
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2009

Chairman: * Councillor David Ashton

Councillors: * Marilyn Ashton * Barry Macleod-Cullinane
 * Miss Christine Bednell * Chris Mote
 * Tony Ferrari * Paul Osborn
 * Susan Hall * Mrs Anjana Patel

* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillors Margaret Davine and Bill Stephenson also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 571 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I - Key Decision - Harrow Council Corporate Plan 2009-12

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services introduced the Corporate Plan 2009-12 which set out the Council's vision and three corporate priorities. The priorities, which had been set in line with the budget, were as follows:-

- Deliver cleaner and safer streets;
- Improve support for vulnerable people; and
- Build stronger communities.

The Plan also set out the Flagship Actions for 2009-10 and information about the Council's plans for improvement. It also reviewed achievements in 2008-09.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services advised that as a number of elements of the Corporate Plan in relation to performance assessment were embargoed until 5 March 2009, approval was also sought to a delegation to the Leader of the Council to approve any final changes.

The Assistant Chief Executive provided Members with an update on the level of consultation and the process. He advised that over 1,000 residents on the Residents' Panel had been consulted on the priorities and that over 90% had supported the priority to deliver cleaner and safer streets, 78% to improving support for vulnerable people and 56% for building stronger communities. Similar responses had been received when residents had been invited to submit their comments in October 2008.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Corporate Plan 2009-12 be approved, subject to the Leader of the Council being given delegated authority to approve final changes, particularly relating to information on performance assessment.

Reason for Recommendation: Approval of the Corporate Plan was reserved to Council.

(See also Minute 575)

RECOMMENDATION II - Key Decision - Revenue Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the proposed revenue Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2009-10 to 2011-12. She advised that the current economic pressures on the Council amounted to £3.5-£4.0m. She added that the Greater London Authority had set their precept the previous day and that there would be no increase in precept next year.

The Corporate Director of Finance advised that her report explained the Council Tax Strategy and outlined the key assumptions that underpinned the budget. The report also included a sensitivity analysis but she stressed that in such volatile times, it was difficult to make predictions. She added that there were substantial funding gaps in years 2 and 3 of the plan.

The Corporate Director of Finance reported that consultation on the budget had taken place at various stakeholder meetings, the minutes of which had been circulated on the second supplemental agenda. The draft notes of the Partnership with Older People Panel held on 4 February 2009 had been tabled for Members' information. A wide range of issues had also been addressed at the Cabinet Question Time on 5 February 2009. The Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance added that, in relation to consultation with the Unions, discussion had been deferred at the Employees' Consultative Forum on 28 January 2009. He had subsequently met Union representatives on 6 February 2009 which had enabled discussion on updated information.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance emphasised that the Council was facing challenges, particularly due to the low level of reserves. He was, however, confident that the budget was prudent. The Corporate Director of Finance advised that the report contained a detailed risk analysis and that there was a target of £5.0m for general reserves. Her report as Chief Finance Officer was included in the report and she stated that, in her opinion, the budget was robust.

Members were advised that the Housing Revenue Account was a separate part of the budget and their attention was drawn to the increase in service charges for tenants and leaseholders. The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing advised that local authority rents were being increased in line with Government policy. However, the Council was lobbying, with the London Borough of Westminster, to get rents under control.

The Cabinet, having agreed the MTFs, the Voluntary Severance Scheme, an increase to the fees and charges, the budget and the proposed changes to the LMS formula in relation to schools and the Medium Term Budget Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account,

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That (1) the Revenue Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12 be approved to enable the Council Tax for 2009-10 to be set;

(2) the model Council Tax resolution attached at Appendix 1 be approved;

(3) the Housing Revenue Account for 2009-10 attached at Appendix 2 be approved and, in particular, to agree to

- (a) increase rents by 6.15% on average from 1 April 2009;
- (b) increase service charges for tenants by 5.5% and for leaseholders by 10.6% on average from 1 April 2009;
- (c) increase energy (heating) charges by 2.5% on average from 1 April 2009;
- (d) increase water charges, garage rents and car park rents by 2.5% on average from 1 April 2009;

(4) the Members' Allowances Scheme attached at Appendix 3, be approved.

Reason for Recommendation: To publish the final budget proposals and set the Council Tax and rents for 2009-10.

