian](#)

In his foreword to the government green paper, Care Matters, the education and skills secretary, Alan Johnson, refers to the "insecurity, ill health, lack of fulfilment", as well as the educational underachievement, of many of the 60,000 children who are in care. The week before the publication of the green paper, a Centre for Policy Studies report talked about how we are "betraying 60,000 children in care", claiming that "a successful system of care would transform this country, empty a third of our prisons, and halve the number of prostitutes and homeless". And in response to Care Matters, chiefs of local authority and voluntary childcare organisations have been queuing up to endorse the failures of state care.

But the political and professional consensus that the care system is to blame for society's woes is wrong, for five reasons.

First, many of these 60,000 young people come into care for a few weeks or months and return to their parents; 40% return home within six months, a majority within 12 months, and the average length of stay for all young people in care is less than 2.5 years. Their time spent in care represents a very small part of their lives and therefore in no scientific sense could it be causally linked to future outcomes. The education, careers, health and wellbeing of these young people will be far more shaped by what happens to them at home and in their schools and communities. To make a retrospective connection between, for example, a week spent in care as a baby and ending up in prison or homeless is a gross distortion that devalues and stigmatises young people who live in care and those who care for them.

Second, it is only about 10% of the 60,000 who leave care at between 16 and 18 years of age. But among this group most come into care, aged 10 to 15, from very poor economic circumstances and difficult family backgrounds: neglect, poor parenting, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse has often been part of their lives. These circumstances cast a long shadow on their emotional and intellectual development and most have very disrupted educational careers before coming into care. When they enter care, some as late as 13 to 15 years of age, their educational attainment levels are often well behind those of same age young people in the general population. Again, any association between care and outcomes will be flawed unless it recognises the impact of their pre-care experiences.

Third, research studies we have carried out at York University during the last 25 years show that despite their very poor starting points, some care leavers will successfully "move on" from care and achieve fulfilment in their personal lives and careers, while a second group will "survive" quite well, given assistance from skilled leaving-care workers. This leaves a third, highly vulnerable group of young people who have a range of complex mental health needs and will require assistance into and during adulthood.

It is this latter group, representing about 3%-5% of the 60,000 care population, who have become identified in the public and professional consciousness as typical of all young people in the care system, and who are driving the reform agenda.

Improving outcomes

Our research studies at York University do show that these three different pathways are associated with young people's family life, the quality of care they experience, their transitions from care, and the support they receive after care. Improving outcomes requires early interventions and family support; providing better quality care to compensate young people for their damaging pre-care experiences through stability, continuity, as well as assistance to overcome educational deficits; providing more gradual transitions from care to adulthood, and ongoing support, especially to those young people with mental health and complex needs.

Fourth, there is evidence from international research that outcomes get better when young people get older and settle into adulthood, especially those who have had stability and skilled help. After all, youth transitions are by definition a time of change and some disruption.

Fifth, it is unlikely the proposals contained within Care Matters will have any significant impact on outcomes if current measures are used as the only indicator of progress. These outcome measures are crude in three respects: they detach young people in care from their socio-economic backgrounds - the differences in educational attainment are far less when comparisons are made between care leavers and young people from similar backgrounds, and some young people from care do better by being in care, which is not recognised; and they fail to take into account young people's "starting points" on entry to care and the progress they have made in care - again, major achievements in getting back into education, developing leisure interests and vocational skills or becoming a parent, which may improve their self-esteem, often go unacknowledged. They also focus primarily on educational attainment and careers, and separate these from other inter-related dimensions of young people's lives, most importantly their wellbeing.

What is needed is a progress measure to provide a far more rounded view of what is happening to young people at different points in time that could incorporate their views of their wellbeing, as well as that of other important people in their lives. This would recognise their hazardous journey, as well as the efforts of those who have helped them.

In one of our York studies, using such a composite measure of progress, we found that three-quarters of young people leaving care were making progress towards, or had achieved, positive outcomes.

The simplistic view of care as failing 60,000 young people should be confined to the dustbin. Until we introduce a more sophisticated measure of progress we do not know how successful care is - although the indications from research findings in relation to young people who spend longer in care (and therefore care can be said to have some impact on their lives) is far more positive than generally recognised. But care could be better. Just to "survive" or "struggle" with complex needs is not good enough.

The proposals in Care Matters that build on the body of established research findings detailed above are to be welcomed, especially those designed to improve the status, rewards and training of carers, in order to improve stability, quality of care and more gradual transitions from care. But these need to be seen as part of a more comprehensive

response across the life-course of young people, including measures to tackle family problems, social deprivation and poor quality education. Care cannot by itself carry the can.

*· Mike Stein is research professor at York University's social work research and development unit. His book *What Works for Young People Leaving Care?* is available from Barnardo's Books at barnardos.org.uk*

APPENDIX B

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Meeting: | Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee |
| Date: | 18 October 2006 |
| Subject: | Final Report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children |
| Responsible Officer: | Paul Najsarek - Director, People, Performance and Policy |
| Contact Officer: | Nahreen Matlib – Senior Scrutiny Officer |
| Portfolio Holder: | People First |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Status: | Part 1 |

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

1. Note the final report of the light touch review of education of looked after children.
2. Endorse the report's findings and recommendations.
3. Forward the report to Cabinet for consideration at the next available opportunity.

Reason for report

At its last meeting on 27 June 2006, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to establish a group to conduct a light touch review to examine the education of looked after children.

The review group met on two occasions to consider evidence from officers and the People First Portfolio Holder. The final report of the review group is attached.

Benefits

Approval of the report and its recommendations will allow the Sub-Committee to influence the development of provision for looked after children in Harrow's care. In particular, the report addresses fulfilling statutory duties as 'corporate parents' as given by section 52 of the Children Act 2004 and should help inform the authority's preparations for CPA and JAR.

Cost of Proposals

There are no immediate financial implications contained in this report, although some of the recommendations if approved could involve expenditure for Children's Services and Member Development for which funding would need to be identified.

Risks

Not applicable.

Implications if recommendations rejected

1. Scrutiny will be unable to impact upon a statutory responsibility for members and an important area of service provision.
2. Scrutiny will limit the ways in which it influences the preparations for the authority's CPA and JAR.

Section 2: Report

Brief History

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on the local authority in its role as corporate parent to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

At its meeting on 27 June 2006, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee commissioned a light touch review of the education of looked after children in Harrow's care, to report back to its next meeting on 18 October.

The scope of the review examined the way in which the council and its members fulfill the role of corporate parents and in doing so, promoted better understanding of the roles and responsibilities as well as assessing the adequacy of services to looked after children.

Following an initial meeting to set its terms of reference, the Review Group conducted much of its evidence gathering and analysis in an 'online' fashion, culminating in a 'Question and Answer Session' with the People First Portfolio Holder and the Director of Children's Services.

Consultation

Members of the Review Group and officers directly involved its work have been consulted on the findings and recommendations in the report.

Financial Implications

This report is not seeking any additional financial resources. Review expenses will be met from the agreed scrutiny budget for 2006/07 which is £340,400. Of this, £266,050 is paid in salaries and £74,350 is available for projects and other expenditure. There were no further costs of this review, in addition to scrutiny resources (i.e. officer time and printing).

Some of the recommendations if approved could involve expenditure for Children's Services and Member Development for which funding would need to be identified.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

None specific to this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

None specific to this report.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

- Final report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children
- Appendices

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CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 2006/07

LIGHT TOUCH REVIEW OF THE EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN September 2006

REVIEW GROUP:

Councillor Mark Versallion – Review Group Chairman

Councillor Margaret Davine

Councillor Mitzi Green

Councillor Narinder Mudhar

Councillor Sasikala Suresh

Councillor Jeremy Zeid

Mr Alton Bell – Association of Harrow Governing Bodies

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The aim of this committee's scrutiny of the education of Looked After Children is to identify ways in which Harrow Council can improve educational attainment whilst also promoting the better understanding of Members' roles and responsibilities as corporate parents.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee conducted a Light Touch Review from July to September 2006. This review had limited time and resource and so focused its attention on specific areas to ensure value-added recommendations, of which there are five.

Further work in this area would be of benefit to both Looked After Children and Harrow Council's policy development and service delivery. This review provides a good foundation for future investigations.

I would like to thank all the officers and members who participated in this review and my particular thanks to Mr Alton Bell, who represented the Association of Harrow Governing Bodies and who is also a foster carer. I very much appreciate everyone's time and commitment in supporting this committee's work and its recommendations.

Councillor Mark Versallion
Chairman
Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on the local authority in its role as corporate parent to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

At its meeting in June 2006, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee commissioned a light touch review of the education of looked after children in Harrow's care, to report back to its next meeting in October.

The scope of the review examined the way in which the council and its members fulfil the role of corporate parents and in doing so, promoted better understanding of the roles and responsibilities as well as assessing the adequacy of services to looked after children.

Following an initial meeting to set its terms of reference, the Review Group conducted much of its evidence gathering and analysis in an 'online' fashion, culminating in a 'Question and Answer Session' with the People First Portfolio Holder and the Director of Children's Services.

The Review Group makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Information that can identify children who are at risk of being taken into care should be given special attention and monitored regularly with the aim of the Council supporting these children and their families through preventative work. As this covers a spectrum of issues across children's services, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee should consider this matter for inclusion in its future work programme.

Recommendation 2: That this authority continues rewarding LAC for their achievements and that the views of LAC are sought in exploring the best ways to celebrate these successes in an awards ceremony – whether an inclusive event for all children and young people or an event especially for LAC. The Review Group recommends that following this consultation a budgeted proposal is developed on the options for such an event, including details on funding options e.g. corporate sponsorship.

Recommendation 3: The Corporate Parenting Group ensures that every member of the Council attends as many as possible LAC events per year to ensure they remain in touch with looked after children and young people and fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parents.

Recommendation 4: That the list of all teachers and governors in the borough with designated responsibilities for LAC within their schools includes details of peers who can be contacted to share advice and experience. This development is practical, feasible and affordable and could tie in with the training already provided to support these roles.

Recommendation 5: That the Member Development Panel organises a seminar on corporate parenting for the current intake of councillors, and considers the valuable input that the Corporate Parenting Group can play in this training.

BACKGROUND: NATIONAL CONTEXT

Definitions

A 'looked after child' is a child or young person who is living away from home in a setting arranged and supported by the local authority either voluntarily (under s20 of the Children Act 1989¹) or as a result of court proceedings and a care order. They can be of any age from birth to 18 years. Furthermore if they were in care at or after their 16th birthday ('care leavers') the local authority retains the responsibility for them 'as a good parent' until they are 25 years old.

'Corporate parent' refers to the role local authorities have with regard to the children and young people in their care, whereby they are responsible for all aspects of their welfare as if they were a parent.

As education spans more than that received just during school, the duty to promote educational achievement includes under 5's and those leaving care and going on to education, employment or training. Likewise, achievement goes beyond academic achievement as it is recognised that there are many other ways to demonstrate an ability to achieve.

The national picture

Over 61,000 children and young people are looked after at any one time in England². Each year about 90,000 are looked after, 42% of whom return home within six months. A number of studies have concluded that children and young people who are looked after still face serious challenges in their lives and are often disadvantaged as a result, in particular educationally.

In a study published in 2003³, the Social Exclusion Unit identified a range of barriers that prevent looked after children and young people from achieving their educational potential. These included placement instability, time out of school or other learning settings, insufficient help with their education if they get behind, insufficient support and encouragement at home and not enough help with emotional, physical or mental health and wellbeing.

Over the last few years, children's services have increasingly come under the spotlight, not least as a response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry⁴. This has led to the Every Child Matters Green Paper⁵, the Children Act 2004⁶ and the Change for Children Programme⁷, which sets out the agenda for change to achieve the objectives of Every Child Matters.

¹ *The Children Act 1989*, HMSO 1989. This Act gives the basic framework which provides the legal underpinning for all services for children, in particular children and young people in need or in public care.

² *Children Looked After in England*, DfES 2005.

³ *A Better Education for Children in Care*, Social Exclusion Report, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, September 2003.

⁴ Report of an Inquiry by Lord Laming, Department of Health and Home Office, January 2003.

⁵ *Every Child Matters* – Green Paper presented to Parliament, Treasury September 2003.

⁶ *The Children Act 2004*, HMSO 2004. This provides the legal underpinning for *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* – a series of documents that have been published to provide guidance under the Act, to support local authorities and their partners in implementing new statutory duties.

⁷ *Every Child Matters – Change for Children Programme*, DfES 2004.

*Every Child Matters – Change for Children*⁸ sets out the five mutually reinforcing outcomes that are most important to children and young people: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being.

The Children Act 2004

The Children Act 2004 secured Royal Assent on 15 November 2004 and provides the legislative spine on which to build the reform of children’s services in England. This Act sits within and extends the Children Act 1989 and is supported by extensive statutory and good practice guidance.

Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 extends section 22(3)a of the Children Act 1989 (the general duty of local authorities in relation to children looked after by them) as follows:

(3A) the duty of a local authority under subsection (3)(a) to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them includes in particular a duty to promote the child’s educational achievement.

Section 52 of the Act places a duty on the local authority in its role as the corporate parent to promote the educational achievement of looked after children. This will ensure that decisions on issues such as placement and stability support better educational achievement. The statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children and safeguard and promote their welfare came into effect from 1 June 2005.

Local authority roles and responsibilities with regard to s52

In supporting the role and responsibility of corporate parent, there is a wealth of regulations and guidance to accompany the new duties. DfES statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children (December 2005) states that local authorities:

“should be doing at least what any good parent would do to promote their child’s educational aspirations and support their achievements”.

BACKGROUND: LOCAL CONTEXT

Harrow’s Looked After Children

As at 31 July 2006, Harrow’s Children’s Services had lead responsibility for 165 looked after children (LAC), a figure fairly consistent with previous years. 95 of Harrow’s 165 LAC (58%) represent BME groups. The gender split for the LAC is: 101 (61%) are male and 64 (39%) are female. The ages of the LAC in Harrow’s care are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Ages of the looked after children in Harrow’s care

| Age group | Number of children | Percentage of all LAC |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 0-4years | 22 | 13% |
| 5-9years | 17 | 10% |
| 10-15years | 72 | 44% |
| 16-18years | 54 | 33% |

⁸ *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, HM Government 2004. This launches a national programme of change *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* which sets out the action local areas will want to take to ensure that services meet the needs of children, young people and families and what Government will do to support local areas.

