



TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

**TUESDAY 22 JULY 2008
7.30 PM**

FORUM AGENDA (CONSULTATIVE)

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

MEMBERSHIP (Quorum 3 Council Members)

Chairman: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Councillors:

Yogesh Teli

**Bob Currie
Phillip O'Dell**

Representatives of Individual Housing Estate Tenants' and Residents' Associations

Reserve Members:

1. G Chowdhury
2. Robert Benson
3. Mrs Kinnear

1. David Gawn
2. B E Gate
3. -

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

**Contact: Lysandra Dwyer, Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 020 8424 1264 E-mail: lysandra.dwyer@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

TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE FORUM

TUESDAY 22 JULY 2008

AGENDA - PART I

1. **Appointment of Chairman:**

To note the appointment at the meeting of Cabinet on 15 May 2008 of Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane as Chairman of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum for the Municipal Year 2008/09.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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.

Enc

5. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 6)

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 28 February 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

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

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Forum for the Municipal Year 2008/09

7. **Public Questions:**
To receive questions (if any) from local residents or organisations under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
8. **Petitions:**
To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
9. **Deputations:**
To receive deputations (if any) under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).
- Enc. 10. **INFORMATION REPORT - Housing Performance Report 2007-08 and plans for 2008-09:** (Pages 7 - 14)
Information Report of the Divisional Director (Housing)
- Enc. 11. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn Report 2007 - 08:** (Pages 15 - 22)
Information report of the Corporate Director (Finance).
- Enc. 12. **Estate Services:** (Pages 23 - 28)
Report of the Divisional Director (Housing).
- Enc. 13. **INFORMATION REPORT - Housing Capital Programme:** (Pages 29 - 38)
Information report of the Divisional Director (Housing).
- Enc. 14. **INFORMATION REPORT - Right to Manage Process:** (Pages 39 - 40)
Information report of the Divisional Director (Housing).
- Enc. 15. **INFORMATION REPORT - Mill Farm Close Regeneration Programme:**
(Pages 41 - 46)
Information report of the Divisional Director (Housing)
- Enc. 16. **Minor Amendments / Revision to the Housing Allocations Scheme:**
(Pages 47 - 122)
Report of the Divisional Director (Housing).
- Enc. 17. **Homelessness Strategy:** (Pages 123 - 184)
Report of the Divisional Director (Housing)
18. **Suggestions for Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**
Suggestions for agenda items for the next meeting.
19. **Any Other Urgent Business:**
Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.
20. **Date of Next Meeting:**
To note that the date of the next meeting of the Forum will be held on the 11 November 2008.

AGENDA - PART II - Nil

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**TENANTS' AND LEASEHOLDERS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

28 FEBRUARY 2008

Chairman: * Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath
Councillors: * Don Billson * Phillip O'Dell
* Bob Currie

* Denotes Member present

Tenants' and Leaseholders' Representatives

Representatives from the following Associations were in attendance:-

Antoney's Close Tenants' and Residents' Association
Berridge Estate Tenants' and Residents' Association
Pinner Hill Tenants' and Residents' Association

In total 6 Tenants/Representatives attended.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

123. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.

124. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- (i) Councillor Bob Currie declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda, in that he attended monthly meetings of Brookside Close Tenants' and Residents' Association. Accordingly, he would remain in the room when the items were discussed.
- (ii) Councillor Phillip O'Dell declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda, in that he attended meetings of the Wealdstone Community Association. Accordingly he would remain in the room when the items were discussed.

125. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

The Forum was asked to consider two items, which had been admitted late to the agenda, as follows:

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances / Grounds for Urgency</u>
10. Housing HRA Capital Programme 2008 - 10	This report had not been circulated with the agenda to allow up to date information relating to the Housing Capital Programme to be provided to the Forum.
11. Information Report – Grounds Maintenance Service	This report had not been circulated with the agenda due to concerns relating to confidential information in the original report.

Following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the items would not be admitted late to the agenda.

126. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting and the ordinary meeting, held on 9 January 2008 be taken as read and signed as correct records.

127. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 16 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

128. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

129. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4E of the Constitution).

130. **Quarter 3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Monitoring Report as at 31 December 2007:**

An officer introduced the report and explained that the end of year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget was likely to achieve a surplus of £219,000.

The officer reported that:

- the estimated outturn of over £300,000 was an improved position compared to the original budget;
- key variances suggested that the budget would allow additional surpluses;
- a key area of expenditure was the salaries of officers who supported the delivery of the housing priorities. A marginal overspend in terms of staffing costs was expected;
- an increase in charges by energy suppliers had resulted in increased costs of gas, water and electricity and a subsequent overspend of approximately £267,000;
- there had been an overspend of £140,000 on repairs across housing estates due to increased costs relating to void repairs and the use of specialists;
- in total, the HRA expenditure was approximately £17.54 million;
- the income received under the HRA would meet the majority of expenditure. The Council would be recovering more than had been originally budgeted for;
- the Council had experienced a lower than expected rental loss although there had been lower Right to Buy sales;
- voids were being made habitable much more rapidly. As a result, the Council were experiencing less rental loss at below budget;
- it was estimated that £1.1 million would be recovered in Service Charges from leaseholders;
- facility charges recovery was in line with the changes in the Budget. The level of charges was below costs as the costs of utilities were increasing above assumed levels of inflation;
- the Council is in negative HRA subsidy due to the formula and policy employed by Central Government.

In response to a Member's request for further information on the insurance premium recovered from leaseholders, the officer advised that the Council had budgeted to recover through leasehold charges up to £259,000. Service charges also services such as ground maintenance and caretaking. This was reflected by the £215,000 variance. The HRA only supported £43,000 of leaseholder costs.

RESOLVED: That the Housing Revenue Account position at the end of the third quarter of 2007-08 be noted.

131. **INFORMATION REPORT – Update On Decent Homes Progress:**

An officer introduced the report of the Divisional Director (Housing) and explained that Housing, Property Services and Kier had put a considerable effort into the delivery of decent homes. The officer explained that it had been previously reported that there were 108 completions as part of the Decent Homes programme. Due to several difficulties encountered with the Council's contractor, Kier, the Council had not quite achieved this target.

The officer explained that as of 8 February 2008, there were 735 completions with 1006 outstanding. The officer explained that the Council's target for 2007/08 was to complete Decent Homes work on 1720 properties.

The officer qualified the statistics by stating that the Council were placing importance on ensuring that the works being carried out were being done correctly. In addition, the Council had increased the number of contractors on site to perform work, sub contractors had been dismissed and management resources had been increased by Kier.

During the discussion on this item, Members and representatives of individual housing estates' Tenants' and Residents' Associations raised a number of issues, which officers responded to as follows:

- in response to concerns over the installation of 4 foot long fluorescent lights, lights currently being installed as part of the programme would be changed and other bulbs used instead;
- that when a boiler had reached the end of its useful life it would be replaced. A Member expressed his concern about boilers having yearly checks. The Chairman advised that certificates were issued to residents confirming gas safety inspection. In response to a concern about condensation on windows, the officer responded that windows were double glazed which meant that the panels could be taken out and replaced;
- the Council was in the process of appointing an additional Tenant Liaison Officer. The officer had only recently left and apologies were offered to tenants and residents if they had been unaware of the changes in staff. The Council was in the process of sending out information to the residents informing them of the changes;
- satisfaction forms stating that works had been completed satisfactorily under the Decent Homes programme should not be signed unless residents were satisfied that the works were completed. Residents should speak to Resident Liaison Officers. In terms of the concerns over baths, this had been investigated and they were a British Standard approved design. The officer reported that pre-assessments were carried out by the Resident Liaison Officer. If there were any issues regarding designs of components these would be fed back to the Council to determine what was fit for purpose;
- the programme for Decent Homes was based on information relating to Stock Condition that the Council held. As a result, not every resident could expect to have new facilities. The Council had communicated the Decent Homes Standards and used the information it held to develop the programme. Works were being conducted on empty properties to bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard. The Council would agree the level of works to be undertaken. A key factor considered in developing the programme related to the life expectancy of the components. In response to a query on the actual number of houses that had been surveyed as part of the stock condition survey. The Divisional Director (Housing) responded that 20% of the properties under the Council's management were surveyed. This was in accordance with guidelines issued by the government for conducting stock condition surveys. It was the Council's intention to hold information on all properties in the borough but this would develop over a period of time. The Council was already in the process of working with Kier to start next year's validation programme of the published so that there was no delay in progressing the Decent Homes works;
- the 232 outstanding properties from the Apollo Project had been transferred to Kier;

- the Council had experience of working with the two sub contractors who were performing well. A number of new sub contractors had been employed and would be closely monitored by Kier;
- in response to a concern regarding a fuse box being condemned shortly after installation, the situation would be investigated and a response provided to the Member of the Forum.

A Member of the Forum expressed his concern that there was a continuous pattern of issues raised by the tenant representatives present which was not conducive to an optimistic atmosphere at the Forum. The Divisional Director (Housing) stated that she was willing to organise a meeting between officers, concerned tenant representatives and relevant Councillors to resolve these issues prior to the next meeting of the Forum.

RESOLVED: That the progress on the delivery of the Council's Decent Homes programme be noted.

132. **INFORMATION REPORT – Gas Safety Inspections – Progress Report:**

The Forum received a report which had been prepared as a result of concerns on the Council's approach to gas safety inspection.

The officer explained that the Council had a statutory responsibility, as a landlord, to check safety relating to gas installations. The officer further explained that since 1 July 2007, the Council had delegated this task to Kier. He advised that Kier followed a programme approved by the Council's Property Services team to ensure that gas checks were completed. The officer reported that all properties had to be tested and safety certificates issued before expiration.

The officer described the process followed in accessing gas safety in properties. This involved:

- Kier conducting a first visit to the premises in question. If no contact was made then a letter was sent to the resident;
- a second visit would then be made. If there was still no contact, a third visit would be made after which the Council would serve a Section 54 Notice. This was a statutory power under the Housing Act which enabled the Council to undertake necessary inspections.

The officer emphasised that the Council's objectives were to ensure that installations were safe and not to take tenants to court.

The officer reported that the Council had undertaken to inform all tenants that gas inspection needed to be undertaken. He added that the Council would attempt to reduce the number of properties without gas safety certificates by allowing Kier to be flexible and utilise the Environmental Protection Act.

A representative of a Tenants and Residents Association commented that officers should work more closely with them to gain access to those properties which they were having difficulty with. The officer and Divisional Director (Housing) stated that they would welcome the assistance of the TRAs.

In response to a Member's query as to what the cost implications of submitting section 54 notices, the Divisional Director (Housing) stated that there were no significant costs.

RESOLVED: That the background and current position of the Council's gas safety programme within HRA tenanted properties be noted.

133. **INFORMATION REPORT – Right to Manage Process:**

The Forum received a report which stated that Cabinet had agreed in June 2005, following the conclusion of the housing stock options appraisal, to investigate the potential for establishing a Tenants' Management Board supported by an Independent Tenants Adviser Service. First Call had been appointed as the Independent Tenant Adviser by a panel of tenants and leaseholders.

The officer explained that legislative requirements were applicable in the establishment of a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). These were prescriptive and he/she detailed the procedures to be followed.

The next stage of the process involved entering the feasibility stage. This would address identified concerns, would the TMO address the concerns and would the scheme be both financially and generally viable.

The officer explained that in order to enter the feasibility stage, a TMO had to be established. The conditions included that 20% of secure tenants or tenants overall had to be members of the TMO and a constitution based on the model constitution provided by the Government had to be adopted. Once these conditions had been adhered to, a Right to Manage notice would be distributed to tenants and leaseholders within a relevant area of the TMO and notice served on the Council.

The officer reported that First Call were successful in applying for Section 16 funding from the Housing Corporation for a borough wide pre-feasibility study. The Council was currently undertaking this study and had carried out a survey to identify the level of interest. There had been a 22% response rate to the survey and of those who did respond, 82% had expressed an interest in exploring tenant management further. The officer also reported that a meeting had been organised for those who had expressed an interest in establishing a steering group.

During the discussion on this item, Members and representatives of Individual housing Estates Tenants and Residents Associations raised a number of issues, which officers responded to as follows:

- there would be implications for funding if Tenants and Residents Associations opted out of the Right to Manage Scheme. The Tenants and Residents Association and TMO were separate schemes. The prime responsibility for the Tenants and Residents Association was to be a key consultee of the Council. The purpose of the TMO was to manage all housing services in a specific area;
- there was a clear distinction between the roles of TRA, TMOs and the Council;
- TMOs, as prescribed in law, related solely to tenants and leaseholders;
- the way in which tenants could vote was different at each stage of the right to manage process. At the end of the feasibility study, a report would be produced and would specify whether to conduct a final ballot. It would be the responsibility of the Council to organise a final ballot and a TMO could not be established unless 51% of those eligible to vote agreed to the establishment. The officer did inform the Forum that there were proposals to amend legislation to ensure that the final ballot was more reflective of all other previous ballots which had taken place;
- the legislation was clear on who could and could not vote on the setting up of a TMO. Each tenant and leaseholder concerned had a right to vote at each stage of the process. To further clarify, in cases of joint tenancies those tenants listed on the tenancy agreement would be eligible to vote on the basis of the vote for tenant.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Right to Manage process in Harrow's Council Housing report be noted.

134. **Suggestions for agenda items for next meeting:**
The following items were suggested as agenda items for the next meeting of the Forum:

- Housing HRA Capital Programme 2008 – 10;
- Grounds Maintenance Service.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

135. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

Garden Fences

A member of the Forum representing the Tenants and Residents Association requested the Forum to consider the Council's policy on garden fences. The member had been informed by a Council officer that tenants had to pay for fences to be installed / reinstalled and wished to know the reasons for this.

The officer explained that she understood that this question related to an incident which had occurred last year. The officer explained that it was understood that a passer by

had been injured by a brick wall. An order had been issued to replace the brickwall. The job had been carried out in September 2007 but a surveyor had said that the works were not satisfactory and the Council requested that the fence be replaced as requested by the initial works order.

The officer explained that the tenant's handbook did state that fencing was the responsibility of the Council. However, new tenancy agreements under item 3 did now state that the tenant was responsible for gardens, patios and fencing.

The Member representing the tenants and residents association stated that he/she had seen the tenant knock down the wall in question whilst other neighbours had seen the tenant selling the bricks. The Member questioned why the tenant in question should get a new fence. A Member of the Forum also commented that they knew that the tenant had knocked down the wall in question.

The officer explained that they could only provide information that they had received. An officer stated that the Council did not have any background information on the wall being knocked down but that the repair had been handled by Kier without any further cost to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

Organisation Funded by the Council

A Member raised an item on an independent report investigating an organisation funded by the Council. The item was raised in a private session of the meeting.

The Member asked questions of officers present who provided responses to the queries asked.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

136. **Date of Next Meeting:**

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of the Forum would be held on 22 July 2008.

137. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**

In accordance with the Advisory and Consultative Procedure Rule 13 (Part 4E of the Constitution) it was:

RESOLVED: At (1) 9.59 pm to continue until 10.15 pm;

(2) 10.14 pm to continue until 10.20 pm;

(3) 10.19 pm to 10.30 pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.25 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CAMILLA BATH
Chairman



Committee:	Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLCF)
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Housing Performance 2007-08 and plans for 2008-09
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Adults and Housing Services - Paul Nasjarek
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults & Housing - Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Report on Housing Performance 2007-08 and plans for 2008-09

Section 1 – Summary

This report is in the form of a newsletter, which provides information on how key services were delivered in 2007/08. It also highlights initiatives and targets which the housing service proposes to deliver in 2008/09.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

The report is in the form of a newsletter and is attached in Appendix 1.

Section 3 – Further Information

None.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Rebecca Caprara
Housing Strategy and Performance Manager
020 8420 9638 rebecca.caprara@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: Best Value Performance Plan 2008/09.

Voids, allocations and lettings

- Last year we let a total of 268 council properties.
- We reduced the average time it takes us to relet a property from 33 days to 23 days, making Harrow one of the top performers in London. This is a huge improvement and means that we are maximising the use of our stock, by providing homes for people in the shortest time possible. Our high performance in void turnaround has led to some tenants informing us that not enough time is being allowed for them to move into their new home. We have reduced this year's target to 27 days, after reviewing our performance and listening to customer feedback.

Rents

- We collected £20.6 million in rent last year. This is 97.4% of all the rent owed to us, which is an improvement on the previous year (96.6% in 2006/7). This year we have a newly structured rent team, and we plan to increase rent collection to 98.5%.
 - Last year we reduced the proportion of tenants with more than 7 weeks' rent arrears from 7.39% to 7.15%. Our target for 2008-09 is to further reduce this to 6%.
 - This year we will continue with the Rent First! campaign and ensure that we maximise the use of our debt prevention service, to assist people who are having problems paying rent.



Tenancy management

- Last year we served a total of 508 Notices Seeking Possession to tenants in rent arrears, and we evicted 13 tenants due to high levels of debt. This is higher than we expected, but reflects catch up on our overall arrears performance in previous years.
- This year, our new arrears prevention team will focus on ensuring that all residents who are experiencing difficulty in paying rent receive the required welfare and debt prevention support. They will also ensure that persistent non-payers are swiftly taken to court and evicted.
- Last year we introduced new tenancy conditions to all secure tenants.
- This year we will revise both the tenant and lessee handbooks.
- Last year we continued to follow the principals of the Respect Agenda, and we are already seeing the benefits of a revised case management system for dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) on housing estates.
- We evicted one person for ASB last year. We also had 4 incidents of racial harassment reported to us, all of which were fully investigated. This year we will continue to monitor and promptly investigate all race hate crimes. In addition, our new anti-social behaviour (ASB) team will focus on serious cases of ASB, neighbour dispute and domestic violence. Working with the police and the Safer Neighbourhood Team, they will ensure that our tenancy agreement is fully enforced against perpetrators of ASB.

Estate management

- In 2007-08 we completed around 30 projects to make improvements to our estates, in consultation with individual Tenants and Residents Associations. These range from installing new lighting, gates, doors, fencing and other security measures, as well as providing disabled parking bays, improving parking controls and better access.



New security door at Shaftesbury Circle



Stonegrove Estate fencing

Revamp of Grange Farm play area

Thanks to funding from the Raebarn House Development of £10,000, new equipment for older children was installed in the play area and pathways were resurfaced. Much to the delight of the residents!

"We have waited ten years for this to happen".

"You have made us so happy".

"My child looks out of the window and wants to play on OUR play area".

"This area helps me to amuse myself with basketball, meet other friends and make new ones".

"The play area is always in full swing with younger kids and parents in the inner play section with older children".



- Last year we also completed a review of our caretaking service. This year we will be consulting with residents on improvements for caretaking and other estate services.

- As part of the estate services improvement project, we will be market testing the grounds maintenance service to achieve an improved service for residents, and better value for money. In addition to improved caretaking services, this project could incorporate plans for parking controls and a new cleaning service for council estates.

Repairs

- In July 2007 there was a major change in the way we deliver repairs to council homes, with the start of our new partnership contract with Kier Building Maintenance.
- Telephone surveys from Kier show that 99.6% of residents were satisfied with repair work carried out to their property.
- Over 20,000 repair orders were placed during the year, 60% of which were classed as emergency or urgent. We'd like to reduce the proportion of urgent repairs raised to 45% by the end of 2008-09, to free up money to carry out more routine maintenance.
- We completed 92% of urgent repairs within government time limits. We want to increase this to 97.5% in the coming year.
- We completed non-urgent repairs within an average of 16 days, and our target is to reduce this to 10 days. Following consultation with tenants through Homing In, from April 2008 we revised our priority times for repairs to council homes and brought them in line with government guidelines. Our monthly monitoring for this year shows that we are already exceeding our 2008-09 target.
- Last year we kept 63% of all appointments made. A key priority for us this year is to improve on this figure, and we have set ourselves a target of 90%.
- This year we're installing repairs diagnostic software to reduce administration and improve efficiency, by helping to diagnose a repair at the first point of customer contact.

Decent Homes and planned maintenance

- Kier Building Maintenance took over the contract for Decent Homes works in October 2007. During 2007-08, we reduced the number of non-decent council properties from 3680 to 2323, which is a reduction of nearly 37%.
- Last year we installed:
 - 672 new kitchens
 - 566 new bathrooms
 - 160 new central heating systems
 - 412 new windows and doors.
- This year, we will continue to work with Kier. We plan to complete the Decent Homes programme by April 2009, which is one year ahead of the target set by central government.

Mrs Callan from Eastcote Lane Estate in her newly refurbished kitchen by Kier "...The workers were the best - clean and tidy and really nice people. They were always the same men too, which was good. I'm more than happy with my new kitchen and bathroom - they're absolutely marvellous!"



Regeneration of Mill Farm Close

- Last year we completed an options appraisal for the regeneration of Mill Farm Close. Following consultation with residents, Cabinet approved that we progress with redevelopment proposals outlined in the Tribal options appraisal report. This enabled us to progress the redevelopment of the estate by inviting Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to submit proposals for assessment.
- In March 2008 a resident steering group was setup for consultation and training with the Independent Tenant Advisor, to go through the expressions of interest. The initial 6 expressions of interest have been shortlisted to 4 RSLs, who have been invited to submit more detailed proposals.
- An estate event will be held on 12 July, which will enable residents to see the proposals from 4 RSLs and provide feedback. A report is to go to Cabinet in October 2008 with the chosen RSL for approval. A ballot will then be held in April 2009, and if there is a majority vote, work will commence to finalise the project. We aim to transfer Mill Farm Close to the successful RSL before March 2010.

Tenant and leaseholder participation

- Last year we appointed First Call to work with residents to explore the 'Right to Manage' option. Our pre-feasibility work is near completion and by July 2008, we will have a better understanding of which parts of the borough will benefit from formal feasibility.
- Last year we helped to setup Grove Estate Residents Association. We also helped set up Milton Road Residents Association, which unfortunately folded not long afterwards. We do however continue to recognise block representatives. Stonegrove Estate TRA also folded but an Estate Representative was voted in in March 2008 to represent the residents on the estate.
- This year, our newly structured resident participation team will focus on the following key areas:



Lisa and Heena from Grove Estate RA

- Supporting residents in the creation of new residents associations and assisting with established ones.
- Supporting residents associations to become more involved in the day-to-day delivery of services to their areas and estates; this includes involving residents in major improvement projects to housing estates.

What else is in store for 2008-09?

Benefits of a restructure - during 2007-08, we had a thorough review of our housing management service. We considered feedback from complaints, satisfaction surveys and comparison with other housing organisations, and in April 2008 we put in place a new structure for Resident Services. These changes include the creation of two anti social behaviour officers, a dedicated arrears prevention team and maintaining the traditional patch based housing officer as a main point of contact for residents. This year will be the start of real improvements to all aspects of our housing management service.

Improved customer contact - Resident Services is changing a number of practices in order to improve access to staff and services. These primarily concern duty arrangements and telephone answering, whereby staff have specific duty days, and telephone answering machines will no longer be used. We will also have appointment systems for ASB and arrears prevention work.

Website improvements - we have recently made additions to the Harrow Council website, which allows tenants to find the contact details of their housing officer by typing in their address. During the course of this year we will develop our website further to make it more interactive.

Electronic management system - later this year we will be implementing new management systems to ensure that enquiries and service requests are dealt with swiftly, consistently and professionally. All correspondence, forms and other information will be electronically managed and processed to agreed service timescales, resulting in a more efficient customer focussed service. Our electronic management system will take effect from September 2008.

Standards for customer care - this year there will also be a corporate review of customer care standards, and Housing Services will play a key part in consulting on and devising these standards.

Tenant satisfaction survey 2008-09 - this summer we will commission a research company to carry out a satisfaction survey to a random sample of our tenants. The questionnaire will cover key aspects of housing management, and the results will allow us to see what we're doing well, where we need to improve, and help us to develop and implement an action plan. This survey will be carried out every two years, and it will also allow us to compare tenants' views with other local authorities.

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Meeting:	Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn Report 2007-2008
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director of Finance - Myfanwy Barrett
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults & Housing – Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – HRA Outturn

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out the outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2007-2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) Note the revenue outturn position for 2007-2008 subject to audit and HRA capital outturn reported elsewhere on this agenda
- (b) Note the position for HRA balances
- (c) Note the implications of the outturn for 2008-09 and beyond
- (d) Note the timetable for audit committee meetings and external audit review

REASON:

SECTION 2

Introduction

1. The provisional forecast outturn for the HRA is an in year surplus of £518k against a budgeted surplus of £219k, which represents an increase in the surplus of £299k. Appendix 1 details the outturn position subject to audit.
2. The in year surplus has increased by £195k when compared with that reported to TLCF on 28th February 2008. The increase in surplus reflects variations in both income and expenditure which are detailed below.

Expenditure

3. Expenditure is £746k or 4% greater than the budget for the year. This relates, in the main, to increased salary and non salary staffing costs including consultancy supporting the delivery of housing priorities, increased energy costs, increased contribution to the bad debt provision and various one off costs in relation to repairs.
4. The increases in the repairs expenditure relates to the one off cost the maintenance contracts in addition to terminating transport contract hire costs as a result of transferring the directly managed repairs staff team to Kier, together with increases in day to day maintenance expenditure and the inclusion of a provision in relation to disrepair claims.
5. The increased contribution to the bad debt provision reflects a slight increase in rent arrears during the year and also the increased level of debt written off in relation to those debts which by statute can no longer be recovered, these write offs amounted to £142k
6. The increased costs are offset by an under utilisation of the contingency provision and additional income relating to the recovery of prior year leaseholder service charges which were greater than anticipated.

7. A contribution of £1m is included to support the capital expenditure in relation to the Decent Homes works.

Income

8. Increased income is £1,046k or 6% compared to budget for the year. The increase relates largely to additional rental income and HRA subsidy, offset by a lower level of non dwelling rent income and service charges. This variance is significant and relates to the fact that the rental year was 53 weeks in 2007/8.
9. Dwelling rental income was higher than budget by £600k. This relates largely to the combination of lower levels of property sales through right to buy, improved efficiency in void turn around times and a 53 week rental year. The budget assumed 52 weeks. The increased income also relates to service charges and the variation now evident following the split between rent and service charge with effect from 1st April 2007.
10. The difference between budget and out turn in relation to negative subsidy relates to the rent constraint allowance. This is the mechanism used by government to compensate for limiting rent increases to 5%. This is the last year in which this allowance applies under guidance received from central government.
11. Non dwelling rental income including garages, carports and leasehold shops underachieved by £39k, mainly due to higher than expected void levels.

HRA Balances

12. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business plan assumes prudent use of balances and estimated an in year surplus of £648k for 2007/8 together with a carry forward balance of £6,377k into 2008/09. The table below details a lower level of balance as at 31st March 2008, reflecting the fact that the in year surplus of £518k was delivered at a level below assumption in the HRA business plan approved by Government Office for London in 2007.

	£'000
Opening balance as at 1 April 2007	5,728
Budgeted in year surplus	219
Outturn variance	299

Balance at 31 March 2008	6,246
---------------------------------	--------------

Liabilities and Contributions to Provisions

13. As a necessary part of good accounting practice all provisions are reviewed on a regular basis and the appropriate contributions to or from provisions are made at year end. During the year a risk was identified in relation disrepair claims and as part of the closure of accounts process this risk was addressed by the inclusion of a provision.
14. The HRA has debt relating to housing rents and service charges. There is an agreed recovery policy for determining the appropriate bad debt provision. As part of the closure of accounts process, the policy is applied to all debt outstanding at the year end. The total debt outstanding in was £1.6m and the provision is £0.8m.

Implications of the outturn for 2008-09 and beyond

15. Further work is required to establish the extent to which the reduction in balances brought forward into 2008-09 will impact on the long term viability of the HRA business plan. This will be captured as part of the first quarter monitoring to the Cabinet in September and will be reported to TLCF with the first quarter report for 2008/9.

Timetable for audit committee meetings and external audit review

16. The draft accounts were considered by the Audit Committee 24 June 2008 and the external audit will commence in early July. The final accounts will be considered by the Audit Committee on 22 September 2008 and must be signed off by the Council and the Auditor by the end of September.
17. A summary of the draft accounts for the Council will be included in the Council's annual report, as part of the July edition of Harrow People.

