



# **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2007  
7.30 PM**

**SUB-COMMITTEE AGENDA (SCRUTINY)**

**COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2,  
HARROW CIVIC CENTRE**

**MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3)**

**Chairman: Councillor Stanley Sheinwald**

**Councillors:**

**Ashok Kulkarni  
Mrs Vina Mithani  
Dinesh Solanki**

**Ms Nana Asante  
Graham Henson  
Jerry Miles (VC)**

**Reserve Members:**

**1. Yogesh Teli  
2. Jeremy Zeid  
3. Anthony Seymour  
4. Mrs Janet Cowan**

**1. Mano Dharmarajah  
2. Phillip O'Dell  
3. Dhirajlal Lavingia**

**Issued by the Democratic Services Section,  
Legal and Governance Services Department**

**Contact: Paul Tenconi, Democratic Services Officer  
Tel: 020 8424 1264 E-mail: paul.tenconi@harrow.gov.uk**

***NOTE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE MEETING:  
IF YOU WISH TO DISPOSE OF THIS AGENDA, PLEASE LEAVE IT BEHIND AFTER THE MEETING.  
IT WILL BE COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING.***

## **HARROW COUNCIL**

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 13 JUNE 2007**

#### **AGENDA - PART I**

1. **Appointment of Chairman:**

To note the appointment of Councillor Stanley Sheinwald at the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 May 2007 as Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman:**

To note the appointment of Councillor Jerry Miles at the Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 May 2007 as Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2007/08.

3. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the whole of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

4. **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.

5. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

To consider whether any of the items listed on the agenda should be considered with the press and public excluded on the grounds that it is thought likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that there would be disclosure of confidential information in breach of an obligation of confidence or of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

6. **Minutes:**  
That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2007 be deferred until bound in the Council Minute Volume.

[Note: The 28 March 2007 minutes are published on the Council's intranet and website].

7. **Public Questions:**  
To receive questions (if any) from local residents/organisations under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.

8. **Petitions:**  
To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.

9. **Deputations:**  
To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.

10. **References from Council and Other Committees/Panels:**  
To receive any references from Council and/or other Committees or Panels.

- Enc. 11. **Draft Housing Strategy:** (Pages 1 - 62)  
Report of the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing.

12. **Any Other Business:**  
Which the Chairman has decided is urgent and cannot otherwise be dealt with.

**AGENDA - PART II- Nil.**

This page is intentionally left blank



Meeting:	Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date:	13 June 2007
Subject:	Draft Housing Strategy
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Penny Furness-Smith, Corporate Director of Adults and Housing
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Camilla Bath, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Draft Housing Strategy 2007 Draft Housing Business Plan 2007

## **SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report sets out a draft of the council's Housing Strategy.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is requested to consider the draft strategy and make comments on its content as appropriate.

## SECTION 2 - REPORT

The Housing Strategy document is designed to cover the wider enabling responsibilities of the Council beyond the landlord service. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan is used to outline the Council's plans as a landlord for its own stock. Neither document fully met the Fit for Purpose criteria when assessed by the Government Office for London (GOL) in 2002.

Work on developing the Strategy and Business Plan has been proceeding for some time. Harrow staff have been involved in project planning the production of the documents and identifying key themes for inclusion in them. Staff absence has caused some delays in progress towards the timetable for delivering the documents to GOL agreed with them, and so recently we have appointed consultants (Tribal) to help us to prepare both the Strategy and the Business Plan.

### Timetable

We have agreed with GOL that the Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan will be submitted to them on 23 July 2007, so that they have time to assess it before the deadline for Fit for Purpose approval of the end of August 2007. This means that both documents will be considered by Cabinet on 19 July 2007.

### Position at 31 May 2007

Various key documents and tasks that will be needed to complete the work are still underway, although they will be completed in time for Cabinet to consider the Strategy and Business Plan. For example:

- A revised Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken but has yet to be finalised as we are in discussion with the providers on a number of issues where we require some adjustment of the report
- Revenue and capital forecasts are being reviewed by our consultants to ensure that they are still a reasonable basis for the Strategy and Plan

Further consultation with stakeholders is also needed, particularly with residents in the case of the HRA Business Plan (although a number of the key building blocks of the Plan have already been the subject of significant consultation with them, including the Options Appraisal and the proposed capital programme for meeting the Decent Homes Standard).

This means that the documents available for consideration by Scrutiny members are at a draft stage and have many gaps where more detailed work is required, or text or figures need to be reviewed. This is particularly the case with the HRA Business Plan, where we have commissioned Tribal to carry out the review of financial forecasts mentioned above. In the documents, gaps and outstanding queries are indicated by *text in italics*.

However, the documents as presented give a good indication of the structure of the final version and indicative contents for each section.

Members are requested to consider the draft strategy and to make comments as appropriate, in the context of national and regional policy and best practice in this area, particularly with regard to the requirement be “fit for purpose” within the terms set out by the central government through the Government Office for London (GOL).

Legal implications

Members are being asked to comment on the report as part of wider consultation on the Housing Strategy. This statutory consultation period will last 28 days, commencing at the beginning of June. The Strategy will then be considered by Cabinet, whereupon it will be submitted to GOL for a judgment to be made on its “fitness for purpose”.

Financial implications

The Strategy is in draft form. Members are being asked to comment on its contents and as such decisions cannot be taken at the moment that would have financial implications.

**SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE**

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 01/06/07		
Name: Helen White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 01/06/07		

**SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Contact:** Carol Yarde, Area Manager, 020 8420 9660

**Background Papers:** None

**IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?**

1.	Consultation	N/A
2.	Corporate Priorities	N/A
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	

This page is intentionally left blank



# HARROW HOUSING STRATEGY

## Contents Page

### **Introductory section**

Introduction, overview & consultation

### **Strategic context**

The corporate, national, regional & sub-regional priorities

Partnership working

Stock condition analysis

Housing needs analysis

Resources available

### **Our strategy**

Evaluation of options for delivery of the strategy

Fulfilling the housing objectives for

- Meeting the needs & aspirations of vulnerable people
- Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation
- Improving neighbourhoods and quality of life
- Increasing housing supply
- Make better use of resources to deliver quality services

### **Making it happen**

Action Plan

Monitoring

### **Appendices**

## Introductory section

### Introduction, overview & consultation

#### What is the housing strategy?

The housing strategy is a 5-year plan for investment and service development across all types of housing in Harrow. It includes plans for:

- Private rented housing
- Owner occupied housing
- Council and housing association rented homes
- Intermediate housing – that is low cost home ownership or rented housing
- Supported housing for people with particular needs

The housing strategy must balance the needs and wishes of the residents of Harrow (owner-occupiers, tenants and housing applicants) so that we make best use of the resources we have. While the Council leads in developing the housing strategy, it can only do so in consultation with, and with the support of, other key stakeholders such as customers, members of the Harrow Partnership, government agencies and other local authorities and their representatives. We realise that by working together we can be much more effective than by operating on our own.

#### The housing strategy is important because it:

- Sets out a 5 year plan for all types of housing in Harrow
- Supports the Council's key priorities and influences other plans
- Determines the amount of money available to spend on local housing schemes
- Is developed in consultation with all groups, individuals and organisations with an interest in Harrow's housing.

#### Borough profile

*(from Housing Needs Survey, stock condition surveys - all tenures, vitality report, CPA report)*

Harrow is one of London's most economically, culturally and ethnically attractive suburbs. It is an area that combines the fast pace of a lively business and commercial centre with the peace and quiet of the countryside.

The borough is located in the northwest of London and is 12 miles from central London. The 2001 census has shown that Harrow has an increasing population that has put pressure on the environment and need for housing. The population stood at 206,814 of which over 41% belonged to a minority ethnic group.

Harrow is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest borough in London with 214,000 residents and 82,250 households. *(compare with population increase with rest of London. Add inward and outward migration from housing needs survey info)*

Covering 50 square kilometres (20 Square miles), Harrow is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest borough in London in terms of area but 21<sup>st</sup> in terms of size of population (Source: Government 2005 mid-year population estimates)

Harrow is one of eight local authorities nationally with more residents of ethnic minorities than white British people. Government mid 2004 population estimates show that 52% of Harrows population is of ethnic minority the 8<sup>th</sup> highest proportion in England. *(this contradicts % information above)*

Harrow has a high proportion of green space and just over a fifth of the green is designated Green Belt.

Population density- 12<sup>th</sup> largest borough in London- below London average but above outer London average (*repetition*). The least densely populated wards are in the north of the borough- Canons, Stanmore Park and Harrow Weald. The most densely populated wards are Kenton East, Wealdstone, Roxbourne and Edgware.

Nearly 6% of Harrows households are lone parent households with dependent children; the level of lone-parent households is significantly below both the London and national levels.

Harrow has the lowest proportion of single-person households in London.

Deprivation 31<sup>st</sup> out of the 33 London Boroughs, 17<sup>th</sup> out of 19 outer London Boroughs  
Multiple deprivation in Harrow is well below the national average and one of the lowest ranked in London and outer London.

Harrow combines areas of affluence with areas of acute deprivation. Wards in the north show high average incomes. In the south of Harrow, the Rayners Lane estate is in the most deprived 10% nationally.

Income - Harrow is worse than the national average for income deprivation but better than the London average.

Harrow's stock covers a wide range of dwellings including xxx (*add from stock condition survey. Add figure for overcrowding*).

*Add Break down of tenure for properties*

*Harrow has XXX areas – add distinctive features*

*Add deprivation score - income bands*

## **Consultation**

*What consultation took place to inform this strategy- insert here*

## Strategic context

### The corporate context

A Sustainable Community Plan for Harrow 2006-2020 is the corporate vision for Harrow. In this vision it states that Harrow will be a place that offers the best of capital and country and is loved by its residents. Harrow will be a desirable place to live, learn work and play. It would like to be recognised as one of the best London councils by 2012. We will:

- Celebrate what we have in common and capitalise on our diversity
- Have the lowest crime and fear of crime on London
- Be a place where people are healthy and stay healthy
- Work in collaboratively with partners and residents
- Be a leader in reducing carbon emissions
- Promote a mix of housing in distinctive neighbourhoods
- Be a place where children and young people are healthy and safe, fulfil their potential and help other people
- Have the premier town centre in north west London
- Be easy to get around
- Protect our green space
- Run efficient, accessible and high performing services
- Promote older people's independence

Our immediate priorities to support this vision are:

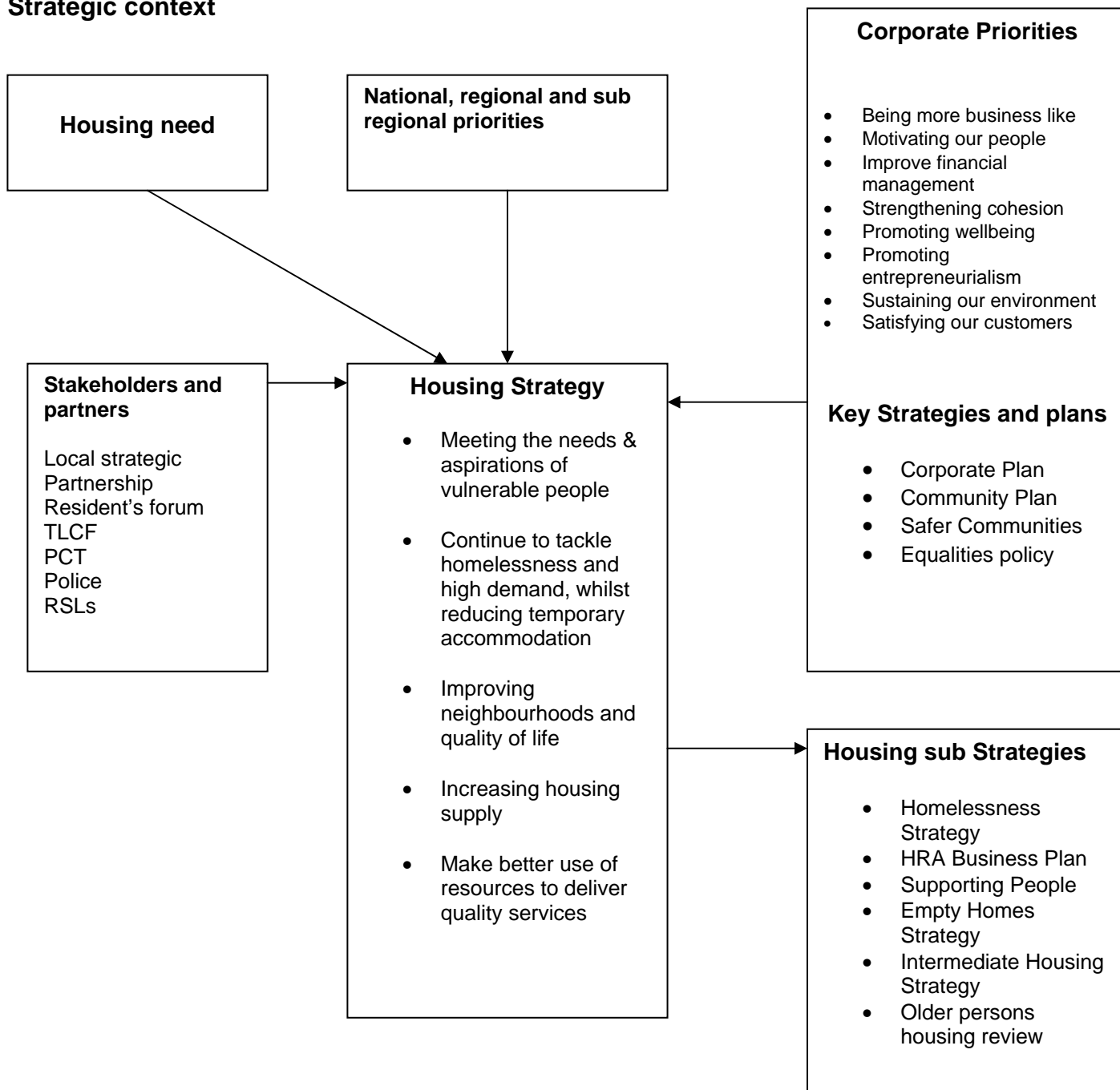
- Being more business like
- Motivating our people
- Improve financial management
- Strengthening cohesion
- Promoting wellbeing
- Promoting entrepreneurialism
- Sustaining our environment
- Satisfying our customers