Harrow has 19 LAC cases open with the Children with Disabilities team and there are 30 LAC with statements of special educational needs. The allocation of placements of Harrow's LAC is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Placements for looked after children in Harrow's care

| | In Harrow | Out of Borough |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Number of children in foster care | 46 | 28 |
| Number of children in residential care / semi independent living | 49 | 24 |
| Number of children in kinship | 19 | 1 |

Total number of LAC = 167 (figures as at May 2006)

With regard to educational attainment, in 2004, of all Harrow's LAC, 46% left care with no GCSE's and 11.5% achieved five or more Grade C+. In 2005, 58% of all pupils for whom Harrow is responsible left care with no GCSEs, 8.3% achieving five or more Grade C+. The comparative figures for those pupils educated in Harrow are 28.3% and 18.2% respectively.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

In seeking to continuously improve scrutiny in Harrow, scrutiny councillors have recently introduced new ways to undertake their investigations of issues, policies or performance. One of these new ways of working is the light touch review - commissioned by a committee at one meeting (in this case, Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 27 June 2006) to report back to the next (18 October 2006) with either some key findings or recommendations as appropriate. This is particularly pertinent for issues that do not warrant the detailed consideration of an in-depth review, at least not in the first instance.

A light touch review methodology provides new members a good induction to scrutiny, the subject area and also, in this instance, their responsibilities as corporate parents. This is especially timely and relevant given the new legislation. However a light touch review must be more selective in its focus and activities. For example, the Review Group acknowledges that, in part due to the timeframe of this review covering the summer holiday period, it did not have an opportunity to speak directly to children, young people or their participation officers.

The Review Group set its scope⁹ as the following:

- To examine, analyse and make proposals on the way the council and its members fulfil the role of corporate parents to the borough's looked after children, especially with reference to meeting the roles and responsibilities given in Section 52 of the Children Act 2004.
- In doing so, promote better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of corporate parents and assess the adequacy of services to looked after children to inform the council's improvement agenda.

⁹ The scope document and project plan for the Review Group's work are included in the Appendices of this report.

During the course of this review, the Review Group met on two occasions, with the rest of the work conducted 'online' by members and officers. Activities included gathering and examining performance data sets, developing a questioning plan to seek further elaboration on the most pertinent issues and holding a Question and Answer session with the relevant Portfolio Holder and the Director of Children's Services. This latter meeting involved a local school governor and foster carer in the questioning and subsequent discussions. Integral to the process of the Review Group's work was the use of an IDeA/LGA guide¹⁰ as the toolkit for scrutinising this topic area. This draws upon the expertise and knowledge of local authority staff, councillors and young people who have experience of being looked after, and suggests a number of questions by which to explore the most pertinent issues in relation to the new responsibilities under s52 of the Children Act 2004.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE REVIEW

The findings and conclusions from the Review Group's evidence gathering and discussions¹¹ follow by the key areas of responsibilities, as given in the new duty for corporate parents (s52 of the Children's Act 2004). The local authority's progress on serving looked after children and ensuring their educational achievement will contribute to the annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment and will also be subject to in depth scrutiny as part of the Joint Area Review (both in November 2006). The findings from this review should inform this work.

Strategic planning and accountability

Responsibilities: Children's Services Authorities have a duty to publish a 'Children and Young Person's Plan' which should address the specific issue of the need to make steady improvements in the achievements of children and young people who are looked after by the local authority.

Directors of children's services and lead members are, respectively, professionally and politically, responsible for discharging the authority's duties to looked after children and ensuring their educational attainment is improving.

The Portfolio Holder for People First and the Director of Children's Services are agreed that the single **key** aspiration of the authority for the children and young people who are looked after is that they should achieve the educational outcomes as do their peers. LAC represent a disadvantaged group, not because they are in care but because of what has happened in their lives which has led them to be cared for by the local authority.

The Council has recently started using a new Management Information System to manage its performance data. This will allow a more sophisticated interrogation of the information the authority holds on its LAC and their educational attainment. The Review Group is pleased to hear that performance information reports are produced every six weeks and disseminated to senior management (Chief Executive, Directors, Group Managers,

¹⁰ *Show Me How I Matter: A Guide to the Education of Looked After Children*, Improvement and Development Agency and Local Government Association, March 2006.

¹¹ Witnesses questioned by the Review Group over the course of the review: Paul Clark (Director of Children's Services Department), Gail Hancock (GM, Safeguarding and Family Support Group), Councillor Janet Mote (Portfolio Holder, People First) and Paul Wedgbury (GM+ Children and Families Group).

Portfolio Holder) and the relevant information is fed through to frontline staff. Managers meet regularly to monitor performance and identify any arising issues.

Whilst new systems inevitably take time to embed and acclimatise to, the Review Group is heartened that new data analysis is now coming forward, problems highlighted more efficiently and informing policies to improve the educational attainment of LAC more effectively. Further interrogation of new data sets should allow for more in depth analyses capturing the real issues facing the young people we look after in this borough.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee has considered the Harrow Children and Young People's Plan¹² at previous committee meetings. Harrow has a fully integrated Children's Services department and a relatively low number of looked after children, however given the nature of the borough and the changing demographics, new families with specific needs may be entering the borough. Local services need to plan for this and the potential increase in thresholds. Members are keen that children on the borders of risk, in terms of potentially needing local authority care, are considered. Supporting these children and their families is vital so that any future risk can be lessened.

The amount of money available within this borough is low compared to all other boroughs in London however Harrow provides better value for money than suggested by its position in the league table of actual funding. Harrow's Children's Services find that there is a need to concentrate resources on those most in need and this sometimes makes it less easy to be engaged in prevention and early intervention when the focus is on reactive services to ensure the safety and well being of children.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Information that can identify children who are at risk of being taken into care should be given special attention and monitored regularly with the aim of the Council supporting these children and their families through preventative work. As this covers a spectrum of issues across children's services, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee should consider this matter for inclusion in its future work programme.

Involving children and young people

Responsibilities: Every authority should involve children, young people, their carers and parents in planning for, developing and improving services both individually and collectively.

There is a statutory responsibility to ensure that young people's views, wishes and needs are taken into account in decisions about their care and each time their needs are assessed¹³. Formal mechanisms are in place to ensure that this is the case in Harrow and therefore that children and young people are formally involved in discussions about their

¹² A strategic plan by the local authority and its partners (see section 17 of the Act) which is a key element in implementing children's trusts.

¹³ Each LAC has a care plan – a formal plan agreed by all involved of how a child or young person who is looked after will have their needs met – what, when and by whom.

care every six months at the very least. Reviews¹⁴ of each LAC's case involve face-to-face interviews with the young person and this feeds into their Personal Education Plan¹⁵. Furthermore, LAC have contributed to the Council's response to the Every Child Matters consultation.

Efforts are made by the authority to ensure that children and young people have real access to the Director of Children's Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder. The Director meets regularly with groups of LAC, the Youth Councils and School Councils. Through the All Party Special Interest Group on children, a number of decision makers meet regularly with over 100 young people. An illustration of where such access and communication has proved successful is when twice a year the Director meets with the Young Care Leavers to look at their service and debate with them things that could help them improve their future. For example changes have been made in the system of helping young people pass their driving test. Given a limited budget, eligibility criteria needed to be developed and the young people themselves undertook this task, in the process setting rather challenging criteria e.g. 95% attendance for two terms at college before being able to request driving lessons funded by the local authority.

The authority has two participation officers who work with a group of young people in care under the name of Young Voices. This group has produced a DVD on the role of young people in their reviews and a Key Health Facts document for young people.

The Review Group is satisfied that Children's Services is doing a good job in adequately involving children and young people and engaging with them on a practical level.

Supporting educational achievement and aspirations

Responsibilities: The local authority should do at least what any good parent would do to promote their child's educational aspirations and support their achievements.

Currently Harrow's achievements academically for LAC are slightly above the London average but will need to improve dramatically to keep pace with the generally high achievement of children in the borough. This is the focus for Children's Services and especially the new multi-agency team for LAC.

Whilst LAC have a number of complex problems and experiences in life that need specifically addressing, the Review Group equally recognises that their achievements and attainments must be celebrated and rewarded. Harrow has demonstrated this in a number of ways including:

- An Awards Ceremony for Children Looked After by the authority
- An Annual Youth Achievement Awards where young people are nominated by their peers
- A Foster Carers' Award, including awards for children
- A visit to Tate Britain, including a special award from the Portfolio Holder
- The Director of Children's Services writing out to all those taking exams to wish them luck

¹⁴ There is a legal requirement to review a child or young person's care plan after one month, three months and then every six months when they start to live in care.

¹⁵ A personal education plan is a plan for how a young person who is looked after gets their educational needs properly met.

- Providing work experience to individuals to help with their studies e.g. working with the council photographer to complement a Media Studies course

Extra-curricular educational support is also available. This month has seen the start of a new specialist homework club to support LAC, their parents and foster carers – the “Sunshine Project” operates at the Teachers’ Centre and is aimed at primary and junior school children, providing computing facilities to aid their learning. Throughout the summer, LAC are fully integrated into all of Harrow’s summer activities.

The Review Group has learnt that due to budgetary constraints, all awards ceremonies are being merged into one event and therefore there will no longer be a separate event dedicated to LAC. The Review Group has discussed the merits of an inclusive and integrated event for all children and young people regardless of their background, against the need to give young people who have experienced particular hardship or adversity, a special event and a well-deserved ‘pat on the back’. Each approach had its advantages and these should be explored further.

The People First Portfolio Holder has said that from her own experience she has enjoyed these events for LAC, as they present an opportunity to informally meet the young people at a social event - an opportunity that does not often present itself on other occasions. The Portfolio Holder has stated her wish to see these separate events for LAC continue, however she recognises the financial constraints associated with this and therefore the only way forward may be to merge with other events or seek sponsorship to fund the event. It is agreed that the views of LAC should be sought in deciding the best way to proceed with regard to celebrating the success of LAC in the borough.

The Portfolio Holder reiterated that all councillors are corporate parents and so have a responsibility to support LAC, recognise their achievements and thus should be involved in such events.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

That this authority continues rewarding LAC for their achievements. The Review Group recommends that the views of LAC are sought in exploring the best ways to celebrate these successes in an awards ceremony and that a budgeted proposal is developed on the options for such an event, including details on funding options e.g. corporate sponsorship.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Corporate Parenting Group ensures that every member of the Council attends as many as possible LAC events per year to ensure they remain in touch with looked after children and young people and fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parents.

Securing appropriate education

Responsibilities: When children and young people come into public care, allocated social workers, supported by the local authority infrastructure, should ensure that the children have a suitable educational placement that minimises disruption to their education, have a

named lead person responsible for their personal education plan and have the services provided to support that plan within set time periods. Admission policies must reflect the priority given to children and young people who are looked after.

Harrow's admissions criteria give clear priority to LAC in attaining school places. The Review Group is satisfied that the admissions policy is working in this respect and is reassured by the authority's strategy of prevention through early intervention in LAC moving schools i.e. 'managed moves'. However, as noted in Recommendation 1, those children and young people 'on the border' of becoming looked after by the authority must be borne in mind. In some cases, additional work on challenging the attitude of some schools and teachers towards these young people who may sometimes be seen as having challenging additional needs, may need to be undertaken.

Effective personal education plans

Responsibilities: All children and young people who are looked after should have a personal education plan (PEP) whatever their educational circumstances.

PEPs are very important in developing and charting the educational lives of LAC. However, they should not be seen as merely another document to be completed for children and young people but rather as a living document that evolves as the needs and circumstances of the young person changes. LAC themselves can write reports for their PEPs so the PEP is a living document. At the hub of an effective PEP should be allowing the young person to get hold of the educational opportunities they need for their development and personal growth. The Review Group stresses the need to ensure that the quality of PEPs is equally as robust for those young people educated out of borough.

A critical factor in ensuring placement stability is increased multi-agency and multi-disciplinary support to placements. In June 2006¹⁶, Harrow launched its proposal to focus long-term corporate care for LAC through one dedicated LAC team of professionals, and partners were invited to help develop these plans. The social care core is ready with the team manager's post currently advertised. This team will bring together a number of professionals from other agencies and disciplines to manage a LAC 'virtual team' which includes a LAC education officer, Connexions worker, youth worker, LAC nurse, CAMHS worker, drugs and alcohol outreach worker, social worker and an youth offending team outreach worker. The inclusion of an educational psychologist will help ensure that PEPs are education driven. This 'virtual team' will look at issues impacting upon LAC and their carers, focus on LAC life chances and outcomes and replace a number of previous groups/forums. Governance arrangements will mean that this group reports to the Children's Services Management Team and the Corporate Parenting Group. The Review Group endorses the development of this multi-agency/discipline group and believes it should progress the steady work towards a Children's Trust for Harrow by 2008.

Supporting the educational achievements of children leaving care

Responsibilities: The duty to promote the educational achievement of children and young people who are looked after extends to those young people who are leaving care (s23a-s23d Children Act 1989). Local authorities should ensure that each young person's Pathway Plan into independence builds on their educational progress when they were looked after, includes details of how they will be supported to stay in further or higher

¹⁶ Children Looked After Team Launch, 5 June 2006 at Harrow Teachers' Centre

education, and ensures they are given support to access services to prepare for and obtain employment, education or training.

Time constraints did not allow the Review Group to consider this area of responsibility in any depth.

Sharing information effectively through interagency and inter-authority co-operation

Responsibilities: Local authorities should, in the context of statutory guidance, on information sharing establish and maintain inter-authority and interagency arrangements and protocols for sharing relevant information about care placements and education.

Time constraints did not allow the Review Group to consider this area of responsibility in any depth.

Actively supporting schools and raising their awareness about the needs of children and young people who are looked after

Responsibilities: Local authorities should ensure that schools understand the duties on the local authority and their powerful role in significantly improving the educational experiences and life chances of children and young people who are looked after, and make suitable arrangements for designated teachers to fulfil their responsibilities.

Each school has a designated teacher and governor who has received specialist training in meeting the needs of LAC and child protection issues. In the borough there exists a list of these professionals with designated responsibilities however nothing beyond that. In the absence of any formal network, the Review Group strongly believes that these specialists would benefit from access to advice and the sharing of experience from others with similar responsibilities. It would be particularly important to share learning and experiences if their school were to take a LAC. The People First Portfolio Holder is in agreement that a support network would be useful to exchange good practice.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That the list of all teachers and governors in the borough with designated responsibilities for LAC within their schools includes details of peers who can be contacted to share advice and experience. This development is practical, feasible and affordable and could tie in with the training already provided to support these roles.

Reducing unnecessary out of authority placements

Responsibilities: Local authorities should take steps to reduce their dependence on external placement where external placements are not in the best interests of the child.

Time constraints did not allow the Review Group to consider this area of responsibility in any depth.

Supporting children and young people who are looked after in secure accommodation or placed in a youth justice setting

Responsibilities: Where children and young people who are looked after are placed in secure settings they should have full access to education and training consistent with their statutory entitlements and minimal disruption to their education on entering or leaving that setting.

Time constraints did not allow the Review Group to consider this area of responsibility in any depth.

Providing training, development and support for carers, teachers and local authority staff

Responsibilities: Foster carers, residential social work staff, designated teachers and social workers are trained in their responsibilities to promote educational achievement, and receive the right support to do so.