Financial Implications

18. Financial matters are fully reported in the report.

Performance Issues

19. The report sets out the comparison of out turn with budget for the year

Risk Management Implications

20. The outturn position for 2007/08 has an impact on the deliverability of the 2008/09 budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and the HRA business plan.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 7 th July 2008		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 7 th July 2008		

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: Rakesh Kotecha
Senior Professional [Acting], Housing Finance
020 8424 1672

Background Papers: 30 year HRA Business Plan
HRA Medium Term Budget Strategy

Appendix 1

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA): PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2007-2008

	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance		Comments
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Expenditure					
Employee Costs	2,934	3,023	89	3	Various Salary overspends compensated for by under spends in other areas
Supplies & Services	1,705	1,935	229	13	Higher cost mainly attributable to large price increases in gas and electricity supplies
Central Recharges	1,215	1,220	5	0	Revised internal service support charges
Employee Costs - Needs / Strategy	354	405	51	14	Revision and update of salary allocation
Recharge to other services	-503	-503	0	0	Supporting People Grant.
Home Ownership Service	274	64	-210	-77	Income includes recovery of additional income over and above that accrued for prior years leasehold service charges.
Baseline expenditure	5,980	6,144	164	3	
Contingency -general	200	145	-55	-28	On cost on DLO back pay £144k not provided for in prior years.
Operating Expenditure	6,180	6,288	109	2	
Charges for Capital	5,338	5,410	72	1	Reflects higher borrowing cost coupled with lower levels of useable capital receipts from right to buy sales.
Contribution to Repairs Account	4,842	5,343	500	10	Increased cost of £500k includes £172k one off non recurring cost relating to contract termination,

	Approved Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance		Comments
			£000	%	
RCCO	1,000	1,000	0	0	£80k provision for disrepair claims and £250k additional spend on the in year repairs service
Bad or Doubtful Debts	100	164	64	65	Contribution to Decent Homes expenditure. Increase in provision for tenant rent and service charge arrears
Total Expenditure	17,460	18,206	746	4	
Income					
Rent Income – Dwellings	-19,980	-20,578	-600	3	Higher rental income resulting from lower right to buy sales and improved efficiency in voids and 53 week rent year
Rent Income – Non Dwellings	-912	-872	39	-4	
Service Charges Tenants	-1,119	-1,062	56	-5	Variance compensated by dwelling income above
Service Charges	-255	-203	53	-21	Leaseholders service charge income
Facility Charges	-336	-355	-18	6	Income from heating & water charges
Interest	-17	-15	2	-14	Mortgage Interest receivable.
Other Income	-8	-23	-15	198	Represents recovery of court cost from tenant rent arrears court cases
Transfer from General Fund	-83	-88	-5	6	
HRA Subsidy	5,030	4,472	-558	-11	Negative subsidy payable to Government less defective dwelling grant
Total Income	-17,679	-18,724	-1,046	6	
In Year Deficit / (Surplus)	-219	-518	-299	-137	
BALANCE	-5,946	-6,245			

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Meeting:	Tenants' & Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	22 nd July 2008
Subject:	Estate Services
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director of Housing – Gwyneth Allen
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults & Housing - Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out proposals and actions to improve the provision of estate services to Council housing estates

Recommendations:

TLCF is requested to agree to consulting on the options shown under paragraph 2.4 (main options)

TLCF is requested to note short term improvements to service delivery under paragraph 3:1

Reason: (For recommendation)

The council is required to consult on any proposed changes to its services.

Section 2 – Report

2:1 Background

2:1:1 Estate services comprise the following:

Caretaker Services
Grounds Maintenance Services
Building Cleaning (internal common parts)
Parking Controls

2:1:2 Estate services are provided through directly employed teams for caretaking within the housing management (residents' services team). Grounds Maintenance is provided through a Service Level Agreement with the Council's Public Realm Team. Both building cleaning & parking controls are provided on an ad hoc basis through the caretaker service and for parking through a private company named BTP.

2:1:3 In October 2007 a report was published:

A review of the caretaker service – undertaken independently by Brent Housing Partnership.

2.1.4 Whilst this report recommended a number of short term improvements to both services it also highlighted the need to ensure value for money and indicated that service improvements are necessary. Action plans have been produced as a result of the reports.

2:1:5 In respect of building cleaning there are only ad hoc arrangements, as this service is not currently provided. Residents are expected (through their tenancy agreements) to clean the internal parts to buildings.

2:1:6 Car parking controls are provided through a private company (BTP). This arrangement cannot be expanded to cover all housing estates. If the service is to be extended to a new supplier there is a need to procure this competitively and the service would need to be self-financing.

2:1:7 In addition to the report mentioned above, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to determine that existing services are not performing satisfactorily. There is a need to ensure short-term improvements are put in place immediately and to consult residents on proposals for a remodelled service.

2:2 Current situation

2:2:1 In response to the report mentioned above residents' services has put in place the following improvements to ensure that in the short term services are visibly improved to residents:

a) Building cleaning:

An additional £65,000 for the 08/09 financial year has been made available to undertake a deep cleaning program for the internal areas of all our council blocks. The hygienic condition of buildings is variable however all are in urgent need of cleansing. The work will be carried out by our caretaker

service operatives and the work will be approached through prioritising “worst first” blocks. It is planned that the cleaning program will begin at the end of July and continues throughout the financial year. Service charges relating to this aspect of the service will not be recharged to tenants or leaseholders. Funds are available through savings within the housing revenue budget and will be supplemented through the contingency.

b) Grounds maintenance

Recent meetings with the Public Realm Team have focussed on the slow start to the grounds maintenance service and an improvement plan has been agreed to be fully operational by the end of July 2008:

All schedules will be published and available to all TRAs and published on notice boards on housing estates/blocks,
A mechanism for deducting payments for non-service delivery has been introduced,
Closer monitoring of service delivery through estate services supervisors will be regular and frequent.

c) Caretaker Service

Caretaker staff have recently provided a number of improvement suggestions which are now being implemented;

Publication of daily/weekly caretaker visits and tasks to housing estates to be shown on estate sign boards and notified to TRAs,
Direct contact with TRAs on a weekly basis
Introduction of deep cleaning service
Higher level of visibility of caretaking staff when on estates
Complaint and issues inbox to be set up and immediately communicated to caretakers.

d) Car Parking Controls

No short-term improvements (see longer term options)

2.3 Why a change is needed

2.3:1 Outcome of caretaker review

2:3:2 In February 2004 the audit commission produced its inspection findings rating Harrow as 2 star service with good prospects for improvement. The report listed a number of recommendations and notably in respect of the caretaking service:

“A long term improvement plan should be developed for the caretaking service in consultation with departments and stakeholders that impact on the service”¹

2.3.3 In respect of the grounds maintenance service the report stated

¹ Audit Commission Housing Service Inspection February 2004

- *Inconsistency in the quality of the grounds maintenance service*
- *The grounds maintenance service does not provide good value for money²*

2.3.4 In September 2007 a review of the caretaker service was conducted independently by Brent Housing Partnership, their work was supported by Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

The objective of the review was to:

“This review will be limited to a basic assessment to establish whether Harrow’s Caretaking Service is an efficient and effective service, what, if anything, can be done to improve services to residents, and whether the service provides good value for money”³.

2.3.5 The review set out a number of recommendations both in the short, medium and longer term. The main finding of the report identified that the service did not provide value for money and there was a need to market test the service. In support of this the Audit Commission requires Landlords to market test their services, specifically the Key Lines of Enquiry will test the following: -

‘Has recently reviewed its procurement arrangements and who is best to deliver services, particularly for significant areas of expenditure. It has evaluated these and takes an approach which is the most cost effective and which provides high quality services in line with customer preferences’.

2.4 Main options

2.4.1 There is now a need to consult with residents and other stakeholders on how best to provide the full range of estate services delivered by the Housing service in the medium to longer term. This report seeks the endorsement of TLCF to consult on the following options and following this, report to TLCF within the current financial year providing specific recommendations having completed consultation:

2.4.2 Improve the existing services retaining in house provision of the service;

Currently the service does not fully cover the full scope of estate services namely internal cleaning. Retaining the service in house with improvements may require the ending of the service level agreement with the Public Realm Service and including grounds maintenance within an enhanced caretaker service. The service would include grounds maintenance, cleaning, and caretaker duties. A view on how to undertake parking control would need to be developed

2.4.3 Seeking an alternative contractor.

² Audit Commission Housing Service Inspection February 2004

³ Review of Harrow’s caretaking Service October 2007 – Brent Housing Partnership

This option would require formally tendering the complete service to a contractor within a formal contractual arrangement. It would require full market testing and adequate specification. It could involve the transfer of a number of council employees to the successful contractor. Monitoring and payments would be on performance and delivery of the service.

2.4.4 Maintaining “as is” arrangements with more effective monitoring and enforcement

This option would be least disruptive and work has already begun on improving the service to residents. It does not however allow facility to expand to deliver a full cleaning service necessary to cleanse buildings on a daily basis. Additional funds would need to be allocated from the HRA to purchase this service.

2.5 Other options considered

Options to be considered are set out in paragraph 2.4. Any other options suggested during the consultation period will be considered..

2.6 Implications of the Recommendation

2.6.1 Resources, costs and risks

Consultation can be undertaken within existing resources, at this juncture there are no risks to the service.

Failure to agree the recommendation may delay longer-term improvements to the service. The identified risk is continued dissatisfaction of the service and achieving better value for money.

2.7 Financial Implications

2.7.1 Set out the financial implications of the proposed decision, in particular:

The budget cost for estate services in 2008/9 is:

Grounds maintenance £430,000
Caretaking £631,181

2.8 Performance Issues

BV74 Overall satisfaction with landlord
BV74b Overall satisfaction with landlord (BME residents)

Both the above BVPI are at below lower quartile for CPA purposes but at middle quartile when reviewed through the tenant’s satisfaction survey undertaken in 2006 and compared London wide. Surveys are undertaken every two years and a further survey will be undertaken in 2008.

2.9 Risk Management Implications

All risks are set out in the report.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 4 July 2008.....		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: ...7.July 2008.....		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: William Manning. Service Manager, Resident Services, 020 8424 1473

William.manning@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Caretaker Review October 2007

Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry (Housing Management & Estate Services)

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES



Committee:	Tenant and Leaseholder Consultative Forum
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director of Housing – Gwyneth Allen
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults & Housing - Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: 2007/08 housing capital projects completed Appendix 2: 2008/09 housing capital programme

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out information on the 07/08 and 08/09 Housing Capital Programmes

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

1. 2007/08 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1.1 Progress on the decent homes programme

1.2 The original target for 2007/08 was 38% (1398 homes to be made decent during 07/08). This would leave 2282 homes non decent at the end of 07/08.

1.3 There was, however, only an expectation that Kier would deliver 827 decent homes to 31 March 2008. Other completions were expected from 2006/07 Apollo completions (356 properties) handed back in 07/08 and from the Radway window replacement contract (203 properties). The total contracted numbers, therefore, amounted to 1386 (12 properties less than the original target number of 1398).

1.4 The numbers of properties actually completed, across all contracts, was 1357 against an original target of 1398.

1.5 213 tenants (15% of the contract numbers) refused all works programmed for their homes: others declined individual elements.

1.6 Other housing capital projects

1.7 The housing capital budget 07/08 provisional outturn figure is £10,956,768. The expected committed amount to be carried forward to 08/09 is £2,620,232.

1.8 The decent homes Kier contract was fully delivered.

1.9 Appendix 1 shows the 07/08 out-turn on all other housing capital works. A number of projects for which there was no funding in 07/08 have been rolled forward into the 08/09 programme.

2. 2008/09 HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2.1 A number of revisions have been made to the programme reported to February's TLCF. The principle change relates to the decision to bring forward the 2009/10 decent homes programme (and funding) into 2008/09 to enable as many tenants as possible to benefit from improvements to their homes as early as possible.

2.2 This year, more detailed validation surveys are being undertaken than in the past, to ensure that works required, but not specified in the provisional decent homes programme, are identified. As more work than planned is

now being programmed the increased costs have had to be met by curtailing spend on some other elements on the original housing capital programme.

- 2.3 Appendix 2 sets out the revised capital programme as at June 2008.
- 2.4 This year an allocation of just over £1million has been allocated to estate improvements. Consultation with tenants and leaseholders affected by individual proposals will be ongoing throughout the year.
- 2.5 The intention is to publish the full capital programme and the decent homes programme on the Council's web site by the end of July 2008.

Section 3 – Further Information

Further progress on the capital programme will be reported to the next TLCF meeting.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lorraine Dallas, Interim Service Manager Partnerships for Housing,
020 8424 1339

Background Papers:

TLCF report on the Housing Capital programme of 22 February 2008
Cabinet report on the Housing Capital programme of 13 March 2008
Decent Homes programme 2007-10

**HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08 PROVISIONAL OUT-TURN
AS AT 7 MAY 2008**

Programme of works	Addresses	Works status
Decent homes	Borough-wide	1393 of 1825 completed
Boiler replacements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Allen House • Alma Court • Belmont Lodge • Boothman House • Cornell House • Durrant Court • Edwin Ware Court • Goddard Court • Harkett Close • John Lamb Court 	Sheltered	Preparatory works commenced on all blocks
Roof works: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atherton Place • 1-97 Churchill Place • 1-43 Deacons Close (communal) • Carmelite Road (part) • Edwin ware Court 	Borough-wide	Substantially complete Preparatory works commenced Substantially complete Complete Preparatory works commenced
Lifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goddard Court • Grange Court • Harkett Court • Watkins House 	Sheltered	Preparatory works commenced To start on site July 08 Works in progress
Means of escape: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow Weald Park • Meadfield • Grange Court • Boothman House • Belmont Lodge • Alma Court 	Sheltered	All to start on site October 08
Aerials	Borough-wide	Complete
Block entrance doors	Borough-wide	Preparatory works commenced
Condition surveys	Borough-wide	Deferred
Asbestos register and management	Borough-wide	Ongoing
IT upgrades	Office	Completed
Capitalised maintenance	Borough-wide	£200,000 spent
Drainage: 60-90 Hartington Close	Phase 1	Complete
Pinner Hill community centre -		Complete

Programme of works	Addresses	Works status
roof		
Fencing	Borough-wide	Complete
Door entry systems- essential overhaul	Borough-wide	Preparatory works commenced
Fire damage / under pinning / improvements	Borough-wide	Ongoing
Adaptations	Borough-wide	141
Feasibilities	Borough-wide	Ongoing
Minor estate improvements	Borough-wide	All but one projects completed

PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008 – 2009 AS AT 30 JUNE 2008			
ELEMENT	SCHEME	PROGRAMME REVISED AS AT JUNE 2008	NOTES ON JUNE 2008 REVISIONS
DECENT HOMES			
Individual dwellings:			
• Kier	Borough Wide	£7,527,000	2009/10 decent homes programme and budget (£3,583,500) b/f to 2008/09. Overall contract costs have arisen as a result of more thorough surveys resulting in more works to individual homes. Additional costs to be met from budget reductions on other parts of the programme.
• Radway	Borough Wide	£300,000	As above
• New front & rear doors	Borough Wide	£200,000	
• Shower cubicles / level access	Sheltered	£22,000	Installation of showers deferred as a result of timing constraints. Retained budget required for exceptional circumstances.
• Resident decant and / or support costs	Sheltered	£25,000	
• Extensions	General	£300,000	Increased budget to meet demand arising from new Housing Health & Safety Rating Standard as applied to decent homes programme
• Capitalised major works including voids	Borough Wide	£175,000	
• Disability adaptation works (HHSRS)	Borough Wide	£500,000	
• Outstanding decent home works from 2006/07 programme	Borough Wide	£0	Account paid out of 07/08 budget
Communal elements:			
• Communal boiler replacements	Sheltered	£300,000	
• Roofs	Borough Wide	£445,000	
Stock Condition:			
• Surveys	General & sheltered	£50,000	

**PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008 – 2009
AS AT 30 JUNE 2008**

ELEMENT	SCHEME	PROGRAMME REVISED AS AT JUNE 2008	NOTES ON JUNE 2008 REVISIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contingency for unforeseen works following validation surveys 	General & sheltered	£820,500	Validation surveys are showing different patterns of works and increased costs to that contained in original decent homes programme
OTHER INTERNAL WORKS			
Lifts	Sheltered	£550,000	
Upgrade warden call to include door entry systems	Sheltered	£325,000	Increased budget to enable door entry installations to be undertaken concurrently with warden call equipment renewal
Door entry systems	General	£0	Included within sheltered warden call works and within estates improvement projects
Flat blocks main communal entrance doors	Borough Wide	£0	As above
Electrical works (new legislation)	Borough Wide	£0	Incorporated into day-to-day routine repairs
EXTERNAL WORKS			
Drainage:	General	£150,000	Surveys across stock required before programme can be developed Retained budget to meet a specific project b/f from 07/08
Means of escape (phase 2)	Sheltered	£455,000	Budget reduced to accord with ability to deliver the programme. Further phase planned for 09/10
Digital aerials	General and sheltered	£150,000	
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS	Borough Wide	£1,014,000	
COMMUNITY CENTRES:			
Kenmore community centre roof	Estate based	£60,000	Increase in budget required following feasibility survey
Headstone community centre refurbishment	Estate based	£55,000	B/f from 07/08 – deferred in 07/08 due to lack of funds
IT PROJECTS:			
Codeman & ANITE	Annual licences	£10,000	

**PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008 – 2009
AS AT 30 JUNE 2008**

ELEMENT	SCHEME	PROGRAMME REVISED AS AT JUNE 2008	NOTES ON JUNE 2008 REVISIONS
BTP – Housing (paperless office project)	Office systems	£781,000	
H&S / MANAGEMENT / CONTINGENCIES			
Feasibilities / future works	Borough-wide	£100,000	Budget increased to meet demand for feasibilities arising from the decent homes programme, Older People's Housing Review and projects deferred from 07/08
Boiler control timers	Borough-wide	£22,000	New budget item to ensure annual gas safety checks are undertaken on a timely basis
Fire damage / underpinning works (insurance claims):	Borough-wide	£72,000	Original budget net of insurance refunds due
Asbestos Register & Management	Borough-wide	£50,000	Increased budget to allow for more Type 3 asbestos checks (more expensive than usual Type 2), which will be increasingly required. Also larger programme as 08/09 and 09/10 decent homes programmes are being combined
Capitalised major works from maintenance	Borough-wide	£0	Combined with capitalised repairs and voids budget. (See earlier)
Mill Farm regeneration	Stage 2 Fees	£50,000	
Contribution to TMO office	Regional	£0	
Air conditioning Civic 2	Office based	£0	Budget deleted - uneconomic given remaining life of building
Housing department project management costs	Various	£200,000	
Design & Build management fees and staffing costs	Various	£1,375,000	
TOTAL		£16,083,500	

08/09 Budget	£12,500,000
Add: 2009/10 budget for Decent Homes B/F	£3,583,500
REVISED TOTAL	£16,083,500

Continous Improvement Group Action Plan

Project title: 100 Day Challenge
 Prog. Title (if applicable): Harrow decent homes
 Project Director: JP/RJ
 Project Manager: BC



Key:	Owners:	Last Update
RJ	Richard Jackson	27/03/08
JP	John Philips	20.02.2008
FB	Francesca Byrne	20.02.2008
JM	John Muir	
WDA	William Dadoo-Ankrah	20.02.2008
MF	Michael Farquharson	27/03/08
CB	Christopher Bunker	01/04/08
AA	Alan Arthy	27/03/08
COC	Christine O'Connor	27/03/08
JF	Julian Francis	20.02.2008
MD	Michael Dowling	19.02.2008

Task					Update Report		
No.	Challenge	Description	Responsible	Accountable	Progress as at:-	Actions for next period	Action Deadline
1	The Kier Team Pledge	On each of the sites we have all team members including staff, operatives and subcontractors will pledge to deliver best decent homes	MF	FB	Area 6 complete, Areas 1-5 dates arranged with TRAs	Events to be planned with property services and housing (communications meeting - we 25.02.2008 (Mike Brown, Carol Yarde, Francesca Byrne. Continuous discussion through Residents / TRA's meetings.	Complete / Operational
2	Information / Care Packs	Coordinated Information packs for residents (Boxes)	MF	FB		Will advise next week spoke with RLO last week	Complete / Operational
a)	Before works	Outline of what works will take place, when, who to contact, what you will expect to happen- how to look after your new appliances etc	MF	FB	Format produced, initial changes made	Information pack has been developed and with FB, to be reviewed and signed off at communications meetings. Update required	Phase 2
b)	After works	welcome packs (Boxes)	MF	FB	No evidence at the moment	None. Complete / Operational. MF to provide update after information received from RLOs	Complete / Operational
3	Fortnightly surgeries on all sites to meet the team	An opportunity to meet the team and discuss any issues. Book appointments	SG	MF/AA	Partially Complete	Partially complete. Co-ordinated and advertised - liaison with PS and Housing. Update for next meeting, visits are happening	Partially Complete
4	Kier customer care line.	dedicated customer care line available for customers. Kier Email Address for client / customer communications now operational. "harrow.customerservices@kier.co.uk"	COC	JP	Complete / Operational	Care line complete / operational. Kier Email Address for client / customer communications now operational. "harrow.customerservices@kier.co.uk" Circulation of Email address required. MF to provide update next meeting on volumes and findings.	Complete / Operational
5	Can I help?	Whilst work in progress you will be visited daily by your RLO.	AA	MF	Complete / Operational. Monitor.	Started - (Development / improvement of monitoring process / appointment systems in progress. Standard answerphone message for all staff now in place. Part of AA inspection feedback next meeting. MF to monitor	Complete / Operational
6	We will ring you to check how we are doing during the work.	During the work you will receive a phone call each week to ensure that we are delivering service requirements and customer is satisfied.	COC	JP	Complete / Operational. Ongoing - monitor	MF to provide feedback on RLO daily monitoring sheets to include log of calls made to customers, in addition to log of visits made.	Complete / Operational
7	Customer Care Kier Master classes	All Kier people will attend weekly classes on customer care to reinforce Kier Values: 1) keep that appointment 2) Remember its a home 3) Be polite and smile 4) Be safe 5) Be excellent neighbors 6) Do a job you can be proud of 7) Be aware of the environment 8) Be part of the community	FB	RJ	Kier operational therapist seconded for project	Phase 2 training requirements being programmed	Phase 2
8	Help with packing	We will deliver boxes to help with packing and offer to help.	RLO	MF	Complete / Operational. Ongoing - monitor	Quality process to be implemented	Complete / Operational
9	End of day kitchen and housekeeping check .	Kier DLO staff will be visit your property to ensure that we leave it clean and tidy each day whilst work is in progress. Called the Kier Rangers	MD	JM	Area 4 to begin pilot 28.02.2008	Pilot to occur - with view to role out service throughout contracts at Phase 2	Phase 2
10	Resident Respite	Respite areas will be made available whilst work in progress	WDA	JF	Project manager assigned to complete - option of mobile respites to be used due to nature of property geographical spread	All areas to have access to Kier quality respite areas. Area 5 has no furniture - to be discussed next meeting, restructure imminent	Complete / Operational
11	Newsletter	Introduction news letter to explain who your local team is - followed by monthly newsletter	AA	FB	Draft format designed - areas to contribute	To be agreed with PS and Housing at communications meeting - to be completed and distributed . AA / FB to discuss.	Phase 2
13	Show room and warehouse	Dedicated material depot for kitchens and bathrooms including a show area. Improve supply chain logistics and display choices for tenants.	JF / mb	JM / JP		Partially complete - Warehouse found - services to be introduced. Barrat way showroom operational w/c 24/03, Additional Local depot now sourced to bring service in to the Borough	Complete / Operational
14	Dedicated Director	The Kier Director for Harrow will make weekly visits to sites to visit team and community - available to discuss	MF / FB	JP	Complete / Operational. Ongoing - monitor	Visits to be planned and communicated	Complete / Operational
15	Customer survey on completion	Customer survey to be given to all residents on completion of jobs. Process determined for completion and collection of survey. Data collection devised.	MF / RLO	JP	Complete / Operational. Ongoing - monitor	Ongoing - monitor	Complete / Operational
16	Performance Published	Customer satisfaction to be published in each area	COC / FB	JP	format devised and given to LBH for review	format to be agreed and signed off. Distribtuon to be agreed.	April
17	Mobile phones issued for TRAs	Mobile phones with pre programmed numbers to be issued to TRAs	MF	FB	Service communicated to TRAs - distribution began	Partially Complete. Remaining TRAs to receive /decline mobile phones. MF to provide feedback on level of feedback, service improvement.	Complete / Operational
18	Vulnerable Residents and lone working	Service for vulnerable tenants to be developed with Harrow and interested parties.	FB	RJ / JP	Research occurred -	Benching marking and consultation to take place to introduce process and associated training package. Steering group to be formed	Phase 2

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Committee:	Tenants and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Right To Manage
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director of Housing – Gwyneth Allen
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing - Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out an update on the progress of the Right to Manage investigation in Harrow

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

FIRST Call, a government approved section 16 agency, has been working with tenants and leaseholders in Harrow since last spring to establish whether there is any interest in investigating the Right to Manage. Following a borough wide survey, in which 82% of tenants expressed an interest, a Residents' Steering

Group was set up. Other FIRST Call activities included presentations to Council staff, elected members and residents' groups and associations.

It was agreed with the Council and the Steering Group to move forward on an area basis and the borough has been divided into four areas loosely based on existing housing management areas: Central (2101 homes), East (1332 homes), West (882 homes) and South (1666 homes). This approach recognises the boroughwide support for tenant management whilst establishing 4 distinct geographical areas that could benefit from local governance and service delivery. FIRST Call staff have been door knocking and distributing newsletters to recruit members to each of the area organisations. In order for members to vote on whether the projects should move to the next stage of the Right to Manage (The Feasibility Stage), it is required by legislation that 20% of tenants and leaseholders in the defined areas join the TMO.

Following on from the completion of the recruitment drive four Area meetings are being organised at which each tenants' organisation will agree and adopt a constitution, elect a committee and members will be asked to vote whether to carry out a feasibility study into tenant management by serving a Right to Manage notice on the Council in accordance with the legislation. Members will also be able to vote via post, text or online.

It is anticipated that the four area meetings will have been held by the end of July.

Section 3 – Further Information

N/A

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:
Carol Yarde,
Service Development Manager

Tel: 0208 420 9660



Committee:	Tenants and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	INFORMATION REPORT – Mill Farm Close Regeneration Proposal
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director of Housing – Gwyneth Allen
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder Adults and Housing – Councillor Barry Macleod - Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 – Project timetable

Section 1 – Summary

This is an information report setting out progress to date in taking forward proposals to improve and regenerate the Mill Farm Close estate, Pinner.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Cabinet agreed the following on the 14 February 2008:

- 2.2 To authorise officers to progress a comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the Mill Farm Close estate by formally inviting Registered Social Landlords to submit proposals on a competitive basis for consideration and;
- 2.3 That a resident steering group be set up to work with the Council in taking this project forward and that reports on progress be submitted to the Tenant and Leaseholder Consultative Forum.
- 2.4 The resident steering group was set up in April 2008 following a public meeting to which all estate residents were invited. The Steering group includes both tenant and leaseholder representatives from Mill Farm Close as well as members of the Pinner Hill TRA.
- 2.5 Residents have made it clear that they want to progress the proposals as fast as possible and a challenging timescale for selection and appointment of a preferred housing association (RSL) was therefore agreed (Attached at Appendix 1). This requires dedicated commitment from all members of the Steering Group. The fact that the selection process is on track against its planned timetable is due to this dedication from the Steering Group.
- 2.6 Stage 1 of the selection process has been to invite expressions of interest from a variety of RSL's. 6 expressions of interest were received. These were evaluated and ranked independently by the Council and its advisors, Tribal Consulting and also by the Residents Independent Advisor, Firstcall against the following criteria: Financial strength, Resources available for this project, Management and Maintenance functions and performance, Experience of regeneration and stock transfer schemes. All of the RSL's were considered to have the required financial capacity. The Steering Group also evaluated the bids and it was agreed unanimously to invite the following RSL's to the second stage of the selection process:

Catalyst Housing Group

Dominion Housing Group

Network Housing Group

Paradigm Housing Group

- 2.7 Stage 2 requires the RSL's to work up outline plans and submit a business delivery model that will enable the comprehensive redevelopment of the estate to the standards and timescales required by residents and the Council. RSL's must return their Stage 2 submissions by the 18th July. These will be evaluated over the summer and a recommendation made on the appointment of a preferred RSL to Cabinet in October 2008.

2.8 Firstcall has also run a number of training sessions for the Steering group on the following topics: Housing Associations – what are they and how do they differ from the Council, Understanding a financial business plan.

2.9 Consultation

Consultation with residents on this stage of the project is taking place as follows:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Meeting with all residents to explain selection process | April 08 |
| 2. Steering Group meetings | April –
Sept 08 |
| 3. Newsletter to residents | June 08 |
| 4. Presentation by RSLs to all residents (Drop in event) | 12 July 08 |
| 5. Interviews by Resident Steering Group | W/C 28 July 08 |

Section 3 – Further Information

3.1 A full Equality Impact assessment is being undertaken on the proposals. This will be discussed with and agreed by the Resident Steering Group and other stakeholders.

3.2 A further update report will be submitted to the next meeting of the TLCF.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Alison Pegg, Housing Enabling Manager, 020 8424 1933

Background Papers: Cabinet report 14 February 2008, Information provided to residents

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ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	March Mar	April Apr	May May	June Jun	July Jul	August Aug	Septem Sep	October Oct	Novem Nov	Decemb Dec	January Jan	Februa Feb	March Mar	April Apr
1	Public Meeting	1 day	Wed 05/03/08	Wed 05/03/08														
2	Internal Project Team	150.71 days	Mon 07/04/08	Mon 06/10/08		[Summary bar]												
3	Internal Project team meetings	150.71 days	Mon 07/04/08	Mon 06/10/08		[Summary bar]												
11	Steering Group	152 days	Wed 23/04/08	Thu 23/10/08		[Summary bar]												
12	Steering Group Meetings	152 days	Wed 23/04/08	Thu 23/10/08		[Summary bar]												
20	Prepare initial submission information	12 days	Wed 12/03/08	Wed 26/03/08	[Task]													
21	Expressions of interest to RSLs	0 days	Fri 25/04/08	Fri 25/04/08			◆ 25/04											
22	Draft specification	28 days	Mon 28/04/08	Fri 30/05/08			[Task]											
23	RSL Response to submission	13 days	Fri 25/04/08	Mon 12/05/08			[Task]											
24	Deadline for RSL response to expressions of inter	0 days	Mon 12/05/08	Mon 12/05/08			◆ 12/05											
25	Select RSL shortlist	22.86 days	Mon 12/05/08	Fri 06/06/08			[Task]											
26	Questionnaire to short listed RSLs	1.14 days	Fri 06/06/08	Fri 06/06/08														
27	RSL submissions	34 days	Mon 09/06/08	Thu 17/07/08			[Task]											
28	Estate Consultation Day	0 days	Sat 12/07/08	Sat 12/07/08					◆ 12/07									
29	Deadline for short listed RSLs submissions	0 days	Fri 18/07/08	Fri 18/07/08					◆ 18/07									
30	RSL evaluation & selection	28 days	Mon 14/07/08	Fri 15/08/08			[Task]											
31	TLCF	6.86 days?	Mon 14/07/08	Tue 22/07/08					◆									
32	deadline for publishing	1 day?	Mon 14/07/08	Mon 14/07/08					◆									
33	TLCF Meeting	0 days	Tue 22/07/08	Tue 22/07/08					◆ 22/07									
34	Cabinet report	13.57 days?	Fri 26/09/08	Mon 13/10/08														
35	Draft report deadline	1 day?	Fri 26/09/08	Fri 26/09/08														
36	Final Report deadline	1 day?	Mon 13/10/08	Mon 13/10/08														
37	Cabinet decision on whether to ballot	0 days	Thu 23/10/08	Thu 23/10/08														
38	Prepare for ballot	80 days?	Mon 27/10/08	Fri 30/01/09														
39	Ballot	15 days	Mon 02/02/09	Thu 19/02/09														
40	Ballot Result	0 days	Wed 25/03/09	Wed 25/03/09														◆ 25/03
41																		
42																		
43																		
44																		
45																		
46																		
47																		
48		1 day?	Wed 05/03/08	Wed 05/03/08														

Project: Mill Farm Project Plan 08 Date: Thu 03/07/08	Task	[Task icon]	Milestone	◆	External Tasks	[External Task icon]
	Split	[Split icon]	Summary	[Summary icon]	External Milestone	◆
	Progress	[Progress icon]	Project Summary	[Project Summary icon]	Deadline	↓

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Meeting:	Tenants and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	Minor amendments/revisions to the Housing Allocations scheme
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director of Housing – Gwyneth Allen
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing - Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out detailed proposals for amendments to the Council's Allocations Scheme (the document "London Borough of Harrow Lettings and Transfer Scheme").