Our Housing Strategy is an important vehicle for delivery and over the last year we have worked with elected members, corporate colleagues, residents and partners to develop a programme of activity to support the administration's priorities.

<b>Corporate priorities</b>	<b>Housing priorities</b> <i>(to be inserted from each chapter once priorities have been agreed)</i>
Being more business like	
Motivating our people	
Improve financial management	
Strengthening cohesion	
Promoting wellbeing	
Promoting entrepreneurialism	
Sustaining our environment	
Satisfying our customers	

This strategy also underpins and supports a number of departmental and borough-wide strategies, as illustrated in the following table:

## Strategic context



To achieve this vision the Council takes an integrated approach to its role as a strategic authority. Officers from relevant council departments are represented on various strategy groups and are responsible for ensuring that:

- There is a two way flow of information with corporate strategies being informed by service specific issues and vice versa
- The work required from each council service area is progressed to ensure that individual strategy objectives are achieved

*(add, including senior involvement in:  
strategic partnership boards  
Strategy Groups*

Sustainable Communities Board  
 Supporting People Board  
 Add relevance of senior support)

Add section on Local Strategic Partnership and neighbourhood renewal  
 Add reference to regeneration strategy and priorities, cross reference to last housing strategy  
 Add reference to HRA Business Plan and Corporate Capital Strategy (and asset management plan)?

**National, regional & sub-regional priorities**

The Council is involved at national, sub-regional and pan-London level. This through its activities with the Housing Corporation, London Councils (etc), and inter-action with central government via Communities and Local Government and Government Office for London. This is in addition to the Council’s representation and joint working with other boroughs (add some specific references e.g. Insert- cross-borough- Locata, joint gypsy and traveller research etc West London strategic alliance)

(From chapters add to this)

National, regional and sub-regional priorities	Councils contribution
Delivery of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of planning policies and powers</li> </ul>
Allocations policy and choice based lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOCATA</li> </ul>
Homelessness and homelessness prevention	
Supporting People	
Addressing the housing needs of the BME population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BME Housing Strategy put into place in 2002</li> <li>• Quarterly BME housing reference group meetings</li> </ul>
Delivering the Housing Service	
Anti-social behaviour	
Maximising the use of public sector stock	
Meeting the Decent Homes standard	
Working with the public sector	
Regeneration	
Add more	Add more

## **Partnership working**

*Look at strategic objectives of partner agencies*

*Add words re delivering strategy with support of organisations and local people*

*Add info re numbers and type of organisations consulted for the strategy*

*Add details of major partnerships*

*Add some examples of effectiveness of partnership working and impact on communities*

*(e.g. with RSLs – opportunity to mention 10 RSLs partners)*

*Cross reference to working with residents and tenants (HRA BP)*

## **Stock condition analysis**

*Add following for this section:*

*Private sector stock condition survey - SG*

*Housing Association stock – Housing Investment Programme (HIP) returns*

*Council Stock information – Ron Clift*

*Strategic response to dealing with shortfall of housing identified in the Housing Needs survey*



## Housing Needs Analysis

### Housing Needs Assessment

In 2006, the Council commissioned external research consultants to carry out a housing needs survey. The findings of this assessment, published in 2007, together with housing plans, inform the Council's Housing Strategy and determine the Council's priorities for meeting its strategic housing objectives.

The housing needs assessment considers:

- The demographic context of Harrow's housing need
- Indicators relating to housing supply
- A range of indicators of housing need including overcrowding, disrepair, unfitness and homelessness
- The needs of BME residents, older people, key workers
- An assessment of housing needs of people who have a disability or who are vulnerable for other reasons
- The extent to which housing need can be met 'in situ'
- The extent to which housing need can be met through affordable housing in the private sector

All of this information in relation to both the supply and need for affordable housing is finally considered within the 'balance sheet' model recommended by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) (previous ODPM) in its 2001 guidance on housing needs assessments. An assessment of the overall surplus or shortfall of affordable housing in Harrow is made.

#### Population Projections (*need GLA figures*)

Using Greater London Authority (GLA) population projections and information from the assessment of housing needs report:

- The number of households in Harrow is expected to increase from xxxxx households in XXX to xxxxx households in XXX
- The proportion of married couples and shared adult households is expected to xxxxxx and the proportion of lone parent, single person and co-habiting couples is expected to xxxx
- The most frequently occurring household type is married couple households at 42% in XXX but is expected to become xxxxx at xx% by XXX
- The average household size is XXX persons and it is projected to decrease?? As the number of single person households increases
- Housing mobility of XX% is a feature of Harrow and in terms of moves within the borough compared to moves into Harrow the ratio is XX
- Households who move into Harrow in the last xxx had a median income of £xxx and equity of £XX when compared to households that were planning to leave Harrow in the next XXX years who had a median income of £xxx and equity of £XXX

### Affordable housing

*To add*

#### Minimum purchasing power of households

*The Harrow housing needs survey estimates median average annual gross income including housing benefit as £xxxx. Lower quartile annual gross income is £xxxx. Median earnings of Harrow residents are XX% of the London average. Earnings for jobs in Harrow are XX% of the London average.*

*Land registry records show the lower quartile price of housing in Harrow is £XXX. The maximum mortgage that can be raised by those on average earning is £xxxx well short of the lower quartile price.*

When lower quartile earnings are compared to the lower quartile of housing we have a ration of approximately XXX

## Local housing market and supply

### Housing supply

The analysis of the local housing market has included information from all housing supply sources:

*Add*

### Housing demand

*Add*

### Supply and demand

*Special needs housing (change wording)*

*Accessible housing*

*Housing support*

*Delivering the service*

## Monitoring performance

### External assessment

*The Council is subject to both external and internal scrutiny. The government has introduced a system of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Harrow's CPA assessment, conducted by a team of external inspectors from a variety of local authority backgrounds, score was xxxx with housing services scoring XXX in December 2006. The council experienced a IdeA peer review in XXXXXX. Full copies of the XXXXX corporate assessment report is available at [www.XXXXXXXXXX](http://www.XXXXXXXXXX)*

The schedule of recent and forthcoming housing Best Value inspections are as follows (*add*):

Full copies of the inspection reports are available at [www.auditcommission.gov.uk](http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk)

Harrow believes in delivering quality services –*Charter marks?*

## Monitoring Performance

The Council has in place a comprehensive system of performance monitoring and monitors both year on year and with other local authorities through Housemark bench marking club. Information is produced on a regular basis to the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Housing Scrutiny Committee (*confirm this statement*).

Details of performance can be found in the relevant sections of this document. The following summarises the Council's overall performance:

- Stock condition
- New housing provision
- Affordable housing and effective allocation of social housing
- Housing support
- Accessible housing
- Community safety
- Homeownership
- Best use of stock
- Repairs and rent collection

*(add)*

## Resources available

*To be added*

## Our strategy

### Evaluation of options for delivery of the strategy

In considering options for the delivery of housing and housing related services the Council has taken into account:

- The exercise of its responsibilities within existing statutory frameworks such as planning regulations, financial requirement etc
- Procurement strategy
- Asset management strategy (*confirm*)
- Asset management plan (*confirm*)
- Value for money issues
- Locally and centrally determined service requirements
- Capacity, availability and track record of service providers to meet identified needs

There were a number of options available to Harrow to assist in raising funds necessary to meet government priorities, particularly the Decent Homes Standard. The Council conducted an options appraisal in 2005

*Insert re Option Appraisal, information from HRA BP re Decent Homes costs?*

*How much will it cost to get all stock up to Decent Homes standard*

*What have we transferred?*

*What is the programme for delivery?*

## Fulfilling the housing objectives

Chapters on

- Meeting the needs & aspirations of vulnerable people
- Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation
- Improving neighbourhoods and quality of life
- Increasing housing supply
- Make better use of resources to deliver quality services (*to follow*)

## Meeting the needs and aspirations of vulnerable people, especially older people.

### Aim

Our aim in Harrow is to meet the needs and aspirations of vulnerable people especially older people by enabling and maintaining independence and wellbeing by offering a choice of Housing Options. This will be achieved by delivering the key objectives listed below.

### Key Objectives

1. Enabling Independence for all vulnerable people across all tenures including those with Long Term conditions and those at risk of social exclusion, by delivering the Supporting People Strategy and the joint commissioning strategies.
2. Promoting Independence for Older People by reconfiguring services in line with the Older People's Housing review 2005 and the Supporting People 5 year strategy and Annual Plan 2007/08.

What do we mean by vulnerable people ?

When referring to vulnerable people we are generally talking about people who have needs in the following categories :

1. Older people.
2. People with Long term conditions eg Learning Disabilities
3. People who are socially excluded e.g. Offenders , Homlessness

Further details about the breakdown of these groups is detailed in the Supporting People strategy. ([weblink to the strategy](#))

### How we currently meet the housing needs and aspirations of vulnerable people especially older people

Harrow has a range of services that meet the housing needs of vulnerable and older people; these include:

- A range of Floating support provision
- Supported Housing options including sheltered accommodation, learning disability community support networks and refuge provision.
- Social Care contracts to deliver specialist housing.
- Staying Put Services - enabling older people to remain living independently in the private housing sector
- Locata + brief explanation of how it helps vulnerable people
- Homelessness Forum ditto
- Telecare ditto
- Self directed Care – individual budgets

Full details about the services are available through the Housing website ([weblink](#))

### 5 year - Action Plan.

In order to meet the two key objectives we will need to deliver against the following Actions:

### Achievements

Harrow's housing strategy addressed the aspirations of vulnerable people by setting targets relating to supported housing objectives.

There were three targets that have been met:

- Implementing the ODPM Supporting People framework for Harrow by 2003.
- Increased the number of supported places in Harrow by 110 units (2002-04) through a supported Housing strategy (JF to check)
- Developed a Learning Disability Housing strategy to meet Valuing People guidelines

There have been further key achievements in relation to meeting the needs and aspirations of vulnerable and older people since the 2002-07 Housing strategy

The Supporting People programme has been fully implemented resulting in:

- The development of a diverse range of Housing support services both accommodation based and floating support, see Appendix 1 for full details.
- The decommissioning of a number of services that were not of a suitable standard for vulnerable people in Harrow.
- The commissioning of new 'floating support' services for older owner occupiers, offenders and single homeless people as well as an expanded services for people with drug and alcohol issues.
- Procured the single homeless service as part of a cross authority initiative to ensure quality and value for money (VFM).