Corporate parenting is a vitally important responsibility for every elected member and must be delivered within the 'Every Child Matters: Delivering Change for Children' agenda established by the Children Act 2004. A Green Paper setting out the government's new strategy for looked after children is due out shortly and the National Children's Bureau, funded by the DfES, will also launch a new toolkit for councillors to help them fulfil their corporate parenting role towards LAC and care leavers.

As part of members' induction in Harrow, councillors are advised of their corporate parenting duties. This could be broadened, perhaps led by the Corporate Parenting Group in informing, educating and encouraging peers about their responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

That the Member Development Panel organises a seminar on corporate parenting for the current intake of councillors, and considers the valuable input that the Corporate Parenting Group can play in this training.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the work of Review Group, please contact:

Nahreen Matlib

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Website: www.harrow.gov.uk/scrutiny

APPENDIX A: SCOPE DOCUMENT

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
2006/07**



LIGHT TOUCH REVIEW OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | SUBJECT | Looked after children |
| 2 | COMMITTEE | Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee |
| 3 | REVIEW GROUP | <p>Members:</p> <p>Councillor Mark Versallion – Review Group Chairman Councillor Margaret Davine Councillor Mitzi Green Councillor Narinder Mudhar Councillor Sasikala Suresh Councillor Jeremy Zeid</p> <p>Co-optees: Mr Alton Bell - Association of Harrow Governing Bodies</p> |
| 4 | AIMS/ OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assess how well the council is performing as corporate parents against the duties contained in new legislation (Section 52 of the Children Act 2004) • To help position the authority as part of the preparations to respond to the Joint Area Review and Comprehensive Performance Assessment processes. • To consider ways in which the council, schools and other agencies can promote good educational attainment for looked after children. • To suggest ways in which the council and partner organisations can best deliver services for looked after children in order to stimulate dialogue and understanding between members and managers. |
| 5 | MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF REVIEW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the performance of the council as corporate parents so as to best meet the needs of looked after children in the borough. • Establishing a means of dialogue in order to contribute usefully to improved outcomes for looked after children. • To ensure all members understand their roles as corporate parents to assist in a more effective corporate parenting function within the organisation. |
| 6 | SCOPE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine, analyse and make proposals on the way the council and its members fulfil the role of corporate parents to the borough's looked after children, especially with reference to meeting the roles and responsibilities given in Section 52 of the Children Act 2004. |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In doing so, promote better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of corporate parents and assess the adequacy of services to looked after children to inform the council's improvement agenda. |
| 7 | SERVICE PRIORITIES (Corporate/Dept) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Harrow safe, sound and supportive Empower Harrow youth |
| 8 | REVIEW SPONSOR | Lynne McAdam, Service Manager Scrutiny |
| 9 | ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER | Paul Clark, Director of Children's Services |
| 10 | SUPPORT OFFICER | Nahreen Matlib, Senior Scrutiny Officer |
| 11 | ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT | Existing resources from within the Scrutiny Team |
| 12 | EXTERNAL INPUT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders: children and young people, foster carers Partners: schools (headteachers and governors) Experts: IDeA, Local Government Association, other local authorities |
| 13 | METHODOLOGY | <p>Stages for the light touch review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify current policies Examine how performance matches policies – consider responses to the IDeA suggested questions (written) Identify issues arising – question senior managers and members (written/oral) Seek external input – children and young people and schools (e.g. primary/secondary school governors), either through existing data or fresh information (e.g. invite to a meeting, focus group, questionnaire) Determine how to inform policies <p>The Review Group will meet on two occasions (at the start and end of the process) with most of the work conducted 'online', outside of meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting 1 (31 July 2006) - to agree scope and determine questions for senior managers. August – collation of responses and data. Meeting 2 (18 September 2006) – to seek elaboration on responses from appropriate Director and portfolio holder(s). Second part of the meeting for Review Group members to agree observations, draft findings and frame recommendations. Final report to be completed by the end of September. Report to be presented to the next meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee (18 October). |
| 14 | EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS | The involvement of children and young people in this review would give due consideration to their individual needs e.g. taking account of their own experiences, the need for confidentiality, language requirements, disability needs, familiarity with a setting |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | | as formal as council committees. |
| 15 | ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That council officers and children and young people will be willing to engage, especially given the timeframe covers the lead up to the Joint Area Review. • That the timescale will be sufficient to prepare a considered and relevant report with recommendations, especially given that the timeframe covers the holiday period and there may limit access/availability of members, schools and children and young people. |
| 16 | SECTION 17 IMPLICATIONS | There are none. |
| 17 | TIMESCALE | Light touch review of three months, reporting back to the next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 18 October 2006. |
| 18 | RESOURCE COMMITMENTS | Scrutiny Officer, with administrative support where required. |
| 19 | REPORT AUTHOR | Scrutiny Officer with review group. |
| 20 | REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS | <p>Outline of formal reporting process:</p> <p>To Service Director <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When: September meeting</p> <p>To Portfolio Holder <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When: September meeting</p> <p>To CMT <input type="checkbox"/> When.....</p> <p>To Cabinet <input type="checkbox"/> When.....</p> |
| 21 | FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS (proposals) | To be confirmed – in project plan. |

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
2006/07



LIGHT TOUCH REVIEW OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

| Activity | Member Input <i>Who is involved?</i> | Officer Resource <i>Who is involved?</i> | When |
|---|---|--|-----------------|
| Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee commissions a light touch review of looked after children, to report back to its next meeting | Children and Young People Committee | | 27 June 2006 |
| Develop scope | Chairman – Councillor Mark Versallion | Nahreen Matlib (Senior Scrutiny Officer) in consultation with Paul Clark (Director of Children’s Services) | Early July |
| Preparation period - preliminary research and desk top data gathering | Review Group (“online”) | NM | Early July |
| Initial contact with stakeholders – Harrow governors (including article in Harrow Governors’ Newsletter) | MV | NM Neetha Atukorale (Governor Services Co-Ordinator) | Late July |
| Meeting 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Group agrees scope Briefing on new statutory responsibilities (Section 52 of Children Act 2004) Identification of information/data needs | Review Group | Paul Wedgbury (Group Manager+, Children and Families) | 31 July |
| Collation & evaluation of preliminary data/evidence | Review Group | PW | 7 August onward |
| Identification of questioning plan for question and answer session with portfolio holder and Director of Children’s Services | Review Group (“online”) | NM | W/c 14 August |

| Activity | Member Input <i>Who is involved?</i> | Officer Resource <i>Who is involved?</i> | When |
|---|--|---|---|
| Meeting 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of information received Final preparation of questioning plan Question and Answer session with portfolio holder and Director of Children's Services Consider observations and frame findings and recommendations (review group determines thrust of report) | Review Group Review Group Review Group Councillor Janet Mote - Portfolio Holder People First Review Group | NM PC NM | 18 September |
| Draft report | MV | NM | By 26 September |
| Review Group comments on draft report and accountable manager confirms factual accuracy | Review Group ("online") | PC | By 3 October |
| Comments incorporated into final draft of report | | NM | By 4 October |
| Review Group agree final report | Review Group ("online") | | By 6 October (agenda dispatch 9 October) |
| Final report of Review Group to Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee, for approval | Children and Young People Committee | | 18 October |
| Consider if there is a need to publicise report findings | Review Group | NM | Late October |
| Final report published & referred to Executive for consideration (Cabinet/Portfolio Holder/Directorate – depending on issues/recommendations) | MV | NM | November/ December |
| Evaluation of review process | Review Group | NM | November |
| Follow up/Monitoring of outcomes | Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee | NM | Work programme 2007/08 |

Contact : Nahreen Matlib, Senior Scrutiny Officer, Scrutiny Unit, Harrow Council

Background Papers:

'Show Me How I Matter: A Guide to the Education of Looked After Children', Improvement and Development Agency and Local Government Association, March 2006.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET

18 JANUARY 2007

Reference from the Meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 18 October 2006: Final Report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children

1. The Sub-Committee received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, alongside a verbal report of the Chairman of the Review Group, on the findings of the review of the education of Looked after Children.
2. Members commended the work of the Review Group and its report. However, concern was expressed at the projected cost of an event being held to reward Looked after Children (LAC) that had emerged during the Review. Members urged that this costing be explored further. Members were also of the view that all Members should be trained on corporate parenting.
3. Members requested that Recommendation 5 of the report be placed before Recommendation 4, as it linked with Recommendation 3.

RESOLVED: That (1) the final report of the light touch review of education of Looked after Children be noted;

(2) the findings and recommendations of the light touch review, as set out in the review report, be endorsed;

(3) the report be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration at the next meeting;

(4) the Corporate Parenting Group be requested to ensure that every Member of the Council attends as many as possible Looked after Children events per year to ensure they remain in touch with looked after children and young people and fulfil their responsibilities as corporate parents;

(5) the Member Development Panel be requested to organise a seminar on corporate parenting for the current intake of Members, and consider the valuable input that the Corporate Parenting Group could play in this training;

(6) the Director of Children's Services be requested to prepare a plan of action resulting from the light touch review and report back to the Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 13 February 2007, when the relevant Portfolio Holder would also be invited to attend to participate on this matter.

[REASON: 1) To influence the development of provision for looked after children in Harrow's care.]

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Papers: Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 18 October 2006 and the Report of the Director of People,

Performance and Policy: Final Report of the Light Touch Review of the Education of Looked After Children

Contact: Zoe Crane, Committee Administrator, tel: 020 8424 1883
e-mail: zoe.crane@harrow.gov.uk



| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2007/2008 |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Responsible Officer: | Myfanwy Barrett (Director of Financial & Business Strategy) |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr David Ashton (Finance and Business Matters) |
| Status: | Part 1 |
| Encs: | Tax Base Calculation |

Section 1: Summary and Recommendations

The Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government Act 2003, requires the Authority to formally calculate its Council Tax Base for 2007-2008 and pass this information to precepting authorities by 31 January 2007. The tax base must be set between the 1 December and 31 January 2007.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet considers the information given in this report and agree that :

- (a) The band D equivalent number of taxable properties is calculated as shown in accordance with the Government regulations;
- (b) The provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2007-2008 is agreed at 1.5% producing an expected collection rate of 98.5%.
- (c) Subject to (a) & (b) above, a Council Tax Taxbase for 2007-2008 of 84,926 Band D equivalent properties (being 86,219 x 98.5%) be approved, allowing for payment in lieu of Ministry of Defence properties.

Reason:

To fulfill Council's statutory obligation to set the Council Tax Base for 2007- 2008

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

The Tax base must be set by the Council each year. Officers have calculated the Council's tax base, according to the relevant procedures and guidance, for 2007-2008 of 84,926 net properties.

The law requires the Council to formally agree its Council Tax Taxbase for 2007-2008 and give this figure to preceptors by 31 January 2007. The tax base has two parts:-

- (a) the number of taxable properties shown as 'band D equivalents':
- (b) the expected collection rate for the year

For calculating the tax base, (and setting the Council Tax) properties in each of the eight valuation bands are given different weightings. These weightings are shown as a proportion of the band D value. These are shown below:-

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|---|------|------|------|---|
| Weighting | 6/9 | 7/9 | 8/9 | 1 | 11/9 | 13/9 | 15/9 | 2 |

The calculation method is set out in the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended. The regulations require that calculations must be shown for each tax band as well as a total for all bands.

The Regulations state that the calculation of the tax base must be based on the Valuation list produced by the Listing Officer of the Inland Revenue as it stands on 30 November in the year preceding that for which the relevant amount is calculated (i.e. at 30 November 2006 for the financial year 2007-2008). It must show actual numbers of properties at that date and allow for the effects of discounts and exemptions. It must also show likely changes to bands, new properties, properties taken off the valuation list and likely changes to discounts, empty properties and exemptions for 2007-2008.

The detailed calculation of the band D equivalent properties is shown at **Appendix 1**.

The Taxbase shows new properties being built in Harrow (including in-fill development and conversions).

For 2007-2008 officers are recommending a budgeted collection rate of 98.5%. The expected collection rate is the percentage of Council Tax to be collected after estimating uncollectable amounts. It was previously 98.5% in 2004/2005.

For 2005/2006 & 2006/2007 the percentage used was 99%. However officers are recommending the budgeted collection rate reverts back to 98.5% for the new year, 2007/08, as officers believe this is more realistic as the higher percentage appears unsustainable.

The Provision does not mean that collection efforts will stop once the budgeted collection level has been reached, or that eventual losses will necessarily be

1.5%. It is, however, essential that an adequate provision be made.

2.2 Consultation

None. Not applicable

2.3 Financial Implications

This is a report from the Director of Financial & Business Strategy and deals with financial matters.

2.4 Legal Implications

Section 33(1) Local Government Finance Act 1992 imposes a duty on a billing authority such as Harrow to calculate its council tax by applying a formula laid down in that Section.

The formula involves a figure for the council tax base for the year which must itself be calculated

The Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 require a billing authority to use a given formula to calculate the council tax base. This is the formula set out and followed in the appendix to the report.

Section 33 and various statutory instruments also impose a duty on the Council to calculate the council tax base within a prescribed period which is laid down in the Regulations as between 1st of December and 31st of January.

Section 67 Local Government Act 1992 was amended by section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003 to enable the full Council to delegate the power to set the tax base to the Executive. The constitution was duly amended at full Council on 20 October 2005.

The Council must legally agree the Council Tax Base for 2007-2008 by 31 January 2007. This report recommends that it be set at 84,926.