Recommendations:

The TLCF is requested to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Portfolio Holder for approval.

Reason: (For recommendation):

It has been identified that the London Borough Of Harrow's Choice Based Allocation Scheme (or "Locata") for permanent housing might need amendment to fully comply with existing legislation. Upon further consideration of the Scheme, it is apparent that there are also areas that would benefit from updating, in order that they might reflect current best practice. The proposed amendments and improvements are not representative of major change, which would be subject to formal consultation. There is an intention to invite tenants and leaseholders to have the opportunity to give consideration to the proposed improvements and revisions and offer comment before formal adoption.

Section 2 – Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The aim and objective of improving Locata should result in enhanced levels of customer satisfaction as the policy will be better balanced, and seek to be more accessible, fair and transparent.
- 1.2. The purpose of the proposed changes is to look at the operational functionality of a more meritocratic, fair scheme in favour of underlying housing need in Harrow, lessening the risk of costly legal challenges.

2. Background

- 2.1. The current Lettings and Transfer Policy was agreed in April 2003 when London Borough of Harrow joined the West London choice based lettings scheme (Locata). This dispensed with the old “points” based scheme in favour of a “banding” arrangement. The allocations scheme then allows applicants to register compete and bid on the basis of “*reasonable preference*” for access to permanent social housing. Since April 2003, there have been a number of minor amendments, the last of which were agreed by the Planning, Housing and Development Portfolio Holder in April 2006.

3. Current Situation

- 3.1. A number of additional events have occurred, notably :-
 - a *Changes in environmental legislation have rendered certain aspects of the scheme out of date. A new regime for inspection and environmental standards (the Housing Health and Safety Rating System - HHSRS) was introduced following the enactment of the Housing Act 2004 and came into force in April 2006.*
 - b *London Borough of Harrow is aware that there is a need to change part of the scheme, which prohibits “dual” registrations. This is where a number of applications are made with reference to the same household’s underlying housing needs. The amendments made seek to ensure full compliance with current housing legislation.*
 - c *Other housing case law has emerged pertaining to allocations of permanent housing, which has implications for the London Borough of Harrow’s scheme (* see below). Following this judgement there are now specific requirements in lettings schemes that need to have a clear policy reflecting this “cumulative preference” (i.e. “**multiple needs**” or “**composite need**”)*
 - d *Recent Ombudsman decisions in relation to both processing medical assessments for applications, and on the matter of homeless priority dates clearly imply that amendments would be necessary.*

* (R (ON THE APPLICATION OF (1) SACIDA CALI (2) FAHMO ABDI (3) FAIZA SHARIF HASSAN) V WALTHAM FOREST LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (2006)

“a local authority housing allocation scheme was unlawful as it did not permit a proper judgment to be made in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Part VI on the respective needs of persons whose needs were cumulative. In addition the scheme had failed to define the criteria for awarding a reasonable preference to those entitled to it under the s.167(2) of the Act”

- 3.2. The proposed changes are being sent to the Housing Association Forum for consideration in July/August 2008.
- 3.3. There will be further and more substantive changes during 2009/10, as part of the West London partner authorities' response to the London wide mobility scheme (Capital Moves). There are also imminent proposals for London Borough of Harrow's Overcrowding Action Plan. It was felt that the minor changes that are proposed in this report would not benefit from further delay. The more major and significant changes will still be subject to the minimum twelve week stakeholder consultation period recommended in the Allocations Code of Guidance Ch 6, Para 6.6.

4. Main Option/s

- 4.1. There are existing pressures from external bodies, partners, together with our need to meet the aforementioned legal requirements, which necessitate making these minor amendments. Failure to make amendments at this time might present difficulties on typical "day to day" operational matters
- 4.2. It would be possible to change only the relevant parts of the scheme required to comply purely with housing law. However, it is felt that there is also an opportunity that exists presently to bring the scheme more fully up to date. It is imperative that from the point of view of staff in housing needs and from the service users perspective, Harrow is able to use the most accurate and current information.
- 4.3. Full detailed explanation on the proposed amendments is attached as Appendix A (wherever possible, each topic is referenced to the relevant paragraph of the current allocations scheme).

5. Other Options Considered

As an alternative, it would be possible to consider completely re-writing the housing allocations scheme. In itself, this would require extensive consultation and a great deal of staff time to review the policy in this way. It is proposed that the main format of the scheme is "refreshed" to reflect current housing law rather than overhauled and/or rewritten. A large number of amendments have been inserted for clarification and compliance.

In relative terms, there have been fewer complaints about the existing policy, as it is generally perceived to be more popular than the old "points-based" system.

6. Implications Of The Recommendation

6.1. Resources, Costs & Risks

6.1.1. Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

6.1.2 The associated risks of not making changes mean that the council might be open to legal challenge from housing applicants who identify inconsistencies with current law and practice. The net effect might be a successful legal challenge to the allocations scheme/policy, and resultant costs or the possibility of an adverse finding by the Ombudsman (with the possibility of compensation).

6.2. Staffing/Workforce

6.2.1. There would be no significant impact on staff as a consequence of the proposed amendments/enhancements, other than minimal staff time required for the basic administration in implementing the changes

6.2.2. There is benefit for staff to have clearer and more current information in place and to hand. This in turn should lead to improved service delivery and outcomes together with better meeting the needs of the service users.

6.3. Equalities impact

6.3.1. There is an intention to bring the allocations scheme into line with current corporate practice and priorities with full regard given to the Council's "Older People's Housing Review". Previous use of language and wording does not sit evenly with the aims and objectives of the review and the amendments will promote the interests of older people in this wider context. An Equalities Impact Assessment will also be carried out before the report is sent to the portfolio holder.

6.4. Legal Comments

6.4.1 The matter of amendment for instances of "dual" registrations on Locata will align with current legislation and case law ensures full compliance with housing law.

6.4.2 "Composite needs" assessments required following judgement in R (ON THE APPLICATION OF (1) SACIDA CALI (2) FAHMO ABDI (3) FAIZA SHARIF HASSAN) V WALTHAM FOREST LBC (2006) would bring Locata into line with legal requirements.

6.5. Community Safety

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The resources and costs are minor and will be absorbed within the existing Housing Needs budget, and comprise:

- a Re-printing of the Scheme in order that it is available on demand in Housing Reception. There is also alternative means of access via the Harrow website.
- b Training requirements on the new policy – these will be minimal, as officers have good awareness of the issues involved.

7.2. There are no specific cost implications associated with changing the policy in the ways proposed.

8. Performance Issues

8.1. Whilst there are no measurable performance indicators affected by these changes proposed for in the Allocations Scheme, it is clear that a better performing allocations scheme might prove to be beneficial to the aims and objectives of other initiatives. Examples of this would include the London Borough of Harrow's Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan recently submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and the proposed Overcrowding Action Plan.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 9 July 2008		
Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 9 July 2008		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Rosy Leigh, Housing Assessment Manager, tel: 020 8420 9209

Background Papers: The Council's Lettings and Transfer Scheme can be found on the Harrow website at

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=644

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES

Appendix A

Proposed Amendments

1. West London Locata is now an established scheme. Some of the language used in the introduction which was written at the scheme's inception (referring to its "pilot" status and "recent set-up") are clearly now irrelevant. This scheme is now well established and the wording throughout the document will need necessary amendment to reflect this. As the scheme has expanded over the last five years to include additional partners, together with several housing associations who have also joined West London Locata, there is a risk that the current wording relating to key issues might give a misleading impression. (e.g. the matter of partnership stated in Para. 1 of the scheme).

2. The Move-UK Mobility Scheme. The HOMES mobility moves scheme came to an end and it's proposed successor (MOVE UK) subsequently failed to become operational. In relation to inward mobility moves, the Council will still seek to prioritise elderly people who need to relocate back into Harrow. In the case of outward mobility moves, there is no longer a "Fresh Start" Team in existence, and the references to it will logically need to be deleted. There are additional but minor amendments that would need to be made in a similar manner. In line with this, mention will now need to be made for newer initiatives for mobility moves (e.g. Capital Moves). It is likely that this might necessitate further minor amendments/changes at a later stage.

3. The scheme must include the council's detailed procedures for assessment of "composite need" (see 3.1 [c]). In order to effectively meet current legal requirements, London Borough of Harrow will now need to include a reference to the new policy on assessment of "composite need". This will be placed under the section "Assessments and Banding Decisions". This will amend the reference to use of the Medical Adviser (Para. 3) in line with the revised policy. The policy will then be added as an Appendix C to the scheme.

4. All claims for medical priority must be put before a qualified medical advisor. Current arrangements in the scheme allow for housing officers to exercise a level of discretion when determining medical priority. This is done without the absolute need to put the case before the Council's medical advisor. Consequently, it can present potential vulnerability in instances where the Ombudsman examines applications. In turn, they might then find that could be construed as maladministration. A clear amendment to Para 11a) will resolve this matter.

5. The scheme cannot now prohibit applicants from registering with more than one Locata partner. In line this, the last bullet point of Paragraph 4(b) of the Lettings and Transfer Scheme document will need to be deleted (*i.e. "...are currently registered with another Locata partner (subject to Board decision)"*). There are occasions where a neighbouring council might accommodate homeless applicants within the London Borough of Harrow's boundaries. London Borough of Harrow are no longer able to refuse dual registrations by applicants. This measure will ensure that applicants who have been accepted as homeless by another local authority (but placed in temporary accommodation in Harrow) would not get priority over homeless households to whom Harrow owes a duty.

The addition of a new category (Para 15) will now specify the way in which these applications will be treated. In line with legal requirements, there is no intention to fetter discretion, and this will be made clear in the revised scheme. The individual merits of a case will still be considered, and higher priority may still be given where

<p>Harrow is ultimately satisfied that the original local authority is unable to provide suitable accommodation.</p>
<p>6. Applicants should not get priority dates in band A, B or C predating a period of being adequately housed. There have been a number of complaints from applicants received that relate to banding arrangements and the appropriate priority that a case would attract. It is proposed that a clearer explanation is now written into the scheme.</p>
<p>7. Homeless people's priority date It is intended that applicants should receive priority from the date they were actually homeless, and not the date the council accepted a duty towards them, which could be some considerable time later. A recent Ombudsman case against Hounslow Council highlighted this issue and minor amendment will resolve it.</p>
<p>8. Language and wording on housing for older people To appropriately reflect current corporate practice it is proposed that wording in Paras. 16 and 17 should reflect the language and priorities of the Council's "Older People's Housing Review".</p>
<p>9. Withholding Debts Due To The Council The scheme does not currently allow us to suspend the application of a person who has deliberately withheld council tax or other debts to the council. Para. 12 to be revised to reflect this</p>

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

LETTINGS AND TRANSFER SCHEME

HOUSING ACT 1996, PART VI as amended by the HOMELESSNESS ACT 2002

This Lettings and Transfer Scheme is Harrow's Allocations Scheme as required by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

Original version agreed by the Council's Planning, Development and Housing Portfolio Holder (Ref PHD 106/02) for implementation from 05/04/03.

Amendments to Section 11 of this document agreed by the Council's Planning, Development and Housing Portfolio Holder (Ref: PHD 021/03) for implementation from 04/09/03.

Further amendments to various sections were agreed by the Council's Planning, Housing and Development Portfolio Holder (Ref: PHD 089/03) for implementation from 03/04/04.

Further minor amendments to various sections were agreed by the Council's Planning, Housing and Development Portfolio Holder (Ref: PHD 104/05) for implementation from 24/04/06.

Lettings and Transfer Scheme

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Introduction

This document contains Harrow's Allocations Scheme (as required by the Housing Act 1996 as amended), and now includes the Council's policy on transfers and complies with the Homelessness Act 2002. It sets out the priorities and procedures that Harrow will follow in the letting of housing accommodation, both to tenants on the transfer list and homeseekers on the Housing Register.

In drawing up this scheme there has been consultation with all registered social landlords (housing associations) with which the Council has nomination arrangements and various departments of the Council, including Social Services. Also, due consideration was given to the Council's powers and duties contained in the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002, related legislation and guidance given by the Secretary of State and in respect of equal opportunities under various pieces of legislation.

During 2002 the Council changed the way it lets permanent housing to give people more choice. Harrow together with four other London boroughs and three housing associations, have joined forces to promote a new way of helping people to move or find a new home.

A central lettings agency, Locata, has been set up to work with all partners to advertise and match people to homes. Movement between boroughs is now possible because a proportion of vacancies will be available to tenants and homeseekers (including homeless households) living in any of the five local authority areas. Under the new scheme tenants and homeseekers become members of Locata and actively search for a home. Vacant properties are advertised in a regular free magazine and on the Internet and members are able to bid for properties. All members are placed, in date order, into a broad needs band according to their circumstances.

The Council's lettings policy is based upon a target system with targets set for transfers and homeseekers, which cover the majority of lettings, and for target groups considered outside the scheme. Targets are set and agreed by elected members, with each group given a proportion of lettings. An annual review of both projected supply and demand takes place and a strategy is planned for all lettings for the coming year. There is regular monitoring of Council lettings and housing association nominations.

Targets are set taking into account housing need, statutory and contractual obligations, the cost of temporary accommodation and other financial considerations, the Council's responsibility as a landlord, the need to make the best use of Council stock and the housing situation within the borough.

1. Locata

All homeseekers and transfer applicants on the Housing Register of any Locata partner local authority or housing association automatically become members of Locata. The founding partners are:-

1. London Borough of Brent
2. London Borough of Ealing
3. London Borough of Harrow
4. London Borough of Hillingdon
5. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
6. London Borough of Hounslow
7. Acton Housing Association
8. Ealing Family Housing Association
9. Nottinghill Housing Trust
10. Paddington Churches Housing Association
11. Paradigm Housing Group
12. Shepherds Bush Housing Association
13. Stadium Housing Association
14. Thames Valley Housing Association
15. Westway Housing Association

and all other organisations that may join the partnership in the future.

2. Eligibility for Harrow's Housing Register

The Council maintains a Housing Register, and the following persons are eligible to be put on it (these persons are referred to as eligible persons):-

- a) persons aged over eighteen resident in the borough (16 and 17 year olds to whom the council owes a duty will be assisted outside the scheme)
- b) persons with a local connection found to be unintentionally homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- c) young persons leaving care, referred by Social Services under their quota arrangements
- d) persons in hospital, prison or the armed forces whose last settled address was in the borough
- e) persons accepted by Harrow for re-housing under the MOVE UK Mobility Scheme
- f) secure or introductory tenants of Harrow

- g) assured tenants of registered social landlords or other housing authorities who are resident in the borough
- h) persons who the council considers should be eligible persons, on a case by case basis, because of exceptional circumstances or special needs
- i) other persons who are eligible persons by law.

3. **Who can be considered part of the household?**

a) Other members of the household

- Homeseekers: persons who were part of the household at the date of registration, and are still in occupation.
- Tenants: persons who were part of the household at the start of the tenancy, and are still in occupation.

b) Partners

- A partner who is living in a permanent relationship with the homeseeker or tenant and can prove that they have done for at least twelve months or are married.

c) Children

- Homeseekers: children born since the registration date and dependent children (under 18) joining the household where it can be proved that the homeseeker is the sole legal guardian and that there is no other option for re-housing. Where there is another legal guardian a decision will be made on a case by case basis to agree where it is reasonable to expect the child to be part of the household.
- Tenants: children born since the start of tenancy and dependent children (under 18) joining since the tenancy started.

d) Dependants

- A dependant relative who has joined the household because they are unable to live independently and there are no other options for the family, e.g. the relative owns a property or occupies a property large enough to accommodate the family. Advice will be sought from the Medical Adviser on whether the relative needs to live with the family. Where this is not considered essential, other options, such as sheltered housing, will be discussed with the family before a decision is made by the Housing Assessment Manager as to whether the relative should be

included in the application or advised to make a separate Housing Register application.

e) Carers

- A carer, where the homeseeker or tenant can demonstrate that a live-in carer is essential, one has been identified and has moved in with the household or is ready to do so when accommodation is made available and the Housing Assessment Manager (in consultation with the Council's Medical Adviser or Social Services as appropriate) agrees that a carer is essential.

4. Exclusions from membership

The following persons are not eligible for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of social housing:-

- a) if they are disqualified under the Housing Act 1996, S. 160A (these include people from abroad who are ineligible for an allocation of housing) or
- b) if they, or any member of their household:-
 - have been guilty of serious anti-social behaviour and a possession order is being sought or has been obtained or (in the case of a homeseeker) behaviour which the council considers would entitle it, if they were a secure tenant, to obtain a Possession Order under S.84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to that Act, other than ground 8* or
 - have assaulted a member of staff and an injunction is being sought or has been obtained or
 - knowingly give false or misleading information or withhold information that has been reasonably requested or
 - are currently registered with another Locata partner (subject to Board decision)

We will write to anyone who is being excluded from the Register giving our reasons. A copy will be sent to Social Services if they are involved or if it is considered appropriate.

Applicants have a right to ask for a review of a decision to exclude them from the Housing Register (see Review Procedure at Appendix B).

* Homelessness Act 2002, S.14(8)
London Borough of Harrow
11/07/08

A fresh application will be considered if:-

- i) the applicant's immigration status has changed, or
- ii) the applicant can demonstrate good behaviour for at least a year, or
- iii) the applicant or any member of their household knowingly gave false or misleading information or withheld information that was reasonably requested but this was over a year ago.

5. Removing people from the Housing Register

A member will be removed from the register if:-

- it is found that they have never been or they cease to be a eligible person
- they fail to re-register within three months of the anniversary of their registration (see **Section 8, Re-registrations**)
- the Council considers there are good reasons for doing so.

The Head of Housing has discretion to allow a member to remain on the register after they have moved out of the borough, in exceptional circumstances. This could be if the homeseeker has lived in the borough for a long time, is elderly or has severe medical problems and has lost their accommodation through no fault of their own and arranged short-term accommodation outside the borough.

Before removing a person from the register, the Council will give them written notice. The notice will ask the person to provide information, which the Council requires to help them decide whether to remove them from the register. It will give 21 days for the homeseeker to provide the information and tell them that the Council may decide to remove them if the information asked for is not provided or there are reasons why they should be removed from the register.

Homeseekers will be notified in writing of their removal from the register with the reasons for it and their right to request a review of the decision. (See **Appendix B, Review Procedure**)

6. Registration Process

- a) All homeseekers requesting re-housing and tenants requesting transfer must complete an application form to be put on the Housing Register. However an eligible person may be registered without an application form

in some circumstances, e.g. certain types of referral from Social Services, at the Council's discretion.

- b) If the homeseeker or tenant is not an eligible person the Council will notify them in writing, giving the reasons for the decision and informing them of the right to request a review of the decision. (See **Appendix B, Review Procedure**). A copy of the letter will be sent to Social Services if they are involved or if it is considered appropriate.
- c) In Harrow more people need housing from the council and housing associations than we have available. Most homeseekers and transferring tenants have to wait many years before they will be successful in bidding for a suitable property. To try to solve this problem Harrow Council works with housing organizations in other parts of the country to help people move to areas where there are available homes. Under Harrow's Housing Options Scheme information is provided about alternative choices in the housing market, which will include private sector opportunities, shared ownership and out of London moves. More information is available from our Fresh Start Team on 0208 424 1730.

7. Registration and initial assessment

If the Council is satisfied that the homeseeker or tenant is eligible to be on the register an initial assessment is made based on the information on the application form and any other information available. All those eligible will be assessed and placed in the appropriate bedroom category and in one of the four priority bandings in date order of registration.

Locata writes to all those who have been assessed as eligible to inform them that they have been registered as either a homeseeker or a transfer and that they can bid for homes using Locata HOME (the free magazine advertising available properties). Locata's membership pack includes coupons for bidding, a list of Locata HOME magazine outlets and an explanation of how to bid for properties. It also gives new members the following information:-

- Locata Identification Number (LIN)
- band and the reason for it
- priority date
- maximum bed size for which they can bid
- mobility group (physical disability level) if applicable
- advice that members have a right to request a review if they consider any of their registration details to be inaccurate (see Appendix B for review procedure).

8. Re-registrations (renewals)

Members have to re-register annually to remain on the Housing Register and are sent a reminder letter within three months of the anniversary month of the last registration date.

Members are allowed one month after the reminder letter to re-register, following which the file is perused for other recent contact, i.e. telephone calls, interviews or correspondence. If the member appears to be vulnerable and/ or to have a high priority we will make a visit if necessary. If there is no contact the applicant is notified that they will be removed from the register unless the Council considers that they should remain on the register.

9. Priority bands (See also Appendix A for full listing of bands)

The four priority bands are:-

- band A (emergency and top priority members)
- band B (members with an urgent need to move)
- band C (members with an identified housing need to whom the Council is required to give reasonable preference)
- band D (all other members).

Change of Circumstances

Members must keep the Housing Department informed of any changes in their circumstances. If this results in a band change we will inform the member in writing of the new band, the reason for it and the applicable priority date, and of their right to request a review of this decision (see **Appendix B, Review Procedure**).

10. Priority dates

The principle of the scheme is that no one should overtake existing members in a band.

Moving Up a Band

Moving up a band – the date that the higher priority has been given.

Moving Down a Band

Moving down a band – new priority date reverts to the date that applied when the member was previously in that band or any earlier date when they were in a higher band. The principle is that when moving down they should be awarded the earliest date that they were in the new lower band, or in a higher band.

Example 1	Priority Date
Member applies to register in January and is awarded band D	January
In February member is awarded band B	February
In March member is awarded band A	March
In April member is down graded to band C	February

Example 2	Priority Date
Member applies to register in January and is awarded band C	January
In February member is awarded band B	February
In March member is awarded band A	March
In April member is down graded to band C	January

Example 3	Priority Date
Member applies to register in January and is awarded band C	January
In February member is awarded band A	February
In April member is down graded to band B	February

Example 4	Priority Date
Member applies to register in January and is awarded medical priority – band B	January
In February member is accepted as homeless and is placed in B&B – remains band B	January
In April member is moved to temporary accommodation so housing no longer has adverse effect on health – band C	January

Example 5	Priority Date
Member applies to register for sheltered accommodation in January and is awarded band C	January
In February member changes his mind and wants one bed non- sheltered and is down graded to band D	January
In April member is awarded medical priority - band C	April
In May member is awarded urgent medical priority – band B	May
In June medical priority reduced again – band C	April
In June member is awarded emergency medical priority – band A	June
In July medical need disappears – band D	January
In August new medical assessment – band C	August

Band A rating will generally be given for a time-limited period (at the registering body's discretion) and in any case will be reviewed at regular intervals to check, for example, whether failure to apply for properties indicates that a member's case is not a genuine emergency.

Priorities within bands will be on a date order basis, according to the date the member was placed into that band.

There is a residual discretion for households whose defining features (including their cumulative needs) are deemed to be so exceptional that a higher priority band is deemed to be necessary.

Where the defining features (including the cumulative needs) of a member in band A are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate/imminent rehousing, there is a discretion to enable the household to be made a direct offer outside the scheme.

The relevant dates for the four bands are as follows:-

Band A

Emergency Medical – date approved as emergency

Severe Hardship – date approved as emergency

Management transfer – date approved as emergency

Ex-service tenants – date agreed person is priority to re-house

Urgent permanent decant – date agreed move is urgent

Homeless in Temporary Accommodation – date agreed person is priority for move-on

Statutory duty – date of Closing Order or similar

Fostering/Adoption - date of approval/referral by Social Services

Adapted Property Release – date transfer application registered (or occupant with disability deceased/moved out, if later)

Unauthorised occupants (non statutory successor) – date approved for re-housing

Underoccupier – date transfer application (for smaller property) registered

Band B

Medical Hardship – date medical assessment completed by Medical Adviser

Homeless – date of homelessness acceptance

Statutory overcrowding – date agreed as statutorily overcrowded

Unauthorised occupants (non statutory successor) – date approved for re-housing

Underoccupier – date transfer application (for smaller property) registered

Management transfer – date approved for management transfer

Ex-tenant discharged from institution – date new housing application registered

Permanent decant – date person agreed for re-housing

Supported housing release – date advised by Social Services that person is approved for move-on

Young People Leaving Care and other quotas – date accepted as quota

High Priority hardship – date high priority agreed

Severe Social hardship – date high priority agreed

Bands C & D

Registration date unless moving from band D to band C because of newly unsatisfactory housing conditions, new medical needs, becoming eligible for sheltered accommodation or new Care Plan when the date of the new assessment is used.

11. Assessments and Banding Decisions

Following the registration a decision will be made on what, if any, follow up action is appropriate, e.g. referral to the Medical Adviser; Disability Services, Environmental Health Officer (EHO), Homelessness Assessment Team if there is a threat of homelessness, or Social Services. The Housing Assessment Team makes decisions about banding in the light of appropriate advice and the following guidelines. They will carry out a composite assessment of the needs of all members of households with multiple needs.* The assessment will determine whether such households will be accorded an additional preference by being placed in band A or B, as appropriate to their needs.

a) Medical Needs (applicable to both Homeseekers and Transfers)

Members who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which is affected by their current home, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a Medical Self-Assessment form. The Housing Assessment Team considers this form, together with any relevant information from the General Practitioner, hospital consultant, or Occupational Therapist as appropriate. Where appropriate the Team also seeks advice from the Council's medical advisor.

Assessments are made of the effect of present housing on the state of health of the member or anyone in the household. In reaching a decision we will consider whether the overall effect on the household or any member of the household is sufficiently severe to warrant inclusion in a higher band.

In each case the recommendation is based on a judgement of need. Members with medical needs will be placed in one of the following bands:-

* Households with multiple needs are households entitled to a reasonable preference in the allocation of housing on more than one of the statutory grounds as defined in Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Band A – Emergency Medical will be recommended where the member (including accepted homeless members) or one of the household has a life threatening condition which is seriously affected by their current housing. Band A will also be given where current housing conditions and/or other circumstances are having such a major adverse effect on the medical condition of any member of the household as to warrant emergency priority. All recommendations for Medical band A are referred to the Locata partnership's Medical Advisor.

Band B – Medical (including mental health) Hardship will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the member (including accepted homeless members) or one of the household.

Band C – Medical (including mental health) Hardship will be recommended where the current housing conditions are having an adverse effect on the medical condition of the member or one of the household which creates a particular need for them to move.

Where a household is overcrowded and/or there are other adverse circumstances, the medical assessment will take into account the effect of the overcrowding and the adverse circumstances on the health of the household. Overcrowding (unless it is statutory overcrowding which is only relevant for secure or assured tenants) places homeseekers into band C. The Medical Adviser, in his/her recommendation, will take into account all the housing circumstances (including any element of overcrowding, floor level, and any other medical conditions of household members, etc) that affect the health of the household as a whole.

➤ **Mobility Needs**

Irrespective of the band assessment, where a member, or one of the household, has a substantial and permanent physical disability which may place them in mobility groups 1 or 2 (see below) the Housing Assessment team will make a referral to Disability Services, for a report on their housing needs. Taking into account the recommendations of the report the Housing Assessment team will place the member in one of the following mobility groups:-

1. Wheelchair user indoors and outdoors.
2. People who cannot manage steps or stairs and may use a wheelchair some of the time.
3. Independent but can only manage one or two steps.

b) Unsatisfactory Housing Conditions & Statutory Duty (applicable to both Homeseekers and Transfers)

Where a member has indicated that he/she is living in insanitary conditions, including lacking one or more of the following:-

- food preparation facilities (i.e. sink and space for a cooker),
- inside WC,
- bathing and personal washing facilities.

The Housing Assessment team may make a referral to the Environmental Health Officer (EHO). The EHO will provide an assessment of whether the member is living in insanitary conditions or other unsatisfactory conditions such as premises considered to be unfit by virtue of substantial or major disrepair which would justify service of notice under Section 189 of the Housing Act 1985.

Members will be deemed to be living in overcrowded conditions if members of their household do not have the following minimum provision:-

- Co-habiting couples – 1 bedroom
- Two siblings of the same sex, less than 5 year age gap – 1 bedroom
- Independent adult 18+, not part of larger household – 1 bedroom
- Children of opposite sex if one is 7+ years old should not have to share a bedroom
- Children of same sex if one is 10+ years old and there is a 5+ year age gap should not have to share a bedroom

NB: For this purpose the following aspects of the current accommodation will be taken into account:-

- If there is a second reception room (“parlour”) it will generally be deemed to be available for use as a bedroom
- Box rooms which could reasonably be used by a child will count as a single bedroom
- Single persons occupying studio flats will not be deemed overcrowded.