The Older Persons Housing review has been undertaken and recommendations have begun to be implemented. Achievements include :

- Commissioning a floating support service to support older owner occupiers to live in their own homes with a focus on BME groups
- Developing a matrix of sheltered housing criteria through a housing service user group to inform planned remodelling of services.
- Developing a bid for extra care funding with an RSL partner, initially to the Department of Health, and which will now be submitted to the Housing Corporation bidding round for 2008-10;
- Undertaking a joint Housing, Supporting People and Social Care review of Council sheltered accommodation that will make recommendations relating to how service can be re-shaped to better meet current and future need
- Harrow is part of a London Councils pilot to deliver a streamlined – Housing Health and Social Care financial / benefit (?) assessment.

*(add re the HART team's achievements)*

Undertook a pilot to find new and innovative ways of finding hard to reach clients for the Handyperson Service.

Further Achievements are listed in the Supporting People Annual Plans 2006-08.[\(weblinks\)](#)

## **Needs assessment**

There is a wide variety of needs information that has informed the setting of priorities in this strategy.

Evidence of the housing needs of vulnerable people is demonstrated in the Supporting People strategy, the older people's housing review, and the Housing Needs Survey, which has recently reported. There will be further needs mapping undertaken in the lifetime of this strategy which will further inform it: namely the Social Care statutory needs assessment and the London Council's ? supported housing assessment that will inform the London housing strategy 2007.

The quantitative needs assessment has been combined with qualitative measures such as Housing Options Plans completed by service users with learning disabilities / and with consultations with service users through e.g. the Partnership for Older People (POP) housing sub-group, the Older People's Reference Group and the stakeholder groups implementing the older people's housing review action plan.

(NB consider how stakeholder groups are to be described and referenced e.g. more detail could go in an appendix).

The key needs assessment background to this priority is as follows :

*(weave some stats into this box)*

- The need for more floating support provision across client groups (S.P. strategy)
- The need for more Independent living options for service users with Learning Disabilities (LD Housing Strategy, Housing Options Plans – HOPS, SP Annual Plan 2007?)
- The need for more floating support provision alongside HIA and equity release options - on the basis that there are a large number of older people living in the owner occupied and private sector. (Older Persons Housing Review 2005)
- The need for extra care housing provision and more diverse sheltered housing accommodation(Older Persons Housing Review 2005)
- The need for move on accommodation

## **Resources**

The key source of funding housing related support services to ensure that vulnerable people can attain and maintain independence is via the Supporting People programme funding of £3.5m. This funding is currently ring fenced but will need to be aligned with the Local Area Agreement by 2009.

There are other key funding streams including the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Development funding. The bidding round will be open in 2007 for Housing Corporation capital funding that will be available for investment in supported housing between 2008 –10. We will ensure that locally we are putting forward bids to ensure that the appropriate levels of capital are attracted into Harrow for future accommodation based provision particularly in relation to Older People's Housing.

## **CLG Homelessness Grant**

*(West London project info ? )*

As part of the West London Private Sector Strategy Group, Harrow is participating in a Financial Capability Project to offer practical guidance to vulnerable people living in non-decent homes to enable them to raise the capital to carry out essential repairs and improvements. This is a one year pilot, funded by GOL/GLA, and will also evaluate the outcomes to determine the potential blockages and barriers for the client group in accessing appropriate finance packages.

Substantial capital assets – supported housing schemes  
Allied revenue budgets e.g. social care

*( this needs to tie in with the Strategy resources chapter / appendices and (where appropriate) equivalent sections of the HRA business plan).*



## Policy Context

The policy context for this objective is fundamentally outlined in the National Supporting People Strategy and its key themes of promoting independence and inclusion for vulnerable people ( the strategy is due to be refreshed and issued later in 2007) . There are also links to Local Government White Paper 2006 whose key Themes include Vulnerable People; Health & well being, and the Health White paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say.

*(Include more re social care drivers – 7 white paper outcomes / H&SC strategic needs assessment)*

Locally the key documents that support the local delivery of housing support are the 5 year SP Strategy and the SP annual plan.  
Furthermore the Joint Commissioning strategies are critical to commissioning appropriate services for vulnerable people. ( [see weblinks to these docs](#))

Harrow Council's 2012 vision is supported by the objectives of this chapter. The vision states that Harrow will be a place where people ' are healthy and stay healthy' and where we 'celebrate what we have in common and capitalise on our diversity,' as well as promoting a 'mix of housing in distinctive neighbourhoods' and 'promote older people's independence.

The work supporting vulnerable people also supports a number of the Council's corporate priorities: it improves VFM; strengthens cohesion; promotes wellbeing and satisfies our customers.

## Partnership working

Coherent partnership working between Housing, Social Care, Health, Probation, other statutory agencies and the third sector are crucial to the delivery of this priority.

There are already strong partnership links established through the SP provider forum and Core Strategy group as well as the older people's stakeholder groups, the LD partnership board and xxx (other partnership commissioning bodies). These can be built upon and expanded. The intention to create a new directorate combining Adult Social Care and Housing Services will ensure that these synergies are developed further and used to their best advantage.

*(quotes below should show how service user involvement has shaped services and/ or strategy)*

Quotes from Service users :

Older Person quote – from scheme reviews & stakeholder groups

Quotes from Service Users :

Quote from teenage parents scheme / article re YMCA

Quotes from Service Users:

Someone with a LT condition

## **Appendix 1.**

*(Add a resume of the OP review as an appx too?)*

### **Supporting People Funded Services**

#### **Current Service Provision**

Supporting People funds over 59 services through 40 contracts from some 26 providers for three main groups of adults: Older People , People requiring Homeless and Prevention services and adults with longer term needs.

The Supporting People provision offers housing related support to over 1650 vulnerable people to enable them to retain their independence at any one time.

1. The Supporting People funding supports 1113 Older People in RSL and LA sheltered accommodation. The type of provision for Older People's Housing support for the future is under review.

84 people are supported through the Home improvement agency.

In response to the Older Persons Housing review SP have commissioned a Floating support service for 34 older owner occupiers which will be in place in November 06.

SP supported a bid to the DoH for funding for development of an extra care scheme in Harrow with a revenue commitment to fund 30 units of sheltered accommodation and 20 units of outreach floating support for people in the community. The bid was not successful and officers are considering, with partners, the next steps in relation to alternative funding options.

2. 43 people with Learning Disabilities are supported through a range of providers additional support is being planned for this group.

3. 110 people with Mental Health needs are supported.

4. 86 Homeless families and single people are supported, 46 hours per week of additional floating support provision for single homeless will be provided by Lookahead via the VIP cross authority provision concentrating on those who are at risk of losing tenancies and therefore repeat homelessness.

5. 12 people who have been subject to Domestic Violence are provided with housing related support by Women's Aid.

6. There are 10 people supported by a service offering Housing related support to BME service users with physical disabilities.

7. 40 people will be supported through a generic support service on the Rayners Lane estate.

8. A floating support service for drug and alcohol users has recently been expanded to offer support to 35 service users across tenure.

9. We provide support to 12 people with HIV/ AIDS to help them maintain independence.

10. Harrow can currently support 6 Offenders in accommodation based provision. We have recently commissioned an additional 15 units of floating support provision for Offenders to meet the boroughs requirements as well as those of the London Resettlement strategy.

11. Three Teenage Parents can be supported in Harrow's supported housing provision at any one time.

12. A total of 56 young people can be supported in Harrow through a range of providers. This includes 9 care leavers.

## **The Homelessness Problem in Harrow**

There is a significant homelessness and housing need problem in Harrow. With a buoyant private property market and high levels of homeless approaches (average 2,200 per annum) the Council faces a continuing problem in meeting the demand for affordable housing from many priority groups - families, single people, and vulnerable adults. Although this picture of housing need is common to other London boroughs, Harrow's problems are particularly acute because it has one of the lowest totals of social housing in London (third only to Kingston and Redbridge) and there is a mismatch between the size and type of housing becoming available for re-letting and demand.

Housing Services' statistics show high levels of housing need from:

Statutory homeless - those households accepted as being in priority need under homelessness legislation.

Other households applying to the Council's Housing Register as being in housing need.

Black and minority ethnic households who are more likely to be in housing need than other households.

## **Resources Available**

The key source of funding Housing Needs related services is the General Fund Housing Need budget of £2.7m.

There are other key funding streams that are listed below,

- Communities and Local Government Homelessness Prevention Grant - £190K
- Homelessness Innovation Grant - £200k (sub regionally)
- Communities and Local Government Supported Lodgings Grant – £40K

As well as financial resources there are other resources that are available to help facilitate Housing Needs work, including sub regional working.

- West London Homelessness Sub Group
- West London Temporary Accommodation and Direct Lettings Sub Group
- West London Allocations and Lettings Group
- Harrow Homelessness Forum
- London Councils Homelessness Working Group
- Greater London Authority Homelessness Managers Sub Group

Despite the gulf between the supply and demand of affordable housing, Harrow has achieved national recognition through the award of Beacon Council and more recently Regional Champion Status for its innovative work in tackling homelessness.

We have:

- Pioneered the Harrow Options Model for people applying as homeless and disseminated results to other agencies and authorities. Our approach has been recognised by CLG and other organisations as a model of good practice.
- Reduced homeless acceptances from 700 (2000/01) to 159 (2006/07)
- Pioneered the Sanctuary Project which prevents homelessness by allowing women experiencing domestic violence to remain in their home
- Piloted a mediation scheme to prevent homelessness as a result of exclusion by family and friends, resulting in a reduction of acceptances from parents and friends/relatives
- Established a weekly, multi-agency, single homeless advice surgery in Harrow accessed by on average up to 20 people per week. Supported a number of initiatives to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers including promoting improved information exchange with health visitors on placements

- Successfully bid to the CLG Homelessness Directorate for additional funds to implement a census of our stock of temporary accommodation, to detect abandoned properties and fraudulent sub letting, as well as indentifying households who wish to end the homelessness duty through a qualifying offer.
- Successfully bid to the CLG Homelessness Innovation Fund to lead on a sub regional direct lettings pilot.

## Links to Corporate Vision and Priorities

Vision	Objective
Have the lowest crime and fear of crime in London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent the council at the following panels to address housing issues when required;               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPP)</li> <li>2. Prolific Priority Offenders (PPO)</li> <li>3. MARAC (DV Multi Agency Panel)</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Lead on the Accommodation pathway within the London Resettlement Pilot</li> <li>• Develop the Sanctuary Scheme assist all victims of Domestic Violence</li> </ul>
Work collaboratively with partners and residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead on the West London Homelessness Innovation Fund (HIF) bid, to develop a sub regional private sector direct lettings scheme</li> <li>• Work with the West London YMCA to develop a supported lodgings scheme for homeless 16/17 year olds, as well as move on options from their foyer.</li> <li>• Continue to develop the Locata Scheme across West London to maximize cross borough mobility and keep the priority banding scheme fit for purpose, particularly in light of the impending legislation redefining overcrowding.</li> </ul>
Priorities	Objective
Being more business like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving service planning</li> <li>- Continuous service improvement</li> <li>- Improving value for money</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and update our 2003-2008 Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>- Continue to test our customer service through the West London mystery shopping initiative and through a census of temporary accommodation residents</li> <li>- Continue to procure appropriate services at a sub regional level to achieve economies of scale</li> </ul>
Strengthening Cohesion : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involving and engaging residents</li> <li>- Building understanding between communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Undertake a customer satisfaction survey of residents of temporary accommodation.</li> <li>- Engage with local BME communities to develop an understanding of Housing Needs issues.</li> </ul>

## Links to Other Local, National, Regional and Sub Regional Priorities

<b>Local</b>
<i>Homelessness Strategy</i>
<b>National</b>
Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes, Changing Lives
2010 Reduction in Temporary Accommodation
<b>Regional</b>
Mayors Strategy
London Resettlement Strategy
<b>Sub Regional</b>
West London Homelessness Strategy
Homelessness Innovation Fund

### Sub Objective/Priority for Core Objective

Core Objective	Sub Objective
Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation	Develop the Sanctuary Scheme to assist all victims of Domestic Violence
	Develop a sub regional private sector direct lettings scheme to increase the supply of private sector accommodation for the Finders Fee initiative
	Develop a supported lodgings scheme for homeless 16/17 year olds.
	Conduct a census of households in Temporary Accommodation to uncover fraudulent sub letting and abandoned properties, as well as identify households who wish to accept a qualifying offer and conduct a satisfaction survey.
	Engage with local BME communities to develop an understanding of Housing Needs issues

