
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2007

Chairman: * Councillor Chris Mote

Councillors: * David Ashton * Janet Mote
* Marilyn Ashton * Paul Osborn
* Mrs Camilla Bath * Mrs Anjana Patel
* Miss Christine Bednell * Eric Silver
* Susan Hall

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS**RECOMMENDATION I - Key Decision - Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

The Corporate Director (Community and Environment) introduced the report which set out the background to the development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

That (1) the Rights of Way Improvement Plan be approved;

(2) the publication of the Plan on Harrow's website be agreed;

(3) the Plan be reassessed within 10 years;

(4) authority be delegated to the Environment Services Portfolio Holder to amend the timetable for implementation of the Statement of Action based on available funding opportunities;

(5) authority be delegated to the Environment Services Portfolio Holder to develop the programme of work required to implement the Statement of Action taking into account available resources.

Reason for Recommendation: This is a statutory plan that sets out a Borough wide strategy for the future of rights of way in Harrow. The Borough is legally required to have published the Plan by November 2007.

PART II - MINUTES292. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared.

293. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2007 and 25 July 2007, be taken as read and signed as correct records.

294. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That all business be considered with the press and public present.

295. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received.

296. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following public questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Yvonne Lee

Asked of: Councillor Eric Silver, Adult Services

Question: We understand that the standard of 28 days from referral to assessment is a legal requirement for the older service user but a target for all service user groups. Please can you tell us what proportion of assessment for people with learning disabilities meet this target and what the average waiting time for an assessment for person with a learning disability is?

2.

Questioner: Angela Dias

Asked of: Councillor Eric Silver, Adult Services

Question: Service users in Harrow have expressed concerns that the quality of assessments has fallen recently, and this fact is causing many people some distress. Given that the Council has no absolute definition of what 'critical' or 'substantial' means, and that care managers are being forced to assess people's needs in a different way than they have previously worked in relation to current cost pressures, how is this being addressed in a meaningful way?

[Notes: (i) An oral answer was provided to each of these questions

(ii) under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 16.4, questioner 1 asked a supplementary question which was answered].

297. **Councillor Question Time:**

RESOLVED: To note the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Margaret Davine

Asked of: Councillor Eric Silver, Portfolio Holder for Adult Services

Question: At the meetings of the Cabinet on July 19/25 it was agreed that £250K should be allocated to the Voluntary Sector for helping people whose care needs were classified as substantial. Could Cllr Silver say what steps have been taken in preparation to implement this decision and, in particular, could he indicate what consultations have taken place with stakeholders in the Voluntary Sector and the criteria which will be used to determine what

organisations and which people will be eligible to receiving this money from this funding?

2.

Questioner: Councillor Margaret Davine

Asked of: Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: Could Cllr Patel give an update on the current position concerning the future of Flash Musicals?

3.

Questioner: Councillor Keith Ferry

Asked of: Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Business Support

Question: Could Cllr Paul Osborn confirm that, as very widely predicted, that the Council's whole communications budget has been awarded to Westminster City Council and that they were the sole group who actually tendered for this?

[Note: An oral answer was provided to each of these questions. Under the provisions of Rule 17.4, all questioners asked a supplementary to each question, which were also answered].

298. **Forward Plan 1 October 2007 - 31 January 2008:**

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 October 2007 – 31 January 2008.

299. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no reports to be considered.

300. **Key Decision - Strategic Approach to School Organisation:**

The Director of Schools and Children's Development introduced the report which outlined the reasons for considering a strategic approach to school organisation at this time and proposed a framework for seeking stakeholder support for a way forward.

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development reported that formal consultation carried out in 2002 with stakeholders had identified wide support for the proposed changes, and further extensive consultation was planned. It was anticipated that the proposed change would assist with retention of children in the Borough's schools past primary age. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services echoed her support for the proposed changes which she felt would enhance Harrow's highly valued and diverse community.

RESOLVED: That (1) commitment be affirmed to implementing a change in the age of transfer from 12 to 11 years;

(2) a stakeholder reference group be established;

(3) the submission of a revised Building Schools for the Future (BSF) bid in accordance with the Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance be agreed;

(4) an amended amalgamation policy be agreed.

Reason for Decision: To deliver school re-organisation so that Harrow schools are in line with the national agenda.

301. **Key Decision - Rights of Way Improvement Plan:**
(See Recommendation I).

302. **Integrated Planning 2008-09 to 2010-11:**

The Corporate Director (Finance) introduced the report which provided an update on progress in relation to Integrated Planning for 2008-09 to 2010-11. She highlighted the

current position in relation to the funding gap and outlined the pressures facing the Council and the strategies which were being adopted to close the gap.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Coordination explained that the predicted funding gap for future years was subject to change as it was based on an assumed 1% grant increase. He reported that next year, for the first time, the Corporate Plan would be produced coterminously with the budget, which would ensure that the Council's priorities were reflected in the budget.

Members thanked the Corporate Director (Finance) for a transparent and clear report.

RESOLVED: That the progress to date be noted and the strategy for closing the funding gaps be endorsed.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council adheres to the agreed timetable for integrated planning, culminating in the approval of the corporate plan and medium term financial strategy in February 2008.

303. **Quarter 1 Revenue and Capital Monitoring as at 30 June 2007:**

The Corporate Director (Finance) introduced the report which set out the monitoring of Council's revenue and capital budgets and is critical to effective financial management of the Authority. Regular budget monitoring remains critical for 2007-2008 given the low level of reserves. She highlighted that £1m would be added to the reserves which would provide the Council with a firmer financial footing.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Coordination reported that the Budget Review Working Group had considered the report and asked detailed questions.

RESOLVED: That (1) the current revenue and capital monitoring position at the end of the first quarter for 2007-2008 be noted;

(2) the strategy for ensuring that the Council comes in on budget this year;

(3) the virements summarised in paragraph 17 be approved.

Reason for Decision: To monitor effectively the Council's revenue and capital budgets.

304. **Strategic Performance Report – Quarter 1 2007/08:**

The Corporate Director (Strategy and Business Support) introduced the report, which summarised Council and service performance against key measures and drew attention to areas requiring action. She highlighted that good overall progress was being made and advised that the approach to the Strategic Performance Report would be revised in light of the Corporate Spending Review.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Business Support emphasised the importance of putting performance management at the heart of the Council's work to ensure that high standards were achieved and maintained. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders for Adult Services, Children's Services, Housing and Environment Services highlighted key achievements in their areas.

RESOLVED: That (1) Portfolio Holders be requested to work with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges and receive monthly updates;

(2) the report be noted and to identify any changes it wishes to see in future reports.

Reason for Decision: To enable Cabinet to be informed of performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.32 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRIS MOTE
Chairman