(See also Minute Item 576)

RECOMMENDATION III - Key Decision - Capital Programme 2009-10 to 2011-12

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2009-10 to 2011-12. Whilst in accordance, with the Council's Constitution, the Capital Programme was within the remit of Cabinet, the view had been taken that as it also formed part of the Budget and Policy Framework, endorsement from Council should be sought.

Cabinet, having approved the Capital Programme 2009-10 to 2011-12,

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Capital Programme for 2009-10 to 2011-12 be endorsed.

Reason for Recommendation: To receive the endorsement of the Council to the Capital Programme, part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

(See also Minute Item 577)

RECOMMENDATION IV - Key Decision - Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Strategy 2009-10

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, which covered the prudential indicators, the Annual Investment Strategy, the Borrowing Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Strategy for 2009-10.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That (1) the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators be approved;

(2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Strategy for 2009-10 (as set out in Appendix 3 to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance) be approved; and

(3) the new MRP requirements be implemented with effect from 1 April 2007.

Reason for Recommendation: To promote effective financial management and comply with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003 and other relevant guidance.

(See also Minute Item 578)

APPENDIX 1**Harrow Council****Council Tax Resolution 2009-2010**

Cabinet to approve as part of the Summons for Council, the model budget and Council Tax resolutions reflecting the recommendations of Cabinet and the GLA precept.

Council is requested to determine the level of the Council Tax for 2009-2010 in the light of the information on the precept and make the calculations set out in the resolution shown below.

- (1) To note that at its meeting on 18 December 2008 the Council calculated the amount of 85,755 as its Council Tax Base for the year 2009-2010 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009-2010, in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
- (i) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2) (a) to (e) of the Act. **(Gross expenditure)** £532,402,127
 - (ii) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3)(a) to (c) of the Act. **(Gross income including use of reserves)** £363,563,769
 - (iii) Being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, **as its budget requirement for the year.** £168,838,358
 - (iv) Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, reduced by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year to its General Fund from its Collection Fund in accordance with Section 97(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Collection Fund Surplus) £67,085,763
 - (v) Being **the amount to be raised from Council Taxes** Calculated as the amount at 2 (iii) above less the amount at 2 (iv.) above. £101,752,595
 - (vi) Being the amount at (v) divided by the Council Tax Base, calculated by the Council at its meeting on 18 December 2008 in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year. **(The average Band D Council Tax)** £1,186.55
 - (vii) Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	791.03	922.87	1,054.71	1,186.55	1,450.23	1,713.90	1,977.58	2,373.10

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (vi.) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (3) That it be noted that for 2009-2010 the Greater London Authority stated the following amount in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below

Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	206.55	240.97	275.40	309.82	378.67	447.52	516.37	619.64

- (4) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (2)(vii) and (3) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2009-2010 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below

Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	997.58	1,163.84	1,330.11	1,496.37	1,828.90	2,161.42	2,493.95	2,992.74

HARROW COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY 2009-2010

	2008-2009 Original Budget £000	2009-2010 Original Budget £000
Local Demand - Borough Services		
Adults and Housing	63,918	64,596
Children's	38,172	38,962
Community and Environment	46,594	47,867
Place Shaping	2,881	3,011
Legal and Governance	1,997	2,215
Assistant Chief Executive	3,212	3,389
Corporate Finance	19,210	19,986
Total Directorate Budgets	175,984	180,026
Inflation and Corporate items	4,973	4,212
Capital Financing adjustments	-6,972	-6329
Interest on Balances	-3,135	-185
Total – Baseline	170,850	177,724
Capitalisation	-590	-390
Contribution to Balances	1,000	500
Total Net Expenditure	171,260	177,834
Collection Fund Surplus()/Deficit b/f	1,365	-300
Redistributed Business Rates	-57,670	-54,261
Revenue Support Grant	-8,028	-12,524
Area Based Grant	-8,423	-8,996
Local Demand on Collection Fund	98,504	101,753
Funds / Balances		
Balances Brought Forward	2,154	4,031
Adjustment to Balances	1,000	500
Balances Carried Forward	3,154	4,531
Council Tax for Band D Equivalent		
Harrow (£)	1,152.55	1,186.55
<u>Increase</u> Harrow (%)	2.95%	2.95%
Taxbase	85,466	85,755