### Progress to Date and Key Achievements Against Sub Objective/Priority for Core Objective

Sub Objective/Priority	Progress/Achievements
Develop the Sanctuary Scheme assist all victims of Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sanctuary Scheme for households threatened with homelessness well established in Harrow, resulting in a 50% reduction in homelessness due to DV since inception of the scheme.</li> <li>- Housing representation made to the Domestic Violence Forum for funding sources to enable the scheme to be widened to all victims of Domestic Violence.</li> </ul>

<p>Develop a sub regional private sector direct lettings scheme to increase the supply of private sector accommodation for the Finders Fee initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £200K HIF secured</li> <li>- Project Manager in post</li> <li>- Sub Regional web site in development</li> <li>- Sub Regional Marketing Strategy in development</li> <li>- Sub Regional free phone number purchased.</li> <li>- Sub Regional Procurement Officers employed</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a supported lodgings scheme for homeless 16/17 year olds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communities and Local Government grant secured</li> <li>- West London YMCA developing proposal for a supported lodgings scheme</li> </ul>
<p>Conduct a census of households in Temporary Accommodation to uncover fraudulent sub letting and abandoned properties, as well as identify households who wish to accept a qualifying offer and conduct a satisfaction survey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional £50K Communities and Local Government Homelessness Prevention Grant secured.</li> <li>- Qualifying Offer procedure agreed with partner RSL's</li> <li>- Additional staff appointed</li> </ul>
<p>Engage with local BME communities to develop an understanding of Housing Needs issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BME Housing Strategy produced.</li> <li>- Housing induction programme established for BME community groups.</li> <li>- Sub Regional BME homelessness conference planned.</li> </ul>

## Improving Neighbourhoods and Quality of Life

### Setting the scene

The links between poor quality housing and health and quality of life is well evidenced in national statistics and relevant housing strategies at local regional and national levels. The majority (89%) of the housing stock in Harrow lies within the private sector. Therefore, the quality of much of the housing stock in Harrow depends on owner-occupiers and landlords maintaining and periodically refurbishing their properties. However, there are also pockets of deprivation characterised by higher than average levels of social housing in small areas. Harrow's approach to tackling the inequalities linked to poor housing is therefore as follows:

- A strong and effective Private Sector Housing strategy which targets investment at those groups of people most in need such as the elderly and vulnerable who do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair or make necessary adaptations. We also have a strong enabling role that encourages other owners and landlords to make the most of their asset and keep it in good condition.
- Neighbourhood renewal of the most deprived areas and evidenced by the regeneration of the Rayners Lane estate and options appraisals being undertaken for Mill Farm and Grange Farm.

The vision for Private Sector Housing Renewal is to deliver services that make a positive difference to individuals and communities, and to develop an inclusive and sustainable environment to live and work in.

This vision is consistent with the Council's corporate priorities of *Making Harrow safe, sound and supportive* and *Protecting our precious environment*.

*(This could also match to the proposed corporate priorities currently under discussion of Promoting Wellbeing and Sustaining Our Environment)*

The Private Sector Housing Strategy is influenced by and incorporates aspects of the many national, regional and local strategies. They identify key issues and priority areas for action, which the Council has considered:

### National

The Government's housing policy statement "The Way Forward for Housing" includes the themes of quality and choice noting the links to the wider issues of tackling social exclusion and the need to achieve lasting regeneration. For the private sector the key priorities are to:

Support sustainable home ownership and promote affordable housing;  
Improve standards and stock condition in the private rented sector and houses in multiple occupation;  
and  
Ensure equal access to all services.

### Regional

At the regional level, the key issues for London's private sector identified in the London Housing Statement 2002 – "Working towards Solutions" and GOL's – "Regional Housing Priorities for London" are:

- Housing demand especially affordable housing outstripping supply, leading to increasing use of temporary accommodation;
- Lack of affordable housing making it difficult for low or medium income households to secure suitable and affordable accommodation;
- The need to improve the condition of the housing stock to decent homes standards; and  
Issues related to the Supporting People agenda.

These have translated into 4 priority areas for action:

- to increase affordable housing;
  - to decrease homelessness and develop suitable forms of temporary accommodation and support for vulnerable people;
  - to ensure housing renewal contributes effectively to the wider regeneration strategies; and
  - to develop an effective private sector strategy.
- It is noted that the Mayor for London is consulting (Towards the Mayor's Housing Strategy) during 2007 on a refresh of the London Housing Strategy.

## **Sub-regional**

The West London Housing Strategy identifies 4 key aims up to 2012:

- To increase the supply of housing to meet the predicated population growth;
- To increase to provision of affordable homes to ensure those not able to access the private market to continue to live in West London;
- To improve the quality of housing to Decent Homes Standards across all tenures; and
- To create sustainable communities to ensure the diverse population is effectively served and promote the wellbeing of communities.

Other relevant strategies that have been taken into account include Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing, the Social Care and Health Agenda, Fuel Poverty Strategy, Supporting people Strategy, ODPM Guidance on the Reform Order, LDF, and other relevant legislation.

LACORS [Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services] is now an important player in the 'direction of travel' with regards to Private Sector Housing Renewal and Policy. Their website ([www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk)) is a good source of reference.

## **Work Programmes and Achievements for Harrow's Private Sector Housing Teams**

The work programmes in relation to private sector housing are undertaken by several teams: Private Sector Housing Enforcement team, Harrow Adaptations and Repair Team (HART), Empty Homes, and the Supporting People Team.

### **Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team**

In 2006/07 the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team has implemented the 2 enforcement regimes contained in the Housing Act 2004. These are the application of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to tackle 29 health and safety hazards that contribute to poor housing conditions. Typical Hazards found in Harrow housing include Damp and Mould Growth, Excess Cold, Falls on Stairs etc; and Falls between Levels. For a full explanation of these and other Hazards, see the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operating Guidance (available on [www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs](http://www.communities.gov.uk/hhsrs)).

Where a Category 1 Hazard (which is the risk of harm to the health and safety of an actual or potential occupier) is present then the Council must take action to secure improvement of the property to reduce or eliminate the Hazard. It can do this by serving Improvement Notices, making Prohibition Orders or serving Hazard Awareness Notices. Where the hazard falls into in Category 2, the Council has the discretion to take action in respect of it.

The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team also enforces a wide range of other legislation to remedy defects and situations in properties which are statutory nuisances or require intervention on the part of the Council.

*(Statistics on the improvement of properties achieved during 2006/07 are detailed in the table below).*



The other major strand of work for the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team has been the implementation of the regime for Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation. A key feature of the work programme was the introduction of an additional licensing scheme which enabled those properties that had been registered under the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Registration Scheme 2000, which would have fallen outside the scope of the mandatory licensing scheme, to be included in the licensing regime, thus ensuring continuing protection of the health and safety of the occupants, by maintenance of high standards of amenity and fire safety.

In implementing the licensing regime, the Council has shared its knowledge with the other West London boroughs to establish consistency of approach across those boroughs, in recognition that many landlords have portfolios of property across several boroughs. (*Statistics on the numbers of properties licensed is detailed in the table below*).

### **Harrow Adapt and Repair Team (HART)**

Housing Renewal Grants are a key intervention tool in delivering the Council's Private Sector Renewal Strategy. The type and amount of assistance is determined locally, and is targeted at those members of the community living in the worst housing conditions, and who are least able to afford the cost of the necessary repairs, improvements or adaptations. Further assistance is provided through Disabled Facilities Grants, which are mandatory grants to enable necessary adaptations to be carried out for disabled people.

The Renewal Grant programme is delivered by the Harrow Adapt and Repair Team, which has developed integrated approaches, and works with other agencies in order to meet the strategic priorities determined by the Council. The programme provides a range of options in terms of grants and repayable grants, to ensure that properties do not fall into disrepair. The team includes the Harrow Staying Put service (a Home Improvement Agency) which offers the support and assistance necessary for the most vulnerable members of the community to achieve the housing solution that is right for them. The agency also includes a Handyperson Service that provides low-level but invaluable support to the same target group.

Intervention in the private sector is also aided by partnerships and initiatives to assist owner-occupiers to release capital locked up in the equity of their property. The Council works with the Home Improvement Trust as a partner in Houseproud, a national scheme to support homeowners raise funds for improvements or repairs, and is participating in the West London Financial Advocacy Service, an initiative to provide assistance to vulnerable people living in non-decent homes.

### **Energy Team**

The Energy Team's objectives are to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within private sector housing by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, and to tackle fuel poverty within the borough. Inadequate thermal comfort levels in a property make it non-decent, can lead to health problems for the household and can effect disposable income increasing the risk of fuel poverty. 40% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are produced from domestic housing. Therefore, by improving the energy efficiency of a property we can help tackle climate change, which is part of the Mayor's Climate Change strategy.

The West London Partnership together with funding support from the GLA has just finished the first phase of the Warm Zones project. The aim of the project is to bring private sector housing up to the required thermal comfort levels of the Decent Homes Standard and increase the average SAP rating for vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Based on the 2006 Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey and the Vitality Profiles, the Roxeth ward was highlighted as having the worse thermal comfort levels and the highest levels of fuel poverty. 4000 assessments have been carried out revealing 80 properties as needing boiler replacements or full central heating systems. In addition to this, Harrow Council has added £25,000 to install solar thermal heating to 9 suitable properties, which should supply 60 – 70% of the households hot water needs throughout the year. These systems will be monitored by UCL over 3 years to study the effects. The Warm Zones project will bring £590,000 into the borough over two years and will contribute to reducing the boroughs CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, improve the condition of

properties in the Roxeth ward and improve the quality of life for the residents, as well as educating them on the benefits of renewable technology. On the previous HeatStreets scheme the average CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in the borough was 13.44% with an increase in SAP of 11.58%.

## **Empty Homes**

Empty homes can have an adverse affect on the local neighbourhood. They can become a magnet for nuisance and anti-social behaviour ranging from drug use, fly tipping, vandalism and arson; whilst neglected and overgrown gardens affect neighbouring properties and frequently are sources of rodent infestations. Reports have also shown that empty properties can affect the market values of neighbouring properties.

By working to tackle these properties and bring them back into occupation, we are contributing towards providing a safer living environment for local residents of the Borough, improving the local street scene and reducing the pressures on the Councils resources. Where properties are refurbished using grant assistance, nomination rights are secured enabling families in housing need to be provided with good quality homes.

### **Case study 1: Weald Lane, Harrow Weald**

This pair of semi detached properties were reported as being empty by local residents who were concerned that they were now being squatted. They also complained that the back gardens were overgrown and sightings of rats in the local area. It was apparent having liaised with the police that the properties were also being used as a drugs den. Following co-ordinated action between Housing Services and Environmental Health officers, the properties were secured and the gardens cleared by the owners before any enforcement action was taken. The properties have subsequently been sold and the new owners are in the process of refurbishing them with assistance from the Councils Empty Property Grant. In return these properties will become homes for households in need who are currently on the Councils housing register, while the properties no longer blight this street.

### **Case Study 2: Carlton Avenue, Kenton**

This property in Carlton Avenue had been empty for 8 years. It had been subject to an arson attack, which had affected its neighbouring property. In addition over the years of neglect, the property had become a site for fly tipping and rodent infestations. Following protracted attempts to negotiate with the owner to bring the property back into use or sell it privately, the Council instigated successful Compulsory Purchase Order action. The property was subsequently sold at auction in November 2006 to a private investor who is in the process of refurbishing the property.

*(Images of both case studies available)*

## **Improving quality of life for vulnerable households**

Cedars Hall

The Council currently use 2 hostel facilities to provide emergency accommodation to homeless households to deliver its statutory housing obligations. One of these sites, Anmer Lodge, in Stanmore is due to be decommissioned in February 2008.

We have carried out a detailed options appraisal of suitable sites to identify a suitable location to develop a replacement facility.

We are working in partnership with Genesis Housing Group to develop a purpose built facility to provide 30 units of self contained accommodation as use as emergency accommodation.

This new facility will improve the quality of life which we are able to provide for these vulnerable households. The current hostels provide occupants with access to only shared kitchen and bathroom

facilities. The new development at Cedars Hall provide the 68 residents with self contained flats enabling residents to benefit from privacy and from living in a purpose built dwelling. There will also be opportunity for residents to receive support and welfare advice whilst they await their next move to more settled accommodation. It is hoped that this new facility will be completed in 2008.