Section 3: Statutory Officer Clearance

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Myfanwy Barrett Date: 8/1/07 |
| Monitoring Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Jill Travers Date: 8/1/07 |

Section 4: Contact details and background papers

Contact: Fern Silverio (Group Manager - Revenues) tel: 020-8736-6818

Background Papers:

The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, SI No.612 as amended, SI No.3012 of 2003, LGFA 1992, LGA 2003, Council resolutions of meetings held 16/12/03 & 20/10/2005.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8736 6818

| | | |
|----|--|---------|
| 1. | Consultation | N/A |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | Yes (D) |
| 3. | Community Safety (s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998) | N/A |
| 4. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | N/A |

Appendix 1:

Calculation of the Council Taxbase for 2007-2008

| | Band | @ | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | Total |
|--|------|-----|--------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| Actual current properties | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dwellings on database 30/11/06 | | 0 | 263 | 3,121 | 17,381 | 26,986 | 21,600 | 7,496 | 5,965 | 1,099 | 83,911 |
| Exemptions (minus) | | 0 | 16 | 147 | 493 | 447 | 280 | 115 | 122 | 31 | 1,651 |
| Disabled Reductions of Band: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Add to Lower Bands | | 0 | 2 | 35 | 194 | 237 | 122 | 67 | 18 | 0 | 675 |
| Take from Higher Bands (minus) | | 0 | 0 | 2 | 35 | 194 | 237 | 122 | 67 | 18 | 675 |
| Line 1-2+3-4 = H | | 0 | 249 | 3,007 | 17,047 | 26,582 | 21,205 | 7,326 | 5,794 | 1,050 | 82,260 |
| Number in H above Entitled to One 25% Discount | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | -162 | -1,974 | -7,966 | -7,157 | -4,635 | -1,357 | -751 | -91 | -24,093 |
| Line 6 x 25% | | | -40.50 | -493.50 | -1991.50 | -1789.25 | -1158.75 | -339.25 | -187.75 | -22.75 | -6023.25 |
| Number in H above Entitled to Two 25% (50%) Discount | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 0 | 0 | -3 | -5 | -7 | -7 | -19 | -7 | -48 |
| Line 8 X 50% | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | -1.50 | -2.50 | -3.50 | -3.50 | -9.50 | -3.50 | -24.00 |
| No in H above entitled to 10% discount | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | -1 | -26 | -190 | -161 | -107 | -47 | -32 | -6 | -570 |
| 10% of above | | | -0.10 | -2.60 | -19.00 | -16.10 | -10.70 | -4.70 | -3.20 | -0.60 | -57.00 |
| No in H above entitled to 0% discount | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | -1 | -14 | -88 | -80 | -62 | -25 | -43 | -8 | -321 |
| 0% of above | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Discounts = Q | | | -40.60 | -496.10 | -2012.00 | -1807.85 | -1172.95 | -347.45 | -200.45 | -26.85 | -6104.25 |
| Line 5+ Line 12 | | 0 | 208.40 | 2,510.90 | 15,035.00 | 24,774.15 | 20,032.05 | 6,978.55 | 5,593.55 | 1,023.15 | 76,155.75 |
| Estimated changes likely | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * Properties Awaiting Banding | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **New Properties | | | 0 | 4 | 36 | 40 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 105 |
| Line 14 + Line 15 | | 0 | 0 | 4 | 36 | 40 | 17 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 105 |
| Properties to be Deleted | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Known Errors in Valuation List | | | 0 | -2 | -39 | -71 | -45 | -11 | -6 | -3 | -177 |
| Line 17 + Line 18 | | 0 | 0 | -2 | -39 | -71 | -45 | -11 | -6 | -3 | -177 |
| Line 16 + Line 19 | | 0 | 0 | 2 | -3 | -31 | -28 | -5 | -4 | -3 | -72 |
| 21 Assumed Exemptions on Ratio of Line 2 to 1 | | | 0 | 0 | -1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 |
| 22 Assumed Discounts on Ratio of Line 12 to 5 | | | 0 | -1 | -5 | -3 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -10 |
| Changes to Status of Existing Properties: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 Change in Discounts | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 24 Change in Exemptions | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Expected appeals against bands: | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 Add to Lower Bands | | | 10 | 54 | 84 | 67 | 23 | 18 | 3 | 0 | 259 |
| 26 Take from Higher Bands | | | 0 | -10 | -54 | -84 | -67 | -23 | -18 | -3 | -259 |
| Line 20+21+22+23+24+25+26 = J | | 0 | 10 | 45 | 21 | -52 | -73 | -10 | -19 | -6 | -84 |
| H - Q + J | | 0 | 218.4 | 2555.9 | 15056.0 | 24722.2 | 19959.1 | 6968.6 | 5574.6 | 1017.2 | 76071.8 |
| <i>To calculate band equivalents</i> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 0.67 | 0.78 | 0.89 | 1.00 | 1.22 | 1.44 | 1.67 | 2.00 | |
| 30 Band D Equivalent: Lines 28x29 | | 0 | 145.60 | 1987.92 | 13383.11 | 24722.15 | 24394.39 | 10065.68 | 9290.92 | 2034.30 | 86024.08 |
| 31 Contributions in lieu of Class O | | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 40.0 | 85.0 | 2.4 | 18.8 | 45.0 | 4.0 | 195.2 |
| 32 Band D equivalent for Taxbase calculation | | | | | | | | | | | 86,219 |
| 33 Band D Equivalent for Taxbase Calculation | | | | | | | | | | | 86219 |
| | | | | line 29 | | | | | | | <i>Before allowance for collection rate</i> |
| 34 Band D equivalent for Taxbase calculation after non-collection allowance(1.5%) applied | | | | | | | | | | | 84926 |

| Previous Years' Taxbase calculation figures:- | | Gross figure BEFORE non-collection rate applied |
|---|----|---|
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2007 - 2008 was | FS | 86219 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2006 - 2007 was | FS | 85178 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2005 - 2006 was | | 85160 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2004 - 2005 was | | 84926 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2003-2004 was | | 84205 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2002-2003 was | | 82880 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2001-2002 was | | 82669 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2000-2001 was | | 82361 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 99/00 was | | 81692 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 98/99 was | | 81777 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 97/98 was | | 81951 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 96/97 was | | 81490 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 95/96 was | | 81517 |
| Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 94/95 was | | 81706 |

* Likely bands Estimated on ratio of existing properties

** These are properties currently under construction or for which planning permission has been granted that are not already on our database. The figures shown is the proportion of these properties that will be completed AND BANDED during the year. Therefore

Band @ - this is the tax set for properties in Band A that qualify for Disabled Reduction (there are none at present)



| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | Outcome of statutory consultations on proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service |
| Key Decision: (Executive-side only) | Yes |
| Responsible Officer: | Penny Furness-Smith, Director of Adult Community Care Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Silver – Adult Community Care Services and Issues Facing People with Special Needs |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1 – Analysis of Consultation Responses Appendix 2 – Partial Equalities Impact Assessment Appendix 3 – Evaluation of the Consultation Appendix 4 – Financial Summary |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This report sets out the public response to the Statutory Consultations on the proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service. It also sets out options for Cabinet to consider in response to the consultation exercise.

Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Agree the recommendations in section 2.4

Reason

Cabinet agreed at its meeting of 3rd August to a 12 week consultation exercise covering the service identified above and for the results of this consultation exercise to be reported back to Cabinet so that it could make a decision about the proposals concerning the future delivery of the service.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

1. Background

1.1. At its meeting on 3 August 2006 Cabinet considered further proposals to achieve financial savings during 2006/07. These proposals included the proposed merger of Anmer and Milmans Day Centres, proposed changes to Home Care Charges, and proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service.

1.2. This report deals with the responses to the consultation on proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service. Cabinet received a report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposed merger of Anmer and Milmans Day Centres, the proposed changes to Home Care Charges and the Proposed re-provision of services currently at Wiseworks at its Meeting on 14 December 2006.

2. Proposed changes to the Meals on Wheels Service

2.1. Number of Service Users affected by the Proposals

- 435 Service Users currently receive a hot meals service
- 81 Service Users currently receive a frozen meals service
- At present no Service Users receive a direct payment

2.2. Details of the proposal set out in the consultation

- To retain a hot meals service for those users who have been assessed as being unable to reheat a meal themselves.
- To offer a frozen meal service or the option for service users to use Direct Payments to purchase their own meals from a supplier of their choice.
- To introduce a fair charging system that has the same subsidy level for all types of meals provided by the Meals on Wheels Service.
- To ensure a cost effective Meals on Wheels Service is provided to individuals with special dietary requirements.

- *Full details of the consultation process are set out in Section 5 of this report and Appendix 1*

2.3. Summary of responses to the consultation

- A number of comments made in responses were common to all the consultations
 - The Council is targeting the most vulnerable members of the community.
 - The Council should reduce costs in other ways, e.g. by reducing high salaries or cutting staff number.
 - The Council should raise revenue by increasing Council tax
 - People should be informed about Direct Payments.

- The majority of respondents were either unhappy or very unhappy about the proposal although about a quarter of respondents stated that they 'did not mind'. 21% of the responses received were sent in response to the initial publicity surrounding the Cabinet decision and prior to the detailed consultation proposals being published. The main concerns were that
 - Some service users are not able to heat frozen meals because they are unable to operate a microwave/freezer, lack freezer space or do not have a microwave
 - There will be reduction of contact with other people/reduction of monitoring of health and well being carried out by drivers on an informal basis
 - The Council is targeting the most vulnerable members of the community, prices may be too high
 - The Council should reduce costs in other ways, e.g. by reducing high salaries or cutting down on road works

- *A summary of responses are set out in Appendix 1. In addition copies of the individual responses have been collated and placed in the Members Library*

2.4. Recommended Options for Consideration by Cabinet

- Cabinet is recommended to:
 - To retain a hot meals service only for those service users who are assessed as being unable to reheat a meal themselves.
 - To offer a frozen meal service or the option for service users to use Direct Payments to purchase their own meals from a supplier of their choice.
 - To apply a common subsidy of 44% of the total cost of production to both hot and frozen meals resulting in a charge of
 - £2.78 for frozen meals
 - £4.25 for hot meals
 - and for these charges to be reviewed annually
 - Agree, following implementation of proposals contained within this report (subject to Cabinet agreement), that a review of the Hot Asian Meals production kitchen be undertaken and for the outcome of this review to be reported back to Cabinet as soon as possible.

3. Resources, costs and risks associated with the proposals

3.1. The draft revenue budget approved by Cabinet on 14 December 2006 included a full-year saving of £350k for 2007/08, arising from the proposed changes to the subsidy for hot and frozen meals.

3.2. Appendix 4 provides a summary of the projected impact of the proposed changes, if agreed by Cabinet. This shows that if the volume of frozen meals is increased to 25%, 50% or 75% (from the current 11%) the projected saving that could be achieved would be £137k, £175k or £212k respectively. It is estimated that the projected total production costs will

be £100k less than the predicted cost shown in Appendix 4 because the demand for specialist meals has reduced – there is therefore a greater volume of standard meals being produced. There may therefore be additional savings accruing from reduced operating costs e.g. vehicle (fuel, insurance etc) and reduced staffing costs – these cannot be quantified at this stage. There may be further efficiency savings to be achieved e.g. moving to a pre-factored Asian meals service although this would result in closure of the Milap kitchen.

3.3. A shift away from a hot meals service will potentially incur one-off costs. A reduction in the number of vehicles required to deliver hot meals could result in a penalty for early surrender of the lease. This is estimated to be £5k per vehicle, with a total penalty of £60k if all 12 vehicles were to be returned. In addition there will be workforce implications which cannot be costed at this stage (see 5.1).

3.4. A four week period will be required to make contact with individuals and ascertain whether they would be able to move to a frozen meals service or switch to Direct Payments. Following this review a reassessment will be made of the likely savings for 2007/2008 and this sum included within the final budget to be agreed by full Council in February.

3.5. The Partial Equality Impact assessment recommends that a full Impact Assessment is undertaken as part of the implementation of any of the proposals.

4. Staffing/Workforce Considerations

4.1. There are approximately 35 posts (mostly part-time) who are engaged in the production and delivery of the Meals on Wheels Service. A shift away from the current working method will have implications for staff. This cannot be quantified at this stage and any matters arising from implementation of the proposals will be addressed through the Council's agreed procedures for managing organisational change.

5. Consultation

5.1. The Consultation on the proposed changes to the Meals on wheels Service followed the good practice set out in the Harrow Compact and the Cabinet Office Codes of Practice on Consultation. The Cabinet Office Code of Practice sets out 6 criteria:

- “Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
- Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
- Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
- Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.

- Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.”
 - *An evaluation of the consultation process is attached at Appendix 3*
- 5.2. The consultation lasted 12 weeks and ran from 29 September 2006 to 5 January 2007 (to take account of the Christmas break).
- 5.3. The consultation pack was sent to 516 service users (current and those who had received the service during the preceding 12 month period), 396 local organisations and the 63 Councillors. Freepost envelopes were provided to enable return of completed feedback sheets. The consultation pack was available in different community languages and in tape format. An addendum letter containing information about the proposed charges was sent out on 12th October.
- 5.4. Press adverts were placed in the Harrow Times, Harrow Leader and the Harrow Observer, announcing that the consultation was taking place and subsequent adverts also provided information about the public meetings held on 1, 2 and 8 November 2006 in different locations across Harrow.
- 5.5. Posters were placed in libraries, and on public notice boards, as well as in the civic centre. Copies were also sent to GP surgeries and directly to local organisations to place on their notice boards. Subsequent posters also provided information about the public meetings.
- 5.6. The Harrow Council website was used to advertise the consultation with links to the PDF documents of each proposal, as well as copies of the adverts, posters and information about the four public meetings.
- 5.7. In order to encourage feedback, potential respondents were able to choose from the following methods to express their views.
- By post using a freepost address (to send back feedback sheets)
 - Calling the dedicated telephone consultation line (feedback sheets were filled in by council staff)
 - Via email to the dedicated consultation email address
 - By taking part in the four public meetings
- 5.8. 272 individuals or organisations sent in a written or e-mailed response or communicated their views by the direct consultation line. Of these 56 (21%) were received before the public consultation commenced and resulted from the press coverage following the Cabinet meeting held in August. The proposals set out in the consultation document were amended in the light of this initial feedback. A further 81 individuals attended the four public meetings which encompassed all four consultations.

6. Equalities Impact

6.1. A Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the evaluation of the consultation process. This is attached as Appendix 2. As part of the implementation of the proposals set out in this report individual service users will be contacted to ascertain whether they would be able to move to a frozen meals service or switch to Direct Payments.

7. Key Performance Indicators

7.1. The following indicators will be impacted by any reduction in the number of service users:

- Help to Live at Home (all Care Groups) indicators

8. Corporate Priorities

8.1. This report addresses the Corporate Priority of Making Harrow Safe, Sound and Supportive.

9. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

9.1. This report deals throughout with the needs of a group of adults who are amongst the most vulnerable and at risk in Harrow.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Paula Foulds Date: 21 December 2006 |
| Monitoring Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Helen White Date: 9 January 2006 |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

Mark Gillett
Group Manager Plus – Commissioning, Strategic Planning and Health Integration
mark.gillett@harrow.gov.uk
020 8424 1911

Background Papers:

1. Harrow Code of Practice on Consultation
2. Cabinet Office (Better Regulation Executive) – Code of Practice on Consultation

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Consultation | YES |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | 1 |

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Consultation – Analysis of Responses

Summary

The majority of respondents were either unhappy or very unhappy about the proposal although about a quarter of respondents stated that they 'did not mind'. The main concerns were that

- a. Some service users are not able to heat frozen meals because they are unable to operate a microwave/freezer, lack freezer space or do not have a microwave
- b. There will be reduction of contact with other people/reduction of monitoring of health and well being carried out by drivers on an informal basis
- c. The Council is targeting the most vulnerable members of the community, prices may be too high
- d. The Council should reduce costs in other ways, e.g. by reducing high salaries or cutting down on road works

Methodology

The Meals on Wheels consultation ran parallel to, but with a later timescale, to the three community care proposals considered in the December 2006 Cabinet meeting. Potential respondents were made aware the consultation was taking place by the following.