APPENDIX 2

Housing Revenue Account 2009-10 to 2011-12

	Budget 2009-10	Budget 2010-11	Budget 2011-12	Comments
Expenditure				
Employee Costs	1,928,850	1,918,280	1,958,590	Pay inflation assumed as 2%
Supplies & Services	444,830	464,830	444,830	Increase 2010-11 represents bi-annual tenant survey
Utility cost (Water & Gas)	626,250	645,040	664,390	Inflation assumed at 16.7% 09-10 and 3% annually thereafter
Estate & Sheltered Services	1,956,980	1,988,600	2,020,950	
Central Recharges	1,971,700	2,020,990	2,071,530	Inflation assumed at 2.5%
Operating Expenditure	6,928,610	7,037,740	7,160,290	
Contingency - general	200,000	200,000	200,000	Provision for unforeseen expenditure
Charges for Capital	6,917,220	7,104,390	6,971,940	Includes £123k HARP costs, CRI @ 5.45%, interest on balances @ average 2.1%
Contribution to Repairs Account	4,800,680	4,800,680	4,800,680	
RCCO	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Annual contribution
Bad or Doubtful Debts	250,000	250,000	250,000	
HRA Subsidy	6,874,870	7,387,500	8,088,030	Based on final determination issued by CLG [payment redistributed to other parts of the country]
Total Expenditure	26,971,380	27,780,310	28,470,940	
Income				
Rent Income – Dwellings	-22,671,580	-23,818,210	-24,941,900	Average increase 2009-10 6.15% in line with Government rent model

	Budget 2009-10	Budget 2010-11	Budget 2011-12	Comments
Rent Income – Non Dwellings	-869,840	-882,010	-894,490	Average increase of 2.5% for garages. Commercial premises reflect lease agreements
Service Charges - Tenants	-1,150,430	-1,184,940	-1,220,490	Average increase 2009-10 5.5% in line with Government rent model
Service Charges - Leaseholders	-424,350	-424,350	-424,350	Average rent increase 2009-10 10.6% reflecting leaseholder costs to be recovered
Facility Charges (Water & Gas)	-487,480	-499,490	-511,490	
Interest	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000	
Other Income	-8,010	-8,010	-8,010	
Transfer from General Fund	-83,000	-83,000	-83,000	Amenities shared by Council and non- Council residents.
Total Income	-25,711,690	-26,917,010	-28,100,730	
In Year Deficit / Surplus)	1,259,690	863,300	370,210	
BALANCE carried forward	-3,810,590	-2,947,290	-2,577,080	
BALANCE Business Plan	-4,764,000	-5,319,000	-5,460,000	

APPENDIX 3LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROWMEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

1. This scheme shall have effect until 31st March 2010. It replaces all former schemes.

Basic Allowance

2. A basic allowance of £8,160 per annum shall be paid to each Councillor.

Special Responsibility Allowances and Mayoral Allowances

3. (1) A special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who have the special responsibilities in relation to the posts specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme. The amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.
- (2) An allowance of £10,250 per annum shall be paid to the Mayor and an allowance of £2,040 per annum shall be paid to the Deputy Mayor.
- (3) No Member may receive special responsibility allowances in respect of more than one post. For the purposes of this paragraph, the mayoral allowances referred to in 3(2) above are considered to be special responsibility allowances.

Up-rating the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

4. The basic allowance and special responsibility allowances will be up-rated annually in line with an index approved by the London Councils Independent Panel. The index to be used will be the level of the Local Government Pay Settlement. When making the scheme for 2011-12, the indexing arrangements will be reviewed.

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

5. The reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred in respect of **approved duties** (as set out in Schedule 2) **undertaken outside the Borough boundaries** can be claimed by Members, co-optees to formal Council committees and Independent Members of the Standards Committee at the rates paid and on the conditions specified in the officer scheme for travel and subsistence allowances.

Carers' Allowance

6. (1) The allowance shall only be paid for attendance at approved duties as listed in Appendix (i).
- (2) The maximum basic rate of pay is £2.90 per half hour for the duration of the meeting together with the Member's travel time between home and the place of the meeting and the carer's reasonable travelling time.
- (3) The allowance is claimable in respect of children aged 15 or under or where a professional carer is required to meet a specialist need (eg a nurse for an elderly person).
- (4) Actual costs will be paid **on production of an invoice or receipt**.
- (5) Where the length of the meeting cannot be predicted and payment to the carer is necessarily contractually committed then a payment of up to 4 hours will be made. (For day time quasi-judicial meetings, payment of up to 8 hours may be made if the estimated length of the meeting is for the whole day).
- (6) In addition, the reasonable travelling expenses of the person taking care of the dependent shall be reimbursed either at the appropriate public transport rate, or in cases of urgency or where no public transport is available, the amount of any taxi fare actually paid.