## **Cross tenure initiatives**

The Vitality Profiles provide evidence that there are small pockets of multiple deprivation in some areas of Harrow. The most deprived area in Harrow is the SOA of Rayners Lane. This included one of the largest Council estates in Harrow featuring particularly poor examples of system built housing. This neighbourhood was selected as an improvement area in 2000. Working closely with residents the estate was transferred to the Home Group in 2002. A complete regeneration of the estate is now underway including the demolition and rebuilding of most of the housing including some housing for sale, as well as other initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life, particularly for young people, on the estate.

Another area characterised by multiple deprivation is the Mill Farm estate in Pinner. A review of the options for this estate with residents commenced in April 2007 with the first stage due to complete in summer. Cabinet will then be asked to approve a plan for achieving the Decent Homes standard on the estate as well as other initiatives that will offer improvement in quality of life.

*(Add bullets re desired outcomes and links to existing initiatives eg the construction training programme already set up on Rayners Lane etc, also add in here any other estate improvement works eg the various play area initiatives etc? Are there any other cross tenure area initiatives we can refer to?)*

*(Add bullets of key achievements including new housing, community centre plus activites, construction training etc)*

## **Supporting People Team**

*(cross ref vulnerable people)*

## **Vision and Priorities Going Forward**

Within the vision for Private Sector Housing Renewal of delivering services that make a positive difference to individuals and communities, and to developing an inclusive and sustainable environment to live and work in, the priorities for the Council are to work with the private sector to:

- ensure that private housing in Harrow is safe, secure and free from risks to health;
- improve substandard private sector dwellings, including houses in multiple occupation, through advice to owners, landlords and the business community, enforcement and financial assistance and working in partnership with voluntary and non-voluntary agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Age concern, Housing Advice, Housing Provision, and Homelessness charities such Shelter etc;
- ensure the private sector stock is used effectively to minimise empty properties, under occupation and overcrowding;

to improve energy efficiency within private sector dwellings, with particular priority for vulnerable households on low incomes.

The key priorities for the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Team are:

- to enforce the licensing regime for Houses in Multiple Occupation provided by the Housing Act 2004 *(outcome indicators to be devised)*;
- to enforce the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 in respect of housing conditions *(outcome indicators to be devised)*.

## **Harrow Adapt and Repair Team (HART)**

- To ensure the effective targeting of Housing Renewal grants.
- To ensure the efficient processing of Disabled Facilities Grants.
- To provide a quality Home Improvement Agency service in line with Supporting People priorities.
- Work with partners to continue to explore the effective use of alternative funding and procurement sources for private sector renewal.

*(outcome indicators to be devised for all).*

## **Empty Homes**

To reduce the number of long term empty properties in the borough, by using voluntary methods and enforcement action where appropriate *(outcome indicators to be devised).*

## **Increasing Housing Supply**

### **Links to Corporate Priorities/2020 vision**

### **Links to other local, national, regional, sub regional priorities**

#### **Vision**

In accordance with local, sub-regional, regional and national policy our aim is to increase quality housing opportunities for Harrow residents that contribute to mixed and balanced communities. Specifically we seek to increase the range of affordable housing opportunities to meet the priority housing needs identified from the recent Housing Needs survey and that contribute to sub regional and regional housing targets.

Within the overall aim of increasing quality housing opportunities our key objectives are to:

- Increase the supply of affordable family housing
- Provide a range of affordable intermediate housing options
- Continue promoting our Empty Property Strategy to ensure we make best use of existing housing resources
- To use high quality design to increase densities and improve the long term sustainability of housing

#### **Increasing the supply of affordable housing**

Harrow is a built-up residential borough with large areas of green belt. This contributes to the limited opportunities for new development, particularly large development sites at which the Affordable Housing Policy thresholds apply. Housing and Planning Services work closely together with developers and RSLs to maximise the contributions from planning policy and legal (S106) agreements.

The Harrow UDP was adopted in 2004 and in accordance with the London Plan. It encourages an increased supply of housing by identifying suitable land and housing policies that support change of use to residential. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)- December 2006 confirmed that the London Plan annual housing supply target of 400 homes per annum had been exceeded in both 2004/5 and 2005/6.

The Affordable Housing policy requires an overall strategic target of 50% affordable housing from all sources. Whilst a minimum 30% is to be provided on sites capable of being developed for 15 or more units, the Council would normally expect up to 50% on qualifying sites. The affordable housing is to be provided in the ratio 70% social rented housing to 30% intermediate. Affordable housing contributions are calculated either by units or habitable rooms to encourage the provision of larger homes.

Levels of affordable housing negotiated through planning agreements have increased since 2004 (*insert table*) In that time we have further modernised processes to ensure the corporate approach continues to follow best practice principles:

- Housing officers attend Planning Advice meetings to give advice on affordable housing requirements and to support specific developments
- Internal Project teams are established to progress large or complicated developments
- Housing officers lead on the negotiation of the affordable housing including toolkit analysis to assess financial viability and liaison with RSLs and Housing Corporation
- Housing officers contribute to legal agreements to ensure long term objectives are met

We acknowledge that the AMR demonstrates that the affordable housing is below target. In 2005/6, 28.6% of total housing completions were affordable (i.e. 121 out of 423). This is partly because of the relatively low number of larger sites above the 15 unit threshold to which the policy can be applied and the high cost of land generally which makes it impossible for RSLs to compete on the open market to acquire sites for 100% affordable housing. The LDF will consider further opportunities for tackling some of these issues, such as a reduction in the policy threshold to 10 units.

Our partner housing associations are key to realising our objective to increase the supply of affordable family homes. Innovative partnerships have enabled the sale of Council land to realise corporate objectives and provide affordable housing (*case study Grant Road*). The pipeline development programme will deliver 71 large family homes over the next xxx years.

### Projected additional RSL stock over next 3 – 5 years

2007/08 Completions	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed+	Total
RENT					
Elmgrove,	3	11	10		24
Grove			3		3
Mepham			2	3	5
<b>TOTAL RENT</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>32</b>
INTERMEDIATE					
Elmgrove	12	12	1		25
Grove		44			44
<b>TOTAL INTERMEDIATE</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>69</b>

2008/09 Completions	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed+	Total
RENT					
Pinner Road	2	23	2		27
Biro	17	23	11		51
<b>TOTAL RENT</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>78</b>
INTERMEDIATE					
Pinner Road	47	38			85
Kenton Road	6	4			10
<b>TOTAL INTERMEDIATE</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>42</b>			<b>95</b>

### 2007/08 to 2016/17 annual target provision for affordable housing for Harrow is 200 units (London Plan).

We continue to firmly support the principles of sub regional and regional partnerships to make the best of opportunities regardless of borough boundaries. The West London Partnership works closely to ensure fair and equitable access to all new homes funded through the NAHP whilst acknowledging the benefits brought to the partnership by those boroughs with greater development opportunities. Harrow has been able to maintain new development contributions at about the same level as our assessed need meaning that we have had only limited nominations to out of borough properties to date.

### Key Achievements

162 new affordable homes secured through planning policy permissions in 2005/6 against the HUDP annual target of 165.

34 new rented homes completed in 2005/6 and 112 in 2006/7.

10 large family homes (4 bed plus) completed in 2006/7 with 71 homes in the pipeline

Delivery of 121 new rented homes in Harrow for the West sub regional NAHP 2004-2006 against an initial allocation of 90.

### **Provide a range of affordable intermediate housing options**

We recognise that most people aspire to own their home but that high house prices in Harrow mean there is a large group of people who can afford more than social rent but cannot afford open market housing. *(Add data from the HNA)*. Access to affordable intermediate housing options is vital to enable young people and families, including key workers, to continue living and working in Harrow and deliver mixed and balanced communities.

We have set a target that 30% of new affordable housing should be intermediate and affordable to households with incomes in the range £17-48,000. We published a Key Worker Housing Strategy in (20xx) together with an on-line Low Cost Home Ownership register ([www.harrow.gov.uk/lcho](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/lcho)). We work closely with the Homebuy agent and other boroughs to ensure a one-stop shop approach to the marketing of new intermediate housing opportunities.

### **Key Achievements**

1580 households registered with the Low Cost Home Ownership Register. The majority (75%) are one or two persons households. 71% have household incomes within the £17,000 to £48,000 target range, with the average income within that range being £26,469.

165 new intermediate homes completed 2004-07 – 64 x key worker intermediate rental studio flats, 54 x 1 bed and 47 x 2 bed shared ownership flats. A total of 91 of these new homes were sold to key workers.

A further 69 intermediate homes are in the pipeline for completion in 2007/08 – 12 x 1 bed, 56 x 2 bed and 1 x 3bed shared ownership flats

### **Continue promoting our Empty Property Strategy to ensure we make best use of existing housing resources**

Given the limited opportunities for new development to fully meet housing need in Harrow, we recognise the importance of utilising our existing housing stock. We carried out a detailed survey of all registered empty properties in the borough in 2006. This confirmed there were 1010 (1.4%) properties empty, over 680 of which had been vacant for more than 6 months. This information has enabled us to target our resources effectively at those properties which have been empty for the longest period of time.

Owners of empty properties are offered a comprehensive range of options to enable these properties to be brought back into use, including the provision of Empty Property grants, Housing Association leasing schemes and direct lettings schemes. Where no voluntary arrangements can successfully bring a property back into use, the Council will take appropriate enforcement action, such as Compulsory Purchase Order, or Empty Dwelling Management Orders to ensure a property is brought back into use.

In addition to tackling the number of wasted vacant privately owned residential properties we have actively promoted the conversion or reuse of vacant commercial premises for residential. In Wealdstone this has resulted in X new homes in the town centre (*Railway hotel, Poppy Court, Bannister House*)

We are working with our sub regional partners on a temporary to permanent leasing scheme partly funded through the SHI initiative. This will enable the purchase of existing properties that will initially be let as temporary accommodation but convert to permanent social housing over a 15 year period.

### **Key Achievements**

Total units brought back into use 2002 – 2007	1975
Number of Empty Property Grants awarded (to long term empty properties) 2004 - 2007	51
New units created through conversion schemes	127
Successful Compulsory Purchase Orders since 2002	2

## Using high quality design to increase densities and improve long term sustainability

We recognise that in a developed borough like Harrow that better use of existing land is vital if we are to increase housing supply. Increases in density in appropriate locations must be matched by high quality design and regard to long term sustainability, and also to ensure compatibility with existing housing. On the Rayners Lane estate the Council has led the way working with residents and the Home Group to replace poor quality Council housing with high quality higher density mixed tenure housing as well as vastly improved community facilities.

We have maintained a policy to ensure that 10% of all new housing is built to full wheelchair standard and the rest to Lifetime Homes standards. This is set down in our Accessible Homes SPD, adopted in April 2006.

### Key achievements

- *(Table demonstrating increase in homes on the Rayners Lane estate, Strongbridge Close)*

### Wheelchair units against target 2005-2007

Scheme	Total no. of rental units	No. of wheelchair units	Size of units	10% wheelchair target
Templar House	6	2	2 x 2b4p (flats)	1
Poppy Court	8	1	2b3p (flat)	1
Grant Road	44	4	1 x 3b4p (house) 3 x 3b5p (houses)	4



# Housing Strategy Priorities and Housing Objective Action Plan

2007/2008-2011/2012

37

<b>Objective 1: Meeting the needs and aspirations of vulnerable people</b>					
<b>Priority:</b>					
Priority Actions	Responsibility	Completion date	Resources (R=revenue) (C= Capital)	Performance indicators and Targets	Progress as at.....
Deliver the recommendations of the Ops Housing review	Jane Fernley	2012			
Deliver the Supporting People strategy 2005- 10 and the yearly Annual Plans.	Nick Davies	2010			
Set priorities for future Supported Accommodation Needs	Jane Fernley Alison Pegg Nick Davies Social Care Commissioners	August 2007			
Review the way in which Aids , Adaptations and Telecare are delivered ?	Steve Nye Nick Davies				
Establishing Supporting People Funded services into the LAA	Nick Davies - LAA lead				
Integrated services for OP with MI					

*NB. This Action plan is high level and is underpinned by the detail of the Supporting People Strategy 2005 –10 and the SP Annual Plan 2007 –08 as well as the Older People’s Housing review action plan. These documents are included in the Appendices*

<b>Objective 2: Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation</b>					
<b>Priority:</b>					
Priority Actions	Responsibility	Completion date	Resources (R=revenue) (C= Capital)	Performance indicators and Targets	Progress as at.....