Members living in housing found to be unsatisfactory on any of the above criteria will normally be placed in band C.

In the following circumstances members will be placed in band A:-

- (i) if the EHO has notified that he has issued a Closing Order (i.e. properties unfit for human habitation where there is no alternative measure to render the property fit) or
- ii) if emergency re-housing is essential, e.g. Compulsory Purchase Order to enable site clearance for a road widening scheme

iii) where there is a statutory duty to re-house.

c) Homelessness & High Priority Hardship (applicable to Homeseekers only)

➤ Band A – Emergencies

Where an accepted homeless household is provided with temporary accommodation by the council and the landlord wants the property back, or the property is for some reason considered unsuitable to meet the household's needs, the member will be placed in band A if the Housing Provision team consider the household's needs would not be best met by providing further temporary accommodation. Examples of circumstances in which such a decision can be taken are:-

- (i) one or more of the household has obtained employment, resulting in severe financial hardship
- (ii) there are severe medical or disability reasons
- (iii) cases of severe harassment or violence in the current property
- (iv) severe disrepair of the current property

Where demand caused by leases expiring exceeds supply priority for move on to permanent accommodation will be given to those households who have waited the longest and alternative temporary accommodation will be provided to the others.

➤ Band B – Urgent

Accepted homeless households making their own arrangements or housed by the Council in bed and breakfast or hostel (non self contained) accommodation will be placed in band B.

High Priority Hardship: Homeseekers with dependant children who are living in insecure accommodation, do not have a bedroom and are lacking or sharing amenities will also be placed in band B.

➤ **Band C – Reasonable Preference**

Accepted homeless households who are occupying or under offer of an assured shorthold tenancy provided under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII move to band C until such time as the landlord wants the property back or their needs can no longer be met, or they are offered permanent accommodation by bidding through Locata.

Other homeless people within the meaning of part VII of the Housing Act 1996, but to whom the main duty has not been accepted, will be placed in band C. Homeseekers who have been served with a Notice to Quit (NTQ) or Possession Order (PO) will be referred to the Homelessness Assessment Team to investigate the validity of the Notice and to offer advice and assistance.

Other homeless households owed a re-housing duty will be reviewed as necessary.

d) Social Welfare Considerations (applicable to both Homeseekers and Transfers)

Where there are social/ welfare needs the Housing Assessment Team will consider the recommendations of Social Services and other relevant agencies and take into account any multiple needs. They will place the member in the appropriate band as follows:-

Band A – Severe Need or Enabling Fostering/ Adoption

Authorised by a Senior Officer or above where members are in “severe need”, which means exceptional circumstances and/or multiple needs which warrant emergency priority.

Where Social Services make a recommendation that permanent accommodation be provided to enable someone to foster or adopt a child, if this is agreed by the Housing Assessment Team the member will be placed in band A.

Band B – Severe Social Hardship

Authorised by a Senior Officer or above where members have an urgent need to move due to severe social hardship (usually by welfare agency, social services or police referral) is agreed by Housing Assessment Team in one of the following circumstances:-

- to give or receive care or support
- child protection reasons
- other urgent social/welfare reasons or multiple needs which warrant high priority

Band C – Other social/welfare hardship

This is where accommodation is required to assist Social Services in delivering a Care Plan (e.g. by moving the member nearer to source of care and support or to accommodate a carer), or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed between Social Services and Housing.

e) Other High Priority Categories (applicable to Transfers Only)

➤ Emergency Management Transfers

Band A is agreed in exceptional circumstances by the Tenant Services Manager and Head of Housing where there are significant and insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling and there is imminent personal risk to the tenant or their family if they remain in the dwelling.

Where the Tenant Services Manager and Head of Housing agree a non-urgent management transfer band B will be awarded.

"Like for like" policy: Management transfer members will only be eligible to bid for similar size and type property, e.g. house to house, flat to flat. A special flag is put on the computer system to ensure that, if bids are made for larger properties, the priority can be adjusted accordingly (e.g. band C overcrowding).

➤ Permanent decants

Band A is awarded if a property is **imminently** required for essential works and the tenant will not be returning (e.g. development schemes). If the need to move is not imminent the member will be placed in band B.

Decanting may also be necessary if the freehold of the property belongs to another landlord, the lease is due to end and the Council is obliged to return the property with vacant possession.

Although Harrow will encourage and assist such tenants to use Locata we recognise that we have a duty to provide suitable alternative accommodation and will make a reasonable offer within the necessary timescale whether a successful bid is made or not.

➤ Council interest transfers

Band A is awarded to facilitate a tenant's move in one of the following circumstances:-

- (i) release adapted property – the decision to prioritise is at the Council's discretion if there is an unmet need for the property occupied (e.g. where

the tenant does not require adaptations such as a walk-in shower and/or other wheelchair accessible facilities)

- (ii) make best use of adapted stock – for example where providing adaptations in the current property is not feasible but there may be a suitable alternative property available
- (iii) enable tenants underoccupying property to move to studio or one bedroom accommodation or to give up two or more bedrooms under the Tenant Incentive Scheme.

Where transfers to smaller accommodation require two or more bedrooms and will be relinquishing only one bedroom they will be placed in band B.

Underoccupiers who have succeeded to the tenancy, where the Council can obtain possession by offering alternative accommodation, will be required to bid for properties within six months of succession.

Harrow reserves the power to relax the minimum occupation criteria in its absolute discretion where underoccupiers are bidding for properties larger than they need.

- Statutorily Overcrowded Tenants or those with a Court Order

Band B is awarded to tenants who are statutorily overcrowded as defined by Part X of Housing Act 1985 or where there is a Court Order to re-house.

f) Other High Priority Categories (applicable to Homeseekers Only)

See **Section 15, Other Groups on the Register.**

12. Rent arrears policy

- **Accepted Homeless Households in temporary accommodation**

Homeless households in Council-provided temporary accommodation will be advised that, if they fall into rent arrears, their housing register application will be suspended.

Applications will be suspended when a homeseeker either

- a) refuses to pay the rent
- b) fails to make a commitment to repay arrears or

c) fails to provide supporting information for a Housing Benefit claim.

If a homeseeker in Temporary Accommodation falls into arrears, their application will be suspended. The application will remain suspended until the arrears are cleared or an agreement has been reached to clear the arrears and this agreement has been kept to for at least three months. Depending on the amount of the arrears and the nature of the agreement, discretion will be exercised to review cases and lift suspension earlier or later than three months. Exceptions can be agreed to this policy, in particular for those cases in bands A or B.

➤ **Homeseekers in the private sector**

Where a homeseeker is in the private sector then any arrears will not be taken into account. However, where they have lost their previous accommodation through the non-payment of rent or they were previously Council or Housing Association tenants and who have been found to be intentionally homeless they will be treated as ineligible for offers (see **Section 25, Ineligibility for an offer**). This decision will be reviewed at regular intervals, or at least once a year (see **Section 26, Review of ineligible members**).

➤ **Tenants**

Tenants are allowed to be members of Locata even if they have rent arrears. However, at the time that they bid for a property they must have a clear rent account. Consideration will be given to varying this rule where other exceptional circumstances apply such as:-

- (i) Tenants with rent arrears and urgent management, medical or social hardship priority in band B may be transferred at the discretion of the Tenant Services Manager. In most cases, tenants will be less than 10 weeks in arrears or on Housing Benefit and have been reducing the arrears regularly for at least six months, or the urgency of the case is considered to warrant a move despite the arrears
- (ii) Tenants who need to move because of statutory overcrowding or where Band A priority has been awarded by the Housing Assessment Team or where a permanent decant is essential may be transferred despite rent arrears
- (iii) Tenants will be moved under the Tenants' Underoccupation Incentive Scheme subject to the above guidelines net of the incentive payment, which will be offset against the arrears.

13. Verification

All members must have their circumstances and housing conditions verified before they will be eligible to sign up for a secure or assured tenancy. Verification may include a home visit where appropriate.

- a) Members placed in bands A and B and those members in band C who have been waiting the longest will be visited, unless their circumstances have already been verified by homelessness investigations.
- b) Members with medical and other needs that appear to qualify them for either band A or band B will be visited and verified.
- c) All members visited will be required to provide the following documents:-
 - Proof of identity and residence for all persons included on the application
 - Proof that they are still eligible persons
 - Proof of benefits being received
 - Other proofs as appropriate.

14. Home visit

- a) At the home visit previous addresses and the reasons for leaving will be investigated to determine whether the applicant lost their accommodation by doing or failing to do something. This will include where the applicant is a former tenant of a social landlord and was evicted because of a breach of tenancy agreement or is a former Council tenant with rent arrears.
- b) Homeseekers with sufficient income and/or savings and owners/former owners with sufficient equity will be advised that they will be ineligible for an offer of accommodation if at the time they bid for properties it is found that they have sufficient financial resources to obtain accommodation for themselves in the private sector. They will be advised of re-housing options in the private sector such as shared ownership.
- c) At the visit the visiting officer explains the scheme fully to the member, stressing that **they will no longer be able to wait for an offer – they must actively bid for homes if they are to be re-housed.** The Visiting Officer will advise the member to bring original documents into the Housing Department within the next few days.

- d) Following the visit, the visiting officer will complete a Housing Visit Report and refer the file, with recommendations, if appropriate, to the relevant Housing Options Officer. The Housing Options Officer will update and reassess the application, amending the band, if necessary, make any further enquiries and request any further documents needed. The Housing Options Officer will refer the case to a Senior Officer if the applicant has given false or misleading information or has withheld information or if any of the circumstances at a) or b) above apply.
- e) The Housing Applications Officer will amend and update the application as appropriate ensuring that all necessary information is noted on the system. Unverified members who bid for property will not be allowed to sign up.
- f) If it is agreed either that the member is ineligible for an offer or should be excluded from the scheme the Housing Options Officer will write to them, giving reasons for the decision and advising them of their right to request a review of the decision (see **Section 26, Review of Ineligible members**).

15. Other groups on the register

The following groups will be placed on the Register if they are eligible to join it:-

a) Move-on Quotas (Young People Leaving Care and Other Groups)

The Head of Housing agrees with Social Services an annual quota for move on to assist young people being discharged from care. Quotas are also provided for move-on accommodation to assist voluntary housing agencies working in Harrow. All quota homeseekers must normally have a local connection as defined by Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. Quota homeseekers are only eligible for studio and one-bedroom accommodation, even where the member has a baby. Quota homeseekers will be placed in band B.

- (i) Social Services or the referral agency will ensure that Quota homeseekers complete an application form and refer it with supporting /background information to the Senior Accommodation Officer (Permanent Allocations) who will check eligibility for the quota and for monitoring purposes. .
- (ii) The Housing Assessment Team will register the application..

- (iii) Social Services or the referral agency are responsible for informing their quota applicants that they have a limited period from date of registration to exercise choice by bidding for appropriate properties. If they fail to secure accommodation within the given period their application will be reviewed and **they may be made one offer only in line with current policy.**

b) Obligations

- Ex-service tenants for whom there is a contractual obligation by the Council to re-house will be placed in band A. The service conditions of some ex-service tenants entitle them to underoccupy their accommodation by one bedroom.
- Ex-Council tenants discharged from an institution to whom the Council has given a commitment to re-house (in order to encourage them to relinquish a tenancy upon entering the institution) will be placed in band B.

c) Non statutory successors and Occupiers Holding Over

Non statutory successors for the purposes of this scheme are persons not entitled to take over a tenancy from a secure tenant by succession i.e. following the death of the secure tenant.

In these circumstances the Housing Management Officer for the area will interview the applicant. The Housing Management Officer will then submit a report to the Head of Housing and Environmental Health Services who, in reaching a decision as to whether an allocation will be made, will take account of the following:-

- The age of the applicant
- The length of time they have lived with the deceased tenant
- Their ability to finance accommodation in the private sector
- Any medical factors
- Any other relevant considerations

Occupiers Holding Over. In any case where a tenancy is due to end or has been ended by the tenant(s) serving Notice to Quit or a Surrender, the Housing Management Officer for the area will interview anyone in occupation after the tenancy has ended or expected to be in occupation when the tenancy ends, and who makes an application for continued accommodation. The Housing Management Officer will submit a report to the Head of Housing and Environmental Health Services. Every effort will be made to reach a decision on the application before the tenancy ends.

In reaching a decision as to whether an allocation will be made, account will be taken of the following:-

- The applicant's relationship to the former tenant(s)
- The circumstances in which the tenancy ended
- The age of the applicant and any medical/social factors
- The length of time the applicant has lived at the property
- Their ability to finance accommodation in the private sector
- Any other relevant considerations

Re-housing of Non Statutory Successors and Occupiers Holding Over

- (i) The Head of Housing and Environmental Services will base his decision as to whether an allocation of housing should be made on his assessment of whether the applicant would be likely to be in priority need if they were homeless, and on the balance of fairness and equity in each case.
- (ii) If the Head of Housing and Environmental Services decides that an allocation of housing should be made he will decide whether to grant the tenancy of the property currently occupied by the applicant or whether to offer alternative accommodation.
- (iii) If the decision is taken not to offer re-housing the Housing Management Officer will initiate Possession proceedings.
- (iv) If it is decided that the applicant should be re-housed they will be advised by the Housing Management Officer and will be required to complete an application form.
- (v) The Housing Options Officer will register applicants approved for a move to a studio or one bed or giving up two or more bedrooms in band A.
- (vi) Other applicants approved for a move to smaller accommodation, but requiring two bed or larger and/or relinquishing only one bedroom will be placed in band B
- (vii) The Housing Options Officer will advise the applicant that they have a limited period from date of registration to exercise choice by bidding for appropriate properties. **If they fail to secure accommodation within the given period they may be made one offer only in line with current policy. If this is refused possession proceedings will be commenced. (Housing Management will closely monitor this.)**

d) Releasing Supported Housing

Where an applicant is occupying supported housing provided by a public authority, and Social Services recommend, after consultation with Housing, that they are ready for independent living, the applicant will be placed in band B with the aim of freeing up the supported housing placement for someone else who needs it.

e) Move UK (inward mobility) nominations

Move UK is a voluntary scheme designed to provide housing mobility opportunities and assistance with housing problems for people in London and throughout the British Isles. Because of the shortage of accommodation in Harrow we only accept incoming Move UK nominations for sheltered and designated elderly accommodation.

Nominations from other housing organisations can be considered from homeseekers who have a local connection (usually a family connection). Incoming Move UK applicants must register with the authority where they have the most connection but they can bid for cross-borough properties.

Applications are referred to the Housing Assessment Team who will check that:-

- the list is open for new Move UK applicants,
- they meet the above criteria, and
- that their referring organisation completes a sheltered assessment form.

The Housing Assessment Team will place accepted nominees on the Housing Register, in band C.

e) People not currently resident within the borough

(i) People not currently resident in the borough who are in the following groups will be banded and prioritised according to the general criteria set out in this Scheme:-

- persons with a local connection found to be unintentionally homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 by this Council [see section 2 (b) above]
- young persons leaving care, referred by Social Services under their quota arrangements [see section 2 (c) above]
- persons in hospital, prison or the armed forces whose last settled address was in the borough [see section 2 (d) above]
- persons accepted by Harrow for re-housing under the MOVE UK Mobility Scheme [see section 2 (e) above]

- secure or introductory tenants of Harrow [see section 2 (f) above]
- persons who the council considers should be eligible persons, on a case by case basis, because of exceptional circumstances or special needs [see section 2 (h) above]

(ii) Other people eligible to be on Harrow's Housing Register but who are not currently resident within the borough will be placed in band D unless they are in one of the five categories of person to whom Harrow must give reasonable preference for re-housing under the Homelessness Act 2002, S.16(3), in which case they will be placed in band C.

In addition at the time of offer this group of non-residents will be given less preference than other members within the same band who are currently resident within the borough (i.e. irrespective of priority date an in-borough member would be given preference over an out of borough member). Preference between out of borough members would still be determined by priority date.

16.Housing for the elderly

Harrow has three types of accommodation specifically for the elderly. These are:-

- Elderly Persons Dwellings

These are specifically designated for elderly people who can live independently. To be eligible the member must meet the advertised age criteria, which may be 45+, 50+ or 55+. For some flats fairly good mobility is necessary, as many are on the first or second floor without a lift.

➤ Sheltered Housing

This type of accommodation is for members aged sixty or over who can live independently and are able to manage alone, but who prefer the added security of a resident warden and an alarm cord system should it be necessary to seek help in an emergency. This includes people who can manage alone with the aid of a social services care package. Members who are disabled may be considered for sheltered from 55 years.

➤ Very Sheltered Housing

Harrow has one sheltered scheme with an extra element of care. The scheme is staffed by residential social workers that work on a rotational basis to provide cover 24 hours per day. Access to the scheme is by Social Services nomination and people age 55+ are eligible.

17. Processing applications from the elderly

Members may indicate on the application form if they wish to be considered for sheltered accommodation. They may also be referred by relatives, social workers, or doctors, or sheltered accommodation may be recommended by the Council's Medical Adviser.

- (i) Following registration and notification as at 6. above a home visit is arranged for verification. (See **Section 13, Verification & 14, Home visit, above**).
- (ii) The Visiting Officer will carry out a Sheltered Assessment, setting out, in detail, the member's ability to manage independently, any medical problems and how these may affect day to day activities, their present living conditions and any difficulties experienced in the accommodation.
- (iii) At the home visit the member is asked if they are interested in other partners' areas.
- (iv) The Visiting Officer evaluates the Sheltered Assessment, taking into account the advice of the Council's Medical Advisor if applicable, and recommends that the applicant is either suitable or not for Sheltered Accommodation. Those who appear to need a higher level of support and or care are referred to the Social Services Elderly Care Management Team for an assessment of their suitability for Watkins House or Residential Care.

- (v) If members express an interest in sheltered accommodation in other partners' areas, following agreement by the Sheltered Panel, the completed assessment is sent to the relevant authority to decide if they are able to assist.
- (vi) The other partners will inform the London Borough of Harrow of their decision.
- (vii) The Applications Officer will advise members which, if any, partners are able to assist and explain how to bid.
- (viii) Members agreed for sheltered housing will be placed in band C unless there are other particular reasons to re-house which qualify them for a higher band.
- (ix) Elderly members who do not want sheltered accommodation will be placed in band D unless they qualify for a higher band for other reasons.

18. Labelling properties for advertising

The Senior Accommodation Officer (Permanent Allocations) will describe and label properties which are ready to advertise as being for Transfers or Homeseekers or both, taking into account targets, and set the eligibility criteria for the properties, such as:-

- minimum and maximum numbers of persons in the household
- if children are allowed or required
- if there are age-limits
- the mobility group, if applicable (see **Section 11a, Mobility Needs**)
- if applications are restricted to special cases such as Quota/ Homeless/ Decant/ Key Worker/ same estate
- if pets are allowed
- whether it is available for cross-borough bids
- sheltered
- Over 45s, 50s or 55s

The adverts will also specify:-

- who owns the property and whether it is a specialist landlord
- the weekly rent including any other charges
- The date the property will be ready for occupation
- If a local lettings policy applies.

19. Advertising properties

Partners and associates advertise their vacant properties in a regular free magazine called Locata HOME. All properties will be labelled as outlined in **Section 18, above**. Locata HOME is available at various places including housing offices, supermarkets, One Stop Shops and all public libraries across the five partner boroughs. It is also available on the Internet at www.locata.org and may be posted directly to members on payment of a small subscription. Locata, the partnership's central lettings agency, publishes Locata HOME.

20. Bidding for properties

- (i) Eligible members can make a limited number of bids, per edition, for properties advertised in Locata HOME by sending in their completed coupons, by telephone bidding, text message or by bidding online via the website, www.locata.org (Harrow libraries provide this service free of charge), and any new technology that may become available in the future. Locata sends coupons to all members. Members can obtain more coupons by contacting their housing authority or by telephone ordering. Members who make more than the allowed number of bids will have the additional ones disregarded. Full details of how to bid and order coupons by phone are set out in Locata's Scheme Information User Guide, which is sent to all new members.
- (ii) Members with support needs and those who have difficulty with written English will be assisted and encouraged to read Locata HOME and choose properties.
- (iii) Members who urgently need to move and who do not bid for properties may receive a direct allocation. (See **27, Direct lettings, below**).
- (iv) Locata checks that all bids for a property meet the eligibility rules. They exclude from consideration all those who are ineligible. Members who consistently bid for properties for which they are ineligible may be contacted to discuss how to bid.

21. Time limits for bidding for properties

Generally speaking there is a six month time limit for bidding for the following categories of band A and B members, and they will be advised of this at the time that A or B priority is awarded:-

- Quota and homeless homeseekers
- Ex-service tenants
- Ex-council tenants released from an institution who the council has undertaken to re-house
- Non statutory successors
- Management transfers
- Permanent decants
- Underoccupiers who have succeeded to the tenancy, where the Council can obtain possession by offering alternative accommodation

In practice the time limit will depend on the type of property needed and the council will take into account whether high priority members are making appropriate bids and whether they are refusing properties unreasonably. Failure to bid and multiple refusals will result either in priority being reviewed or in a direct allocation being made at the end of the period.

22. Eligibility of Bids

Members on Harrow's Housing Register may bid for properties advertised in the following sections of Locata HOME:-

- Harrow
- Cross-Borough
- PCHA Housing Association
- Ealing Family Housing Association

To be eligible, a bid from a Harrow member must satisfy the following rules:-.

Rule	Notes
There is no current offer of another property	Making an offer to a member makes all other bids from that member ineligible whilst the offer is live*.
Member not currently suspended	See Section 25, below.
Member is on Harrow's Housing Register	If a property is a Harrow property and not advertised cross-borough, the member must be on Harrow's register.
Member is in correct category ("housing list")	The member's housing list (Homeseeker or Transfer) must match that of the property
Bid before deadline	The bid must reach Locata before the short list is closed
Only three bids per Edition allowed	Only the first 3 bids from a member for an Edition of Locata HOME are eligible
Maximum persons	The member's household must have no more than the maximum number of persons for the property**
Minimum persons	The member's household must not have less than the minimum number of persons for the property**
Maximum beds	A member cannot bid for a property with more bedrooms than they are assessed as needing***
Minimum age	The member must satisfy the age requirement on the property label

* If a member comes to the top of more than one shortlist the decision as to which property to offer is at the landlord's discretion

** Management transfers bidding for like-for-like properties are exempt from these rules, as are some ex-service tenants.

*** Underoccupiers and members releasing adapted property may be allowed to bid for larger property than they would otherwise be assessed as needing.

23. Selection

- (i) All eligible bids for each property are placed into priority order. Priority is decided first by band and second by date order within each band, thirdly by registration date and finally by random selection. Where a property has been advertised to give preference to a mobility group, bids from these applicants will be prioritised in band order above bids from members who are not in that mobility group. Every bid is assigned a random number when the bid is made. This number is used to resolve ties, the higher number gets priority.
- (ii) The prioritised list is referred to the landlord for offer.

- (iii) If there are no eligible bidders for a property, the Senior Accommodation Officer (permanent allocations) may decide either to make a direct allocation (see **Section 28, below**) or readvertise it or refer it back to the landlord (or Harrow Housing Management as appropriate).

24. Offers

In order to minimise delays the landlord may arrange multiple viewings for up to five members per property. Members are required to bring proof of identity to the viewing. Unverified members (see **Section 13, above**) will be advised via the "Invitation to view letter" to contact their Housing Officer within 24 hours in order to arrange for verification and confirm their eligibility prior to the viewing date.















- (i) The Housing Assessment Team carry out any further eligibility checks considered necessary, maintaining contact with the importing landlord throughout the process.
- (ii) The member is offered the property and invited to sign for the tenancy.
- (iii) If the member refuses, the next person is selected. A member is not penalised for refusing properties although checks are likely to be made if several properties are refused (see section 22, Time Limits).
- (iv) Members who fail to have their verification completed before the viewing date will not be offered the property.
- (v) Existing Council Tenants cannot be guaranteed a new tenancy until their existing tenancy is ended.

If the previous tenants stated that they were victims of racial harassment, prospective tenants of ethnic minority origin will be advised of this after they have viewed the property and expressed an interest in it, but before they formally enter into a tenancy.

Bed size eligibility

The maximum number of bedrooms for which members are eligible to bid is determined by the size of their household but, as there is a shortage of large homes, many members will be advised seriously to consider bidding for smaller accommodation than they would prefer. Where a property has two living rooms and one can reasonably be used as a bedroom, it will be labelled on that basis.

Maximum bedroom eligibility is determined using the following guidelines:-

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Single person						
Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings wishing to live together						
Pregnant Woman (with or without partner) with no other children						
Parent(s) with one child						
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy both under 7.						
Parent(s) with two same sex children less than 5 years age difference						
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy where one is age 7 or over						
Parent(s) with two same sex children more than 5 years age difference both under 10						
Parent(s) with two same sex children 5 years or more apart where one is age 10 or over						
Parents with three or four children*						
Parents with five or more children*						

* Max number of bedrooms will follow the rule for age and sex separation given for the families with two children. Non dependent children over 18, cousins, grandchildren and other relatives will normally be assessed using the same rules.

The Housing Assessment Team will add a bedroom where the Medical Adviser recommends this as essential.

Members will be advised that they stand a greater chance of a successful re-housing if they bid for the smallest property for which the number of people in their household is eligible, because supply is greater the fewer bedrooms there are. Supply of 5 and 6 bedroom properties is virtually non-existent.

25. Ineligibility for an offer

Members will not be made an offer of accommodation if, at the time they bid for a property, any of the following circumstances exist:-

(i) Financial resources available to meet own housing costs

- Homeseekers who are found to have sufficient financial resources to obtain accommodation for themselves in the private sector.
- Tenants who have a current application to buy their dwelling or for a home purchase grant, e.g. Homebuy, at the time a bid is made for a property.

(ii) Behaviour which affects suitability to be a tenant

- Tenants who have any rent arrears, although consideration will be given to varying this rule in band A cases or where other exceptional circumstances apply. (See **Section 12, Rent Arrears Policy, above**).
- Homeless homeseekers placed in temporary accommodation who have rent arrears. Consideration will be given to varying this rule, where exceptional circumstances apply or, depending on the level of arrears, if they have made a satisfactory agreement to clear the arrears and have kept to that agreement for at least three months.
- Tenants upon whom the Council/RSL has served notice of its intention to seek possession or obtain an injunction, due to breach of one or more of the tenancy conditions.(except rent arrears - see above). The suspension will be lifted if and when the Council withdraws legal action or a court decision is given in favour of the tenant.
- Ex tenants, who have deliberately lost their accommodation e.g. eviction due to rent arrears.
- Tenants who have wilfully damaged or neglected their property, or are refusing to allow repairs to be carried out, until they have remedied the damage.
- Tenants or new homeseekers or any member of their household who have attacked or threatened staff or with a history of anti-social or criminal behaviour related to housing.

(iii) **Persons not suitable to bid**

- If the Public Protection Panel recommends that a tenant or homeseeker with high priority should be excluded from bidding such persons will be assisted via direct offers (see **Section 27, below**)

26. Review of ineligible members

Ineligible members will remain in their priority bands and date appropriate to their housing circumstances, but they will not be made an offer until they apply to their landlord or local authority for a review of the decision that they are ineligible. Harrow, in reviewing the decision, will determine whether the ineligibility should continue to apply.

- Under **Section 25 (i)** the member would need to prove a change in their financial circumstances that removed the reason for their ineligibility.
- Under **Section 25 (ii)**, the member would need to demonstrate, for example, that they have modified their behaviour e.g. by paying off rent arrears, remedying damage or allowing repairs to be carried out. If legal action has been withdrawn or a court order has been given in favour of the tenant, then the local authority will carry out a review.
- Under **Section 25 (iii)** the member would need to appeal to the Public Protection Panel for a review of its recommendation.

See Appendix B for Review Procedure

27. Direct lettings

In certain very limited circumstances, partners may use their discretion to allocate properties directly to the following members and to applicants ineligible to become members:-

- “special circumstances” , e.g. public protection panel cases. One offer, in line with policy, will be made and, if it is refused, members will lose their priority
- homeless & quota homeseekers, and Urgent Management transfers, decant tenants and underoccupiers who have succeeded to a tenancy who have failed to exercise choice by bidding for properties, may be made one offer before duty is discharged or priority is lost.










- under-occupiers in very desirable properties, who have highly specific requirements
- ex-service tenants, who have highly specific requirements or who have failed to exercise choice by bidding for properties will be made a direct offer. If this is refused their case will be reviewed.
- tenants who need to be temporarily decanted will be offered a transit property. If the offer is refused possession proceedings will be commenced.
- tenants who need to be permanently decanted and fail to make a successful bid for alternative accommodation within the necessary timescale will be made one suitable offer. If the offer is refused possession proceedings will be commenced.
- unauthorised occupants who have failed to exercise choice. If the offer is refused possession proceedings will be commenced.
- homeseekers accepted for the mental health Floating Support Scheme
- young persons aged 16 and 17 to whom the council has accepted a duty, or who are in the Leaving Care Quota but who are under the age of 18.
- members in band A whose defining features (including their cumulative needs) are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate/imminent rehousing.

In the above cases, a reasonable offer will be made. A reasonable offer of accommodation is one which so far as possible matches the size and type of property for which the applicant is eligible as set out below, and is not in an area which is known to be unsafe for that member.

Size of property offered under direct lettings

This is determined by the size of the applicant's household but, as there is a shortage of large homes, the applicant may be offered smaller accommodation than they would prefer. Where a property has two living rooms and one can reasonably be used as a bedroom, it will be allocated on that basis.

Accommodation is allocated using the following guidelines:-

	1	2	3	4
Single person				
Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings wishing to live together				
Pregnant Woman (with or without partner) with no other children				
Parent(s) with one child				
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy both under 7.				
Parent(s) with two same sex children				
Parent(s) with one girl and one boy where one is age 7 or over				
Parents with three or four children*				
Parents with five or more children*				

An additional bedroom will be allocated where the Medical Adviser recommends this as essential.