- (7) The allowance is not to be paid where the carer is a member of the Member's household.
- (8) Any dispute as to the entitlement and any allegation of abuse should be referred to the Standards Committee for adjudication.

Co-optees' Allowance

7. A basic allowance of £445 per annum shall be paid to co-optees to formal Council committees and Independent Members of the Standards Committee.

Claims and Payments

8. (1) A claim for allowances or expenses under this scheme shall be made in writing within two months of the date of undertaking the duty in respect of which the entitlement to the allowance or expense relates.
- (2) Payment shall be made
 - (a) in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances, in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme each month;
 - (b) in respect of out-borough travel and subsistence expenses and Carers' Allowance, each month in respect of claims received up to one month before that date.

Backdating

9. Any changes made to this scheme during the year may be backdated to 1st April 2009 by resolution of the Council when approving the amendment.

Pensions

10. Allowances paid under the Harrow Members' Allowances Scheme will **not** be pensionable for the purposes of the Superannuation Act.

Renunciation

11. A person may, by notice in writing given to the Chief Executive, elect to forgo any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

Withholding Allowances

12. (1) In the event that a Member is suspended from duties, that Member's basic allowance and special responsibility allowance (if any) will be withheld for the whole period of the Member's suspension.
- (2) In the event that a Member is partially suspended from duties, that Member's basic allowance will be paid but their SRA, if any, will be withdrawn for the period of the partial suspension.

Appendix (i)Approved duties for Carers' Allowance

- A meeting of the Executive.
- A meeting of a committee of the executive.
- A meeting of the Authority.
- A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the Authority.
- A meeting of some other body to which the Authority make appointments or nominations, or
- A meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the Authority make appointments or nominations.
- A meeting which has both been authorised by the Authority, a committee, or sub-committee of the Authority or a joint committee of the Authority and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of a joint committee and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited (if the Authority is divided into several political groups) or to which two or more councillors have been invited (if the authority is not divided into political groups).
- A meeting of a Local Authority association of which the Authority is a member.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in pursuance of any Procedural Rule of the Constitution requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the Authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- Duties undertaken on behalf of the Authority in connection with arrangements made by the authority for the attendance of pupils at a school approved for the purposes of section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

SCHEDULE 1
SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES (SRAs)

There are 7 bands of SRAs:-

Band	Post	SRA - £/annum
1	Leader of the third largest Group Deputy Leader of the second largest Group Chief Whips of the two largest Groups Chairman of Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee Chairman of Licensing and General Purposes Committee Chairman of Standards Committee Support Members for Cabinet	£2,040
2	Performance Lead Members for Scrutiny Policy Lead Members for Scrutiny	£3,060
3	Nominated Member of the largest party not holding the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee (<i>see Note 1</i>) Nominated Member of the largest party not holding the Chair of the Development Management Committee (<i>see Note 1</i>) Chairman of the Traffic Advisory Panel Chairman of the Grants Advisory Panel	£4,590
4	Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub Nominated Member of the largest party not holding the Chair of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub Nominated Member of the largest party not holding the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£6,630
5	Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee (<i>see Note 2</i>) Chairman of the Development Management Committee (<i>see Note 2</i>) Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Leader of the Second Largest Group	£8,670
6	Deputy Leader Cabinet Members	£19,890
7	Leader	£31,110

NOTES

- (1) If the same person is the Nominated Member of the largest party not holding the chair on both the Strategic Planning Committee and the Development Management Committee, they will receive 1.5 times the Band 3 allowance.
- (2) If the same person is the Chairman of both the Strategic Planning Committee and the Development Management Committee, they will receive 1.5 times the Band 5 allowance.
- (3) In the Council for 2006 to 2010, the Groups are as follows:-
Largest Group = Conservative Group
Second Largest Group = Labour Group
Third Largest Group = Liberal Democrat Group

SCHEDULE 2

CLAIMS FOR OUT-OF-BOROUGH TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE EXPENSES

Duties Undertaken Out-of-Borough

Claims for travel and subsistence expenses incurred can normally only be paid in respect of approved duties undertaken at venues out of the Borough. Expenses will be reimbursed at the rates paid and on the conditions specified in the officer scheme for travel and subsistence allowances.