Work with RSL partners to achieve discharge of homelessness duty through qualifying offers	Housing Provision Manager	2010	R CLG grant		
Implement Value Improvement Project for West London single homeless floating support to promote tenancy sustainment.	Housing Needs Manager	On going	R		
Develop supported lodgings schemes for homeless 16/17 year olds	Housing Needs Manager	On going	R		

### Objective 3: Improving neighbourhoods and quality of life

#### Priority:

Priority Actions	Responsibility	Completion date	Resources (R=revenue) (C= Capital)	Performance indicators and Targets	Progress as at.....

### Objective 4 : Increasing housing supply

#### Priority:

Priority Actions	Responsibility	Completion date	Resources (R=revenue) (C= Capital)	Performance indicators and Targets	Progress as at.....


<b>Objective 5 : Make better use of resources to deliver quality services</b>					
<b>Priority:</b>					
Priority Actions	Responsibility	Completion date	Resources (R=revenue) (C= Capital)	Performance indicators and Targets	Progress as at.....



## Monitoring Progress

The HIP strategy action plan will be the key documents by which delivering the housing strategy objectives will be monitored and progress tracked. Information on progress will be reported to the housing strategy officer group and XXX forums at regular meetings. Information on progress will also be incorporated into performance indicator and periodic reports to the xxxxx. Progress on those elements of the Action Plan relevant to other corporate strategies will be reported to those strategy meetings and meetings involving service users on a regular basis.

Feedback from residents and stakeholders will be obtained through:

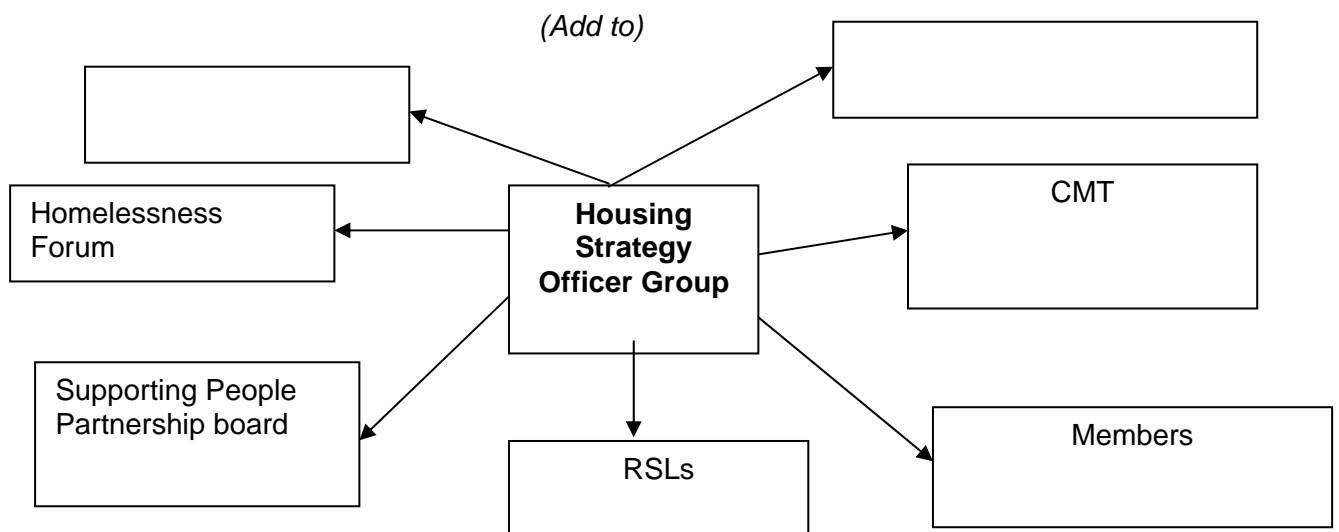
- Consultative user groups associated with various corporate strategies
- Resident survey as appropriate
- Cabinet lead members, council and overview scrutiny
- Etc

*(terms of reference to Office group)*

The Housing Strategy Officer group is chaired by the head of housing but has a cross departmental representation to ensure a coordinated approach to planning of the strategy and its review. The group has a responsibility for advancing the Housing Strategy objectives and monitoring progress. It is supported by xxxxxxxx. The group includes not only the head of housing and service managers from housing departments but so too corporate policy, adult social services, community safety .....list all

The Housing Strategy Officer group has identified a wide range of issues of concern where housing has a contributed to make. These include..... Using its wide ranging strategic expertise the Housing Strategy Officer group has been able to formulate draft strategic objectives and priorities for the housing strategy. This group has also been key in taking forward a number of cross-departmental strategic issues...give an example and quote here

Diagram illustrating links with Housing Strategy officer group:



This page is intentionally left blank

## HARROW HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUSINESS PLAN

### CONTENTS

#### Foreword

*[By Portfolio Holder?]*

#### Introduction, overview and consultation

#### Strategic Context

The corporate, national, regional & sub-regional priorities  
Strategic Housing Priorities

#### Other influences on priorities

Stock condition analysis and the Options Appraisal process  
Housing needs analysis  
Our Performance  
Resources available, including partnership working

#### HRA BP Objectives and Priorities

#### Our Plan

Progress towards and plans for achieving priorities:

- Enable and maintain the independence and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people who are or will be residents of Council stock
- Contribute to reduction in use of temporary accommodation by using Council stock as effectively as possible
- Achieve Decent Homes Standard in Council stock by 2010
- Improve resident satisfaction with the environment of their homes
- Empower all residents to have a greater say in the management of their homes and community
- Reduced hate, crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance as a result of working with other agencies
- Improve turnaround time for empty Council housing so that they are available to relet as quickly as possible
- Make sure our properties are being used effectively
- Maximise income
- Improve information we hold about our residents and properties so that we can target scarce resources at individuals/areas in most need
- Increase resident satisfaction with access to and response from Resident Services
- Increase resident satisfaction with responsive repairs service

#### Making it happen

Action Plan  
Monitoring

#### Appendices

#### Glossary of terms

## **INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW AND CONSULTATION**

### **What is the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (HRA BP)?**

Harrow's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan sets out and explains the actions the Council will be taking to make sure the best possible use is made of its Council housing resources, to meet current and future needs identified in our Housing Strategy. The HRA BP is particularly concerned with services provided by the Council as a landlord.

### **What is the purpose of the HRA BP?**

The HRA BP is meant to provide a thorough understanding of the issues affecting Council housing in Harrow, to be a basis for sound decision-making, and a convenient source of information. It will help us to respond effectively to the opportunities and challenges that face us now and in the future.

The Business Plan is designed to be updated in the light of changing circumstances, such as revised estimates of our income and expenditure, new legislation or guidance from central government, or anything else that affects the way that we manage our housing stock.

### **What is in the HRA BP?**

In the HRA BP you will find a description of the current state of council housing in the borough and of the progress we have made so far in meeting housing objectives. It sets out our priorities, and explains how they have been decided on. We consider the difficulties and challenges that we face and show how we plan to overcome them. Most importantly, we set out clearly and in detail what we intend doing in the future.

This Business Plan includes many references to the Council's Housing Strategy. This is because the Council's stock of housing has an essential role within that strategy. The Business Plan also takes account of the Council's wider community objectives.

We recognise the benefit of consulting with all our partners. In particular, residents were very involved in the Options Appraisal process we went through in 2005, through which the Council decided how it would achieve improvements to tenants' homes. As part of this continuing process you are very welcome to make comments on this Plan. Full contact details can be found at the end of this document.

To make good decisions, it is essential that we have accurate and up-to-date information about the condition of our housing. In the Business Plan you will find the results of recent stock condition surveys. These give us important information about the state of repair of our stock and levels of maintenance required.

We must try to make available to our tenants the right sort of property in the right location. This HRA BP includes up-to-date information on local supply and demand for Council housing, and our plans for dealing with areas of less popular housing.

The Plan looks at how we currently manage our housing, including how we deal with repairs, and how we ensure that the capital funding invested in our properties will continue to be a good investment.



The HRA BP looks in detail at how we balance the income from rent and other sources, with outgoings on repairs, maintenance, management and other expenses. We look forward up to 30 years to predict the different possible financial outcomes which might arise from the actions we are taking now.

The Business Plan includes an assessment of different ways of achieving our housing aims and objectives.

To achieve our objectives, we need to understand the steps that we have to take towards them. The Action Plan included in this HRA BP sets out the tasks that must be achieved within specific timescales, and who is responsible for them.

As well as looking forward, the HRA BP looks back to measure how well we have performed against previous targets and objectives. This gives us the opportunity to learn from the past and to highlight particular areas of success on which we can build.

### **Who is the HRA BP for?**

The HRA BP is designed to be read by everybody. Jargon has been avoided and technical terms used as little as possible. Those technical terms that are unavoidable are fully explained in the Glossary. In the interests of clarity and economy, frequently used terms are abbreviated. These are listed in the Glossary.

For readers who want fuller information, detailed statistics and some of the documents on which this Plan has been based are included in Appendices after the main text.

### **Consultation with Residents and Stakeholders**

As described in the Housing Strategy, residents and stakeholders have been involved in the preparation of the Strategy, and particularly in setting the strategic housing objectives and priorities which inform the Business Plan objectives and priorities.

Residents and other stakeholders were engaged in many different ways in the Options Appraisal process which forms the foundation of the HRA BP. *[Add detail of consultation events etc plus*

- *TLCF see reports on HRA annually*
- *Influence on BP:*
  - *Reviewing methodology of service charge depooling as result of tenant dissatisfaction with current methodology]*

### **STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

The strategic context for the HRA BP is described in detail in the Housing Strategy.

*[Summary of strategic context section of Housing Strategy to be added here, to include links to national, regional, sub-regional and corporate priorities]*

### **Strategic Housing Priorities**

The objectives of our Housing Strategy are:

- Meeting the needs & aspirations of vulnerable people
- Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation
- Improving neighbourhoods and quality of life
- Increasing housing supply
- Make better use of resources to deliver quality services

## **OTHER INFLUENCES ON PRIORITIES**

### **Stock condition analysis and the Options Appraisal process**

#### Decent Homes – the Options Appraisal process

The Government requires local authorities to bring all Council stock up to Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 2010. To assess the most effective way of achieving this in Harrow, the Council carried out a 'light touch' option appraisal in 2003. At that time, the Council decided to set up an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) as its preferred way of raising the funds necessary to pay for the work to achieve the DHS. However, during 2004 Local Authorities were given new borrowing powers, and it became clear that this 'prudential borrowing' option could deliver better value for money than the ALMO route to achieve the DHS in Harrow. A decision was taken by Cabinet in November 2004 to withdraw from the ALMO. As a result of this, the Council needed to carry out a comprehensive Housing Option Appraisal, looking not just at the best way of getting the necessary investment in the Council housing stock but also at the wishes of tenants and leaseholders about the management of their homes.

This Options Appraisal, carried out during 2005, was led by a Working Group with tenants in the majority, and was informed by a significant consultation programme, using a range of media to ensure that we reached and involved as many tenants and leaseholders across Harrow as possible. As part of the option appraisal process tenants and leaseholders identified the standard they wished all homes to achieve by 2010. Tenants and leaseholders also told us that they wanted to see improvements in security, safety and the environment.

The Council decided it could achieve the DHS 2010 if it invested additional money through prudential borrowing on the HRA. In addition to meeting Decent Homes, the Council's Cabinet in June 2005 agreed:

- That, subject to maintaining a balanced HRA and positive cashflow over 30 years, additional spending on discretionary estate improvements of up to £5m. be made available for works over and above the Decent Homes standard
- To note that the tenants on the Options Appraisal Working Group supported the stock retention option on the understanding that an additional £3.5m is found before 2010 for additional improvements works to estates

The Options Appraisal and its recommendations were approved the Government Office for London in February 2006.

### Housing needs analysis

*[Add summary of Fordham report + link to full report when finalised]*

Research on older people's housing needs in the borough in 2004 found that:

- Harrow does not have a massive oversupply of sheltered housing, but some of our sheltered housing is now quite old, and lacks the space standards and facilities that are now accepted as normal. The average age of those living in such accommodation has moved upwards very rapidly in the last two decades, bringing higher levels of need for support that the design of these buildings does not always allow. Some sheltered schemes have seen amenities such as shops, access to doctors and pharmacy, proximity to public transport etc. disappear making independent life for their residents more difficult.
- There will be a diminishing role for rented accommodation in old age as levels of ownership rise. The amount of conventional rented sheltered housing should therefore be reduced significantly, through (for example) refurbishing some schemes to provide independent retirement living accommodation without specific services, or using sites for Extra Care or leasehold sheltered housing

## **Our Performance**

### How we measure performance

The Council has well-developed performance management structures in place. A service planning cycle has been established to ensure that all service areas have developed, and are working to, a service plan that reflects corporate priorities. Key targets and indicators are monitored by Scrutiny in the form of a strategic performance report.