- Press adverts were placed in the Harrow Times, Harrow Leader and the Harrow Observer, announcing that the consultation was taking place and subsequent adverts also provides information about the public meetings.
- Posters were placed in libraries, and on public notice boards, as well as in the civic centre. Copies were also sent to GP surgeries and directly to local organisations to place on their notice boards. Subsequent posters also provided information about the four public meetings held on 1, 2 and 8 November 2006 in different locations across Harrow.
- The Harrow Council website was used to advertise the consultation with links to the PDF documents of each proposal, as well as copies of the adverts, posters and information about the public meetings.
- Consultation packs were sent out to 516 MOW service users (current users or who had used the service in the past 12 months), 396 local organisations and the 63 councillors. Freepost envelopes were provided for completed feedback sheets.

The local organisations were made up of:

| Organisation | Number |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Community groups | 247 |
| Supporting people contractors | 89 |
| PCT/GP surgeries | 39 |
| Home care providers | 21 |

In order to encourage feedback, potential respondents were able to choose from the following methods to express their views.

- By post using a freepost address (to send back feedback sheets)
- Calling the dedicated telephone consultation line (feedback sheets were filled in by council staff)
- Via email to the dedicated consultation email address
- By taking part in the four public meetings

Participant response - numbers

There were a total of 272 individual responses (feedback sheet, written response, telephone or email). Please note that some 56 of these responses were received before the consultation actually began and the comments made were mainly around comments 1 – 13 in the main table under participant response, on the following pages. The following table breaks down how respondents identified themselves, when provided.

| MOW consultation | No. |
|------------------|-----|
| Service users | 158 |
| Carer | 32 |
| Organisation | 5 |
| Not stated | 77 |

81 people attended the public meetings, of whom 18 were deemed to be from a visible ethnic minority background. Participants in each public meeting were a mix of users, carers and voluntary organisation representatives. Other participants included union representatives, councillors and local press.

The table overleaf provides a breakdown of respondents, who stated their ethnic origin when responding by completing a feedback or sheet or who called the consultation telephone line.

Appendix 1

| Ethnic origin of respondents (as stated on feedback sheets) | MoW | |
|---|------------|-------------|
| | No. | % |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 6 | 3.5% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 32 | 18.6% |
| Asian or Asian British Pakistani | - | - |
| Asian or Asian British Other | 3 | 1.7% |
| Black or Black British African | 2 | 1.2% |
| Black or Black British Caribbean | 1 | 0.6% |
| Black or Black British Other | - | - |
| Chinese | - | - |
| Mixed White and Black African | - | - |
| Mixed White and Black Asian | 1 | 0.6% |
| Mixed White and Black Caribbean | - | - |
| Mixed Other | - | - |
| White British | 123 | 71.5% |
| White Irish | 3 | 1.7% |
| White Other | 1 | 0.6% |
| Total | 172 | 100% |

Participant response – Meals on Wheels

Respondents that completed a feedback sheet or telephoned to feedback their views stated were asked to state how they feel about the proposals. The vast majority gave a response, and the outcomes have been listed, below.

| Meals on Wheels | Very Happy | | Happy | | Don't mind | | Unhappy | | Very unhappy | |
|---------------------|------------|------|-------|-------|------------|-------|---------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Service users (157) | 6 | 3.8% | 23 | 14.7% | 38 | 24.2% | 36 | 22.9% | 54 | 34.4% |
| Carers (32) | 0 | 0% | 2 | 6.3 | 10 | 31.3% | 6 | 18.7% | 14 | 43.7% |
| Organisation (5) | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% | 1 | 20% | 2 | 40% | 0 | 0% |

The table below list the comments made by respondents during the consultation, this covers all of the different methods for feeding back views (feedback sheets, dedicated telephone line, dedicated consultation email address and the public meetings).

The analysis of the main points raised by the participants completed the feedback sheets, is as follows.

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|--|--|-------------------|
| 1 | Do not change the existing service | Both hot and frozen meals will still be available for a range of dietary needs | No recommendation |
| 2 | Physically unable to heat a frozen meal/ use microwave | A hot meals service will still be available for people who are unable to safely reheat a frozen meal | No recommendation |
| 3 | Do not have microwave | All circumstances will be taken into account when considering a persons ability to heat a frozen meal in assessments | No recommendation |

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|---|--|-------------------|
| 4 | Cannot operate a microwave/freezer | A hot meals service will still be available for people who are unable to safely reheat a frozen meal | No recommendation |
| 5 | Continue to provide hot meals to the who are unable to heat/cope with frozen meals | Hot meals will still be available to those unable to manage a frozen meal | No recommendation |
| 6 | Freezer is too small to accommodate two weeks worth of meals | We will be able to look at this on an individual basis to see if it is feasible to deliver one weeks supply at a time | As column 2 |
| 7 | If proposals go ahead may need to provide people with larger freezers and microwaves | We will be able to look at this on an individual basis to see if it is feasible to deliver one weeks supply at a time | As column 2 |
| 8 | Need to examine physical capabilities of people receiving hot meals if there are plans to provide them with frozen meals | We will assess each person's ability to manage with frozen meals | As column 2 |
| 9 | Worried that people may not adequately defrost their meals before heating – health consideration Do meals come with instructions | This will be considered as part of assessing which people need to retain a Hot Meals Service. An instruction leaflet will be produced on how to heat frozen meals. | As column 2 |
| 10 | How have the prices been calculated | Prices take the average cost of producing a hot meal and the average cost of producing a frozen meal including the | No recommendation |

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 11 | Loss of contact with people for some users | This would be considered as part of the assessment for anyone moving from a daily delivery of a hot meal to batch deliveries of frozen meals as a sole service | As column 2 |
| 12 | Changes to the service will reduce the 'monitoring' of service users health, wellbeing etc which the drivers currently carry out on an informal basis. How will this be continued? | This would be considered as part of the assessment for anyone moving from a daily delivery of a hot meal to batch deliveries of frozen meals as a sole service | As column 2 |
| 13* | The current delivered hot meal is the only fresh food I receive | Frozen meals are prepared with fresh ingredients whose nutritional value is not damaged by the process of freezing | As column 2 |
| 14 | The increased costs of MOW with other increased care charges will be difficult to manage financially | An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services. | An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups. As column 2 |
| 15 | Unclear about assessment criteria | The overarching assessment criteria is Fair Access to Care Eligibility Criteria. There will also be focus on any identified risks related to not | |

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|---|--|---|
| 16 | How will it effect people in day centres | <p>having a ready prepared hot meal delivered daily</p> <p>Day Centres serve up hot meals and therefore the charge for a meal at a day centre will be the same as for a hot meal</p> | As column 2 |
| 17 | Prices will be too high for service users | <p>An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.</p> <p>This comment is being passed back to the service</p> | <p>An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups.</p> <p>As column 2</p> |
| 18 | Improve the standard, range and size of food | | As column 2 |
| 19 | Freezing may be unsuitable for certain foods such as ethnic meals | Our suppliers only use ingredients that are suitable for freezing when they supply frozen meals | No recommendation |
| 20 | Agree with the concept of charging differently for hot and cold meals | This seems fair as hot meals cost significantly more to produce and deliver than frozen meals | As column 2 |
| 21 | The proposals are targeting the old and the vulnerable | <p>An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.</p> <p>Both hot and frozen meals will still be available for a range of dietary needs</p> | <p>An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups.</p> <p>As column 2</p> |
| 22 | Without a hot meal provided, some service users may need residential care | | As column 2 |

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 23 | Find finance from other sources elsewhere e.g. increase revenue from parking, cut down road works | Elected Members are aware of this point | No recommendation |
| 24 | The council should manage their budget better | Elected Members are aware of this point | No recommendation |
| 25 | Cut the high salaries of council staff | Elected Members are aware of this point | No recommendation |
| 26 | Supermarkets are selling ready meals for the price we pay or cheaper | This is the case and many people already choose to buy their meals this way | No recommendation |
| 27 | Find alternative suppliers such as Tesco who manage to make a ready meal at the fraction of the cost | We will produce information of major local retailers delivering ready meals for people using direct payments or who make private arrangements. | No recommendation |
| 28 | Unfair to increase the cost of meals unless there is an increase in the quality | The proposed price increases reflects more accurately the actual cost of producing a meal. | No recommendation |
| 29 | A possible solution is for me to receive a 7 day supply | This option is under consideration as a number of people has expressed a preference for weekly delivery | As column 2 |
| 30 | How will this effect people with direct payment/need more information about direct payments | Direct payments are already available for people with an eligible need for day care as an alternative to attending a day centre | As column 2 |
| 31 | This may effect some groups more than others e.g. the most elderly and certain ethnic groups | An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be | An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially |

Appendix 1

| No. | Comment | Commentary | Recommendation |
|-----|---------|--|----------------------------|
| | | disadvantaged if changes are made to current services. | adversely effected groups. |

Equality Impact Assessment of the Consultation

| Directorate | People First | Section | Strategy | Person responsible for the assessment | Peter Singh/ Vijay Malik | Date of the assessment | 13 December 2006 | |
|--|--------------|---------|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| Name of the policy to be assessed | | | Community Care Consultation – Your Views Matter | | Is this a new or existing policy | New proposed policy for current services | | |
| 1. In what areas are there concerns, that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact (please tick) | | | i. Race <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vi. Religious Belief | ii. Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vii. Dependents | iii. Disability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> viii. Offending past | iv. Age <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ix. Transgendered or transsexual | v. Sexual orientation | |
| 2. What are the concerns that the policy <u>could</u> have a differential impact on relevant groups. Please explain (continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary) | | | This includes – likely higher costs and other financial implications for service users and carers i.e. possible reduction of services; may adversely affect people with dementia and other vulnerable groups; potential changes in the quality or length of care available; implications of demand for alternative services; impact on carers; impact on current staff and future recruitment costs | | | | | |
| 3. What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this? (continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary) | | | Consultation feedback see methodology in the report 'Consultation – Analysis of Responses' | | | | | |
| 4. What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact | | | Contained in point 2 i.e. possible reduction in services, adverse impact on grounds of age, disability and race. | | | | | |
| 5 Please state clearly the expected benefits of the policy | | | Reduced overall costs and more streamlined services | | | | | |
| 6. Which experts/relevant groups did you approach to explore their views on the issues | | | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No | 7. Please list the relevant groups/experts | | | Number of local organisations and individuals from the voluntary sector, community and local groups and from Health e.g. HAD, HRCE, Mencap, MIND, etc |

Appendix 2

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>8. How was the views of these groups obtained? (please tick)</p> | <p>Letter ✓ Meetings ✓ Interviews ✓ Telephone ✓ Workshops ✓ Fora ✓ Questionnaires ✓ Other ✓</p> | <p>9. Please list the date when each group/expert was contacted</p> | <p>Within the 12 week consultation period between 29 September 2006 to 5 January 2007.</p> |
| <p>10. Please explain in detail the views of the relevant groups/experts on the issues involved (continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary)</p> | <p>Contained in the Cabinet Report dated 18 January</p> | | |
| <p>11. Taking into account the views of the relevant groups/experts, and the available evidence, please state clearly the risks associated with the policy (continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary)</p> | <p>Risks need to be fully assessed by means of individual full impact assessments for the services. It is recommended that a full impact assessment is carried out for the Meals on Wheels service once a decision has been made on the proposals considered by cabinet.</p> | | |
| <p>12. As a result of this assessment is a Full Impact Assessment necessary?</p> | <p>Yes ✓</p> | <p>13. Date on which the Full Assessment is to be started</p> | <p>To be undertaken as part of the implementation of any proposals agreed by Cabinet</p> |
| <p>No</p> | <p>14. Date on which the Full Assessment should be completed</p> | <p>To be undertaken as part of the implementation of any proposals agreed by Cabinet</p> | |

Evaluation of Consultation against the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation

| Criterion | Commentary | Action |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.</p> | <p>A full 12 weeks was allowed for the consultation process, although this meant that timescales were constrained at the beginning and end of the consultation period in order to meet the deadlines to submit a report to Cabinet. Advocacy groups were briefed on the consultation on the Friday before the consultation formally commenced.</p> | <p>There needs to be a greater lead-in time for future consultations to allow more time for preparation and the potential involvement of partners and stakeholders in contributing to the development of the consultation proposals and processes.</p> |
| <p>Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.</p> | <p>The consultation documents followed a standard format and attempted to provide information in a way which made them clear and understandable and would facilitate analysis. An addendum letter was sent out about the Meals on Wheels consultation to provide additional information on the proposed charging structure. As a consequence the consultation period was extend to 5 January 2007.</p> | <p>A greater lead-in time identified above would allow a wider reference group to be consulted about the clarity, style and format of the consultation documents which should ensure greater clarity about the proposals.</p> |
| <p>Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.</p> | <p>The consultation documents were made as clear and concise as they could be, although this may have elicited some criticism as described above.</p> <p>2,400 consultation packs were sent out to individual service users, voluntary, community and faith groups as well as Partner Organisation and Elected Members. The consultation document was made available in different community languages as well as tape format and was available for download from the internet. In addition posters were distributed via libraries and GP surgeries and other relevant settings. There was extensive coverage in the press. Four Public Meetings were held in different location and at different times of</p> | <p>See above</p> |

Appendix 3

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.</p> | <p>the day. A summary of the responses received has been produced as part of the report to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation process</p> | <p>The Cabinet report and appendices will be available on the internet. As part of the implementation of any Cabinet decision relating to these proposals, consideration will need to be given as to how this will be communicated to service users</p> |
| <p>Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.</p> | <p>A designated consultation coordinator was assigned to the four consultations impacting on Community Care Services. This evaluation of the consultation process has been included as part of the report to Cabinet</p> | <p>A consultation co-ordinator should be assigned to all future consultations. Consideration should be given to developing a training programme for all those involved in developing consultations. Consideration needs to be given as to how future consultations will be resourced. There are actual costs attached to producing and disseminating information as well as opportunity costs attached to the involvement of staff</p> |
| <p>Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.</p> | <p>Although this consultation concerned proposed changes to policy rather than the introduction of Regulations a partial Equality Impact Assessment on the consultation process has been carried out which is included in the report to Cabinet.</p> | <p>The partial Equality Impact Assessment recommends that carrying out of impact assessments on each of the service areas as part of the implementation of any Cabinet decision.</p> |