NB. The size of property offered is not necessarily the same standard used to determine priority on overcrowding grounds for the scheme.

28. Non-secure tenants

- a) If a block is scheduled or being considered for redevelopment or demolition, the Council may decide to re-let vacant properties in that block to homeless households on non-secure tenancies.
- b) If the Council requires possession of a property in order for redevelopment or demolition to proceed, the Housing Assessment Manager will place homeless households who are non-secure tenants of that property into the appropriate band depending on whether possession is imminent and whether it is appropriate to offer each applicant alternative temporary accommodation. This will also apply to assured shorthold tenants of a registered social landlord living in the same block.
- c) Asylum seekers who do not qualify for the Housing Register but who have been accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need may have been housed in a Council property with a non-secure tenancy.

- d) If Asylum Seekers are granted exceptional leave to remain in this country, or refugee status, they will qualify for the Housing Register. In these circumstances, the Head of Housing will authorise the granting of a secure tenancy of the property they occupy unless one of the following applies:-
- the Council is taking or seeking to take action against the tenant due to rent arrears or other breach of tenancy
 - the property is larger than the tenant needs
 - the property is in a block that is scheduled for demolition or redevelopment or which the Council has a policy of letting only to non-secure tenants, because it is considering demolition or redevelopment.

29. Refusals following direct lettings

The applicant must give their reasons for refusal in writing. The property will not be held vacant while the refusal is investigated – it will be let to another applicant or Locata member.

If the offer is to a homeless household the reasons for the refusal must be considered in consultation with the Homelessness Assessment Team who will take appropriate follow-up action, e.g. discharge of duty.

A Senior Housing Assessment Officer will consider the reasons for refusal. If there is a clear mismatch e.g. where the homeseeker or property details were recorded incorrectly, the offer will be withdrawn and the applicant notified by letter.

If there is no obvious mismatch, the Housing Options Officer will remove the priority while a Senior Assessment Officer investigates the reasons for refusal. They will consult any other appropriate officers before deciding whether the offer was reasonable. They will inform the applicant of their decision by letter:-

- If the offer is found to have been unreasonable, they will withdraw the offer and reinstate the priority.
- If the offer is found to have been a reasonable one, they will advise the applicant of the reasons for this finding and of the effect the decision has on their application (see below). They will also advise the applicant of their right to request a review of the decision. (See **Appendix B, Review procedure**)

The Housing Options Officer will take the following action:-

- a) Accepted Homeless Household: they will be advised that we intend to discharge the homelessness duty and, if the applicant is occupying temporary accommodation provided by the council, that eviction proceedings will be instigated.
- b) Ex-service tenant: they will be advised that their priority for re-housing has been withdrawn and that the council considers it has fulfilled its contractual obligation to offer suitable re-housing. The member will be invited to make their own housing arrangements.
- c) Quota case: they will be advised that their quota status has been removed and they will be placed in the appropriate band on the general waiting list if they are eligible persons. Social Services will be kept fully informed at all stages.
- d) Temporary/permanent decant tenant: Housing Management will be advised so that they can commence possession proceedings. (Housing Management will closely monitor this.)
- e) Underoccupier who has succeeded to the tenancy: where the Council can obtain possession by offering alternative accommodation Housing Management will be advised so that they can commence possession proceedings. (Housing Management will closely monitor this.)
- f) “Special circumstances” case: they will be advised that their priority has been removed and they will be placed in the appropriate band on the general waiting list if they are eligible persons. Any professionals involved in the case will be kept informed at all stages.
- g) Urgent Management transfer: the Housing Assessment Team will remove the priority status, place the tenant in the appropriate lower band, and inform the tenant and the Area Housing Management Officer.
- h) All other offers: the Housing Assessment Team will remove the priority status and the case will be reviewed.

30. Feedback on Let Properties

All properties let are listed in a future copy of the Locata HOME. The Feedback Section shows the number of bidders for each property and the band and registration date of the successful member.

31. Outgoing MOVE UK and FRESH START Mobility Nominations

- (i) Members requesting re-housing in another borough which is not in the partners' areas will be considered for nomination to another local authority or housing association either via the FRESH START or HOMES Mobility Schemes, if they are eligible persons. The nominee will also have to meet the criteria of the receiving authority, which sometimes includes needing to have a local connection with the borough they wish to move to.
- (ii) Members meeting these criteria may have to complete a MOVE UK application form. The Housing Options Officer will telephone the receiving organisation to find out if they will accept the nomination. If the member is not accepted the Options Officer will inform them in writing.
- (iii) If the receiving organisation is willing to consider the nomination, the Options or Fresh Start Officer will make a nomination. Details are noted on the computer so that if they bid and are eligible for an offer via Locata a check is made with MOVE UK, in order to avoid duplicate offers. If the nomination is rejected, this information is removed from the computer.
- (iv) Members will be informed by letter of the progress of their nomination at each stage, i.e. nomination, rejection.

Appendix A: LOCATA WEST LONDON CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS PILOT SCHEME

	TENANTS	HOME-SEEKERS	DEFINING FEATURES OF APPLICANT
Band A Time-Limited Top/Emergency Priority Rating (time limit is at registering partner's discretion)	Emergency medical	Emergency medical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency banding is granted only in exceptional circumstances, when the applicant or a member of the applicant's household has a life threatening condition, which is seriously affected by their current housing. Where the housing conditions and/or other circumstances are having such a major adverse effect on the medical condition of the applicant or member of the applicant's household as to warrant emergency priority.
	Management T/F (e.g. emergency harassment)		Agreed in exceptional circumstances due to significant and insurmountable problems associated with the tenant's occupation of a dwelling and there is imminent personal risk to the tenant or their family if they remain in the dwelling. Such transfers will be to properties of the same size and type (Ealing & Harrow)
		Ex-service tenants	Ex service tenants e.g. Caretakers or sheltered wardens where the Council has a contractual obligation to house
	Permanent Decants		Where the property is imminently required because of lease expiry or for essential works & the tenant will not be returning (e.g. development schemes)

	TENANTS	HOME-SEEKERS	DEFINING FEATURES OF APPLICANT
Band A (continued)		Homeless households owed the main duty by Harrow* under s.193 of the 1996 Act or s. 65 of the 1985 Act & placed in temporary accommodation (*Provided that Harrow has not decided to refer to another authority under sec 198)	1. Landlord wants property back OR 2. Property not suitable to meet applicant's or a member of the applicant's household's needs AND the only prospect of meeting them is in permanent accommodation e.g. where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have obtained employment & are experiencing severe financial hardship • severe medical or disability reasons • severe harassment • severe violence or disrepair
	Severe Need	Severe Need	Exceptional Circumstances and or multiple needs which warrant emergency priority
	Statutory Duty	Statutory Duty	1. Closing Order issued (i.e. <i>Properties unfit for human habitation as advised by Environmental Health where there is no alternative measure to render the property fit</i>). Or 2. Similar duty where emergency re-housing is essential .e.g. CPO to enable site clearance for a road widening scheme
	Enable fostering/ adoption	Enable fostering/ adoption	Where agreement has been reached to provide permanent accommodation on recommendation by Social Services.
	Release adapted property or make best use of adapted stock		At authority's discretion where there is an unmet need for the property occupied e.g. Tenant does not require walk-in shower &/or wheelchair accessible features Or Where current property needs major adaptations and it is in the Council's interest for the tenant to move.

	TENANTS	HOME-SEEKERS	DEFINING FEATURES OF APPLICANT
Band A (continued)		Successors and non statutory successors in priority need. (approved for move to studio or one bed <u>or</u> giving up 2 or more bedrooms)	Approved by Housing Management for an offer of one bedroom accommodation or giving up 2 or more bedrooms.
	Under occupation (moving to studio or one bed <u>or</u> giving up 2 or more bedrooms)		Applicant is willing to move to smaller property under Incentive Scheme. These applicants will be exempted from minimum occupation criteria.
Band B High Priority		Homeless households owed the main duty by Harrow* under s.193(2) or s.195(2) of the 1996 Act or s.65 of the 1985 Act except those adequately housed with an assured shorthold or non-secure tenancy (*Provided that Harrow has not decided to refer to another authority under sec 198)	Homeless making own arrangements, or accommodated in B&B, or in Hostel. Once an assured shorthold or non-secure tenancy is offered such applicants move to Band C until such time as the landlord wants the property back or their needs can no longer be met unless they are offered permanent accommodation.
	Statutory Overcrowding or Court Order		1. Statutory overcrowding as defined in Part X of Housing Act 1985, OR 2. Court Order to re-house.

**Band B
(continued)**

	Successors and other Non Statutory Successors	Approved for move to smaller accommodation but Requiring 2 Bed + <u>and</u> relinquishing only one bedroom.
Other under occupiers		Agreed moves to smaller accommodation but requiring 2 bed + <u>and</u> relinquishing only one bedroom
Other Management T/F not in Band A		Agreed by Housing Management for non-urgent transfer. Such transfers will be to properties of the same size and type (Ealing & Harrow)
	Ex-tenant discharged institution	Where a commitment has been made in order to get such tenants to relinquish an RSL or LA tenancy on entering the institution
Permanent Decants		Where property is required because of lease expiry or for essential works & tenant will not be returning (e.g. development schemes)
	Release supported housing	Approved for independent living by Social Services or equivalent.
	Young People leaving care Quota	Approved for move on by Social Services Young People Leaving Care Team – priority given for a time limited period – if choice not exercised one offer only
	Move-on Quotas	Other move on Quotas as agreed with partner organisation – priority given for a time limited period – if choice not exercised one offer only

Band B (continued)	Medical (incl. Mental health) hardship	Medical (incl. Mental health) hardship	Band B status for medical need will only be given where an applicant's or a member of the household's current housing conditions are having a <i>major</i> adverse effect on their medical condition. It will not apply where the effect of housing conditions on health is comparatively moderate, slight or variable.
		High Priority Hardship	With dependent children AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in insecure accommodation AND • Not having a bedroom AND • Lacking or sharing amenities
	Severe Social hardship	Severe Social hardship	1. Multiple needs that warrant high priority, or 2. Welfare agency referral (social services or police) <i>Urgent need to move agreed by housing in liaison social services/police/other welfare agency</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give or receive care or support. • For child protection reasons, or • Other urgent social/welfare reasons.
Band C Identified Need Reasonable preference	Homeless	Homeless not included in A or B Other ex-homeless households occupying accommodation secured under part VII section 193(2)	1. Homeless within the meaning of part VII of the Housing Act 1996 or 2. People who are owed a homeless duty and who are occupying temporary accommodation provided under the Housing Act 1996 Part VII. Households who were owed a homeless duty and have occupied temporary accommodation secured under the Housing Act 1996 part VII section 193(2) and who have subsequently accepted a qualifying offer allowing them to remain in private sector accommodation after the duty has ceased.

**Band C
(continued)**

<p>Unsatisfactory housing conditions</p>	<p>Unsatisfactory Housing conditions</p>	<p>i) Overcrowding Households who do not have the following minimum provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-habiting couples 1 bedroom • Each independent adult (18 yrs +) 1 bedroom. However 2 siblings of the same sex and living as part of a larger household will be expected to share, even if one or both are 18yrs+ • Children of opposite sex where at least one child is aged over 7yrs should not have to share a bedroom. • Two Children of the same sex 1 bedroom unless one child is aged over 10 years and there is an age gap of 5 years or more. <p>N.B For this purpose;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Second reception room will generally be deemed as available for use as a bedroom. (b) Box rooms which could reasonably be used by a child will count as a single bedroom (c) Single persons occupying studio flats will not be deemed overcrowded <p>ii) Insanitary conditions that cannot be addressed by Environmental Health Action, including Lacking one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Food preparation facilities (i.e. Sink and space for a cooker) (b) Inside WC (c) Bathing and personal washing facilities <p>iii) Other Unsatisfactory Housing conditions e.g. substantial disrepair (as assessed by Environmental Health or other appropriate officer)</p>
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Band C (continued)	Medical (incl. Mental health) hardship	Medical (incl. Mental health) hardship	Band C status for medical need will be given where an applicant's or member of the household's current housing conditions are having an adverse effect on their medical condition which creates a particular need for them to move.
	Elderly approved for Sheltered	Elderly approved for Sheltered	Applicants over 60yrs needing sheltered accommodation
	Social/welfare hardship	Social/welfare hardship/	Accommodation required to assist Social Services in delivering a Care Plan or to relieve other social/welfare hardship as agreed between Social Services and Housing
		Incoming Move UK applicants	
Band D* No priority Status	All other registered transfers	All others on housing register not included in bands A, B or C	As part of the forthcoming deliberations on a common housing register and common transfer register criteria will eventually need to be agreed as to who is actually eligible to be registered.

Factors determining priorities

Priorities within bands will be on a date order basis, according to the date the member was placed into that band.

There is a residual discretion for households whose defining features (including their cumulative needs) are deemed to be so exceptional that a higher priority band is deemed to be necessary.

Where the defining features (including the cumulative needs) of a member in band A are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate/imminent rehousing, there is a discretion to enable the household to be made a direct offer outside the scheme.

Appendix B: Review Procedure

This appendix sets out the procedure for reviewing the following decisions:-

1. Not to put someone on the Housing Register (or exclude them from bidding under Locata) who has applied to be put on it or to remove someone from the Housing Register other than at his or her request.
2. That a member is Ineligible for an offer.
3. Other decisions relating to this Lettings and Transfer Scheme, including banding and priority dates.

An officer senior to the officer making the original decision and who was not involved in making the decision will carry out these reviews.

Procedure:-

1. A request for a review must be made within 21 days from the day on which the applicant is notified of the authority's decision and the reasons for it. The Council has discretion to extend the time limit if it considers this would be reasonable.
2. The officer carrying out the review will carry out an investigation in accordance with internal procedures and taking careful note of relevant legislative requirements, Statutory Instruments and the prevailing Code of Guidance. If not already received they will invite the applicant to make written representations or, if the applicant is unable to do this or would be disadvantaged by this method, the reviewing officer may hear oral representation. In some cases both written and oral representations may be allowed, and the applicant may appoint someone to act on their behalf in making them.
3. In reviewing a decision on ineligibility for an offer the reviewing officer will determine, where appropriate, whether the applicant has remedied the reason for the ineligibility being imposed.
4. If the reviewing officer finds that the officer who took the decision did not take relevant information into account they will refer the file back to that officer for re-consideration of their original decision as part of the review process.
5. The officer will notify the applicant of their decision within eight weeks of the request for a review (although this time limit may be extended by agreement with the applicant).

- Original Decision Upheld: the letter will give the reasons supporting the review decision. There is no right to request a review of the decision reached on this review. In cases of exclusion from the register/ membership of Locata, or of ineligibility for an offer, the applicant will be advised (as appropriate) that:-
- (i) A fresh application will be considered if the applicant was ineligible due to being subject to immigration control and the applicant's immigration status has changed.
 - (ii) Members/ex-members who have been excluded from membership on grounds of serious anti-social behaviour must demonstrate good behaviour for at least a year before a fresh application will be considered.
 - (iii) Members or any member of their household who knowingly gave false/misleading information or withheld information will not have a fresh application considered for one year.
 - (iv) Members who have assaulted a member of staff must demonstrate good behaviour for at least a year before a fresh application will be considered.
 - (v) When the member has paid off rent arrears, remedied damage, legal action has been withdrawn or they can prove that a local connection has been established they can apply to have the ineligibility for an offer removed from their file.
- Original decision Quashed: the letter will explain what action the Council will take as a result and their reasons for doing so.
- Applicant Provides the Reviewing Officer with New Information: (i.e. information not known to the officer who took the original decision) the review will end and the file will be returned to the Options Officer for fresh enquiries to be made and a fresh decision to be issued. In such cases applicants will be advised of their right to request a review of the new decision.

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
3	Index (see below)	...	Appendix C: Procedure for assessment of Hardship and Multiple Need
4	<p>Introduction –</p> <p>This was written when the Locata scheme was very new and refers to its “pilot” status and recent set-up. Now that the scheme is established the wording needs amendment to reflect that.</p> <p>Reference also needs to be made in the introduction to Capital Moves.</p>	<p>During 2002 the Council changed the way it lets permanent housing to give people more choice. Harrow together with four other London boroughs and three housing associations, have joined forces to promote a new way of helping people to move or find a new home.</p> <p>A central lettings agency, Locata, has been set up to work with all partners to advertise and match people to homes. Movement between boroughs is now possible because a proportion of vacancies will be available to tenants and homeseekers (including homeless households) living in any of the five local authority areas. Under the new scheme tenants and homeseekers become members of Locata and actively search for a home. Vacant properties are advertised in a regular free magazine and on the Internet and members are able to bid for properties. All members are placed, in date order, into a broad needs band according to their circumstances.</p>	<p>Since 2002 a central lettings agency, Locata Housing Services Ltd, has worked with its partners, including Harrow Council, to advertise and match people to homes. Movement between boroughs is now possible because a proportion of vacancies is available to tenants and homeseekers (including homeless households) living in any of the six partner local authority areas.</p> <p>Under the planned capital Moves scheme housing applicants will be able to move to other parts of London, and a certain proportion of lettings will be made more widely available for this purpose. Additional amendments to this Scheme will be proposed when the Capital Moves scheme is finalised.</p> <p>Under the scheme tenants and homeseekers become members of Locata and actively search for a home. Vacant properties are advertised in a regular free magazine and on the Internet and members are able to bid for properties. All members are placed, in date order, into a broad needs band according to their circumstances.</p>
5	Locata partnership –	<p>1. Locata All homeseekers and transfer applicants on the</p>	<p>1. Locata All homeseekers and transfer applicants on the</p>

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Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
	<p>Several more housing associations have joined and the current wording is misleading.</p>	<p>Housing Register of any Locata partner local authority or housing association automatically become members of Locata. The founding partners are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. London Borough of Brent 2. London Borough of Ealing 3. London Borough of Harrow 4. London Borough of Hillingdon 5. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham 6. London Borough of Hounslow 7. Acton Housing Association 8. Ealing Family Housing Association 9. Nottinghill Housing Trust 10. Paddington Churches Housing Association 11. Paradigm Housing Group 12. Shepherds Bush Housing Association 13. Stadium Housing Association 14. Thames Valley Housing Association 15. Westway Housing Association <p>and all other organisations that may join the partnership in the future.</p>	<p>housing register of any Locata partner local authority or housing association (listed below or that may join the partnership in the future) automatically become members of Locata.</p> <p>The partners as at the end of 2005 were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. London Borough of Brent 2. London Borough of Ealing 3. London Borough of Harrow 4. London Borough of Hillingdon 5. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham 6. London Borough of Hounslow 7. Acton Housing Association 8. Ealing Family Housing Association 9. Inquilab Housing Association 10. Notting Hill Housing Trust 11. Octavia Housing Association 12. PCHA Housing Association 13. Paradigm Housing Group 14. Shepherds Bush Housing Association 15. Stadium Housing Association 16. Thames Valley Housing Association 17. Westway Housing Association
5	<p>Eligibility – Although HOMES has ended and MOVE UK did not get off the ground,</p>	<p>The Council maintains a Housing Register, and the following persons are eligible to be put on it (these persons are referred to as eligible persons):-</p> <p>...</p> <p>e) persons accepted by Harrow for re-housing under the MOVE UK Mobility Scheme</p>	<p>The Council maintains a Housing Register, and the following persons are eligible to be put on it (these persons are referred to as eligible persons):-</p> <p>...</p> <p>e) persons accepted by Harrow for re-housing under any agreed national Mobility Scheme</p>

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
	Harrow still prioritises elderly people who need to relocate here.		
6	<p>Dependants –</p> <p>The example given of an alternative option for a dependant relative needs clarification.</p> <p>Reference to use of Medical Adviser needs amending in line with new policy on assessment of composite need (see new Appendix C)</p>	<p>3. Who can be considered part of the household?</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Dependants</u></p> <p>A dependant relative who has joined the household because they are unable to live independently and there are no other options for the family, e.g. the relative owns a property or occupies a property large enough to accommodate the family. Advice will be sought from the Medical Adviser on whether the relative needs to live with the family. Where this is not considered essential, other options, such as sheltered housing, will be discussed with the family before a decision is made by the Housing Assessment Manager as to whether the relative should be included in the application or advised to make a separate Housing Register application.</p>	<p>3. Who can be considered part of the household?</p> <p>...</p> <p><u>Dependants</u></p> <p>A dependant relative who has joined the household because they are unable to live independently and there are no other options for the family (e.g. the relative may own or occupy a larger property which could accommodate the whole family, rather than the relative moving in to the smaller home).</p> <p>Appropriate professional advice will be sought on whether the relative needs to live with the family. Where this is not considered essential, other options, such as sheltered housing, will be discussed with the family before a decision is made by the Housing Assessment Manager as to whether the relative should be included in the application or advised to make a separate Housing Register application.</p>
7	<p>Exclusions from membership</p> <p>– Must amend in the light of</p>	<p>4. Exclusions from membership</p> <p>The following persons are not eligible for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of social housing:-</p> <p>...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ are currently registered with another Locata 	<p>4. Exclusions from membership</p> <p>The following persons are not eligible for entry on the Housing Register for the allocation of social housing:-</p> <p>...</p>

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Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
	<p>legal advice that we cannot prevent a person from registering with more than one Locata partner.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">partner (subject to Board decision)</p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>Fresh Start –</p> <p>We no longer have a Fresh Start Team, so references to it need to be deleted from the scheme.</p>	<p>6. Registration Process</p> <p>...</p> <p>c) In Harrow more people need housing from the council and housing associations than we have available. Most homeseekers and transferring tenants have to wait many years before they will be successful in bidding for a suitable property. To try to solve this problem Harrow Council works with housing organizations in other parts of the country to help people move to areas where there are available homes. Under Harrow’s Housing Options Scheme information is provided about alternative choices in the housing market, which will include private sector opportunities, shared ownership and out of London moves. More information is available from our Fresh Start Team on 0208 424 1730.</p>	<p>6. Registration Process</p> <p>...</p> <p>c) In Harrow more people need housing from the council and housing associations than we have available. Most homeseekers and transferring tenants have to wait many years before they will be successful in bidding for a suitable property. To try to solve this problem Harrow Council works with housing organizations in other parts of the country to help people move to areas where there are available homes. Under Harrow’s Housing Options Scheme information is provided about alternative choices in the housing market, which will include private sector opportunities, shared ownership and out of London moves.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Priority dates</p> <p>–</p> <p>An applicant should not get their band</p>	<p>10. Priority dates</p> <p>The principle of the scheme is that no one should overtake existing members in a band.</p> <p><u>Moving Up a Band</u></p> <p>Moving up a band – the date that the higher priority</p>	<p>10. Priority dates</p> <p>The principle of the scheme is that no one should overtake existing members in a band.</p> <p><u>Moving Up a Band</u></p> <p>Moving up a band – the date that the higher priority</p>

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	<p>priority date backdated if they have been adequately housed since their original priority band was given.</p> <p>Example 5 already shows this, so does not need to be amended, but the accompanying text needs to state this explicitly.</p>	<p>has been given.</p> <p><u>Moving Down a Band</u> Moving down a band – new priority date reverts to the date that applied when the member was previously in that band or any earlier date when they were in a higher band. The principle is that when moving down they should be awarded the earliest date that they were in the new lower band, or in a higher band.</p> <p>...</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Example 5</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Priority Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Member applies to register for sheltered accommodation in January and is awarded band C</td> <td>January</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In February member changes his mind and wants one bed non- sheltered and is down graded to band D</td> <td>January</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In April member is awarded medical priority - band C</td> <td>April</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In May member is awarded urgent medical priority – band B</td> <td>May</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In June medical priority reduced again – band C</td> <td>April</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In June member is awarded</td> <td>June</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Example 5	Priority Date	Member applies to register for sheltered accommodation in January and is awarded band C	January	In February member changes his mind and wants one bed non- sheltered and is down graded to band D	January	In April member is awarded medical priority - band C	April	In May member is awarded urgent medical priority – band B	May	In June medical priority reduced again – band C	April	In June member is awarded	June	<p>has been given.</p> <p><u>Moving Down a Band</u> Moving down a band – new priority date reverts to the date that applied when the member was previously in that band or any earlier date when they were in a higher band. The principle is that when moving down they should be awarded the earliest date that they were in the new lower band, or in a higher band.</p> <p>If they have been adequately housed (i.e. band D) for any of the intervening time, the new band date cannot be any earlier than the date they were subsequently awarded A, B or C band.</p> <p>...</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Example 5</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Priority Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Member applies to register for sheltered accommodation in January and is awarded band C</td> <td>January</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In February member changes his mind and wants one bed non- sheltered and is down graded to band D</td> <td>January</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In April member is awarded medical priority - band C</td> <td>April</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In May member is awarded urgent medical priority – band B</td> <td>May</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In June medical priority reduced again – band C</td> <td>April</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Example 5	Priority Date	Member applies to register for sheltered accommodation in January and is awarded band C	January	In February member changes his mind and wants one bed non- sheltered and is down graded to band D	January	In April member is awarded medical priority - band C	April	In May member is awarded urgent medical priority – band B	May	In June medical priority reduced again – band C	April
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13	<p>Priority dates for bands B and C homeless applicants – We need to be specific about the relevant date (homeless date not decision date, as per recent Russell et. al. Ombudsman decision, Hounslow Council).</p> <p>Sheltered assessments and care plans are confused in the existing wording.</p>	<p>10. Priority dates The relevant dates ... are as follows:- ... Band B ... Homeless – date of homelessness acceptance ... Band C ... Registration date unless moving from band D to C because of newly unsatisfactory housing conditions, new medical needs, becoming eligible for sheltered accommodation or new Care Plan when the date of the new assessment is used.</p>	<p>10. Priority dates The relevant dates ... are as follows:- ... Band B ... Homeless – date the applicant became homeless (which cannot precede the date that the applicant actually made a homeless application). ... Band C ... Registration date unless moving from band D to C because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • newly unsatisfactory housing conditions, • new medical needs, • new Care Plan • becoming eligible for sheltered accommodation, when the date of the new assessment is used. <p>If moving from band D to C because of homelessness this will be the date the applicant became roofless and was placed in non-self-contained accommodation or made own temporary arrangements.</p>												

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14	<p>Assessments and Banding Decisions –</p> <p>This section needs to include a reference to our new policy on assessment of composite need (see new Appendix C)</p>	<p>11. Assessments and Banding Decisions</p> <p>Following the registration a decision will be made on what, if any, follow up action is appropriate, e.g. referral to the Medical Adviser; Disability Services, Environmental Health Officer (EHO), Homelessness Assessment Team if there is a threat of homelessness, or Social Services. The Housing Assessment Team makes decisions about banding in the light of appropriate advice and the following guidelines. They will carry out a composite assessment of the needs of all members of households with multiple needs.* The assessment will determine whether such households will be accorded an additional preference by being placed in band A or B, as appropriate to their needs.</p>	<p>11. Assessments and Banding Decisions</p> <p>Following the registration a decision will be made on what, if any, follow up action is appropriate, e.g. referral to the Medical Adviser; Disability Services, Environmental Health Officer (EHO), Homelessness Assessment Team if there is a threat of homelessness, or Social Services. The Housing Assessment Team makes decisions about banding in the light of appropriate advice and the following guidelines. They will carry out a composite assessment of the needs of all members of households presenting hardship or multiple needs. The assessment will determine whether such households will be accorded an additional preference by being placed in band A or B, as appropriate to their needs. Appendix C sets out the council’s policy and procedure for assessing hardship and multiple need.</p>
14	<p>Medical needs –</p> <p>The policy needs to be amended so that the advice of a suitably qualified medical professional</p>	<p>a) Medical Needs (applicable to both Homeseekers and Transfers)</p> <p>Members who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which is affected by their current home, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a Medical Self-Assessment form. The Housing Assessment Team considers this form, together with any relevant information from the General Practitioner, hospital consultant, or</p>	<p>a) Medical Needs (applicable to both Homeseekers and Transfers)</p> <p>Members who indicate that they or anyone in their household have an illness or disability, which is affected by their current home, or who may be vulnerable on physical or mental health grounds and in need of settled accommodation are requested to complete a Medical Self-Assessment form. The Housing Assessment Team considers this form, together with any relevant information from the general practitioner, hospital consultant, or</p>

* Households with multiple needs are households entitled to a reasonable preference in the allocation of housing on more than one of the statutory grounds as defined in Section 167 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

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Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
	advises us on all claims for medical priority (as per the recent Chinery Ombudsman decision against Harrow council)	Occupational Therapist as appropriate. Where appropriate the Team also seeks advice from the Council’s medical advisor.	occupational therapist as appropriate. The Team also seeks advice from the Council’s medical advisor, except where the member sends in the same information repeatedly, or the medical condition is clearly not of such a nature as to be adversely affected by the type of accommodation occupied. Staff will also attempt to contact consultants directly if they or the Medical Adviser are unclear on the nature of the evidence provided.
20 and 21	<p>Rent Arrears Policy</p> <p>The policy currently omits mention of applicants who owe the council money. Someone who has not paid their council tax can be offered a council tenancy, which is not right.</p> <p>The new</p>	<p>12 Rent Arrears Policy – Accepted Homeless Households in temporary accommodation</p> <p>Applications will be suspended when a homeseeker either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) refuses to pay the rent b) fails to make a commitment to repay arrears or c) fails to provide supporting information for a Housing Benefit claim. <p>– Homeseekers in the private sector</p> <p>Where a homeseeker is in the private sector then any arrears will not be taken into account. However,</p>	<p>12 Rent Arrears Policy – Accepted Homeless Households in temporary accommodation</p> <p>Applications will be suspended when a homeseeker either:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) refuses to pay the rent, or b) fails to make a commitment to repay arrears, or c) fails to provide supporting information for a Housing Benefit claim, or d) owes the council money and has refused to make, or has failed to keep to, a repayment arrangement. <p>– Homeseekers in the private sector</p> <p>Where a homeseeker is in the private sector then any arrears will not be taken into account. However, the homeseeker’s application will be suspended if</p>