For the past two years the Council has been using specialist software to develop scorecards, which managers use to monitor performance. As part of the corporate business transformation project, SAP is being introduced from September 2006, which will replace the current system for developing and monitoring against performance scorecards. SAP will enable managers to access performance information more quickly and easily, and to monitor progress against targets.

### Recent Performance

*[Explanations of Best Value Indicators to be added]*

*[Recent Best Value Performance Indicators and any local indicators to be added to table and performance trends analysed]*

BVPI	Brief definition	2002/03 actual	2003/04 actual	2004/05 actual	2005/06 actual
63	Energy efficiency of housing stock– SAP rating	54	56	63	64

BVPI	Brief definition	2002/03 actual	2003/04 actual	2004/05 actual	2005/06 actual
66a	Rent collected by as a proportion of rents owned	96.79%	95.63%	98.1%	97.95%
66b	Percentage of tenants with more than 7 weeks of rent arrears	-	-	-	15.56
66c	Percentage of tenants in arrears who have had Notices Seeking Possession served	-	-	-	26.66
66d	Percentage of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	-	-	-	0.14
74a	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord – all tenants	80%	79%	-	-
74b	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord – ethnic minority tenants	74%	73%	-	-
74c	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord – non-ethnic minority tenants	81%	80%	-	-
75a	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord – all tenants	-	57%	-	-
75b	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord - ethnic minority tenants	-	57%	-	-
75c	Tenant satisfaction with Landlord – non ethnic minority tenants	-	57%	-	-
164	Equal access to social housing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
184 a	Non-Decent local authority dwellings (percentage)	-	49%	55.8%	48%
184 b	Non-decent local authority dwellings (percentage change)	-6	-4%	13.8%	8.5%
212	Average time to re-let local authority housing (days) (old BV68)	-	45.92		42.32

### Audit Commission Inspection

*[Last inspection was in 2004 – add summary?]*

### Benchmarking

The Council is a member of HouseMark and of Housing Quality Network.

*[Add detail on data available through these organisations, and how it has changed what Resident Services does]*

### Status Survey

*[Summary of STATUS survey of resident satisfaction – key issues appear to be:*

- Overall satisfaction with services significantly reduced since last STATUS survey
- Repairs service
- Overall quality of home
- Recycling
- Grounds maintenance]

### Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey

*[Summary of survey of leaseholder satisfaction]*

## **RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

### **Harrow's Housing Stock**

#### Stock size and age at April 2007

The Council-owned stock as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 totalled [updated figure needed] rented dwellings plus a further [updated figure needed] leasehold dwellings.

Compared to the majority of other London boroughs, the Council-owned stock is relatively small. It is also a small percentage of the total housing resources available. The number is further reduced each year as tenants exercise their Right to Buy option. Our stock is largely estate-based; around 230 homes located across the Borough are not on an estate. The majority of estates are relatively small and comprise traditionally-built family houses and low-rise flats no higher than four storeys in traditional suburban layouts. They generally benefit from both private and communal amenity space. The largest estate comprises some 700 properties with the majority being family housing with a small proportion of low-rise flats. There are no Council-owned high-rise flats in the borough. There are pockets of properties of non-traditional construction totalling some 600 units.

[Updated breakdown of stock numbers by property type and size needed]

#### Stock Condition

The Council has a stock condition database (Codeman), which it uses to develop the Decent Homes works programme. A stock condition survey was undertaken in 2003 during which 100% of the external areas of the council's housing stock were surveyed and 20% of the stock was surveyed internally. This information was entered onto the Codeman database and has been continually updated as works have been completed. The original survey information was reviewed by Savills in 2004/05 during the Options Appraisal process. In addition to this:

- All sheltered housing has been surveyed in the past 12 months as part of the sheltered housing review
- External consultants are carrying out a desktop review of Mill Farm stock condition data as part of the Options Appraisal for that estate

*[Information on energy efficiency data to be provided by Ron Clift]*

The output from these surveys is described in detail in the section on Decent Homes below

#### Revenue Funding

*[Detailed figures and text to be added after review completed, but will be in line with Options Appraisal figures]*

#### Capital Funding

*[Add details of:*

- *Commitment given to set aside proportion of RTB receipts for Housing*
- *Commitment given to set aside 100% of HRA asset sales receipts for Housing (e.g. Mepham Garden scout hut)*

*Any other decisions on capital funding for Housing]*

#### Short- to Medium-Term Analysis

*[Detailed figures and text to be added after review completed, but will be broadly in line with Options Appraisal figures]*

#### Long-Term Analysis: 30 years

*[Detailed figures and text to be added after review completed, but will be broadly in line with Options Appraisal figures]*

#### **Partnership working**

The Council is committed to working in partnership with many other agencies and organisations to deliver excellent homes and services to our residents. For Resident Services (the part of the Council that looks after Council housing), the key partners with whom we work are:

- The Antisocial Behaviour Unit
- The Crime Reduction Team
- Kier - we are currently negotiating the final details of a partnership (the Harrow Integrated Property Partnership or HIPSP) to deliver Decent Homes works, responsive repairs and works to empty properties, which will “go live” in July 2007
- Brent Housing Partnership - we have worked closely with this local high-performing ALMO to redesign our procedures for delivering services, plan services etc
- Other West London boroughs, particularly those who also participate in the LOCATA choice-based lettings scheme
- *[add details of other key partners]*

#### **HRA BP OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES**

##### HRA BP Objectives

*[To be drafted – could use same objectives as Housing Strategy but tailored to Council stock/landlord services]*

##### HRA BP Priorities

*[Table below shows a first draft of possible priorities for Harrow landlord service – this will be subject to further analysis of performance, feedback from residents etc. Explanation to be added of why the priorities have been selected i.e. analysis of performance issues, STATUS survey results etc]*

<b>Strategic Housing Objectives</b>	<b>HRA BP Priorities</b>
Meeting the needs & aspirations of vulnerable people especially older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable and maintain the independence and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people who are or will be residents of Council stock</li> </ul>
Continue to tackle homelessness and high demand, whilst reducing temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to reduction in use of temporary accommodation by using Council stock as effectively as possible – see below</li> </ul>
Improving neighbourhoods and quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve Decent Homes Standard in Council stock by 2010</li> <li>• Increase resident satisfaction with the environment of their homes</li> <li>• Empower all residents to have a greater say in the management of their homes and community</li> <li>• Reduce hate crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance perpetrated or suffered by Council tenants</li> </ul>
Increasing housing supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve turnround time for empty Council housing so that they are available to relet as quickly as possible</li> <li>• Make sure all Council stock is being used as effectively as possible</li> </ul>
Make better use of resources to deliver quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise income from rent and service charges</li> <li>• Improve information we hold about Council stock and its residents so that we can target scarce resources at individuals, properties and areas in most need</li> <li>• Increase resident satisfaction with access to and response from Resident Services</li> <li>• Increase resident satisfaction with responsive repairs service</li> </ul>

### **Our Plan – Progress and Priorities**

*[Throughout this section, achievements to date should be “boxed” to increase visibility and cut down on repetitive text]*

<b>Enable and maintain the independence and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people who are or will be residents of Council stock</b>
--

#### Older Tenants

Our achievements in this service area include:

- *[Details of floating support for Council tenants]*

- Developed, with service users as well as colleagues from Supporting People and Social Care, a model for assessing whether individual sheltered housing schemes are still “fit for purpose”, or need remodelling of the fabric of the building or services to match current and future needs

We now need to plan how best to implement the recommendations of the Review

### People with Disabilities

*[Add text on disabled adaptations:*

- *Integration into Decent Homes work*
- *Paying for 2 x OT to assess needs before Decent Homes work]*

### **Contribute to reduction in use of temporary accommodation by using Council stock as effectively as possible**

We can best achieve this by using our existing stock and other HRA assets as effectively as possible – see *[reference to relevant section below on using stock effectively]*

### **Achieve Decent Homes Standard in Council stock by 2010**

#### Progressing towards Decent Homes

*[All figures used in this section to be reviewed]*

As can be seen from the performance figures in *[add reference to Performance section of Plan]*, little progress has been made in reducing the overall percentage of Council homes that are non-decent. The reasons for this are as follows:

- The proportion of the capital investment programme for Decent Homes work was not increased until 2004/5, so there was little improvement in 2003/4 and 2004/5. As spend on Decent Homes was limited, more homes became non-decent during 2003/4 and 2004/5 than were brought up to Decent Homes standard
- Investment in Decent Homes increased in 2005/6 and 2006/7 after the Option Appraisal exercise, but delays in getting works on site mean that homes in these programmes are still to be completed. The proportion of homes becoming non-decent was also significant in 2006/7 and this combined with delays in progressing works during the year has led to a significant increase in non-decency at the 1 April 2007.

The new HIPSP partnering contract should accelerate delivery of the Decent Homes programme, and so estimates indicate that there will be significant progress in 2007/8 as backlog works will be completed. However a significant decrease in non-decency will not be recorded until 1 April 2009 when the programme starts to tackle newly-arising non-decent homes.

Total investment requirements are analysed in more detail below.



### Investment to deliver Decent Homes

FPD Savills were commissioned in January 2005 to provide 30-year forecasts of the cost of achieving the Decent Home standard and related assets in a reasonable state of repair, using the existing stock condition survey information and updated market costs and replacement cycles. Their estimated capital investment requirements are shown in the table below, and compared to actual investment for Years 1 – 4 (2004/5 – 2007/08).

Year	Decent Homes/essential works (£'000)		Disabled adaptations (£'000)		Other works (including environmental improvements) (£'000)		Total (£'000)		Difference between total estimate and actual (£'000)
	Savills estimate	Actual	Savills estimate	Actual	Savills estimate	Actual	Savills estimate	Actual	
Year 1 2004/5	£6,069	£5,414	£547	£600	£239	£1,320	£6,855	£7,334	£479
Year 2 2005/6	6,209	5,387	559	500	246	1,627	7,014	7,514	£500
Year 3 2006/7	£6,350	£6,234	£572	£500	£252	£440	£7,174	£7,174	0
Year 4 2007/8	£6,497	£6,402	£585	£500	£256	£440	£7,338	£7,342	£4
<b>Total</b>	<b>£25125</b>	<b>£23437</b>	<b>£2263</b>	<b>£2100</b>	<b>£993</b>	<b>£3827</b>	<b>£28381</b>	<b>£29364</b>	<b>£983</b>

Thus in the first four years of the Decent Homes programme, almost £1 million more was invested than was estimated.

Revised estimates of the Decent Homes requirements have been provided from the current Codeman database. The revised Decent Homes investment requirements from 2007-2010 are set out below.

	Decent Homes/essential works (£'000)	Disabled adaptations (£'000)	Other works (including environmental improvements) (£'000)	Total (£'000)	Options Appraisal estimate (£'000)	Difference from Options Appraisal estimate (£'000)
Year 5 2008/09	£7,209	£500	£450	£8,159	£7,513	+£646
Year 6 2009/10	£14,050	£500	£450	£15,000	£0	+£15000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£27,661</b>	<b>£1,500</b>	<b>£1,340</b>	<b>£30,501</b>	<b>£14,851</b>	<b>+£15650</b>

This table excludes the cost of additional works over and above the simple replacement of elements at the end of their life for the Mill Farm Close estate and Grange Farm Close. These estates are being reviewed separately to identify options for their regeneration for which alternative funding solutions will be sought – more detail is given below.