1. Members may claim travel and subsistence expenses in respect of the following **out-of-Borough** duties:-
 - (a) Attendance at any meeting which may be convened by the Authority provided that Members of at least two groups are invited and the meeting is not convened by officers.
 - (b) Attendance at a meeting of an outside body to which the Member has been appointed or nominated as a representative of the Council, where the Outside Body does not itself operate a scheme to reimburse travel and subsistence expenses.
 - (c)
 - (i) attendance at an appropriate out-of-Borough conference, seminar, meeting or other appropriate non-political event as a representative of an Outside Body to which that Member has been either nominated or appointed by Council to serve in a role with a specific pan-Authority remit;
 - (ii) attendance at meetings in the capacity of a direct appointee of a Local Authority Association, joint or statutory body or other London-wide or national body subject to the following proviso:

that the Member serves on the appointing body by virtue of an appointment made by Council to an authorised Outside Body;

subject in either case to the Outside Body/Bodies concerned themselves not making provision for any travel and subsistence expenses necessarily incurred.

 - (d) Attendance at a meeting of any association of local authorities of which the Authority is a member and to which the Member has been appointed as a representative.
 - (e) Attendance at a training session, conference, seminar or other non-political event, the attendance fees for which are being funded by the Council through a Departmental or a corporate budget.
 - (f) Attendance at any training session, conference, seminar or other non-political event for which there is either no attendance fee or any attendance fee is being met by the Member him/herself (or from the relevant political group secretariat budget) subject to the relevant Director confirming that the content of the training, conference, seminar or event is relevant to the Member's responsibilities in respect of the services provided by the Authority or to the management of the Authority.
2. Duties for which out-of-Borough travel and subsistence expenses may not be claimed include:-
 - (a) Political meetings or events.
 - (b) Any meetings of 'Outside Bodies' to which the Member has not been appointed or nominated by the Council as its representative.
 - (c) Meetings of the Governing Bodies of Schools.

PART II - MINUTES567. **Declarations of Interest:**

The Chairman advised Members that, in relation to the agenda item on the Revenue Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12, the discussion would be high level. Following consultation with the Director of Legal and Governance Services, declarations in relation to specific items within the budget were not required unless that particular item was being discussed. However, it was a matter for Members to decide whether an interest should be declared.

RESOLVED: To note that no interests were declared by Members present in relation to the business to be transacted at the meeting.

568. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2009, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

569. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

570. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions had been received.

571. **Councillor Questions:**

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

1.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety

Question: "I am sure I speak on behalf of all councillors in congratulating our staff on the magnificent job that they have done in gritting our roads in very difficult circumstances. Harrow Council reported that on the first night of the snow that it had used 250 tonnes of salt to grit Harrow's roads which amounted to one quarter of its annual allocation of gritting salt, and had ordered a further 500 tonnes. Could Councillor Hall update us on the latest position as regards to our stocks of gritting salt?"

Answer: I thanked John Greenfield, on behalf of the Council and the residents, at the time. Let us also pay tribute to the Meals on Wheels Service who kept things going. They were magnificent, as indeed were all our street sweepers, who were out gritting.

As you know, it is a serious situation throughout London. There is no salt available. We have actually ordered 700 tonnes, 500 from one company, 200 from another but there is nothing available at the moment. We are now down to 180 tonnes, which is obviously a serious situation to be in. They are forecasting light snow tonight.

If it is ice on the roads, we grit at a rate of something like a gradient of 10 whereas if we were looking at snow, we would normally put down a gradient of about 40. Hopefully next week will be better weather.

Supplemental Question: Could I ask if there's any prospect of increasing our 180 tonnes, which does seem to be quite a small amount if we should be inflicted by further snow and if there is snowfall, will you selectively be gritting roads to save stocks?

Supplemental Answer: At the moment, we do not know whether we can get the salt. We cannot get hold of the suppliers and it is all now being made much worse by the NLAC Board.