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	<p>policy also needs to apply to non homeless homeseekers and tenants.</p>	<p>where they have lost their previous accommodation...</p> <p>– Tenants</p> <p>Tenants are allowed to be members of Locata even if they have rent arrears. However, at the time that they bid for a property they must have a clear rent account.</p>	<p>they owe the council money and have refused to make, or have failed to keep to, a repayment arrangement. Where they have lost their previous accommodation...</p> <p>– Tenants</p> <p>Tenants, like homeseekers, are allowed to be members of Locata even if they have rent arrears. However, at the time that they bid for a property they must have a clear rent account. Their application may be suspended if they owe the council money (either rent, council tax or any other debt) and have refused to make, or have failed to keep to, a repayment arrangement. .</p>
26	<p>Mobility nominations</p> <p>–</p> <p>MOVE UK did not get off the ground, but Harrow still prioritises elderly people who need to relocate here.</p> <p>The subsequent</p>	<p>15 e) Move UK (inward mobility) nominations</p> <p>Move UK is a voluntary scheme designed to provide housing mobility opportunities and assistance with housing problems for people in London and throughout the British Isles. Because of the shortage of accommodation in Harrow we only accept incoming Move UK nominations for sheltered and designated elderly accommodation.</p> <p>Nominations from other housing organisations can be considered from homeseekers who have a local connection (usually a family connection). Incoming Move UK applicants must register with the authority where they have the most connection but they can bid for cross-borough properties.</p>	<p>15 e) Inward mobility nominations</p> <p>Because of the shortage of accommodation in Harrow we only accept incoming nominations on behalf of out of borough residents for sheltered and designated elderly accommodation.</p> <p>Such nominations from other housing organisations can be considered from homeseekers who have a local connection (usually a family connection). Applicants must register with the authority where they have the most connection but they can bid for cross-borough properties.</p> <p>Applications are referred to the Housing Assessment</p>

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
	<p>paragraph had a duplicate letter, so needs to be renumbered.</p>	<p>Applications are referred to the Housing Assessment Team who will check that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the list is open for new Move UK applicants, ➤ they meet the above criteria, and ➤ that their referring organisation completes a sheltered assessment form. <p>The Housing Assessment Team will place accepted nominees on the Housing Register, in band C.</p> <p>15 e) People not currently resident within the borough...</p>	<p>Team who will check that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the list is open for new mobility scheme applicants, ➤ they meet the above criteria, and ➤ that their referring organisation completes a sheltered assessment form. <p>The Housing Assessment Team will place accepted nominees on the Housing Register, in band C.</p> <p>15 f) People not currently resident within the borough...</p>
27	<p>Other groups on the register –</p> <p>We need to add another group to Para 15: homeless people resident in Harrow to whom a homelessness duty is owed by another borough.</p>		<p>15 g) People resident in Harrow to whom a homelessness duty is owed by another borough</p> <p>If a person wishes to register for housing with Harrow, in addition to their registration with their “home” borough, they will be given band C. They will be given less preference than other band C members to whom Harrow owes a homelessness duty, but more preference than non-residents referred to in (f) above, to whom no homelessness duty is owed.</p> <p>However, the individual merits of the case will be considered, so that higher priority may be given where Harrow is satisfied that the authority that owes the duty is unable to provide suitable accommodation.</p>
27 and	<p>Housing for the elderly –</p>	<p>16. Housing for the elderly</p> <p>Harrow has three types of accommodation</p>	<p>16. Housing for older people</p> <p>Harrow has three types of accommodation</p>













Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
28	<p>The wording should be changed to reflect the way the council currently discusses older people, as per the “Older People’s Housing Review”.</p>	<p>specifically for the elderly. These are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Elderly Persons Dwellings <p>These are specifically designated for elderly people who can live independently. To be eligible the member must be meet the advertised age criteria, which may be 45+, 50+ or 55+. For some flats fairly good mobility is necessary, as many are on the first or second floor without a lift.</p> <p>...</p> <p>17. Processing applications from the elderly</p> <p>...</p>	<p>specifically for older people. These are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Older Peoples Dwellings <p>These are specifically designated for older people who can live independently. To be eligible the member must be meet the advertised age criteria, which may be 45+, 50+ or 55+. For some flats fairly good mobility is necessary, as many are on the first or second floor without a lift.</p> <p>...</p> <p>17. Processing applications from people over 60 years of age</p> <p>...</p>
28	<p>Sheltered housing –</p> <p>The paragraph needs to give more clarity on what “needing” sheltered housing entails.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sheltered Housing <p>This type of accommodation is for members aged sixty or over who can live independently and are able to manage alone, but who prefer the added security of a resident warden and an alarm cord system should it be necessary to seek help in an emergency. This includes people who can manage alone with the aid of a social services care package. Members who are disabled may be considered for sheltered from 55 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Very Sheltered Housing <p>Harrow has one sheltered scheme with an extra element of care. The scheme is staffed by residential social workers that work on a rotational basis to provide cover 24 hours per day. Access to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sheltered Housing <p>This type of accommodation is for members aged sixty or over (although age limits for schemes do vary) who can live independently and are able to manage alone, but who prefer the added security of a resident warden and an alarm cord system should it be necessary to seek help in an emergency. This includes people who can manage alone with the aid of a social services care package. Members who are disabled may be considered for sheltered from 55 years. Members who are already living in a sheltered scheme may apply to transfer to another, but will only get band D for this unless there is a demonstrated need (as opposed to a preference) for the transfer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Very Sheltered/ Extra Care Housing











Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
		the scheme is by Social Services nomination and people age 55+ are eligible.	Harrow has one sheltered scheme with an extra element of care, and other schemes are planned. The scheme is staffed by residential social workers that work on a rotational basis to provide cover 24 hours per day. Access to the scheme is by Social Services nomination and people age 55+ are eligible.
28	<p>Watkins House –</p> <p>Reference needs to be made more generic in light of council's plans for more extra care housing.</p>	(iv) The Visiting Officer evaluates the Sheltered Assessment, taking into account the advice of the Council's Medical Advisor if applicable, and recommends that the applicant is either suitable or not for Sheltered Accommodation. Those who appear to need a higher level of support and or care are referred to the Social Services Elderly Care Management Team for an assessment of their suitability for Watkins House or Residential Care.	(iv) The Visiting Officer evaluates the Sheltered Assessment, taking into account the advice of the Council's Medical Advisor if applicable, and recommends that the applicant is either suitable or not for Sheltered Accommodation. Those who appear to need a higher level of support and or care are referred to the Social Services Elderly Care Management Team for an assessment of their suitability for extra care sheltered housing or Residential Care.
29	<p>Applications Officer – This mistake in the title needs correcting, and reference to assisted bidding would be appropriate here.</p>	(vii) The Applications Officer will advise members which, if any, partners are able to assist and explain how to bid.	(vii) The Housing Options Officer will advise members which, if any, partners are able to assist, explain how to bid and, if the person needs it, bid for properties on their behalf.
31	<p>Eligibility of bids –</p>	<p>22. Eligibility of Bids Members on Harrow's Housing Register may bid for</p>	<p>22. Eligibility of Bids Members on Harrow's Housing Register may bid for</p>





































Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording																																										
	The list of housing associations needs updating	properties advertised in the following sections of Locata HOME:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Harrow ➤ Cross-Borough ➤ PCHA Housing Association ➤ Ealing Family Housing Association 	properties advertised in the following sections of Locata Home:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Harrow ➤ Cross-Borough ➤ Any of the individual housing association pages 																																										
32	Bidding rules – These need clarification that members registered with a partner housing association but resident in Harrow are eligible to bid on Harrow’s page.	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> 22 Member is on Harrow’s Housing Register </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> If a property is a Harrow property and not advertised cross-borough, the member must be on Harrow’s register. </td> </tr> </table>	22 Member is on Harrow’s Housing Register	If a property is a Harrow property and not advertised cross-borough, the member must be on Harrow’s register.	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> 22 Member is on Harrow’s Housing Register, or on the register of a partner housing association and resident in Harrow. </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> If a property is a Harrow property and not advertised cross-borough, the member must be on Harrow’s register, or on the register of a partner housing association and resident in Harrow. </td> </tr> </table>	22 Member is on Harrow’s Housing Register, or on the register of a partner housing association and resident in Harrow.	If a property is a Harrow property and not advertised cross-borough, the member must be on Harrow’s register, or on the register of a partner housing association and resident in Harrow.																																						
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34 and 38	Maximum Bedroom Eligibility – This will change when Locata partners agree to adopt the bedroom standard.	Maximum bedroom eligibility is determined using the following guidelines:- <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single person</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	Single person							Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings							Maximum bedroom eligibility is determined using the following guidelines:- <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>5</th> <th>6</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Single person</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1	2	3	4	5	6	Single person							Cohabiting or Married Couple or same sex adult siblings						
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Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording						Proposed wording					
	<p><i>Needs to be checked – also to give consideration to the criteria for direct lettings – page 38.</i></p>	wishing to live together						wishing to live together					
		Pregnant Woman (with or without partner) with no other children						Pregnant Woman (with or without partner) with no other children					
		Parent(s) with one child						Parent(s) with one child					
		Parent(s) with one girl and one boy both under 7.						Parent(s) with one girl and one boy both under 10.					
		Parent(s) with two same sex children less than 5 years age difference						Parent(s) with two same sex children both under 20.					
		Parent(s) with one girl and one boy where one						Parent(s) with one girl and one boy where one is age 10 or over					

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

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		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">is age 7 or over</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parent(s) with two same sex children more than 5 years age difference both under 10</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parent(s) with two same sex children 5 years or more apart where one is age 10 or over</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents with three or four children*</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents with five or more children*</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>* Max number of bedrooms will follow the rule for age and sex separation given for the families with two children. Non dependent children over 18, cousins,</p>	is age 7 or over								Parent(s) with two same sex children more than 5 years age difference both under 10								Parent(s) with two same sex children 5 years or more apart where one is age 10 or over								Parents with three or four children*								Parents with five or more children*								<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">Parents with three or four children*</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents with five or more children*</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>* Max number of bedrooms will follow the rule for age and sex separation given for the families with two children. Non dependent children over 18 will normally be entitled to their own bedroom.</p>	Parents with three or four children*							Parents with five or more children*						
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Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording																								
		grandchildren and other relatives will normally be assessed using the same rules.																									
34	<p>Size of property offered under direct lettings</p> <p>– Two irrelevant asterisks should be removed</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Parents with three or four children*</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents with five or more children*</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Parents with three or four children*						Parents with five or more children*						<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Parents with three or four children</td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> <td style="width: 10%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents with five or more children</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Parents with three or four children						Parents with five or more children					
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35	<p>Ineligibility for an offer because of sufficient financial resources –</p> <p>Mustn't have a blanket policy of no allocations to o-occupiers – risk of adverse judicial review. Suggested wording has been borrowed from Croydon B.C.</p>	<p>25. Ineligibility for an Offer</p> <p>Members will not be made an offer of accommodation if, at the time they bid for a property, any of the following circumstances exist:-</p> <p>(i) Financial resources available to meet own housing costs</p> <p>Homesekers who are found to have sufficient financial resources to obtain accommodation for themselves in the private sector...</p>	<p>25. Ineligibility for an Offer</p> <p>Members will not be made an offer of accommodation if, at the time they bid for a property, any of the following circumstances exist:-</p> <p>(i) Financial resources available to meet own housing costs</p> <p>Homesekers who are found to have sufficient financial resources (income/ capital/ freehold, leasehold or joint interest held in a home) to obtain accommodation for themselves in the private sector or through a low cost home ownership scheme, taking into account the size and type of property needed. In exceptional circumstances there is discretion to make offers to those with negative equity and those who would be unable to manage a mortgage because of age, infirmity, disability, etc.</p>																								

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
39	<p>Outgoing Mobility nominations</p> <p>–</p> <p>Paragraphs to be amended in light of demise of Move UK</p>	<p>31. Outgoing MOVE UK and FRESH START Mobility Nominations</p> <p>(i) Members requesting re-housing in another borough which is not in the partners’ areas will be considered for nomination to another local authority or housing association either via the FRESH START or HOMES Mobility Schemes, if they are eligible persons. The nominee will also have to meet the criteria of the receiving authority, which sometimes includes needing to have a local connection with the borough they wish to move to.</p> <p>(ii) Members meeting these criteria may have to complete a MOVE UK application form. The Housing Options Officer will telephone the receiving organisation to find out if they will accept the nomination. If the member is not accepted the Options Officer will inform them in writing.</p> <p>(iii) If the receiving organisation is willing to consider the nomination, the Options or Fresh Start Officer will make a nomination. Details are noted on the computer so that if they bid and are eligible for an offer via Locata a check is made with MOVE UK, in order to avoid duplicate offers. If the nomination is rejected, this information is removed from the computer.</p> <p>(iv) Members will be informed by letter of the progress of their nomination at each stage, i.e. nomination, rejection.</p>	<p>31. Outgoing Mobility Nominations</p> <p>(i) Members requesting re-housing in another borough which is not in the partners’ areas will be considered for nomination to another local authority or housing association, if they are eligible. The nominee will have to meet the criteria of the receiving authority, which sometimes includes needing to have a local connection with the borough they wish to move to.</p> <p>(ii) Members meeting these criteria may have to complete an additional application form. The Housing Options Officer will telephone the receiving organisation to find out if they will accept the nomination. If the member is not accepted the Options Officer will inform them in writing.</p> <p>(iii) If the receiving organisation is willing to consider the nomination, the Options Officer will make a nomination. Details are noted on the computer so that if they bid and are eligible for an offer via Locata a check is made, in order to avoid duplicate offers. If the nomination is rejected, this information is removed from the computer.</p> <p>(iv) Members will be informed by letter of the progress of their nomination at each stage, i.e. nomination, rejection.</p>

Appendix A – list of proposed amendments to the Allocations Scheme

Page	Subject	Current wording	Proposed wording
3 and 42	Banding Scheme – this is no longer a “pilot”.	Appendix A: LOCATA WEST LONDON CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS PILOT SCHEME	Appendix A: LOCATA WEST LONDON CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS PRIORITY BANDING SCHEME
42 to 45	Banding Scheme overcrowding rules	<i>NB WLALG will be considering giving higher priority to “severely overcrowded” applicants. This and the Capital Moves accommodation may have the effect of requiring “substantial” amendments to the Allocations Scheme.</i>	
48	Banding Scheme footnote – Mention needs to be made here of our new policy on assessment of composite need.	<p>Factors determining priorities Priorities within bands will be on a date order basis, according to the date the member was placed into that band.</p> <p>There is a residual discretion for households whose defining features (including their cumulative needs) are deemed to be so exceptional that a higher priority band is deemed to be necessary.</p> <p>Where the defining features (including the cumulative needs) of a member in band A are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate/imminent rehousing, there is a discretion to enable the household to be made a direct offer outside the scheme.</p>	<p>Factors determining priorities Priorities within bands will be on a date order basis, according to the date the member was placed into that band.</p> <p>There is a residual discretion for households whose defining features (including their cumulative needs) are deemed to be so exceptional that a higher priority band is deemed to be necessary. Appendix C describes the assessment process for applicants with multiple needs.</p> <p>Where the defining features (including the cumulative needs) of a member in band A are considered to be so exceptionally severe as to warrant immediate/imminent re-housing, there is a discretion to enable the household to be made a direct offer outside the scheme.</p>



Meeting:	Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLCF)
Date:	22 July 2008
Subject:	Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013
Responsible Officer:	Corporate Director, Adults and Housing Services - Paul Najsarek
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing - Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Cabinet Report 17 July 2008 Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013 Homelessness Review 2008 (via weblink)

Section 1 – Summary and recommendations

1.1 The attached report to Cabinet sets out the key objectives and priorities of the new Homelessness Strategy for Harrow, to be delivered over the next 5 years. It has been developed following a full review of homelessness services, including extensive consultation with staff, partners and service users. It sets out the way in which the council, and its partners, will develop services to meet the challenges of homelessness demand in Harrow, while at the same time supporting national, regional and local priorities.

1.2 Recommendations:

The Forum is requested to:

- note the contents of the Cabinet report and Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013; and
- make comments, which will be reflected in the final version of the Strategy before formal submission by 31 July 2008.

1.3 Reason: (For recommendation)

All councils are required, under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a five-year Homelessness Strategy in place, based on a full review of

homelessness and homeless services. Harrow's existing Homelessness Strategy was developed in 2003 so the Council is required to develop a new Homelessness Strategy for submission to CLG by 31 July 2008.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 The attached Cabinet report sets out in Section 2 the background to the Strategy, including priorities included, consultation completed and equalities issues.

2.2 Financial Implications

2.2.1 Financial implications are set out in section 2.7 of the attached report.

2.3 Performance Issues

2.3.1 Performance issues are set out in section 2.8 of the attached report

2.4 Risk Management Implications

2.4.1 Risk management implications are set out in section 2.9 of the attached report.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
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Date: 4th July 2008

Name: Paresh Mehta	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
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Date: 4th July 2008

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jane Fernley, Interim Housing Needs Manager, tel: 020-8424-1283, jane.fernley@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report 17 July 2008

Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Homelessness Review 2008 available from website at www.harrow.gov.uk

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	17 July 2008
Subject:	Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Paul Najsarek, Director Adults and Housing Services
Portfolio Holder:	Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing - Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013 Homelessness Review 2008 (via weblink)

1.1 This report sets out the key objectives and priorities of the new Homelessness Strategy for Harrow, to be delivered over the next 5 years. It has been developed following a full review of homelessness services, including extensive consultation with staff, partners and service users. It sets out the way in which the council, and its partners, will develop services to meet the challenges of homelessness demand in Harrow, while at the same time supporting national, regional and local priorities.

1.2 Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to approve the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and delegate to the Corporate Director the ability to make changes including any adjustments necessary following discussion with Communities and Local Government (CLG) and report to Tenants and Leaseholders Consultative Forum (TLCF) on 22 July 2008.

1.3 Reason: All councils are required, under the Homelessness Act 2002, to have a five-year Homelessness Strategy in place, based on a full review of homelessness and homeless services. Harrow's

existing Homelessness Strategy was developed in 2003 so the Council is required to develop a new Homelessness Strategy for submission to CLG by 31 July 2008.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Every local authority has a duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. Harrow produced its first Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan in 2003. This Homelessness Strategy 2008 builds on the achievements of the first strategy and sets out our road map for meeting the challenges of homelessness over the next five years. In doing so, it links with and supports a number of key local strategies. The links to key local objectives are summarised below.

Corporate Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep crime low • Improve the well being of adults and children and the care of those who most need our help • Improve the way we work for our residents • Develop communities where people from different backgrounds get on well together
Sustainable Community Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage affordable housing to be developed in accessible locations • Increase social inclusion • Ensure continuous improvements in the quality of housing, affordability, and choice of type, size and tenure • Ensure sound multi-agency communication and practice around protecting children from harm and promoting their welfare
Adults and Housing Services Transformation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing accommodation opportunities and increasing housing options for older people and for people with LD, MH, PD and people with multiple disabilities, in mainstream housing • Effective working practices
Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To tackle homelessness and high demand, while reducing the use of temporary accommodation

2.1.2 The Strategy also sets out how it is informed by the national and regional strategic context, including the extensive work done in the West London sub region to tackle homelessness.

2.2 Options considered

2.2.1 Harrow's Housing Strategy 2007-2012 (approved by Cabinet 19 July 2007 minute 273) contains an objective with 3 key priorities relating to

homelessness, which have been used as the basis for the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2008-13. Staff, stakeholders and service users have considered these, along with other priorities. The multi-agency Project Board agreed the final priorities identified in the Strategy.

- 2.2.2 There are a number of actions included in the Strategy for which an options analysis will be required; for example future hostel provision and the review of the housing advice service.

2.3 Background

2.3.1 It is a statutory requirement (Homelessness Act 2002) for the council to have in place a homelessness strategy, based on a full review of homelessness and homeless service provision in the borough. This is used to inform the establishment and delivery of key strategic priorities to improve services to homeless people. Latest guidance from CLG stresses the need for close partnership working across the council and partner agencies in the delivery of the strategy.

2.3.2 This strategy demonstrates a comprehensive approach to tackling homelessness in Harrow. The strategy has been based upon both the research carried out through the review, as well as interviews and other forms of consultation with partners and stakeholders. We have also drawn upon performance and needs data, and research from sources such as Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Harrow Housing Needs Assessment 2006.

2.3.3 Finally, the Strategy builds upon the aims and delivery of the first Harrow Homelessness Strategy 2003 – 8. This was developed at a time when Harrow was just starting to implement its innovative approach to tackling housing need via homelessness prevention. The Strategy was extremely successful initially; resulting in the council getting national recognition by way of Beacon status for tackling homelessness and outcomes such as a dramatic reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances and the elimination of the use of bed and breakfast hotels. Since 2005, the external environment has been more challenging and some of the quick wins available in 2003 are no longer possible. Nevertheless, the central themes of the 2003 strategy are still valid and are carried through to this successor document.

2.4 Priorities

2.4.1 The key priorities that frame the Strategy are as follows:

- To prevent homelessness, and to tackle high demand and the wider causes of homelessness
- To secure accommodation for homeless people across a range of tenures, and to manage and reduce the use of temporary accommodation
- To support vulnerable homeless people, including young and single homeless, in accessing settled homes and sustaining their tenure

- To regularly review the homelessness strategy, to ensure it is effective, adapts readily to the changing external environment and that the Housing Needs service provides good value for money

2.5 Consultation

- 2.5.1 A comprehensive programme of consultation has been completed, with staff, partners and customers including all homeless households on the Housing Register, existing council tenants and specific service user groups such as teenage parents and young homeless people. A variety of methods were employed including a reception based satisfaction survey (47 responses), postal survey with Homeseecker News (488 responses), focus groups with 47 services users and 11 staff and a homelessness conference for 60 partners. Full details of specific consultations and their findings are detailed within the Homelessness Review document and the Strategy includes a section on "what stakeholders told us" under each of the four priorities.
- 2.5.2 The information gathered has been used to shape the Strategy, and participants in the consultation have been kept informed of the progress of the work. A Homelessness Strategy Project Board was established to oversee the review process and development of the strategy. The Board was made up of stakeholders from various agencies providing services across the spectrum of homelessness. Membership is detailed in the Homelessness Review document. The Board made detailed comments on drafts of the Strategy as it developed and agreed the final priorities.

2.6 Equalities impact

- 2.6.1 An equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been developed and is included in the Homelessness Review 2008. The EIA assesses the impact the strategy will have on defined groups based on an analysis of current evidence. It reflects actions required to address differential impact, which has then been included in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.
- 2.6.2 The assessment has shown that although higher proportions of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households are presenting as homeless and on waiting lists for suitable accommodation, particularly larger accommodation, there is no evidence from the data to suggest that this group is directly discriminated against in the homelessness process (12.3% of applications from BME households are accepted, compared with an overall average of 12.2%). However, it is important to note that there will continue to be an imbalance in the proportion of larger BME households waiting for accommodation with so few larger properties becoming available for letting each year.
- 2.6.3 Key findings from the assessment have been reflected in the action plan, particularly the need for larger accommodation (Action Plan objective 2 action 5), the need for access to adapted properties for physically disabled people (objective 3 action 23), improved collection of data on disability for more accurate monitoring on disability (objective 4 action 12) and research into the needs of Lesbian, Gay,

Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups, faith groups and gypsies and travellers (objective 4 action 15).

- 2.6.4 In addition to the EIA, the Council needs to demonstrate that it has had due regard to promoting the equality of opportunity of disabled people and other persons in accordance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Section 49 also requires the Council to take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. Equality of opportunity in this case would be represented by the specific needs of disabled people for suitable temporary and permanent accommodation being recognised and prioritised.
- 2.6.5 Data is not currently routinely collected on the numbers of disabled people, or households containing a disabled person, presenting as homeless to assess whether or not this is disproportionate to the number of disabled people in the community. In addition, the council's ability to find suitable temporary accommodation for people with mobility impairments is restricted by the limited availability of such accommodation that has been designed or adapted for use by people with mobility impairments. There are similar difficulties concerning the provision of permanent accommodation, although there is scope for adaptations, subject to resource availability.
- 2.6.6 The strategy has recognised these issues and, at objective 4 action 12 addresses the need for improved collection of data on disability for more accurate monitoring. In addition, at objective 3, action 23, the Strategy specifically addresses the need to increase the availability of suitably adapted temporary property.
- 2.6.7 In the case of other disabilities, the strategy recognises the needs of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues by a range of actions at objective 3, actions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
- 2.6.8 The actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy should positively address any existing differential impact on specific groups. Any change, positive or negative, will be identified through the annual review process by the multi-agency Homelessness Strategy Project Board, and will be addressed in future updates to the action plan.

2.7 Financial Implications

- 2.7.1 The resources available for implementation of this strategy include: Harrow Council homelessness revenue budget, specific CLG revenue grants, Harrow affordable housing fund capital and Housing Corporation capital, plus privately raised finance for new housing schemes delivered by RSLs.
- 2.7.2 The total net revenue budget for homelessness in 2008-9 is £2.7m, and includes £204k specific CLG revenue grants and £320k HB income.

In 2009-10 cost savings of £160,000 will be made to support the HARP IT project.

2.7.3 In the 2008/09 approved revenue budget Housing Services contributed to the Council's savings programme, resulting in growth in homelessness costs being absorbed within the existing budget through a range of initiatives to manage demand. The budget is based on an average of 32 families in Bed and Breakfast for a full year; however at the start of 2008/09 there were 71 families in Bed and Breakfast. This is a significant cost pressure but will be managed down by the initiatives detailed in the strategy and the maximisation of Housing Benefit. It is not clear at this stage whether this can be contained within the existing budget by 31st March 2009 and it will be closely monitored and reported as appropriate.

2.7.4 As noted throughout the strategy the homelessness service is subject to changing external forces and a number of budgetary pressures associated with the costs of temporary accommodation and prevention initiatives. Where new initiatives have revenue cost implications these will be managed within the overall homelessness budget or within the corporate medium term financial strategy.

2.8 Performance Issues

2.8.1 The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan relate directly to a number of key performance indicators including:

CPA Housing Block - Housing the Community:

PI ref no / Frequency	PI description	Lower Threshold	Upper Threshold	Actual and CPA threshold 2007/08
BV183a H14	Average time in B&B (weeks)	6 weeks	1.2 weeks	7.02 lower
BV 183b H15	Average length of stay in hostel accommodation (weeks)	23.1 weeks	0 weeks	11.6 middle
BV214 H16	Repeat homelessness acceptances	8.00%	1.00%	0% upper
BV203 H22	% change in average no of families placed in TA	28.31%	-6.94%	-2.48% middle

2.8.2 Performance on some of these indicators, such as length of time in B&B, has been worsening due to a variety of factors. The Action Plan puts in place measures to reduce the use of B&B in overall numbers and the length of time spent.

2.8.3 National Indicator Set:

From 2008/09 there are two new performance indicators that will be used to measure performance of the homelessness service:

- NI 156 will measure the number of households living in temporary accommodation;

- NI 155 will measure the number of affordable homes delivered (gross). This is also an LAA target.

The Strategy sets out in detail how we aim to meet the CLG target of reducing the use of TA by 50% (2004 – 2010) and refers to the Housing Strategy 2007 action plan to increase the number of affordable homes delivered in Harrow.

2.8.4 Successful delivery of the strategy will also impact on national performance indicators relating to offenders, older people and vulnerable people (specifically NI 46, 139, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 149).

2.8.5 Adults & Housing Services Transformation Plan:

The review of the Homelessness Strategy and the reduced use of temporary accommodation are key deliverables of Programme Area 2: developing accommodation opportunities. The Strategy also supports

- The widening of accommodation options for vulnerable people (2.3)
- Conclude the HARP project (CAPITA) contract (5.1)
- Ensure services are efficiently and effectively resourced by skilled staff, through partnership working (programme area 6)
- Ensure consistency of approach and evidence based decision making in order to direct resources to front line services.

2.8.6 The homelessness strategy action plan at Section 4.1 of the Homelessness Strategy 2008-13 identifies where actions relate to specific performance indicators.

2.9 Risk Management Implications

2.9.1 Risk included on Directorate risk register? Yes

2.9.2 Separate risk register in place? Yes

2.9.3 The homelessness strategy operates in an environment that is fluctuating and highly susceptible to change due to external factors. In response to this there has been a risk appraisal of key elements of the Strategy and Action Plan and controls are in place to mitigate and manage the highest risks.

2.9.4 Specific factors currently impacting on the delivery of the Strategy include the current financial climate, which could significantly affect both numbers of households presenting as homeless and the development of new affordable homes. This could lead to increased pressure on temporary accommodation for homeless households on the Housing Register.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 26 June 2008		
Name: Helen White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 27 June 2008		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Tom Whiting.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Divisional Director (Strategy and Improvement)
Date: 18/06/08		

Section 5 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Jane Fernley, Interim Housing Needs Manager, tel: 020-8424-1283, jane.Fernley@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Homelessness Review 2008 available from website at

www.harrow.gov.uk



Harrow Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013

**Tackling homelessness and high demand,
While reducing the use of temporary accommodation**

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Message from portfolio holder

Welcome to Harrow's homelessness strategy 2008 – 13.

Much has been achieved since the first homelessness strategy was published in 2003. This is demonstrated by:

- A steady reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation
- The continued success of the Sanctuary Scheme in enabling survivors of domestic violence to remain in their own homes
- The development of a range of supported housing options for young people (including a foyer at Roxeth Gate, offering employment and training, as well as housing and support)
- Participation in West London initiatives, such as the development and distribution of a Housing Options DVD and benchmarking and mystery shopping exercises, to inform future service development.