Appendix 4

| Current Position | | Projected Number of Meals 2006/07 | Average Production Cost | Annual Cost | Income per meal [current charge] | Annual Income | Net |
|-------------------------|------|--|--|--------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Hot | 89% | 115,359 | £7.59 | £875,570.00 | £3.25 | -£374,920.00 | £500,650.00 |
| Frozen | 11% | 13,745 | £4.96 | £68,180.00 | £2.75 | -£37,800.00 | £30,380.00 |
| | 100% | <u>129,104</u> | | <u>£943,750.00</u> | | <u>-£412,720.00</u> | <u>£531,030.00</u> |

| | | Projected Number of Meals 2006/07 | Average Production Cost | Annual Cost | Income per meal [proposed charge] | Annual Income | Net | Impact of shift |
|----------------|------|--|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Model 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Hot | 75% | 96,828 | £7.59 | £734,920.00 | £4.25 | -£411,520.00 | £323,400.00 | |
| Frozen | 25% | 32,276 | £4.96 | £160,090.00 | £2.78 | -£89,730.00 | £70,360.00 | |
| | 100% | <u>129,104</u> | | <u>£895,010.00</u> | | <u>-£501,250.00</u> | <u>£393,760.00</u> | -£137,270.00 |
| Model 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Hot | 50% | 64,552 | £7.59 | £489,950.00 | £4.25 | -£274,350.00 | £215,600.00 | |
| Frozen | 50% | 64,552 | £4.96 | £320,180.00 | £2.78 | -£179,450.00 | £140,730.00 | |
| | 100% | <u>129,104</u> | | <u>£810,130.00</u> | | <u>-£453,800.00</u> | <u>£356,330.00</u> | -£174,700.00 |
| Model 3 | | | | | | | | |
| Hot | 25% | 32,276 | £7.59 | £244,970.00 | £4.25 | -£137,170.00 | £107,800.00 | |
| Frozen | 75% | 96,828 | £4.96 | £480,270.00 | £2.78 | -£269,180.00 | £211,090.00 | |
| | 100% | <u>129,104</u> | | <u>£725,240.00</u> | | <u>-£406,350.00</u> | <u>£318,890.00</u> | -£212,140.00 |
| Model 4 | | | | | | | | |
| Hot | 0% | 0 | £7.59 | £0.00 | £4.25 | £0.00 | £0.00 | |
| Frozen | 100% | 129,104 | £4.96 | £640,360.00 | £2.78 | -£358,910.00 | £281,450.00 | |
| | 100% | <u>129,104</u> | | <u>£640,360.00</u> | | <u>-£358,910.00</u> | <u>£281,450.00</u> | -£249,580.00 |

1. Information on number of meals provided by Service
2. Current production cost based on indicative cost noted in consultation document
3. Proposed charge based on indicative charge noted in consultation document

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| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | LIFT/PFI Project |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Geoff Wingrove, Director of Strategic Services Department, People First |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Eric Silver, People First Portfolio Holder for Adult Community Care Services and Issues Facing People with Special Needs |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | None |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out a proposed new framework for monitoring and maintaining oversight of the LIFT/PFI project to replace the HOST Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to agree to:

1. The establishment of an informal Member Steering Group, comprising the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Adult Community Care Services and Issues Facing People with Special Needs and an Opposition Member, to maintain a general overview of the project.

2. The responsibility for more formal periodic monitoring of the project remaining with the Scrutiny Sub-Committee for Adult Health and Social Care and it is suggested that, with the agreement of the chair of the sub-committee, a report be made to the sub-committee following agreement of the Stage 2 process by Cabinet.

REASONS:

- The LIFT/PFI Project has a capital value of £10m and affects three wards in different parts of Harrow.
- From its inception a number of years ago this project has benefited throughout from cross party support.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The Cabinet meeting of 15 December 2005 authorised the Director of Strategy to seek agreement from the Strategic Partnering Board to the LIFT Co Stage 1 Tender Submission and progress to Stage 2, subject to any adjustments required to the Stage 1 proposal. It also delegated responsibility for the development of the Business Case and subsequently the business plan to the HOST Project Panel.

2.1.2 Following that meeting, the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the project was finalised in agreement with the HOST Panel and submitted to the Department of Health (DH) on 31 March 2006. DH approval of the OBC and agreement to the £10m of PFI credits was received on 13 October 2006. Taking account of the significant amount of time that had elapsed since the Stage 1 proposals were received, officers reviewed the earlier proposals and provided updated information to LIFTCo. On the basis of a revised specification, a Stage 1 agreement is being concluded with LIFT through the Strategic Partnering Board.

2.1.3 The construction of three new Neighbourhood Resource Centres (NRCs) is a landmark project for Harrow's residents and the Council. The NRCs will be community resources which will provide increased capacity for people with learning disabilities and serve as a base from which they will be given support to help them participate more fully in the cultural and educational life of Harrow. The NRCs, which will not replicate existing day centres, will be designed imaginatively to provide improved activity space and enable the Council to offer a wider range of activities and services for people with learning disabilities in a pleasant and rewarding environment.

2.2 Current Position

2.2.1 Stage 2 of the LIFT process, which involves the planning, design, costing and final approvals of the project up to contract signature, is now underway. Taking account of the fact that all work within this stage is done at the Council's cost and that significant risks rest with the Council, it

is essential that Members are kept fully briefed about progress. The change of administration and subsequent decision to disband the HOST panel mean that a new mechanism for monitoring the project needs to be established. It is proposed that a small Member group comprising the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Adult Community Care and Special Needs together with one Opposition Member be set up to maintain a general overview of the project. This arrangement would link with the Adult Health & Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee which would be responsible for more formal, periodic monitoring. The Stage 2 agreement and financial close would still need to be ratified by Cabinet, as resolved in their meeting of 15 December 2005.

2.2.2 The above arrangement will ensure cross party participation and an appropriate framework of accountability in relation to:

- finance
- legal agreements
- the achievement of service objectives and required outcomes
- the effective management of risks
- stakeholder engagement and partnership working

In addition, it will ensure that the project meets its commitment to two of the Council's corporate priorities:

- Making Harrow safe, sound and supportive
- Tackling waste and giving real value for money

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: ...Paula Foulds..... |
| | | Date: ... 13 December 2006..... |
| Monitoring Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: ...Helen White..... |
| | | Date: ... 13 December 2006..... |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Marilyn Vertes, Senior Professional, People First Strategic Services
 Tel: 0208 424 1922 (Ext 2922)

Background Papers

LIFT/PFI Project Cabinet Report 15 December 2005
 Minutes of HOST Panel Meeting 27 March 2006

| | | |
|----|--------------|----|
| 1. | Consultation | NO |
|----|--------------|----|

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | Not Applicable |



| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | Corporate Parenting Panel |
| Key Decision: (Executive-side only) | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Paul Clark, Director of Children's Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Cllr Janet Mote, People First – Children's Services |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1 – Draft Terms of Reference |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out a proposal to establish a Corporate Parenting Panel to enable the Council to fulfil its duties as Corporate Parent to Children Looked After by the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet is requested to:

1. To establish a Corporate Parenting Panel as an Advisory Panel to Cabinet to meet on a quarterly basis
2. To establish the Panel as a proportionate body comprising 6 Elected Members and Reserves and to appoint a Chair to Panel
3. To agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Panel attached as Appendix 1

REASON:

As requested by Elected Members attending the Corporate Parenting Committee of 25 October 2005 and 20 April 2006 to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibility as Corporate Parent.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

1. Background

- 1.1. Corporate parenting can be described as the best efforts of the local authority to care for, nurture, educate and support children and young people who are looked after; i.e. to make sure that they receive the care that would normally be offered by their family so that they achieve their potential.
- 1.2. Sir William Utting in his report 'Children in the Public Care' (1991) saw a positive benefit in members taking a personal involvement and retaining personal oversight of the way in which the local authorities responsibilities are discharged.
- 1.3. The Quality Protects Programme was launched in September 1998 and a special grant of £885m over 5 years was allocated to councils with social services responsibilities. In addition to improvement and quality, a central part of Quality Protects has been an emphasis on the role of councillors as "corporate parents" to their authority's looked after children.
- 1.4. The Social Exclusion Unit report 'A Better education for children in care' (2003) highlighted the responsibility of the whole local authority, not just Children's Services departments, to act as 'corporate parent' for children in care.
- 1.5. In 2003 the DfES published 'If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent.'
- 1.6. In 2005 the Government published 'statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004'. This includes a vital leadership role for the Lead Member for Children's Services and places a responsibility on them, alongside other councillors, to ensure that the local authority acts as the corporate parent for all its looked after children.
- 1.7. A Corporate Parenting Group was established in its current format in 2000. Over this period the annual cycle of meetings has evolved to include a quarterly business meeting, 2 briefing meetings and 2 events involving young people. 15 Elected Members had indicated they wished to be included on the circulation list for agendas and papers for the business and briefing meetings. All Councillors would normally be invited to attend events involving young people, including the annual celebration of achievement event for children looked after.
- 1.8. The last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee was held on 20 April 2006. Councillor Davine chaired the Committee with cross-party representation at meetings.
- 1.9. Elected Members attending the Committee had previously expressed their desire for the Corporate Parenting Committee to be constituted as

an Advisory Panel to the Council. At the meetings held on 25 October 2005 and 20 April 2006 the Director of Children's Services was asked to submit a report to Cabinet to this effect.

2. Details of the Proposal

2.1. The reports proposes the establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel to enable the Council to fulfil its duties as Corporate Parent to Children Looked After by the Council. The Council as a whole is the Corporate Parent, and Councillors have a key role in that. Being a good Corporate Parent means that we should:

- Accept responsibility for children in the Council's care;
- Make their needs a priority;
- Seek for them the same outcomes as any good parent would want for their own children.

2.2. The role of a Corporate Parent is to find out who and where these children are and to make sure that the Council is doing its best to help them.

2.3. As a Corporate Parent, Councillors have a right and a duty to question their authority about this group of children, with executive and scrutiny functions providing avenues through which to do this.

2.4. The draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) sets out the role of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

3. Options considered

3.1. Consideration was given to retaining the Corporate Parenting Committee on its existing basis. Elected Members were of the view that establishment of a Corporate Parenting Panel as an advisory panel would publicly demonstrate the Council's commitment to fulfil its Corporate Parenting role. It would also place the Panel formally on the Executive side, and differentiate it clearly from the Scrutiny function.

4. Consultation

4.1. None undertaken

5. Financial Implications

5.1. The costs associated with implementing this proposal will be contained within existing budgets.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. There are no legal implications arising from this report

7. Equalities Impact

7.1. This report deals throughout with equality issues for Children Looked After, Children in Need and those on the Child Protection Register.

8. Corporate Priorities

8.1. This report addresses the Corporate Priorities of Making Harrow Safe, Sound and Supportive and Empowering Harrow Youth.

9. Key Performance Indicators

9.1. The Corporate Parenting Panel will receive regular progress reports on Key Performance Indicators appertaining to Children Looked After, Children on the Child Protection Register and Children in Need.

10. Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

10.1. This report deals throughout with the needs of a group of children and young people who are amongst the most vulnerable and at risk in Harrow.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Paula Foulds Date: 17 October 2006 |
| Monitoring Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Name: Sharon Clarke Date: 19 October 2006 |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

Mark Gillett
Group Manager Plus – Commissioning, Strategic Planning and Health Integration
mark.gillett@harrow.gov.uk
020 8424 1911

Background Papers:

1. Children in the Public Care' (1991)
2. A Better education for children in care' (2003)
3. If this were my child... A councillor's guide to being a good corporate parent (2003)
4. Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (2005)

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8424 1911

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1. | Consultation | NO |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | 1, 5 |

Corporate Parenting Panel

Draft Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. To ensure that the Council is fulfilling its duties towards Looked After Children corporately and in partnership with other statutory agencies.
2. To consider matters referred to the Panel within its terms of reference and to make recommendations to Cabinet/Portfolio Holder as appropriate including:
 - a. Approving annually the Statement of Purpose for the Adoption Service
 - b. Approving annually the Statement of Purpose for the Fostering Service

Role of the Panel

1. To take an overview of the Council's and partner agencies responsibilities towards looked after children
2. To examine ways in which the Council as a whole and partner agencies can improve the life chances of looked after children and care leavers.
3. Ensure there are good joint working arrangements between council departments and partner agencies.
4. To provide a forum for Children Looked After (CLA) to participate and influence policy and enable CLA to have opportunity to talk about issues relating to their own direct experiences of services they have received. Hence the Board will ensure that the positive experiences/services are maintained and lessons are learnt and changes made in the areas that require improvements.
5. To comment on and contribute to plans, policies and strategies for looked after children and make appropriate recommendations for action.
6. To have a monitoring role, by receiving regular progress reports on a number of key PI's e.g. educational attainment (including implementation of Personal Education Plans), health assessments and implementation of Local Area Agreements for CLA.
7. Monitor the plans/needs of children in Secure Accommodation.
8. To receive regular reports on the needs of care leavers including employment, further education, training and housing.
9. To receive annual reports on the following services
 - Adoption
 - Fostering
 - Complaints
10. To meet with CLA and their carers on a regular basis to consult and celebrate achievements, festivals etc.
11. To manage and arrange Member visits to
 - Children's Homes
 - Foster Placements
 - Frontline Services (as indicated in the Victoria Climbié Audit)

Membership

The Corporate Parenting panel will comprise:

A proportionate number of 6 Elected Members

Service Users, Carers and Schools (Non-Voting)

- 2 Children Looked After
- 2 Foster Carers
- 1 Designated Teacher

Senior Officers (advisors to the Panel – to attend as appropriate to the work of the Panel)

- Director of Children's Services
- Group Manager + Children and Families
- Group Manager Safeguarding and Family Support
- Group Manager Fostering, Adoption and Residential Care
- Senior Professional (Inclusion)
- Principal Educational Psychologist
- Senior Coordinator (Children Looked After)

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| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 th January 2007 |
| Subject: | Disposal of former Allotments at Kenmore Road |
| Key Decision: | Yes |
| Responsible Officer: | Andrew Trehern Executive Director (Urban Living) |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Chris Mote, Portfolio Holder for Property |
| Exempt: | No – Part 1 |
| Enclosures: | Site Plan |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out details of this vacant former allotments site and proposals to dispose of the site for best consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet authorise the Executive Director (Urban Living) to negotiate the best possible price for the sale of the site.

Authority be delegated to the Executive Director (Urban Living) to consider and arbitrate on any objections received following advertisement of the proposed disposal

REASON: To enable a redundant site to be sold raising a capital receipt for the Council at best consideration.

The proposal is consistent with the Council's new Corporate priority of tackling waste and giving real value for money.

SECTION 2 – REPORT

The Land was acquired by the London Borough of Harrow from London County Council in June 1959 for the purposes of open space under the Public Health Act 1875 and the Allotments Acts 1908/1950.

The site has an area of approximately 0.611 of an acre and is located adjacent and immediately to the south of Kenmore Playground.

The site was identified as part of a possible location for the development of an LIFT/PFI Scheme including a PCT element. However it is now deemed surplus to requirements as the location of the Neighbourhood Resource Centre without PCT involvement is to be located adjacent to the allotment site on part of Kenmore Playground. This ensures maximum use of the overall site.