The table shows that significant additional investment of over £15 million is required to meet the Decent Homes standard compared to that originally estimated for the Options Appraisal. The reasons for this are:

- The schedule of rates used to generate the estimated costs for the options appraisal was based on average industry standards. The actual costs being paid by the Council are in the main significantly higher – for example, new windows are actually costing about 44% more, and bathroom replacement is costing over 30% more. As a result fewer homes have been made decent within the agreed budgets. The revised estimates use the higher costs currently being paid by the council and therefore the investment level required to achieve the Decent Homes target has increased. Whilst the HIPSP project should deliver a reduction in costs bringing it nearer to the industry average quoted by Savills these may not be delivered in time for the majority of the remaining Decent Homes programme and it is therefore considered prudent to set the budgets on known actual costs and monitor and adjust as tender prices come in.
- The option appraisal estimates of decent home investment needs did not take full account of potentially failing properties up to 2010. The original stock condition survey did not record the age of specific components in a property and so the number of potentially failing properties up to 2010 could not be estimated. This has now been partially addressed by recording the install date of all new components and estimating and recording in Codeman the existing component install dates as far as practically possible although the database still does not capture 100% of this information. The current estimate includes the majority of potentially failing properties and so investment needs up to 2010 have increased, as shown in the table below.

#### Dwellings falling into Non Decency

Year	No. of New Non-Decent Dwellings	Estimated cost for new Non-Decency (£'000)
Year 1 2004/05	189	£4,928
Year 2 2005/06	291	£7,587
<b>Total</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>£12,515</b>

The numbers of new non-decent properties should dramatically reduce from years 3 to 6. We therefore estimate that there is an additional investment requirement for the non-decent dwellings not captured in the Savills estimates will be £12.5 million as shown in the table above.

Taking into account all of the above changes in investment requirements means that the following levels of investment are required for the remaining two years to achieve the 2010 Decent Homes target:

2008/2009 £11,580k including £500k for adaptations

2009/2010 £11,580k including £500k for adaptations

In addition, during the option appraisal process tenants were very keen to ensure that wider improvements than just those relating to the Decent Homes standard were achieved. Very specifically they wanted to see estate wide environmental improvements and only supported the prudential borrowing option if an additional £3.5M was provided for this purpose. An element of these improvements is already budgeted for with £450k per annum identified in the investment table above. The balance not funded is therefore £2.2M. Adding this requirement would increase the investment level needed as follows:

2008/2009 £12,680 including £500k for adaptations and £1,100k for environmental improvements

2009/2010 £12,680 including £500k for adaptations and £1,100k for environmental improvements

#### Delivering Decent Homes by 2010

The housing capital investment programme was significantly increased in January 2007 to match the requirements set out above. The confirmed 3 year capital investment programme is as follows (the detailed programme is given in *Appendix ?*):

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Decent Homes programme	10,400	10,600	9,100
Other planned work including environmental improvements	1,400	1,400	900
Disabled Adaptations	500	500	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>10,500</b>

A 3 year programme detailing all the Decent Homes works required by individual property up to 2010 has been developed using the Codeman stock condition database. It was widely consulted on with residents in January and February 2007. This programme has now been issued to the Property Services team for delivery.

The Council has set up the HIPSP project to improve radically both responsive and planned works to housing and all corporate property. The Council has now selected its preferred contractor and Kier have been appointed. The contract with Kier is now in the mobilisation stage and is due to officially commence in July 2007. Early

meetings have already taken place with Kier to plan delivery of the 3 year Decent Homes programme and officers responsible for the contract are confident that this new partnering arrangement will ensure delivery of the 3 year Decent Homes works programme by March 2010.

The Mill Farm estate and Grange Farm estate are subject to further option appraisal to select the best solution for their improvement taking into account wider social and economic issues as well as the condition of the housing. The Mill Farm appraisal is due to complete in summer 2007 with Grange Farm following shortly after. These may complete post 2010 depending on the recommended solution and extent to which they interface with other neighbourhood renewal or regeneration programmes.

### **Increase resident satisfaction with the environment of their homes**

#### Addressing Unpopular Housing

We have:

- transferred the Rayners Lane Estate to Home Group, with almost 75% “Yes” votes from residents. Complete regeneration of the estate is now underway including the demolition and rebuilding of most of the housing including some housing for sale, as well as other initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life, particularly for young people, on the estate

*[other achievements under this heading?]*

The Options Appraisal highlighted some further estates for which further work was needed to determine the best solution for their future because Decent Homes works alone will not improve their long-term sustainability and/or the physical construction type means that there are difficulties carrying out the Decent Homes works, including Mill Farm Close and Grange Farm Close.

Mill Farm Close is a small estate consisting of 7 four-storey Easiform system-built blocks of flats providing 112 homes in a mix of bedsit and 1 bed flats and 2 and 3 bedroom maisonettes. 21 are leasehold with one block being mainly leaseholders. Included within the appraisal area is Miller Close comprising 26 houses and 62 Rickmansworth Road comprising 9 flats and several garage sites (some already demolished).

A number of major issues have been identified including spalling concrete, defective wall ties, excessive sound transmission between flats, limited insulation and poor energy efficiency, balcony repairs, need for rewiring, new windows, kitchen and bathroom replacement. Achieving the Decent Homes standard will be at a substantially higher cost than the average for the rest of the stock.

Mill Farm is relatively unpopular compared to the council stock as a whole leading to higher turnover and low demand. It is unattractive and has suffered from a range of anti social behaviour including joy riding, fly tipping, car abandonment and a general breakdown of security. It is difficult to improve security due to the design of the housing and the number of pedestrian routes leading into and out of the estate. There is wasted land and the communal areas are largely unused. The estate contains some bedsit accommodation that is unpopular.

The estate lies within the Pinner ward. Although Pinner is a prosperous and relatively affluent neighbourhood with a high level of home ownership and characterised by above average house prices, at the super output area Mill Farm demonstrates a high level of deprivation compared to Harrow as a whole.

External consultants have been appointed to help us to review options for the regeneration of Mill Farm Close. Tenants and leaseholders will be closely involved in looking at these options, with assistance from an Independent Tenant Advisor.

*[Text on Grange Farm here]*

### Improving Estate Environments

Since the last Business Plan, we have:

- Retendered the Grounds maintenance contract with tenant input to an enhanced specification **[but satisfaction is not high?]**
- Begun a programme of twice-yearly estate inspections, attended by residents and housing staff (including Area Managers)
- Reviewed the procedure for dealing with abandoned cars

To meet resident priorities expressed in the STATUS survey (and leaseholder survey?), we will focus on:

- Developing a programme to increase recycling opportunities in Council properties
- Consulting residents on providing a cleaning service for communal areas funded through service charges

*[Other key actions?]*

<p><b>Reduced hate crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance as a result of working with other agencies</b></p>
---

We have:

- put in place new Domestic Violence and Racial Harassment policies
- contributed to a directory of independent advice for victims of Domestic Violence
- trained all new housing officers to enable them to help victims of Domestic Violence
- agreed a reciprocal rehousing process with 7 West London boroughs to allow victims of hate crimes to be rehoused away from perpetrators in appropriate cases
- adopted a new casework system for dealing with antisocial behaviour, and trained staff in its use

With our colleagues in the ASB Unit, we have helped to:

- Arrange with Ealing Mediation Service to refer mediation cases to them
- Finalise an ASB Protocol (an agreement between the Council, Police and other agencies that explains the procedures taken by the ASB Unit in Harrow and sets out clearly the expectations that the ASB Unit has of its partners)

With our colleagues in the Crime Reduction Unit, we have helped to:

- Establish 11 trained Hate Crime Third Party Reporting sites in the community
- Plan a high profile publicity campaign across the borough to encourage people to report hate crimes
- Prepare a Victim Support Pack for victims of race and faith crimes
- Provide a Freephone multi-lingual helpline

We will now focus on:

- Finalising the introduction of new Tenancy Agreement that will enable us to repossess properties from perpetrators of domestic violence (this is currently out for consultation with tenants)
- restructuring to create specialist nuisance and antisocial behaviour management roles

*[Other actions:*

- *Introductory tenancies?*
- *demoted tenancies?*
- *policy and procedure on implementation of CCTV?]*

<p><b>Empower all residents to have a greater say in the management of their homes and community</b></p>
--

Harrow tenants made it clear in the Options Appraisal process that they want to look at options for taking on more control of their own housing and community. We want to help them to do that, while ensuring that tenant organisations within the borough represent all sections of the community and that everyone who lives in Council stock has the opportunity to have their say, even if they don't want to come to meetings.

Our achievements include:

- A new Tenant Compact, negotiated with residents, is in place
- The appointment of FIRST Call as independent tenant advisers to:
  - Explore the potential for applying for the Right To Manage across the borough (this was a specific tenant requirement for approving the change from the ALMO to the prudential borrowing option)

- Help to increase the representativeness of the formal resident involvement structure
- Providing a Resource Centre for Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations
- Helping leaseholders to set up a Leaseholder Support Group
- Involving residents in selecting our partner for repairs and maintenance

We will focus on:

- Progressing and implementing the FIRST Call work

*[Other action on resident involvement?]*

<b>Make sure all Council stock is being used as effectively as possible</b>
---

We can contribute to making sure that affordable housing in the borough is maximised by using Council stock and other assets owned by the Housing Revenue Account effectively. This means reducing the length of time that properties are empty between lettings as much as possible, although we need to balance this against the need to bring properties to a reasonable standard of repair and decoration before reletting them.

We have already:

- Introduced a choice-based lettings system with neighbouring Councils and local housing associations to reduce the number of properties refused by new tenants and existing tenants wanting to transfer
- Reviewed our procedures for mutual exchange, succession and abandoned properties with the aim of making sure that all available Council stock is being used to best effect

*[Garage sites?*

*Mephram Gardens Scout hut?]*

We will focus on:

- Improving turnaround time for empty Council properties so that they are available to relet as quickly as possible
- Finalising the introduction of new Tenancy Agreements which will include a digital photo of the new tenant so that it is easier to check that they are actually living in the property – this will reduce unauthorised occupancy and mean that our properties are being lived in by people with most need for them

*[Other relevant actions, particularly plans for looking at non-housing assets e.g. garages etc?]*

<b>Maximise income from rent and service charges</b>
--

Balancing the HRA in order to achieve Decent Homes by 2010 means that we must make every effort to increase our income and get value for money for our spending.

We have:

- Implemented a new computer system for Right to Buy purchases which means that we can keep a better track of what leaseholders are liable to pay towards the services they receive
- Increased garage rents to move towards market rents
- “Depooled” service charges from rents so that tenants can see what they are paying for the services they get

*[Garage vacancy rate?]*

Our priorities are to:

- Improve arrears collection performance, partly through a restructuring of Resident Services to create specialist income management roles
- Strengthen management of the service to further improve performance
- Explore the potential for a “Reward” scheme to encourage tenants to pay rent on time
- Apportion service charges (including all relevant costs e.g. staffing) appropriately to leaseholders so that they are happy to pay (*consultation on this?*)
- Help leaseholders to access debt counselling
- Review the use of and charges for community halls to ensure that income to the HRA is maximised.

<b>Improve information we hold about Council stock and its residents so that we can target scarce resources at individuals, properties and areas in most need</b>
---

We currently do not have enough accurate, up-to-date information about our residents to enable us to identify their needs and target our limited resources on those who need them most. Although we believe that our stock condition information is reasonably comprehensive, we need to make sure that it is kept up to date so that we can plan future improvements. We also need to improve the way that we collect information about our performance, so that it focuses on measuring what is important to our stakeholders, including residents.

*[Any achievements in this area that we can highlight?]*

Our priorities are to:



- Develop an Information Strategy for Resident Services
- Establish an Integrated performance management system for Resident Services
- *[Carry out a tenant census to improve our understanding of residents needs]*
- Establish a rolling programme of property surveys with Kier

### **Increase resident satisfaction with access to and response from Resident Services**

Residents have indicated to us through the most recent STATUS survey that they are unhappy with aspects of the services we provide, in particular access to the services and the outcome of queries. We want to make sure that staff are able to communicate in a clear and helpful way with residents, and to have clear service standards that we have agreed with residents.

We have:

- Prepared a new Tenant Handbook (with the active involvement of tenants) so that all tenants have a clear picture of what they can expect from us
- Provided Plain English training for all staff

Our priorities are to:

- Consult residents on standards for all services, and publish the resulting standards to all residents
- Review all standard letters to make sure that are understandable
- Train residents to undertake “mystery shopping” so that they can help to monitor our performance in this area
- Provide customer care training for all staff
- Improve Leasehold Services performance *[more detail needed on this]*

### **Increase resident satisfaction with responsive repairs service**

*[Achievements to date?]*

We are currently negotiating the details of the new partnering contract with Kier. This will deliver:

*[summary of benefits]*

**Action Plan**

**Appendices:**

**Glossary/abbreviations**