This new strategy for 2008 -13 seeks to build on the early achievements in Harrow, but also recognises the increasing challenges that we face in terms of the size of the demand for affordable housing, relative to the small council and RSL (registered social landlord) housing stock, the relatively high cost of housing in Harrow and the limited opportunities for new development.

In these circumstances we must rely increasingly on the private housing sector in Harrow, and out of borough opportunities where these offer reasonable, alternative housing options for people at risk of homelessness. We will also work with partners to offer services targeted at people's particular needs e.g. for housing related support, mediation and employment/ training advice, so as to offer a holistic response to their particular housing circumstances. We recognise and embrace the diversity of people facing homelessness and the Strategy seeks to address the inequalities experienced by different minority groups.

This strategy has been produced as a result of a thorough review and consultation with customers, front line staff and partners. I commend it to you and ask for your support in its delivery.

Councillor Barry MacLeod- Cullinane
Portfolio Holder, Adults and Housing



Message from Divisional Director, Adults and Housing Services

I am pleased to introduce the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and would like to thank the many customers, partners and staff who have contributed to its development. We value your contribution and rely on you to help its implementation.

This is an exciting time for the Housing Service in Harrow. We have successfully completed recruitment to several key posts within the service, including the Housing Needs Manager. We are about to go live with a major IT project, which will deliver service improvements and efficiencies in Housing and enable better sharing of information with other council services. This, combined with a range of information sharing and training programmes for staff, customers and partners and improved ways of working, should improve service delivery. These measures, together with the comprehensive Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, will make sure we continue to tackle homelessness in Harrow effectively for the benefit of all the borough's residents.

Gwyneth Allen

Divisional Director, Adults and Housing Services

1. Introduction

1.1 Strategic context

Every local authority has a duty to produce a Homelessness Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002. Harrow produced its first Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan in 2003. This Homelessness Strategy 2008 builds on the achievements of the first strategy and sets out our road map for meeting the challenges of homelessness over the next five years. In doing so, it links with and supports a number of key local strategies.

The Harrow Homelessness strategy addresses the Council's vision to:

- Deliver cleaner streets, better environmental services and **keep crime low** e.g. by working with partners to reduce homelessness due to domestic violence and reduce re-offending by meeting accommodation needs
- **Improve the well-being of adults and children and the care of those who most need our help**, e.g. by offering a range of services targeted at young people at risk of homelessness
- **Improve the way we work for our residents**, e.g. actions to improve customer service and deliver better value for money
- **Develop communities where people from different backgrounds get on well together**, e.g. by ensuring that service users are referred to appropriate housing related support provision funded by Supporting People; supporting the Council's 'place shaping' and community cohesion roles in relation to the commissioning of temporary and permanent housing

It supports the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives to:

- **Encourage affordable housing to be developed in accessible locations**, by exploring innovative ways of increasing the affordable housing supply e.g. the Temp to Perm scheme
- Have reduced the pockets of deprivation that affect parts of our Borough, to **increase social inclusion** e.g. by offering money advice to people at risk of homelessness, by referring households for employment/ training advice
- **Ensure continuous improvement in the quality of housing, affordability and choice of type, size and tenure**, e.g. by reducing the use of emergency and temporary accommodation, by offering a housing options approach to the prevention of homelessness, by tackling severe overcrowding, by working with private landlords to improve standards of rented housing
- Deliver the targets of the Local Safeguarding Children Board together with the voluntary and community sector, to **ensure sound multi- agency communication and practice around protecting children from harm and**

promoting their welfare e.g. by our active promotion of the multi-agency NOTIFY scheme to record the movement of families in temporary accommodation

It reflects some of the key elements of the Adults and Housing Services Transformation Programme Plan, namely:

- **Developing accommodation opportunities** – by decreasing the use of temporary accommodation, and by increasing housing options for older people and those with learning disability, mental health, physical disability and people with multiple disabilities into mainstream housing
- **Effective working practices** – conclude the HARP IT project to deliver increased customer contact, more effective working, better information sharing and efficiency savings

This 2008 strategy sets out in detail how we will address Objective Two of the Harrow Housing Strategy 2007: to **tackle homelessness and high demand, while reducing the use of temporary accommodation**. It also supports the other housing strategic objectives relating to meeting the needs of vulnerable people, improving neighbourhoods & the quality of life, increasing the supply of housing and delivering high quality services.

The homelessness strategy has important links to Harrow's education, health, community safety, planning, and social care strategies. It is also the parent strategy to Housing Needs work streams such as the Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan 2008 –10 and the Overcrowding Action Plan.

1.2 Housing Needs context – Harrow & West London

As in the rest of West London, Harrow's housing need reflects the economic growth that characterises the area. There is a high demand for skilled workers, house prices are high and there is increasing pressure on transport systems. West London has the highest rate of single person households in London. Greater London Authority (GLA) research projects that population and employment is likely to grow at a much faster rate than housing capacity, predicting a shortfall of 35,000 by 2016. This growth and existing high levels of home ownership mean that there is a major and growing shortfall in affordable housing. The equity gap between average incomes and average house prices in 2002 was in excess of £180,000. There is also an affordability gap in meeting private sector rents. All of this poses challenges to the homelessness strategy in terms of: the quantity and availability of affordable housing, the implications of high private sector rent levels for working households and benefit dependency, and the imperative to consider moves outside the sub region to satisfy housing needs.

Among the seven West London boroughs (Harrow, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea) Harrow's housing need is characterised by having the second lowest level of homeless acceptances and the second lowest level number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (2007-8). Harrow also has the smallest social housing stock, so its ability to meet housing affordable need is limited. In value for money terms, a recent West London benchmarking exercise suggested Harrow had some of the lowest costs for homelessness prevention and costs of temporary accommodation. However, Harrow's Audit Commission near neighbour analysis suggests that the homelessness service is expensive. This is an area requiring further detailed analysis.

There is further information on the local, national and regional context, within the accompanying Harrow Homelessness Review 2008 document.

1.3 The 2003 Homelessness Strategy and developments since

The first Harrow Homelessness Strategy (2003) was produced at a time when Harrow was just starting to implement its innovative approach to tackling housing need via homelessness prevention. In 2003/4 this work was recognised nationally by the Council being awarded Beacon status for tackling homelessness. In the first two years of the 2003 homelessness strategy's existence, homelessness acceptances dropped significantly and for a considerable time there were no households in bed and breakfast hotels. This was a major achievement, enabling the Council also to reduce its use of other temporary accommodation (typically private rented properties leased to housing associations – HALS) and to make significant cost savings on the homelessness budget.

In December 2004 CLG introduced a target to reduce the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation (TA) by 50% by 2010. As a consequence the Council curtailed its leasing of HALS units. The drive to constantly reduce TA usage, combined with some difficulties in procuring other private sector rented homes for use in preventing homelessness acceptances, has led to a steady increase in the level of homeless acceptances over the last 3 years. This Strategy sets challenging targets to reduce homelessness acceptances, whilst at the same time stimulating private sector lettings to potentially homeless households, and thus bring the borough back into line to meet the CLG 2010 TA reduction target. TA reduction is a National Indicator and a key corporate target.

The 2003 Strategy was well rated by the ODPM in its assessment of fitness for purpose. The Action Plan 2003 was an ambitious one, containing over 100 actions, and the Review 2008 includes a detailed progress report against the 2003 Action plan. Some items from 2003 are carried through into this Strategy Action Plan 2008

(e.g. the Sanctuary scheme for people at risk of domestic violence). Other initiatives (e.g. the Freshstart scheme for moves to other social housing out of London) have ceased to be viable due to external drivers in the housing market elsewhere. In some ways the context for homelessness has changed and become more challenging; many of the quick wins available in 2003 no longer apply. However the central themes of the 2003 Strategy are valid; its emphasis on early prevention, partnership working and the need to constantly review our approach in response to the changing external environment are carried through into this successor strategy.

1.4 Strategy development

This Strategy takes a comprehensive approach to tackling homelessness in Harrow. The Strategy has been based upon research and service review, as well as interviews and extensive consultation with partners and stakeholders, including service users. The evidence base for the strategy draws upon local performance and needs data, and research from sources such as Communities and Local Government (CLG) to predict future levels of need and demand. Finally, we have reviewed our performance against the Action Plan for the first Harrow Homelessness Strategy 2003 – 8 and the CLG “Preventing Homelessness Strategy Health Check”.

Both the Strategy and the Review have been written to take account of all relevant guidance, such as the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, and the assessment carried out for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the 2003 Harrow Homelessness Strategy.

Details of the consultation with staff, partners and customers are given in the Homelessness Review document. All information gathered through this process has been used to shape the Strategy, and participants in the consultation have been kept informed of the progress of the work throughout its development

1.5 Structure of the strategy & future reviews

This Strategy document is intended to be concise and focused, with the background information being available in the accompanying Homelessness Review 2008. There are 4 key strategic objectives, which we have developed from the Housing Strategy objective 2 during the review process. These are underpinned by an action plan with SMART targets.

The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is linked into Harrow Council's strategic and service plans and will be monitored through the corporate performance management system.

The strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that our targets continue to reflect local need and national policy.

2. Key Priorities

2.1 Objective one

To prevent homelessness, and to tackle high demand and the wider causes of homelessness

What the review told us:

- The loss of private rented accommodation is the largest single cause of homelessness presentations in Harrow, making up roughly 50% of applications since 2005. This is probably due to the size of the private rented sector (12% of total housing) and the relatively small supply of social housing stock (11% of total housing). We must therefore focus our homeless prevention efforts on working with private sector tenants and landlords to sustain tenancies.
- Performance on tackling homelessness has slipped recently with a steady rise in homelessness applications and acceptances since 2005. As of July 2003, Harrow had 0 households in B&B, whereas at year end 2007/8, there were 73 households in bed and breakfast hotels. The reduction of B&B usage is an important target for this Homelessness Strategy and, in particular, the elimination of its use for 16-17 year olds and a significant reduction in the length of time spent in B&B for families with children.
- Overall the number of households in TA has reduced by 18% since the CLG reduction target was introduced; this is positive, however a greater reduction is required if Harrow is to meet the target of 646 households by March 2010. Our 2008 TA Reduction Plan sets challenging targets for how we will do this and it is an area that will require close monitoring and early intervention to keep on track. Good housing advice and early homelessness prevention are the key to reducing the use of TA.
- Private sector rents are substantially higher than those offered by social landlords: weekly rents on a 1 bedroom property are 58% higher in the private sector, while rents on a 3 bedroom property are 61% higher. There is a risk of benefit dependency for housing applicants taking up high cost tenancies and initiatives that refer customers for employment and training advice / support are important in addressing this.
- Repeat homelessness has remained low, with only 4 cases recorded since 2003/04, and we hope to maintain this position.

What stakeholders told us:

- Need for early intervention techniques, including making presentations about homelessness issues to schools and colleges
- Need to do more work around prevention of rent arrears as a cause of homelessness
- Need to increase the supply of larger properties
- Increase partnership working with the Housing Advice service and Connexions mediation service
- Improve mediation and money advice services
- Increase focus on the 'home'. Training for parents and children will assist them in the future when they become independent
- Make best use of the Housing Benefit Discretionary Housing Payment fund to prevent homelessness

What we plan to do and how

Priority: Ensure access to effective housing advice services
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise homelessness through effective housing advice by Council and partners • Review current Housing Advice service and put in place arrangements for April 2009 • Ensure early identification of money problems which may cause homelessness, and refer for advice
Priority: Sustain tenancies & existing housing arrangements
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocus staff resources on early intervention and homelessness prevention • Provide an effective mediation service to minimise exclusions by family/ friends • Maximise appropriate use of the Sanctuary Scheme to enable survivors of domestic violence to remain in their homes
Priority: Provide housing options to people at risk of homelessness
<p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure effective housing options information and assistance is provided by the Council and partners • Use the West London Domestic Violence reciprocal agreement where people

cannot remain in their own homes, due to risk of domestic violence, and explore its extension to other forms of violence

- Promote intermediate housing options to people in housing need

Priority: Tackle high demand and the wider causes of homelessness

Action:

- Give regular, targeted messages to the wider public about affordable housing demand and supply in Harrow, and the housing options approach
- Support programmes of awareness raising for young people, about the realities and risks of homelessness
- Review the allocations scheme to ensure fair and balanced access between the competing groups of housing applicants
- Refer customers for employment and training advice / assistance to avoid the trap of homelessness and worklessness

2.2 Objective Two

To secure accommodation for homeless people across a range of tenures, and to manage and reduce the use of temporary accommodation

What the review told us:

- There is a significant shortfall in affordable housing in Harrow, principally affordable rented housing. The projected shortfall is 2,303 units per annum and we must work with partners to maximise the development of new affordable rented housing, improve the take up of intermediate housing by housing applicants, and make best use of the existing social rented housing stock.
- There has been an increase in the BME population of Harrow since the 2003 strategy, particularly in the Somali and Polish community. 64% of households in TA are from a BME background and the average length of time spent in TA is 4.5 years, although this varies considerably depending on the bedroom size required.
- We need to increase the supply of affordable housing in Harrow to meet the growing demand, particularly for larger housing (3 bedrooms and larger); this will particularly address the needs of BME households who are disproportionately represented in larger sized temporary accommodation and wait longest for permanent rehousing. We must also use creative housing options for larger

households e.g. offering independent housing options, with training & employment support, to adult family members where appropriate.

- 56% of working households in Harrow could not afford to buy their own home, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2005 report “The Geography of Affordable and Unaffordable Housing”. House prices rose by 60% between 2001 and 2006. Low cost home ownership schemes need to be aimed at households with incomes in the range of £21,000 - £38,000 to be accessible to families in housing need and we need to promote the take up of intermediate housing options by social housing tenants and housing applicants.
- The Housing Register records significant levels of overcrowding (almost 25% of applicants lack one bedroom and nearly 5% lack 2 or more bedrooms and are classed as being “severely overcrowded”.) At the same time 71 households are recorded as under-occupying their existing homes and wishing to move. Our overcrowding and under-occupation action plan seeks to address this imbalance by promoting schemes to support and meet the needs of under-occupiers and thus alleviate severe overcrowding and free up chain properties for use by larger households.

What stakeholders told us:

- Need to manage expectations of the public on the supply of council/ RSL housing
- Open up opportunities to move out of Harrow, should the household express an interest in doing so
- Need to address affordability issues with private sector properties - offer a range of attractive, viable options in the private sector
- Work with landlords to address concerns, and promote initiatives such as the new Housing Benefit system (Local Housing Allowance)
- Maximise use of existing social rented stock
- Work with RSLs, and develop a robust strategy to tackle overcrowding and under-occupation

What we plan to do and how

Priority: Facilitate private sector housing options
Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote Harrow’s private sector letting scheme (Letstart), to applicants and landlords, as a mainstream housing option for households in priority need• Facilitate private sector housing options for single people and young people

Priority: Make best use of the permanent social rented housing stock

Action:

- Maintain current low levels of void times in Council stock
- Work with RSLs and West London partners to maximise the supply of new social rented housing
- Pursue new housing solutions e.g. Temp to Perm Initiative
- Promote and support under-occupation moves, and use chain lettings to assist overcrowded households and, in turn, homeless households
- Encourage full use of the range of mobility schemes to enable choice of area, particularly out of London

Priority: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation

Action:

- Manage the use of all forms of temporary accommodation in line with the CLG target of 50% reduction between 2004 - 2010

Priority: Review the use of emergency accommodation

Action:

- Minimise the use of bed and breakfast hotels, particularly for families and young people
- Review the requirement for hostel provision from January 2010, and plan to meet that need

2.3 Objective Three

To support vulnerable homeless people, including young and single homeless, in accessing settled homes and sustaining their tenure

What the review told us:

- Harrow has an increased score in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, however, it is still ranked 27th least deprived borough in London out of 33
- There is a direct correlation between the areas in Harrow that are most deprived in terms of health and education, and concentrations of people in TA
- Households including a vulnerable resident (with mental health needs or a physical disability) are more likely, on average, to be living in unsuitable housing

- Harrow Council and its partners currently provide housing related support to 1859 vulnerable people at any one time, to enable them to retain their independence
- Housing related support is provided through either accommodation based services (74%) or floating support (19%) to: single homeless people and families (68 units); older people (1320 units); people with drug and alcohol dependency (35 units); women fleeing domestic violence (22 units); young people at risk and leaving care (93 units); ex-offenders (101 units of support); teenage parents (6 units); refugees and asylum seekers (20 units); people with learning disabilities (57 units); people with mental health needs (137 units); people with physical and sensory disabilities (36 units); people with HIV and AIDS (12 units).

What stakeholders told us:

- Some service users felt that the constant moving between temporary accommodation properties was leading to an increase in anti-social behaviour, due to there being no cohesion within communities, and suggested longer-term private sector tenancies to promote sustainable communities
- There is a lack of suitable, adapted accommodation in Harrow for disabled people
- There is a need for improved partnership working with private landlords to ensure a good standard of properties
- Work in partnership with landlords and estate agents to open up options to people on Housing Benefit
- Need for more emergency accommodation, as the homeless process can take too long
- Handholding service would assist both tenants and landlords in sustaining their tenancies
- Focus services towards the most vulnerable and at risk groups
- Holistic approach to vulnerable groups, offering education, advice and support. This needs to look at groups such as young people, drug and alcohol dependency, elderly people and those with multiple needs

What we plan to do and how

Priority: Support young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to provide a range of supported housing options for young people, including medium & low support; access to training/ employment; supported move on accommodation; an emergency 'crash pad'

- Support multi agency work to maintain the low rates of teenage pregnancy in Harrow and provide supported housing for teenage parents

Priority: Support families & single people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Action:

- Work with partners to provide support to families in hostel accommodation, and those in private sector letting schemes, to sustain tenancies
- Support single people in private sector letting schemes to sustain tenancies

Priority: Support vulnerable adults & other identified groups who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Action:

- Maintain the current low level of rough sleeping in Harrow by providing access to housing advice and referral to appropriate specialist provision
- Work with partners to address the housing needs of ex offenders via early advice and assistance
- Provide housing related support to promote and sustain independent housing options for older people, people with mental health issues, drug & alcohol dependency, learning & physical disability
- Carry out an equalities impact assessment and address the issues identified to mitigate the differential impact of homelessness on particular groups

2.4 Objective Four

To regularly review the homelessness strategy, to ensure it is effective, adapts readily to the changing external environment, and that the Housing Needs service provides good value for money.

What the review told us:

- VFM data & need for further analysis
- Feedback from customer satisfaction surveys highlighted 60% of respondents felt that the information they received was useful and 59% felt the information and advice they received was clear enough for them to understand. 52% were satisfied that they received the service they came in for. General feedback included comments about the amount of time it takes for households to obtain a permanent accommodation and a lack of knowledge about Locata and banding.

- The CLG Strategic Health Check has highlighted where there would be scope for improvements in the service, most notably in:
 - More effective partnering arrangements and prevention
 - Improving communications and referrals for vulnerable single persons
 - More effective management and identification of the needs of homeless applicants
 - Providing further support for sustaining tenancies
 - Identifying the best way of serving the needs of diverse local communities
 - Considering new "value for money" initiatives including access to welfare benefits
 - Continuing learning and development for front line practitioners
- There is a need to capture information about disability for monitoring purposes and appropriate staff training, to ensure the council can assess any differential impact on services provided.
- There is a need to increase knowledge around groups including ex-service personnel, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and Faith Groups.

What stakeholders told us:

- Create a homelessness 'network' throughout the Borough
- Programme of education/training for staff, customers and members
- Improved communication between agencies
- Training for landlords, specifically around the Local Housing Allowance
- Evaluate staffing resources in both the Housing Needs staff teams
- Policy briefings for staff
- Information sharing protocols
- Improve the customer reception area
- Improve communication/updates for those on the waiting list

What we plan to do and how

Priority: Work with partners to tackle homelessness
Action:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local and sub regional partners to address the priorities in the

Priority: Work with partners to tackle homelessness

Homelessness Strategy and deliver the action plan via forums, networks and the pursuit of joint initiatives

- Review and further develop protocols between agencies for dealing with applications from homeless people
- Ensure the objectives of the homelessness strategy are fully reflected in local and sub regional strategies and action plans

Priority: Continuously review and improve service delivery

Action:

- Carry out regular customer surveys and address the issues arising
- Improve customer service and value for money via investment in technology, staff learning and development, and review of customer care standards
- Embed performance management throughout the service to ensure we meet the objectives set
- Promote and share good practice in tackling homelessness within the Housing Needs service and with Council colleagues and external partners

Priority: To further develop the homelessness strategy

Action:

- Publicise the homelessness strategy widely to customers and partners
- Review the strategy and action plan annually, with stakeholders, and link to the housing and corporate strategy review groups
- Carry out research to address identified data gaps

3. Implementing the strategy

3.1 Outcomes & delivery

We will monitor the outcomes of the strategy in partnership with the Homelessness Strategy Project Board, and will use past performance, as well as other West London performance as a baseline for measurement. Wherever possible we have included SMART actions in the action plan and these can be readily measured. However, where some targets are broader or less certain, these will be refined through the annual review of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The aim is to deliver the strategy through partnership. All agencies that have taken part in the consultation process are aware of this, and have been consulted on the targets in the action plan.

The strategy will be launched and disseminated widely. This will ensure that all agencies and individuals responsible for tackling homelessness in Harrow will be given ample opportunity to be part of the ongoing process.

3.2 Monitoring and review

Harrow Housing Services will be responsible for reviewing the Strategy document annually to ensure that the targets identified within the action plan still reflect the true local need and demand. These annual reviews will be carried out in partnership with the agencies that have assisted in the development of both the review and the strategy, including the Harrow Single Homelessness Forum, the proposed Harrow Homelessness network and the Homelessness Strategy Project Board.

3.3 Resources

The resources available for implementation of this strategy include: Harrow Council homelessness revenue budget, specific CLG revenue grants, Harrow affordable housing fund capital and Housing Corporation capital, plus privately raised finance for new housing schemes delivered by RSLs.

The total net revenue budget for homelessness in 2008-9 is £2.7m, and includes £204k specific CLG revenue grants and £320k HB income. In 2009-10 cost savings of £160,000 will be made to support the HARP IT project.

As noted throughout the strategy the homelessness service is subject to changing external forces and a number of budgetary pressures associated with the costs of temporary accommodation and prevention initiatives. Where new initiatives have revenue cost implications these will be managed within the overall homelessness budget or within the corporate medium term financial strategy.

3.4 Risk

The homelessness strategy operates in an environment that is fluctuating and highly susceptible to change due to external factors. In response to this there has been a risk appraisal of key elements of the Strategy and Action Plan and controls are in place to mitigate and manage the highest risks.

Specific factors currently impacting on the delivery of the strategy include the 2008 “credit crunch”. This could significantly increase the number of households presenting as homeless and reduce the supply of new affordable homes. A detailed risk management matrix has been developed as part of this Strategy (included in the Homelessness Review 2008).

3.5 Equalities impact

An equalities impact assessment (EIA) has been developed and is included in the Homelessness Review 2008. The EIA assesses the impact the Strategy will have on defined groups based on an analysis of current evidence. It reflects actions required to address differential impact, which has then been included in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

The assessment has shown that although higher proportions of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households are presenting as homeless and on waiting lists for suitable accommodation, particularly larger accommodation, there is no evidence from the data to suggest that this group is directly discriminated against in the homelessness process (12.3% of applications from BME households are accepted, compared with an overall average of 12.2%). However, it is important to note that there will continue to be an imbalance in the proportion of larger BME households waiting for accommodation with so few larger properties becoming available for letting each year.

Key findings from the assessment have been reflected in the action plan, particularly the need for larger accommodation (Action Plan objective 2 action 5), the need for access to adapted properties for physically disabled people (objective 3 action 23), improved collection of data on disability for more accurate monitoring on disability (objective 4 action 12) and research into the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups, faith groups and gypsies and travellers (objective 4 action 15).

In addition to the EIA, the Council needs to demonstrate that it has had due regard to promoting the equality of opportunity of disabled people and other persons in accordance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Section 49 also requires the Council to take steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons. Equality of opportunity in this case would be represented by the specific needs of disabled people for suitable temporary and permanent accommodation being recognised and prioritised.

Data is not currently routinely collected on the numbers of disabled people, or households containing a disabled person, presenting as homeless to assess whether or not this is disproportionate to the number of disabled people in the community. In

addition, the council's ability to find suitable temporary accommodation for people with mobility impairments is restricted by the limited availability of such accommodation that has been designed or adapted for use by people with mobility impairments. There are similar difficulties concerning the provision of permanent accommodation, although there is scope for adaptations, subject to resource availability.

The Strategy has recognised these issues and, at objective 4 action 12 addresses the need for improved collection of data on disability for more accurate monitoring. In addition, at objective 3, action 23, the Strategy specifically addresses the need to increase the availability of suitably adapted temporary property.

In the case of other disabilities, the Strategy recognises the needs of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues by a range of actions at objective 3, actions 15, 16, 17, 21 and 22.

The actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy should positively address any existing differential impact on specific groups. Any change, positive or negative, will be identified through the annual review process by the multi-agency Homelessness Strategy Project Board, and will be addressed in future updates to the action plan.

4. Appendices

4.1 Action plan

Objective one: To prevent homelessness, and to tackle high demand and the wider causes of homelessness						
Priority - Ensure access to effective housing advice services						
We will:		Lead / s	Partners	When	Resources	Performance indicators & targets
1.	<p>Review the housing advice service</p> <p>Review existing arrangements for cost, effectiveness and overall value for money</p> <p>Put in place arrangements for the service from April 2009</p>	Housing Needs Manager	<p>Housing Advice Centre</p> <p>Other potential providers</p>	2008-09	Revenue budget	<p>Number of cases of homelessness prevention</p> <p>Cost of service and effectiveness of prevention, benchmarked against others</p> <p>Contractual arrangements in place for April 09</p>
2.	<p>Provide effective housing Advice</p> <p>Work in partnership with stakeholders/ providers in offering comprehensive advice services to residents to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise levels of homelessness - Avoid the use of emergency 	Housing Assessment Manager	<p>Housing Advice Centre</p> <p>West London</p>	2008-09	<p>Revenue budget</p> <p>SLA with advice provider</p> <p>Bid for CLG</p>	<p>Regularly benchmark performance/outputs from service providers (Housing Advice Centre)</p> <p>Set focused targets and outcomes in line with local and national indicators</p>

	<p>accommodation for vulnerable households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support the West London enhanced housing options bid for a sub regional telephone advice line and database 		partners		pilot funds for enhanced housing options service	Move to joint initiatives and collaborative working to ensure good quality standards
3.	<p>Money Advice referrals</p> <p>Ensure early identification of money problems which may cause homelessness, and work with others to offer debt advice in a focused and proactive way to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify all threatened homeless households from debt data provided by Housing Advice Centre Money Advice Referral Project or Capitalise - refer all residents with debt management issues - irrespective of tenure – to relevant provider for advice and assistance - coordinate a public information campaign where those who are at risk of homelessness can have access to effective housing money/ welfare rights advice - Supporting People services support the need to achieve economic wellbeing through outcome based support 	Housing Assessment Manager	<p>HAC CAB Manager MARP</p> <p>Capitalise</p> <p>HB & DWP partners</p> <p>Resident Services Manger</p> <p>RSLs</p>	<p>2008-10</p> <p>2009</p>	<p>Revenue budget</p> <p>SP funding</p>	<p>Record and monitor data on debt management to anticipate the likely impact on housing</p> <p>Ensure providers and all referral parties are working effectively to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Assist and promote awareness of debt prioritisation to prevent loss of accommodation</p>

	planning.					
Priority - Sustain tenancies and existing housing arrangements						
4.	<p>Refocus resources on early intervention</p> <p>Refocus staff resource focussed on prevention and ensure that Homelessness Prevention Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiate agreements with landlords to encourage the grant of fixed term tenancies of up to three years (and beyond) - Save 25 tenancies through direct negotiation with landlords - (Where appropriate) provide financial assistance to clear rent and mortgage arrears in partnership with Money Advice - Place 50 households directly in alternative private tenancies through the private rented sector initiative (Letstart) before formal eviction <p>Refer potentially homeless households for floating support</p> <p>Ensuring that Service users are referred to</p>	Housing Assessment Manager	Supporting People Manager Private landlords	2008-09	Homeless Prevention Fund Supporting People grant Letstart landlord incentives	<p>Prevention officers increased from 3 to 3.5 by September 08</p> <p>Staff trained and have tools to carry out effective prevention</p> <p>25 private sector tenancies saved</p> <p>50 households placed in private sector tenancies before formal eviction</p> <p>40 households referred for floating support (Look Ahead)</p> <p>Homeless acceptances reduced to 150 per year in 2008/9 and 2009/10</p>

	appropriate preventative Housing related support provision funded by Supporting People e.g. lookahead floating support scheme.					
5.	<p>Homelessness prevention</p> <p>Actively assist and advise residents in maintaining their tenancies In the face of threatened homelessness by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximising use of LHA regime to sustain shorthold tenancies and seek to reduce homeless approaches on this basis from 46% to 30% by 2010 - Resolving HB issues as and when they arise - Being proactive with landlords when there is a threat of homelessness - Arranging for “fast tracking” of HB claims and working with our HB partners to make the fullest use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) where homelessness is threatened or imminent within 28 days - Ensure social housing tenancy ‘sign ups’ are thorough and informative to promote tenancy sustainment 	<p>Housing Assessment Manager</p> <p>Housing Provision Manager</p>	<p>Housing Benefits Manager</p> <p>Private landlords</p> <p>Resident Services Manager</p> <p>RSL partners</p>	2008 - 13	<p>Housing Benefit</p> <p>Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Information packs</p>	<p>Provide data/records of effective liaison/ dialogue with landlords</p> <p>Provide clear and accurate advice on customers tenancy rights</p> <p>Dealing directly with landlords to establish underlying causes of the loss of accommodation</p> <p>Fewer homelessness approaches from social housing</p>