The site has been vacant and unused since at least early 2003 and with the fall in demand for allotments application was made to have its statutory allotment designation released which was granted in 2005 by the Secretary of State specifically for the proposed LIFT scheme in conjunction with Harrow Primary Care Trust.

Legal have now made a further application for release given the proposed change of use.

The site whilst adjacent to Kenmore playground is nevertheless in a predominantly residential area of mainly former council residential properties and the site is considered appropriate for residential development.

Costs of disposal will include legal and agents fees.

Ward Councillors have been consulted on the proposal to dispose of the site for residential development.

Financial Implications

The proposed disposal will generate a capital receipt for the Council. All reasonable legal and agent's costs will be offset against this capital receipt.

Legal Implications

The Land is held by the Council under the Allotment Act. Accordingly it will be necessary for the Council to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State prior to disposal of the property.

Subject to this the Council has the power under Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 to sell the land.

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may dispose of any land it owns if it obtains a consideration which is the best that can be reasonably obtained. This is usually demonstrated by extensive marketing of the property and acceptance of the best price or by disposal at auction.

Where this is not being received, the Council must either rely on the general consent issued by the Secretary of State if applicable or obtain the ad hoc consent of the Secretary of State for the disposal.

As the land forms part of an open space the Council is required under Section 123 (2A) Local Government 1972 to advertise the proposed disposal for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated and to consider any objections to the proposed disposal before making the disposal.

Equalities Impact

None

Community Safety (s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The development of this overgrown disused site will removal a potential source of crime and vandalism

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> / | Name: Anil Nagpal |
| | | Date: 20 th December 2006 |
| Monitoring Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name: Ade Amisu |
| | | Date: 21 st December 2006 |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Andrew Connell , Portfolio Surveyor Capital Receipts dir tel no. 020 8424 1259 internal x2259.

Background Papers: The files are held with the report author

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Consultation | YES |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | D4 |



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HARROW COUNCIL LONDON
Urban Living

P.O.Box 39, Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow HA1 2XA
Telephone: 020 8863 5611

TITLE
Kenmore Road Allotments
Harrow

KEY
 ALLOTMENT

Drawn
JGR
File No.
406/404

Scale
1/1250
Date
14/12/06

ES No.
10030
Issue
B

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| | |
|--|--|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 January 2007 |
| Subject: | “Scores on the Doors” - A pan-London pilot Scheme to publicise the results of Food Safety Inspection results |
| Key Decision: (Executive-side only) | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Andrew Trehern, Executive Director, Urban Living |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Eileen Kinnear - Community Safety and Public Realm |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | None |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report proposes that Harrow Council participate in a London-Wide “Scores on the Doors” London Wide pilot scheme in partnership with the food Standards Agency. The scheme aims to publish food hygiene inspection information on the Internet and seeks Members agreement to the proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Agree that Harrow Council participation in a London-Wide “Scores on the Doors” pilot scheme as outlined in the body of the report.

REASON:

The project will be developed in line with national policy on publishing food hygiene information and improve consumer access to public information in accordance with Freedom of Information and Environmental Information legislation in a cost effective and efficient way.

SECTION 2 – REPORT

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 This report outlines the development of a London-Wide scheme for publishing food hygiene information developed in line with national policy on publishing food hygiene information. The Scheme is a national pilot supported by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS), London Councils (LC), Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and Association of London Environmental Health Managers (ALEHM) (Partners)
- 2.1.2 The scope of the scheme covers food businesses within the retail and catering sectors. For reasons of confidentiality the scheme will exclude home-based child minders and nurseries; approved premises; premises that are inspected through alternative inspection programmes.
- 2.1.3 The scoring mechanism will be based on compliance with the FSA Code of Practice with three key areas being scored in accordance with the Code; Confidence in Management, Compliance- Hygiene and safety, Compliance – premises structure.
- 2.1.4 The scores will be taken from the last primary inspection, with each local authority being responsible for their data and quality assurance checks prior to information upload into the “My London” web site. Appeals will be fed through the normal customer complaints process within each local authority. If the local authority needs additional support a panel of independent representatives will be formed to provide further advice on a case-by-case basis, supported by ALEHM, CIEH and LC.

3.0 Summary

- 3.1 The scheme directly supports corporate priority A1, “Making Harrow Safe Sound and supportive” and B2 “A Real Partnership with Harrow Businesses” and has been developed, in part, to the increasing desire from the public to access food hygiene information. The information is public information and there is a legal obligation on the Council to provide this under the Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations. Publishing the information will allow the council to legitimately signpost enquirers to the web site.
- 3.2 The benefits of the scheme are summarised as follows:
- Improving public access to Council Services and public information
 - Increasing the competitive edge between traders and caterers who seek increasing market share as a result of improved ratings.
 - Reducing the longer-term enforcement burden on the council as a result of increased self-regulation.
 - Increased progression towards the e-government agenda.
 - Saving Officer time responding to individual requests for information using modern IT

3.3 The Partner bodies have amassed technical and financial and IT resources to ensure that the project is managed and delivered on time, within budget and in a consistent and readily accessible format on the “My London “ web site.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no significant financial implications resulting from participation in the scheme. The year-on-year costs are £867 (equal for all LA’s) relating entirely to Internet web site charges for operation of the scheme through the ‘My London web site, and staffing costs associated with operating the scheme. There will also be approximately a day’s work for Capita to make the local IT interface changes. The direct cost and staffing resource can be accommodated within existing service budgets.

4.2 Majority of start-up costs will be funded by the FSA with the costs broken down as follows:

- IT development, tendering and implementation £30,000 (FSA/LA)
- Project management plus on costs £50,000 (FSA/LA)
- Business open days, information/advice support £30,000 (FSA/LA)
- Officer training costs, peer review £30,000 (FSA/LA)
- Publicity, consumer information £80,000 FSA/LA

Total Cost: £220,000

5.0 Implications if recommendations rejected

5.1 As all-33 London Boroughs are involved in the scheme including those that have previously attempted to pursue their own schemes. This enables Harrow to discharge risk and capitalise on benefits in an efficient, managed and consistent way across London. To pursue this independently, which we have to do at some point in the future, would involve increased costs and risk of failure.

6.0 Consultation

6.1 Initial contact with commercial and public sector professionals is broadly positive. The project steering group has consulted with the British Retail Consortium. The project board continues to work with “which” and representatives of the food industry. The experiences of the London boroughs that have experimented with similar schemes have also been considered.

6.2 Further consultation with commercial and industry stakeholders will take place as part of the development process. The board has also considered

research data from the FSA, USA and other European countries. London is also proposing to develop consumer and business consultation on a sub regional level to provide evidence for participating councils.

7.0 Equalities Impact

- 7.1 The scheme will be implemented across the borough and will apply equally to all relevant food premises. It will not target or exclude businesses on the basis of ethnicity or any other factor.
- 7.2 There is anecdotal evidence that the majority of relevant premises will fall into the pubs, restaurants and fast food takeaway categories, many of which will be owned, managed, or operated by members of minority groups. There is a possibility that members of these communities may appear to be disproportionately affected.
- 7.3 Training to support the implementation of the scheme will cover the importance of consistency during the inspection procedure to ensure business are not discriminated on the basis of ethnicity.

8.0 Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

- 8.1 Officers will incorporate the physical impact food businesses have on their environment by properly addressing waste storage and collection issues. Retail premises are increasingly subject to criminal activity, notability, shoplifting and robbery and Officers can provide advice and information to traders about crime reduction initiatives including “Ringmaster” and the “Retail Radio Link” and the use of CCTV

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Chief Finance Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name: Cleared by Myfanwy Barrett Date: 20 th December 2006 |
| Monitoring Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name: Hugh Peart Date: 20 th December 2006 |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

Taiq Chowdry, Service Manager, Community Safety Services, Ext 6236, email taiq.Chowdry@harrow.gov.uk

Gareth Llywelyn-Roberts, Head of Community Safety Services, Ext 6230, email gareth.Llywelyn-roberts@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

London food hygiene information publishing scheme (CIEH, October 2006)

London scheme for publishing food hygiene information (ALEHM, June 2006)

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8736 6236

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | Consultation | YES |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | A1, A2, B2, D5 |

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| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Meeting: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 18 th January 2006 |
| Subject: | Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service – Reorganisation of Service Structure |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Andrew Trehern – Executive Director Urban Living |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Eileen Kinnear – Public Realm and Community Safety |
| Status: | Part I |
| Encs: | Appendix 1 – Existing Staff Structure Appendix 2 - Proposed Staff Structure Appendix 3 – Budget Account for proposed Restructure |

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report informs Members of a proposal to reorganise the Trading Standards Service and seeks Members endorsement of the proposal.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Endorse the Reorganisation of the Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service as outlined in the body of the report.

REASON: Comparisons between this Service and neighbouring and CIPFA “family” authorities show that the cost of the Service per 1000 population is high. A study of the management structure identifies that it appears “top heavy” and should be targeted to reduce costs to provide Gershon and direct savings.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Trading Standards Service has been operated through a consortium agreement since the early 70's, originally tripartite between Harrow, Brent and Ealing. Ealing pulled out of the consortium in the early 90's leaving an agreement between Brent and Harrow.
- 1.2 All staff within the consortium are employed by Brent Council under Brent's terms and conditions. Under the consortium agreement the Director of Trading Standards, in consultation with the Harrow Commissioner, is solely responsible for the appointment, dismissal, management, organisation, structuring and deployment of staff employed in accordance with Brent Council's procedures. In this respect the reorganisation will be wholly under Brent Council's terms and conditions. However, agreement of the Harrow commissioner is required under the agreement and it is this approval that is sought through this report.
- 1.3 Comparisons between this Service and neighbouring and CIPFA "family" authorities as part of our Value for Money study shows that the cost of the Service per 1000 population is relatively high. However, a comparison of outputs shows that the consortium considerably outperforms other authorities. A study of the management structure within the Service identifies that it appears "top heavy" and should be targeted to enable staffing costs to be reduced to improve value for money and provide both Gershon and direct savings.
- 1.2 The proposal in the report directly deliver manifesto pledge D by improving the value for money of the service and D3, through providing efficient staffing to meet our needs.

2.0 Issue to be determined

- 2.1 This report concerns the staffing of the Trading Standards Service. The reorganisation affects the management structure and the customer services team. The principal change is to reduce the middle management team of eight to four officers. The enforcement work undertaken within the existing management team will be delivered by four new front-line enforcement staff, subject to budget reductions within the 2006/7 budget. Within the customer services team the two senior posts are replaced by one and the team are reduced by a further 0.6 full-time equivalent.
- 2.2 Approximately 87% of the total budget of the Service comprises the salaries and transport for staff; a further 9.6% of the budget is for support service such as accommodation, telephones, payroll, finance etc. This leaves only 3-4% of the budget for other supplies/services. To provide realistic savings the staffing costs are the only area that can be considered.
- 2.3 The pressures facing the Service which have led to these proposals for change are as follows:

- Budget pressures include the need to identify 2% Gershon efficiency savings as well as the MTBS savings requirements for 2007/2008.
- The Service is high cost in relation to other similar services provided by London Boroughs, and although outputs are also high the balance between management costs, support costs and the costs of front line service need to be reviewed to ensure continuing value for money.
- Demand is increasing in respect of a number of services including enforcement in relation to the sale of cigarettes, knives and alcohol to children, illegal street trading of pornographic/counterfeit DVD sales, second hand car sales etc. and resources need to be deployed more effectively.
- There is a need to ensure Brent Council's single status agreement is implemented within Trading Standards.
- There is a need to ensure the Trading Standards input into the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in each Council is maintained at upper threshold level and not adversely affected.
- There is a need to allow proceeds of crime enforcement to be carried out, which will provide substantial income in the future.

3.0 Options considered

- 3.1 The current staffing structure is attached as appendix 1 to this report. It can be seen that with a total of 34 staff, the middle management team includes eight officers (24%). Although it is recognised that some of these managers have a front-line enforcement role, this ratio is too high.
- 3.2 In comparison it is important that the level of statutory front line service delivery is maintained. Indeed further demands are being continually placed on the Service in terms of new legislation and different ways of working that require additional resources. It is also important for the future of the Service that increased income resulting from investigations under the Proceeds of Crime Act is maximised. This area of income, if explored effectively, could, as a minimum, fund at least two enforcement posts or provide direct savings within two to three years.
- 3.3 It is therefore proposed to reorganise the Service in the following way:
- to evaluate and re-grade the post of Director of Trading Standards,
 - to reduce the management team from eight officers to four officers,
 - to achieve this by deleting the Deputy Director posts and reducing the number of teams from five to three,
 - the three Team Leader posts will be evaluated and re-graded to reflect their new responsibilities,
 - the enforcement capacity previously provided from the management team will be provided by four enforcement posts to maintain service delivery at 2006-07 levels,

- to evaluate and re-grade the post of Senior Customer Services Officer to reflect additional duties,
- to reduce the number of Customer Services Officers from 2.6 to two,
- to introduce a Finance and Admin officer post which will also assist the two Customer Services Officers.

3.4 The only other options available are to retain the service in its current form, which is not a viable option within current service and budgetary pressures. There is an option available for the management savings to be made and for the new front line officers not to be put in place. The latter will be considered within the MTBS considerations separately to this report.

4.0 Option recommended and reasons for recommendation

4.1 The proposed structure is attached as appendix 2 to this report. In order to implement this new structure the following process will be adopted;

- All of the current middle manager posts, with the exception of the post of Director, will need to be deleted.
- The posts of Director and Senior Customer Services Officer will be job evaluated with new job descriptions.
- Those staff currently in post as Principal Officers will be ring fenced for interview for the new Team Leader/ Deputy Director posts.
- The two Deputy Director post holders will be ring fenced for interview for the newly evaluated Director post and the new Team Leader/Deputy Director posts.
- The Director will be ring fenced for interview for the re-evaluated Director post.
- The Customer Services Manager and Senior Customer Services Officer will be ring fenced for interview for the newly evaluated Senior Customer Services Officer post.
- The Customer Services Officers will be ring fenced for interview for the two Customer Services Officer posts.
- Any staff not successful in securing posts within the new structure will be subject to Brent Council's redundancy and redeployment scheme. A maximum of 4.6 full-time equivalent posts are potentially subject to redundancy.

4.2 The final structure will ensure the same number of staff on establishment as at present, but four manager posts will be replaced by four frontline staff. Under the new structure, the role of the four new managers will not be tasked with producing front-line enforcement work. Instead the four new enforcement officer posts will ensure the work currently being produced will be maintained and work relating, in particular, to illegal sales to children of alcohol, knives, cigarettes, solvents and spray cans; illegal street trading in counterfeit DVD'S etc. can be continued.

4.3 It should be noted that one of the proposed new enforcement officer posts will be dedicated to the Proceeds of Crime Act. There is very significant scope to ensure additional income under the Proceeds of Crime Act, which enables authorities to claim against the proceeds of crime following enforcement action. It is anticipated

that this income could potentially fund at least two enforcement officer posts after two years or provide for additional savings but the levels cannot be forecast.

- 4.4 This reorganisation will ensure the Service will be better placed to deal with the demands that are currently placed upon it, will be structured in a more efficient way, forward looking with the ability to generate additional income.
- 4.5 In order to provide the necessary savings required for 2007/8, this reorganisation will need to be implemented by 31st March 2007. In order to carry out any necessary interviews and notice to be given to any member of staff subject to Brent Council's redundancy procedure, the process described above has been commenced and the statutory redundancy notices have been issued.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 This reorganisation is being considered to address the Gershon report, which recommends all local government authorities produce efficiency savings of 2% per year, and in particular the budget reductions required for 2007/8 and beyond. It will also address "single status" issues across each council.
- 5.2 A breakdown of the budget outlining the new service structure is attached at appendix 3. It is anticipated that the reorganisation will produce savings of £65,369 for the consortium; £36,110 for Brent, 3.3% savings on required budget for 2007/8 and £29,259 for Harrow, 3.4% savings (all eligible as Gershon) on required budget for 2007/8. These figures incorporate redundancy and pension costs.
- 5.3 The one-off redundancy payments to be paid in year 2006/7 are £138,826 for the consortia, £76,687.48 for Brent and £62,138.52 for Harrow. These costs are offset against in year savings due to vacancies and do not have any impact on the year on year savings or provide for a long-term financial commitment.
- 5.4 In effect this means that there will be no requirement for inflationary growth to be provided on this provision, which will directly support the 2007/8 MTBS reductions. It should be noted that the 2007/8 draft budget contains the proposal to reduce the staffing compliment by one enforcement officer. This does not affect the content of this report but will require a reduction in front line enforcement activity as outlined in the relevant budget reports.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 All staff within the consortium are employed by Brent Council under Brent's terms and conditions. Under the consortium agreement the Director of Trading Standards, in consultation with the Harrow Commissioner, is solely responsible for the appointment, dismissal, management, organisation, structuring and deployment of staff employed in accordance with Brent Council's procedures.
- 6.2 In this respect the reorganisation will be wholly under Brent Council's terms and conditions but requires the Harrow commissioner's approval under the agreement.

- 6.2 The agreement between Brent and Harrow (for joint arrangements under section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the discharge of functions as local weights and measures authorities) provides for the cost of redundancies resulting from a reorganisation to be borne by Brent and Harrow in the same proportions as the apportionable costs (as defined in the agreement) are apportioned between the councils in the subject year. The costs of litigation may also be apportioned between the two councils.
- 6.3 It is understood that the staff of the consortium have never been employed at Harrow Council and that, accordingly, Harrow does not have any additional liabilities to staff that might have arisen on transfer of staff into the consortium, or from undertakings and guarantees provided upon transfer of staff.
- 6.4 The council is a local weights and measures authority and has duties as such under a wide variety of legislation. It is important that the reorganisation does not result in any failure by the council to carry out its legislative duties.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 The process and proposals have been fully consulted on with staff through a formal process, which completed in late November. There were no significant objections received and those made were in the form of commentaries rather than direct objections.

8.0 Equalities Impact consideration

- 8.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening by Brent's equalities team and officers believe that there are no diversity implications.

9.0 Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

- 9.1 The Trading Standards Service is an important contributor to Community safety through its enforcement work, especially with respect to under age sales and enforcement of issues such as counterfeit goods. It also has a significant input into Licensing services and provision, as it is a Statutory Consultee. The report addresses the need for the partnership to maintain and enhance the enforcement provision and directly supports the Crime and Disorder Strategy priorities.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Chief Financial Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Anil Nagpal |
| Monitoring Officer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | David Galpin |

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

Michael Read Commissioner London Borough of Brent

Gareth Llywelyn-Roberts, Commissioner London Borough of Harrow

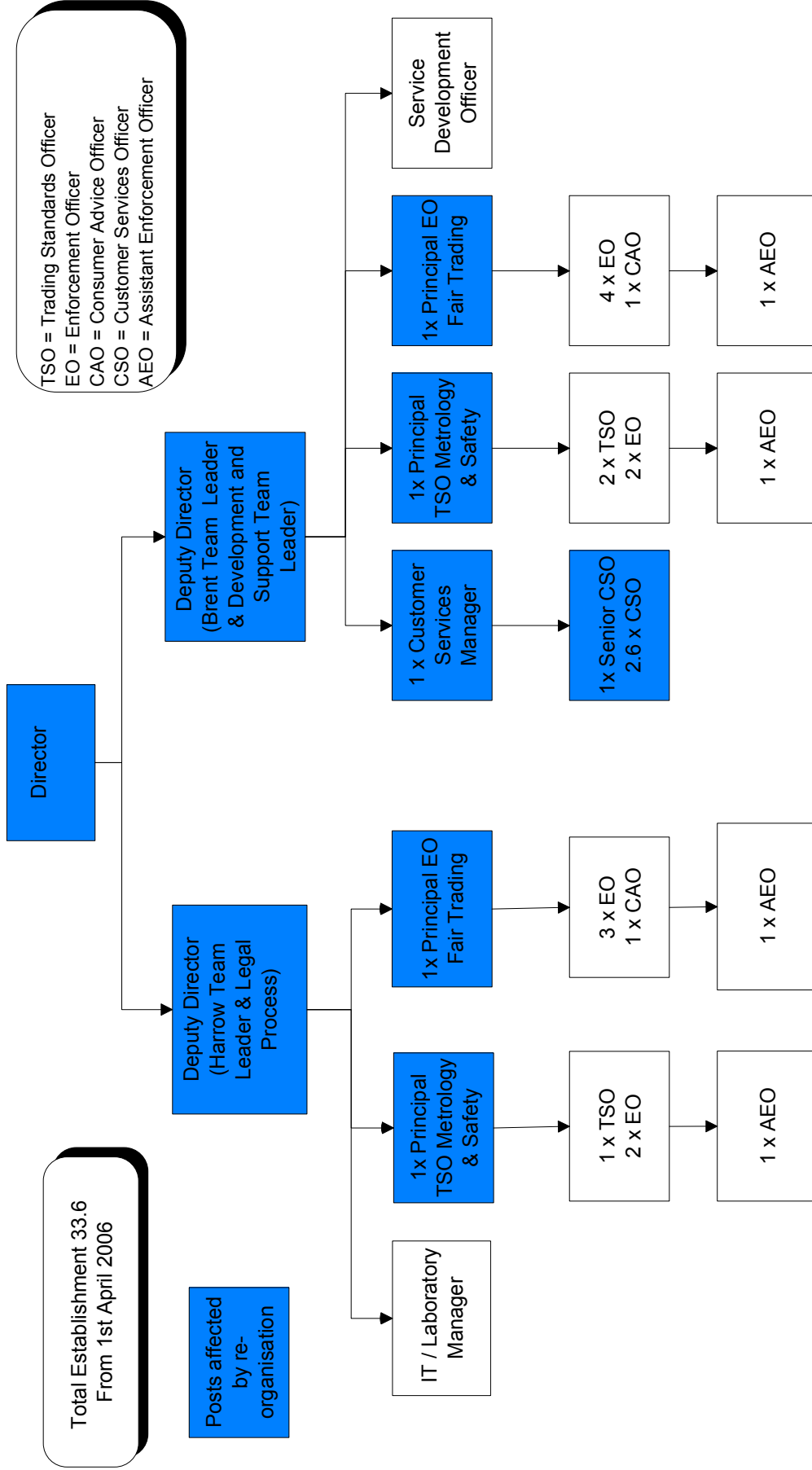
Background Papers:

Trading Standards reorganisation file - Any person wishing to inspect the above should contact Michael Read, Assistant Director, Environment and Culture, Third Floor, Brent House, High Road, Wembley, telephone 020 8937 5302.

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

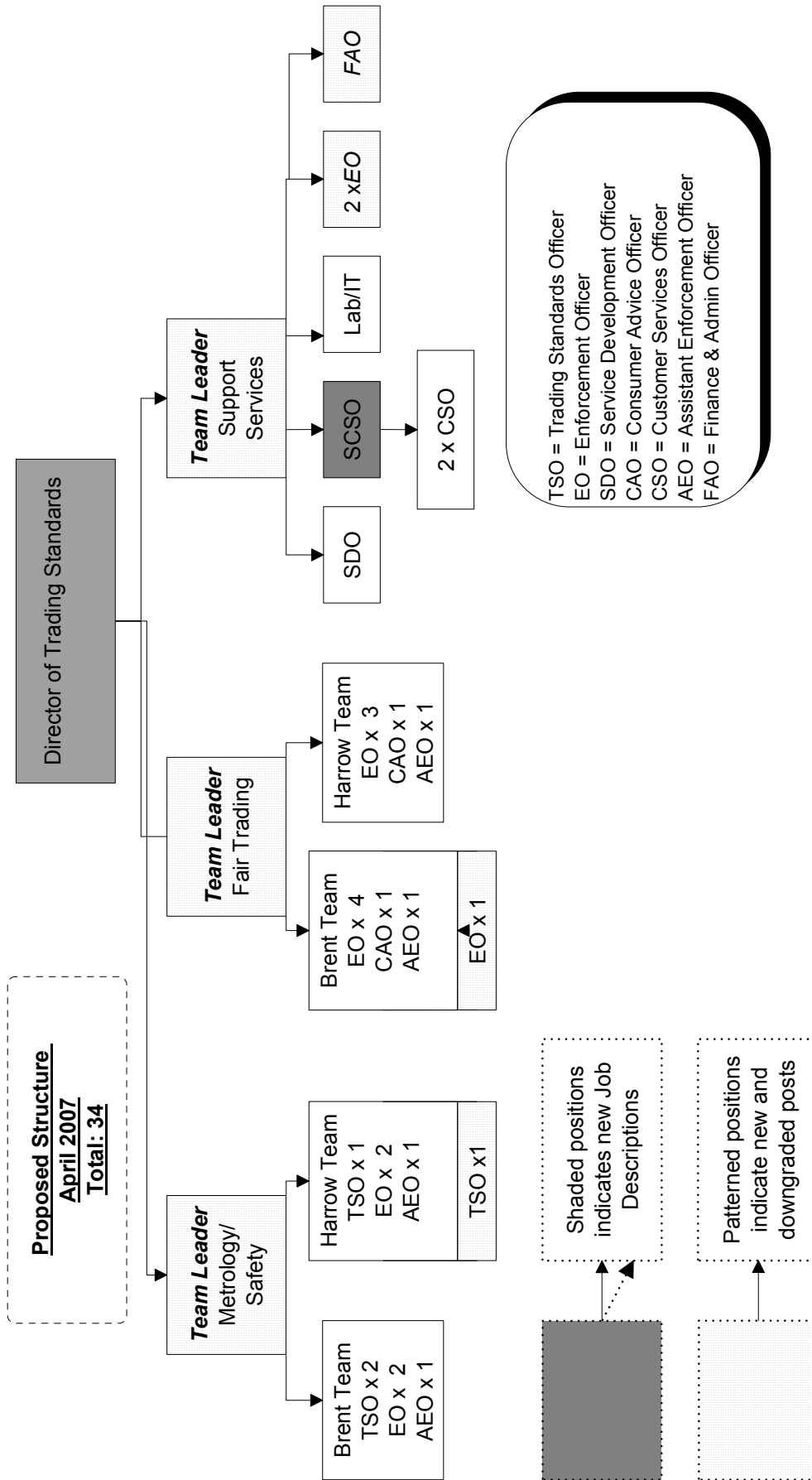
| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Consultation | YES |
| 2. | Corporate Priorities | YES |
| 3. | Community Safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998) | YES |
| 4. | Manifesto Pledge Reference Number | YES |

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APPENDIX 2
Trading Standards Proposed Structure



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Reorganisation of Trading Standards August 2006 wef 1/4/07

| <u>Savings - Posts affected</u> | Post number | Grade | Salary saving(2007/8)figs) £ | Lease car saving £ | PRP/Other saving £ | TOTAL £ | Comments |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|---|
| Director | N7000 | SpD | 87365 | 4812 | 11140 | 103317 | New JD+JE-postholder and deputies ringfenced for new post |
| Deputy Director | N7001 | PO8/9 | 70661 | 5225 | 3000 | 78886 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Director/Team Leader posts |
| Deputy Director | N7002 | PO8/9 | 70661 | 5379 | 3000 | 79040 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Director/Team Leader posts |
| Principal Trading Standards Officer | N7003 | PO5/6 | 59469 | 1872 | 2001 | 63342 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Team Leader posts |
| Principal Trading Standards Officer | N7004 | PO5/6 | 60954 | 1620 | 2110 | 64684 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Team Leader posts |
| Principal Enforcement Officer | N7007 | PO5/6 | 62137 | 1872 | | 64009 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Team Leader posts |
| Principal Enforcement Officer | N7008 | PO5/6 | 62137 | 1620 | | 63757 | Post to be deleted-postholder ringfenced for new Team Leader posts |
| Customer Services Manager | N7015 | PO2/3 | 47245 | 200 | | 47445 | Post to be deleted |
| Customer Services Officer (0.6 post) | N7031 | Scale5/6 | 19301 | | | 19301 | Post to be deleted |
| | | | | | | 583781 | |

Total savings

New Costs - Post affected

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------------|-------|------|------|--------|---|
| Director | N7000 | Hay 5 | 87833 | 1872 | | 89705 | New JD+JE post ring fenced to existing Director and Dep Directors |
| Deputy Director | N7001 | PO7/8 | 69699 | 1872 | | 71571 | New post - ring fenced to existing Deputies+ Principal officers |
| Team Leader | N7002 | PO7/8 | 65930 | 1872 | | 67802 | New post - ring fenced to existing Deputies+ Principal officers |
| Team Leader | N7003 | PO7/8 | 65930 | 1620 | | 67550 | New post - ring fenced to existing Deputies+ Principal officers |
| Enforcement Officer | new | SO2/PO2/PO3 | 84295 | 3744 | 5846 | 93885 | 2 New enforcement posts -to be advertised |
| Enforcement Officer | new | SO2/PO2 | 80934 | 3240 | 2500 | 86674 | 2 New enforcement posts -to be advertised |
| Finance and Admin Officer | new | SO1 | 37441 | | | 37441 | New post- to be advertised |
| Senior Customer Services Officer | N7036 | PO1/PO2 | 3584 | 200 | | 3784 | New JD+JE cost is difference between existing grade and new grade |
| | | | | | | 518412 | |

Total new costs

115

Consortium savings

Brent savings
Harrow savings

Other New Costs (one off)

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|---|
| Redundancy Payments | | | | | | 36109.84 | |
| | | | | | | 29259.16 | |
| | | | | | | 138826 | Redundancy payments to be paid in year 2006/7 |
| | | | | | | 76687.48 | |
| | | | | | | 62138.52 | |

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