6.	<p>Mediation</p> <p>Provide an effective mediation service for young people with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To minimise parental exclusions - To support successful outcomes of mediation on the relationships between young people and their families <p>Review current arrangements and put in place new arrangements following the expiry of the current SLA</p> <p>Partner with Connexions to meet and understand the needs of young people</p>	Housing Assessment Manager	Relate mediation service	2008-10	Revenue budget Staff time	<p>Gauge performance in both quantitative and qualitative form</p> <p>Prevent homelessness for 50% of parental/family exclusions</p> <p>Measure therapeutic outcomes of mediation</p> <p>Records at least 20% of mediation casework and intervention as successful</p> <p>Define expected standards in performance terms from service providers</p> <p>Contractual arrangements in place</p> <p>Regular monitoring in place to maximise outcomes</p>

7.	<p>Sanctuary Scheme</p> <p>Expand/ provide more practical and effective assistance for survivors of domestic violence by ensuring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easier access to a broader range of advice from advocates/representatives to achieve 30% more Sanctuary completions in 08-9 - Offer the full range of legal/practical advice to reduce homeless acceptances due to DV by 50% by 2010 - Housing to be fully integrated into multi agency working on DV - Coverage in all areas within local authority control to assist clients (including the tenancy relations role in relation to harassment) - Ensure appropriate use of tenancy clause in Harrow Council tenancies re DV - Continuing support for the Domestic Violence Forum & action plan - Encouraging RSL's to support safe tenancy policies 	Housing Assessment Manager	<p>Harrow DV forum steering group</p> <p>Resident Services Manager</p> <p>Harrow RSL forum & partners</p>	2008-10	Sanctuary Scheme budget £53k in 08-9	<p>Continue to promote the Sanctuary Scheme</p> <p>Offer all applicants the options of a full assessment under Sanctuary arrangements</p> <p>Liaise with partner agencies to provide ongoing support following completion of Sanctuary initiatives</p> <p>Reduce repeat instances of DV</p> <p>Cultivate links with local courts to ease access to legal remedies for clients</p>
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8.	<p>Housing related support for DV survivors</p> <p>Delivery of the recommendations of the West London Domestic Violence review undertaken by Supporting People:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including commissioning of a WL Floating Support service for DV. - Reconfiguring accommodation based contracts and <p>Commissioning a service for those suffering DV with complex needs</p>	Supporting People Manager	<p>West London partners</p> <p>Support and advice providers</p> <p>Harrow DV forum Housing sub-group</p>	2008-10	SP grant	<p>New West London service in place.</p> <p>Accommodation based contracts reconfigured</p> <p>DV targets</p>
Priority – provide housing options to people at risk of homelessness						
9.	<p>Reciprocal agreement on West London moves due to domestic violence</p> <p>Train staff and monitor participation in the West London DV reciprocal arrangement</p> <p>Consider extending coverage of scheme to include all approaches on basis of violence (including incidences of hate crime)</p>	Housing Assessment Manager	West London DV sub group	2008 -13	Staff time Learning & development budget	Number of effective referrals between West London boroughs
10.	Intermediate housing options					

	<p>Ensure all working households in housing need are registered for shared ownership option/ assessment and follow up their interest</p> <p>Promote intermediate housing options to existing social housing tenants</p>	Housing Assessment Manager	<p>Enabling Manger</p> <p>RSLs</p> <p>Resident services manager</p>	2008 -13	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Learning & development resources</p>	<p>Number of referrals</p> <p>Follow up on referrals</p> <p>Moves into intermediate housing from homeless applicants and social housing tenants</p> <p>Promotional campaigns</p>
11.	<p>Effective options information by all partners</p> <p>Ensure effective housing options information and assistance is provided by Council and partners</p>	Housing Needs Manager	All advice agencies	2008 -13	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Learning & development resources</p>	<p>Regular information sharing</p> <p>Joint learning & development sessions</p>
Priority – Tackle high demand and the wider causes of homelessness						
12.	<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review literature, publicity material, website & reception displays to strengthen message about high demand and to promote housing options - Agree a communications plan and 	Housing Needs Manager	<p>Strategy & Performance Manager</p> <p>Corporate PR</p>	2008-10	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Revenue Budgets</p>	<p>Literature and website regularly reviewed</p> <p>Regular press articles</p>

	<p>ensure regular items in the press and on the website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate scope for text messaging housing applicants to progress case work and prevention/ options follow up - Hold Housing Options days for customers to include e.g. training on how to bid on Locata, Letstart & intermediate housing options 		<p>manager</p> <p>Capita BTP</p> <p>Housing needs customers</p> <p>Partner agencies</p>		<p>HARP IT project</p>	<p>Targeted text messaging</p> <p>Attendance at Housing Options Days</p>
13.	<p>Young people</p> <p>Raise awareness of causes, realities & risks of homelessness and make links to other issues e.g. sexual health, teenage pregnancy, drugs misuse, mental health & crime</p> <p>Tackle the underlying causes of social disadvantage and improve outcomes for young people most at risk of becoming homeless and socially excluded, and their families, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting the roll out of the Prodigals Education Programme in schools, youth clubs & community organisations 	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p>	<p>Childrens Services & schools</p> <p>Youth clubs & community organisations</p> <p>The Prodigals Education Trust</p>	<p>2008-10</p>	<p>Revenue budget</p> <p>CLG funding</p>	<p>Use of Prodigals resource pack in schools, youth organisations and the community</p> <p>Reduction in youth homelessness</p>
14.	<p>Allocations of social housing</p> <p>Review allocations scheme to ensure fair and</p>	<p>Housing</p>	<p>Housing</p>	<p>2009-10</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Scheme review complete</p>

	balanced access between competing groups of housing applicants	Needs Manager	applicants Social housing tenants Locata partners			by March 2010 and recommendations made
15.	<p>Employment & training advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively promote West London HELP (Homelessness Employment Link Project) – ensure staff are trained to make referrals and monitor the referrals - Via referrals to HELP, promote the Off the Streets & Into Work (OSW) project for job coaching households in temporary accommodation in West London - Support the proposed West London Triple Action Project to offer short term accommodation linked to training / employment for emerging households in social housing 	<p>Housing Assessment Manager</p> <p>Housing Provision Manager</p>	<p>Resident Services Manager</p> <p>West London partners</p> <p>RSL partners</p>	2008-10	Staff time	<p>Number of referrals per year plus outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HELP referrals - OSW referrals <p>10 Triple Action moves per year</p> <p>Individual staff targets set for referrals to HELP, OSW</p>

Objective two: To secure accommodation for homeless people across a range of tenures, and to manage and reduce the use of temporary accommodation

Priority - Facilitate private sector housing options

		Lead / s	Partners	When	Resources	Performance Indicators & targets
1.	<p>Letstart scheme</p> <p>Promote Letstart scheme to applicants and landlords via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team, phone line & literature - West London website - Out of London arrangements - Forums & surgeries - Joint working with partners - Link to financial assistance to bring empty homes back into use, as well as ensuring private sector stock meets the DHS - SP funded Lookahead support as part of the Private Sector Letstart package. <p>Maximise use of West London Letstart arrangements for out of London moves</p>	Housing Provision Manager	<p>West London partners</p> <p>Environment al Health</p> <p>Housing Benefit</p> <p>Advice agencies</p> <p>Supporting People</p>	2008-10	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Revenue budget – Harrow & West London Letstart</p>	<p>174 Letstart sign ups by March 2010</p> <p>Regular marketing campaigns</p> <p>Active use of West London Letstart website</p>

2.	<p>Single people</p> <p>Continue to support Single Homeless advice and assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly drop in surgeries - Rent deposit scheme 	Housing Assessment Manager	Single Homeless Forum partners	2008 - 13	Staff time Revenue budget – Harrow & partners'	Number of single people homeless preventions
3.	<p>Young people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate the Supported lodgings scheme - Investigate the scope for a 'crash pad' in Harrow 	Housing Needs Manager Housing Assessment Manager	West London YMCA Supporting People	2008 - 09	CLG grant Housing needs revenue budget Supporting People Grant	At least 6 young people in supported lodgings at any one time in Year 1 Produce options for a 'crash pad' in Year 1
Priority – Make best use of permanent social rented housing stock						
4.	<p>Maintain low void turnaround</p> <p>Minimise void turnaround time in the Council's social housing stock</p>	Housing Provision Manager	Property Services Manager Kier	2008-09	Staff time Revenue Budgets	Average turnaround 27 days

			Resident Services Manager			
5.	<p>Support delivery of new RSL housing</p> <p>Work with RSL's and West London partners to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide additional housing association homes for rent to local authority nominees (specifically large family size properties) - Identify homes for affordable housing options (e.g. shared ownership) and ensure that target for new developments is met on all new sites - Work with West London Partnership to identify and highlight sub-regional demand and housing need making the most of opportunities for new development 	Enabling Manager	<p>Planning</p> <p>RSL partners</p> <p>Housing Corporation</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>West London partners</p>	2008-13	<p>Staff time</p> <p>Capital budgets</p>	At least 116 social rented units produced for letting to homeless families in temporary accommodation by March 2010
6.	<p>Maximise use of existing RSL stock</p> <p>Identify current performance against nomination agreements with RSLs</p> <p>Maximise the proportion of RSL nominations to ensure increased levels of lettings available to</p>	Housing Enabling Manager	RSLs Housing Provision Manager	2008 and ongoing	Revenue budgets and staff time	<p>Baseline established</p> <p>Monitoring reports produced and actions identified</p>

	Harrow					
7.	<p>New housing solutions – Temp to Perm scheme</p> <p>Pursue implementation of the Temp to Perm initiative in Harrow</p>	Enabling Manager	<p>West London partners</p> <p>Scheme provider</p> <p>Funders</p>	2008-10	<p>Housing Corporation Grant</p> <p>Housing Benefit</p> <p>Private finance</p>	100 temporary units acquired by March 2010, for conversion to permanent housing in 2025
8.	<p>Promote & support under occupation moves in social rented stock</p> <p>Implement the Overcrowding and Under-occupation action plan by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointing an Officer to work on tackling overcrowding and under-occupation - target cases for possible under occupation moves, extensions and deconversions - making better use of stock by using chain moves to assist severely overcrowded households and, subsequent units for, homelessness households 	<p>Housing Assessment Manager</p> <p>Housing Provision Manager</p>	<p>West London partners</p> <p>Kier</p> <p>RSLs</p>	2008-10	<p>Staff time</p> <p>CLG overcrowding grant £110k</p> <p>Harrow affordable housing fund £500k</p> <p>Consider underoccupation incentives for RSLs</p>	<p>50 moves in 2008 – 9</p> <p>Number of improved homes</p> <p>2 extensions/ deconversions in 2008-09</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working with RSLs to publicise and target underoccupying households; facilitate downsizing into other social rented stock or moves out of social housing - working with energy officer/ fuel poverty advisors to consider rehousing options and promote downsizing 				offering 100% nomination rights to Harrow Council	
8.	<p>Mobility schemes</p> <p>Encourage full use of mobility schemes to enable choice of area (particularly out of London) by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engaging in local and sub-regional initiatives to promote moves out of area for clients to any form of tenure - provide financial assistance for households wishing to move out of social housing either on grounds of under occupation or other factors (e.g. to provide family support or employment reasons) 	Housing Assessment Manager	<p>Housing Provision Manager</p> <p>Resident Services Manager</p> <p>Enabling Manager</p> <p>Intermediate housing partners</p>	2008-10	Under occupation incentive budget	<p>Monitor all activity of mobility moves out of London</p> <p>Achieve target number of moves out of London per year</p> <p>Confirm households are registered for affordable housing options (such as shared ownership)</p> <p>Increase take up of intermediate housing options by social housing tenants/ homeless applicants by x units per year</p>

Priority – Manage and reduce the use of temporary accommodation						
9.	<p>Meet 2010 target and ensure good quality and value for money</p> <p>Reduce use of all forms of temporary accommodation by 50% (from December 04 to March 2010)</p> <p>Regular contact with homeless families to discuss options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted options e.g. move on for 1 bed households, discussion of housing options with large households - Promotion of qualifying offers to families in temporary accommodation <p>Ensure temporary accommodation is good quality and provides value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use Acclaim benchmarking analysis to review costs and improve vfm - Regularly liaise with RSLs and hoteliers to ensure good standards of accommodation - Ensure all forms of temporary accommodation used, including HMO's, meet required standards under the Housing Act 2004 	Housing Needs Manager	Housing Provision Manager	2008-10	Staff time Revenue budgets	<p>No more than 646 households in TA at March 2010</p> <p>60 1 bed moves from temp accom to alternative housing by March 2009</p> <p>Implement TA Reduction Plan targets</p> <p>VFM benchmarking data</p> <p>Reduction in number of complaints regarding quality of temporary accommodation</p>

10.	Housing Related support Develop a housing support service to support 10 families at any one time to move out of TA	Supporting People Manager	Support providers Housing Provision Manager	2008-09	SP Grant	10 families in TA receive floating support
Priority – Review and reduce the use of bed & breakfast and hostels						
11.	Homeless hostels Review the requirement for hostels Have a strategy in place for the continued use, or replacement, of Anmer Lodge beyond 2010	Housing Needs Manager	Enabling Manager RSL partners	2008-10	Staff time	Hostel requirement planned, consulted upon & resourced Strategy in place by January 2009 for provision after January 2010
12.	Bed & breakfast hotels Minimise use of B&B for families & young people Ensure B&B is of good quality	Housing Assessment manager Housing Provision Manager	RSLs HAC Childrens Services Hoteliers Environmental Health	2008-10	Revenue budget Staff time	0 16 – 17 year olds in B&B by March 2010 0 families in B&B for longer than 6 weeks by March 2010. Reduction in number of

						complaints about quality of B&B
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Objective three: To support vulnerable homeless people, including young and single homeless, in accessing settled homes and sustaining their tenure

	Lead/ s	Partners	When	Resources	Performance indicators & targets
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Priority: Support young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

1.	<p>Accommodation based support</p> <p>Commission an additional 9 units of accommodation for Young Homeless People in 2008 through a combination of HCHA and the YMCA.</p>	Supporting People Manager	HCHA YMCA	July 2008	SP Grant	Service in Place contributing to NI 141 and the TA target
2.	<p>Liaison re services</p> <p>We will continue to work closely with the leaving care team and youth offending team to ensure that services meet the range of young people's housing related support needs.</p>	Supporting People Manager	LCT YOT	Ongoing	SP Grant	Review service in Place
3.	<p>Generic floating support – young people</p> <p>To develop a generic floating support service to pick up the housing support needs of people such as the younger generation with a physical disability who fall outside of the existing floating</p>	Supporting People Manager	Providers	By December 200	SP Grant and WL Framework	NI 141 & 142

	support eligibility criteria.					
4.	<p>Teenage Parents</p> <p>Continue the work that has led to Harrow having the second lowest rate of teenage pregnancy in the London region, and thus tackle teen pregnancy as a cause of homelessness, by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - further partnering and coordination in innovative outreach projects such as 'Clinic in a Box' to reduce presentations to the Council - Communicating effectively with applicants and clients to provide better information on health, the risk of homelessness, range of housing options, budgeting and debt advice - Develop and deliver outreach programme with sessions in schools, colleges and youth groups locally - Awareness raising with staff around issues of teenage parents (as identified from consultation) 	Housing Needs Manager	<p>Teenage Pregnancy co-ordinator</p> <p>Mediation Service</p> <p>Single Homeless Forum</p> <p>RSLs</p>	By March 2011	<p>Revenue budget</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>Fewer homeless acceptances of teenage parents</p> <p>Improved satisfaction with services amongst teenage parents</p>
Priority – Support families & single people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness						
5.	<p>Floating Support – families in TA</p> <p>A floating support service will be developed to support the delivery of the TA reduction target.</p>	Supporting People Manager	Housing and Providers	October 2008	SP Grant/ WL Provider Framework	Service in Place contributing to NI 141 and the TA reduction target
6.	Floating Support – Vernon Lodge hostel	Supporting	Housing	July 2008	SP Grant	Service in Place

	A short-term support service will be delivered to homeless families in Vernon Lodge.	People Manager	and Providers			contributing to NI 141 and the TA reduction target
7.	Review all TA floating support All Temporary Accommodation support services to be reviewed at an early stage of the Supporting People procurement timetable.	Supporting People Manager	Housing and Providers	April 2009	SP Grant	Review undertaken and procurement plan in place
8.	Review single homeless floating support We will monitor the Lookahead single homeless floating support service and evaluate if it should be continued beyond 2009.	Supporting People Manager	West London colleagues	March 2009	SP Grant	Service in Place contributing to NI 141 and prevention of repeat homelessness
Priority – Support vulnerable adults & other identified groups who are homeless or at risk of homelessness						
	Adults with longer term needs					
9.	Drug based detox Buy into a West London project to provide harrow with units of accommodation based drug detox	Supporting People Manager	Drug Action Team (DAT)	Date to be confirmed	SP Grant	Targets in relation to Drug rehabilitation.
10	Dual diagnosis floating support Combine the Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol floating support services into a dual diagnosis service to ensure lack of duplication and maximization of provision.	Supporting People Manager	DAT / Metropolitan Support Trust (MST)	August 2008	SP Grant	Service in place and NI 142 & 149
11	Generic floating support – vulnerable adults	Supporting	Providers	By	SP Grant and	

	To develop a generic floating support service to pick up the housing support needs of people who fall outside of the existing floating support eligibility criteria.	People Manager		December 200	WL Framework	NI 141 & 142
12	Supported independent living Generally to provide more supported independent living accommodation for people with long term needs but in a generic setting.	SP Manager/ Joint Commissioning Managers	Learning Disability (LD) and Mental Health (MH) commissioners	Ongoing in line with the Adult Transformation Project Plan for Accommodation	SP Grant & Joint commissioning social care funding	NI 149 and other LAA indicators
13	Dual diagnosis supported accommodation Develop an accommodation based service for dual diagnosis in consultation with DAT and MST using the delivery vehicle of the West London Lookahead Each project.	Supporting People Manager	MST / DAT	Dates to be confirmed	SP Grant	NI 149
14	Evaluate Mental Health pilot Evaluate the longer term MH pilot scheme and plan for future needs	Supporting People Manager	MST / DAT	By March 08	SP Grant	NI 149
15	Shared ownership for LD Develop more Shared Ownership options in the first instance for people with a Learning Disability	Supporting People Manager	HLDT / Enabling Team	Ongoing	SP Grant	Services in place
16	Independent Living for LD Ensure the delivery of 6 new units of Independent Living provision for LD at the Strongbridge estate.	Supporting People Manager	MST / HLDT	September 2009	SP Grant	Service in place
17	Adapted housing for Physical Disability (PD) In the areas of PD, work with housing to ensure	Supporting People	Housing / Housing	Ongoing	SP Grant	Services in place

	that there is appropriate adapted accommodation through Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and Telecare services.	Manager	Adaptation and Repair Team (HART) / Telecare			
18	Monitor needs of people with HIV / AIDS Continue to monitor the need for specific housing related for individuals with HIV/ AIDS	Supporting People Manager	PD team	Ongoing	Staff time	Recommendations made
	Older People					
19	Review floating support – older owner-occupiers The older owner-occupied sector in Harrow, comprising 80% of the 60+ population, will need to be appropriately catered for. Therefore we will continue to monitor the uptake of the floating support services that SP commissions and consider increasing floating support to older people in future	SP Manager & Housing Senior Project Manager	Health and Social Care colleagues and providers	April 2009	SP Grant	Adult Transformation Project targets
20	Older People’s Housing Review Deliver against the Older Persons Housing review recommendations : - Particularly to develop extra care provision and remodel support services and assessment for Older People.	SP Manager Adult Transformation Project lead	Health and Social Care colleagues and providers	April 2009	SP Grant	Adult Transformation Project targets
	BME Households					
21	To ensure that BME households are able to access the full range of Supporting People provision regardless of ethnicity.	Supporting People Manager	Providers	Ongoing	Staff time	Monitoring and reporting in place
	Rough Sleepers					

22	Provide access to homelessness outreach and identify and contact rough sleepers and arrange appropriate specialist provision	Housing Assessment Manager	Providers	Ongoing	Staff time	Numbers of rough sleepers identified and referrals in place
23	Monitor levels of those sleeping rough and maintain at zero via Single Homeless Forum	Housing Assessment Manager	Single Homeless Forum partners	Ongoing	Staff time Revenue budget	0 rough sleepers each year
	Ex offenders					
24	Ensure that we provide access to housing advice/information on range of housing options	Housing Assessment Manager	Probation/ Prison Services/ HAWK/ Youth Offending Team (YOT)	Ongoing	Revenue budget Staff time	Re-offending/Licence targets/KPI 2/ Repeat Homelessness (BVPI 214 as was)
25	Complete assessments for vulnerability prior to discharge from prison and arrange for direct referrals to appropriate services	Housing Assessment Manager	Probation/ Prison Services/ HAWK/ YOT	Ongoing	Revenue budget Staff time	Re-offending/Licence targets/KPI 2/ Repeat Homelessness (BVPI 214 as was)
26	Liaise with prisons to provide preventative housing advice and consider measures for the early assessment of prisoners for vulnerability and housing entitlement	Housing Assessment Manager	Probation/ Prison Services/ HAWK/ YOT	Ongoing	Revenue budget Staff time	Re-offending/Licence targets/KPI 2/ Repeat Homelessness (BVPI 214 as was)
27	Make literature available at courts for access to housing advice and prospects of accommodation	Housing Assessment Manager	Probation/ Prison Services/ HAWK/ YOT	Ongoing	Revenue budget Staff time	Re-offending/Licence targets/KPI 2/ Repeat Homelessness (BVPI 214 as was)

28	Work actively with YOT, Probations & PPO Panel to coordinate prison discharges and housing advice and develop referral/assessment protocol	Housing Assessment Manager	Probation/ Prison Services/ HAWK/ YOT	Ongoing	Revenue budget Staff time	Re-offending/Licence targets/KPI 2/ Repeat Homelessness (BVPI 214 as was)
29	To monitor the introduction of the HAWK worker that SP funds. Particularly against targets for enabling Offenders to move into the private sector.	Supporting People Manager	Housing. Probation	June 2008 and ongoing	SP Grant and Monitoring	Re-offending targets Licence targets KPI 2
Refugee and Asylum Communities						
30	Ensure an ongoing analysis of need and that all SP services are accessible to the refugee and asylum communities: - Conduct a review of the Somali needs pilot. This project will be evaluated and may evolve to examine other refugee groups needs.	Supporting People Manager	BME reference group	April 2009 and ongoing	SP Grant and Monitoring	NI 141 and BME analysis
Gypsy and Traveller Communities						
31	To continue to work with Housing colleagues to review housing related support for Gypsy and Travellers.	Supporting People Manager	Providers	Ongoing	SP and Housing monitoring	Report and recommendations made

Objective four: To further develop the homelessness strategy and service

Priority - Work with partners to tackle homelessness

	Lead/ s	Partners	When	Resources	Performance indicators & targets
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1.	<p>Forums</p> <p>Work with existing forums to tackle homelessness, share good practice and pursue joint initiatives e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single Homeless Forum - Private Landlords Forums - Harrow Single Homeless Forum - DV Forum - Supporting People consultative arrangements - West London homelessness strategy & implementation groups 	Housing needs Manager	Statutory & voluntary sector RSLs West London partners	2008 - 13	Staff time Revenue budget	Information sharing leading to service improvements Joint initiatives on common issues
2	<p>Practitioner network</p> <p>Create and maintain a Harrow Homelessness Network of practitioners & partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to exchange information/ good practice and report on performance/ newly emerging issues - to arrange joint training sessions for partners and stakeholders 	Housing Strategy & Performance Manager	Statutory & voluntary sector RSLs West London partners	2008 - 13	Staff time Revenue budget	Information sharing leading to service improvements Joint training sessions held
3.	<p>Protocols</p> <p>Maintain and develop information sharing protocols to enable exchange of information with all relevant agencies including RSLs, Adults & Childrens Services, DV Forum members (PCT, Refuge, Support Groups, Police) to improve service delivery to specific groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionalised/vulnerable adults (e.g. 	Housing Needs Manager	RSLs Adult Services Children's Services Health	2008-10	Staff time	Action plans developed Protocols in place and working effectively

	<p>discharged prisoners, mental health patients et al)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young persons (16/17 year olds) - Teenage parents - Survivors of domestic violence - Chemical dependency - Rough sleepers and other "non priority" homeless <p>Develop a protocol for tackling harassment and illegal eviction with clear allocated responsibilities for all agencies involved in the process (c/f from 2003-08)</p>		<p>Police Crime Reduction Unit DV Forum Housing sub-group Enviromental Health</p>			
4.	<p>NOTIFY information</p> <p>Ensure that NOTIFY is updated and maintained and enables partner organisations (Social Services, PCT, Education) to be fully aware of activity and/or movement of homeless families in emergency //temporary accommodation</p>	Housing Assessment manager	Partner agencies	2008-13	Staff time	NOTIFY information being updated and used by all partner agencies
5.	<p>Move On</p> <p>Embed the Move On provider panel process to ensure effective assessment and prioritisation of social housing move on from supported accommodation alongside consideration of Move On options into the private sector through LetStart.</p>	SP Team. SP Providers.	Housing Needs teams Partners	Ongoing	Staff time	Increased NI141 and uptake of private sector move on options
6.	<p>RSL homelessness strategies</p> <p>Ensure that the Homelessness Strategy is interlinked with RSL Homelessness Action Plans</p>	Housing Needs Manager	RSLs Homelessne	2008-13	Staff time Revenue budgets	Strategies and action plans aligned Monitoring information shared

			ss Strategy Project Board			Action plans reviewed where necessary
7.	Local & sub regional strategies / action plans Ensure that the Homelessness Strategy is fully reflected in Harrow Council & partnership and West London strategies and action plans	Housing Needs Manager	Council departments Harrow Strategic Partnership West London partners	2008-13	Staff time Revenue budgets	Representation of Homelessness Strategy in consultation on key strategies
Priority – Continuously review and improve service delivery						
8.	Customer surveys Carry out regular customer surveys and address the issues arising e.g. West London mystery shopping	Housing assessment manager, Housing Provision Manager RSLs for their own stock	Customers Voluntary sector Statutory agencies West London partners	2008-13	Staff time Revenue budgets	Survey information used to improve customer satisfaction and service efficiency/ effectiveness
9.	Customer service Improve customer service by:	Service Developme	Capita	2008-9	Corporate & Housing	Cost savings & efficiencies – improved service,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement HARP information technology project to improve service efficiency - Review customer service standards - Improve customer reception area - Create champions for specific groups, e.g. teenage parents 	<p>nt Manager</p> <p>Housing Needs manager</p> <p>Housing Needs manager</p>	Access Harrow	2008 - 10	<p>revenue budgets</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Corporate & Housing revenue budgets</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>shared of information, streamlined processes</p> <p>Staff training on new standards</p> <p>Monitoring</p> <p>Improved customer satisfaction</p>
10.	<p>Value for money</p> <p>Investigate measures of value for money (e.g. West London exercise, Audit Commission near neighbour analysis) and improve where necessary</p>	<p>Housing Needs Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy & Performance Manager</p>	Finance Team	2008-09	Staff time	Improved Audit Commission VFM scores
11.	<p>Performance management</p> <p>Embed monthly performance management throughout the Housing Needs Service – from strategic plans, through service plans to individual staff performance and development plans</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Staff	2008-10	Staff time	<p>Golden thread from Strategy to individual IPADs</p> <p>Staff understand and can see how their work contributes to the delivery of the strategy</p>

12.	Staff involvement Continue staff involvement in implementation and review of homelessness strategy via strategy review and regular briefings/ workshops	Housing Needs Manager	Staff	2008-10	Staff time	Staff understand and can see how their work contributes to the delivery of the strategy Improved performance demonstrated by KPIs
13.	Good practice Use practitioner network, joint training events & forums to promote and share good practice within the Housing Service, with Council colleagues and external partners	Housing Needs Manager	Housing & corporate colleagues Voluntary, statutory & West London partners	2008-10	Staff time Revenue budgets	Regular sharing of good practice and demonstrable service improvements
14.	Data quality Agree definition of disability and provide training to staff on importance of completing Anite field. Amend housing enquiry form and homelessness application forms to include question about disability and conduct TA census Include disability monitoring reports in quarterly homelessness monitoring reports	Housing Needs Manager Housing Strategy & Performance Manager	Housing & corporate colleagues	End Sept 2008	Staff time Revenue budgets (existing)	Evidence available to highlight any differential impact on disabled homeless people of homelessness process
Priority – To further develop the homelessness strategy						
15.	Publicise the strategy	Housing	Staff	2008-9	Staff time	

	Launch the strategy and publicise its aims widely to customers, partners, staff and wider stakeholders	Needs Manager	Partners Customers Members		Revenue budgets	Launch 2008 held Positive feedback Regular communications on progress
16.	<p>Annual strategy review</p> <p>Review the strategy annually with stakeholders and link to corporate strategy review groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff sounding board & workshops - Service user focus groups - Homelessness Strategy Project Board - Housing Strategy Review Group - Adults & Housing Transformation Plan 	Housing Needs Manager	Staff Project Board Customer representatives	2008-10	Staff time	Annual reviews completed and new plans agreed
17.	<p>Research</p> <p>Carry out research into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identified data gaps ie Faith groups, Ex-service personnel, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and transgender groups - Ongoing research into levels of need and demand (local & regional/ sub regional) - Appraisal of the private rented sector and its capacity to meet future housing needs 	Housing Strategy & Performance Manager	Partners Customers	Ongoing	Revenue budgets	<p>Data to address gaps</p> <p>Up to date research on emerging / changing housing needs issues</p> <p>Appraisal of private sector rented capacity completed</p>