**Divisional
Director of
Environmental
Services:**

It is London-wide situation now and it is being co-ordinated through a Board called "NLAC" which is actually handled by the Fire Service in terms of actually carrying out the allocations. Throughout the last two weeks, each authority has had to say each day how much salt it has left and how many days it estimates it will be able to grit at certain levels. This information is entered into a national database to the companies actually providing the salt, there are two main ones, Salt Union and Cleveland Potash. Their priorities are based upon where the Met Office is saying it is likely to snow and which authorities are saying they are out of salt.

There is also a system of mutual aid working within London now, whereby authorities that have larger stores than others are sharing with other authorities. We have not been in a position to share with others but equally we have not taken a salt delivery from others and that might well be something that comes up now. We do need to stress that most London authorities are now in situations where it is getting quite close to mark in terms of how much salt is left but I think, as Councillor Hall indicated, it does depend on what forecast we get and what level of salt we have to put down. At a low spreading level, we will be all right.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: "In the Cabinet papers for this evening in Appendix J on p86 there is a proposal to increase the service charge to Council tenants by 5.5% and by 10.6% for Leaseholders. Could you explain why the increase in service charges for leaseholders is so high and almost double that for tenants and indeed the one for tenants is quite a way above inflation?"

Answer: We are constrained by Government policy as to what we can and cannot do in Harrow.

In both 2008/09 and in the budget before Cabinet this evening for recommendation to Council, the Council services have been provided for a deep cleaning operation on the estates. As you will know, this has effected a real change in the quality of some of the conditions in which people are able to access the common areas. Unfortunately, whilst it is beneficial to both tenants and leaseholders, not all of those costs are being recovered yet and what we are looking to try to do in the 2009-10 budget is to ensure full cost recovery.

Unfortunately, the Government has placed, and this is where I say that we are constrained by Government policy, a cap on rent and service charges and so, whereas at the moment we cannot recover fully the costs that we incur in providing services to tenants, we can do so and we are obliged to do so from our leaseholders.

Supplemental Question: When are we going to actually try and get this so that leaseholders can explain how their charges are arrived at and we have some clarity so that the tensions between leaseholders and the Council will hopefully cease?

Supplemental Answer: This is an issue that comes up at Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum on a regular basis. Now we have taken some of the priority away from having to get the budget under control within the Housing Revenue Account and that we are beginning to roll out the deep cleaning within the estates and manifest improvements in quality of life, now that those larger priorities have been sorted out, I think that we can now get to grips with leaseholder charges and how they are set. I would like to also point out that we are going to be charging against the actual cost of providing services.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Chris Mote, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: "Would Councillor Mote agree that reducing the opening hours at nine branch libraries from 47.5 hours to 40.5 hours per week will result in a reduction of service to our customers?"

Answer: Yes, there will be a reduction in service. As you know we have been reviewing the library service now for about 18 months. We have a very, very good service, value for money is outstanding. We also have the best library usage in the whole country. We have had to look at a number of efficiency savings during the last 18 months. We've been looking at the number of libraries that we run and their particular locations.

What I am very pleased to say is that we, unlike a lot of other boroughs around the country, will not be shutting any libraries. We made a conscious decision that what we could do is reduce the opening hours on 9 out of the 11 libraries – the 2 libraries that are not affected are the Gayton Road and the Civic Centre Library. To make it easier for the public, we have reduced hours at the 9 libraries at the same time on the same day to avoid confusion. Just to let you know, on agenda item 8, paragraph 53 on page 40 is incorrect as it says that the proposals will not result in a reduction of service. They will actually.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Question: "Four weeks ago in the Harrow Times you floated the idea of the Council setting up a credit union. This is an initiative which we from our side have also advocated and indeed raised with the Chief Executive some while ago. Gareth Thomas MP in his role as Chairman of the Co-operative Party also supports this. Could Councillor Ashton update us on the progress which has been made with this idea?"

Answer: This idea arose a couple of years' ago from discussions I had with the FSA. I met with an organisation who provide the infrastructure, because there are two ways of doing a credit union. One of them you do from scratch, which is expensive and very time consuming and the other, there are certain entities, notably specialist companies which will basically give you a kick-start but what is required from the Council is a positive attitude, which we definitely have, the time given to employees to basically assist the process, effectively as trustees. We are hoping this will happen over the next month or two. It has to be done properly and although credit unions are quite an old concept, they are becoming more modernised and frankly, their time is probably right for the present circumstances. So I am hoping we will move pretty quickly but it cannot be any faster than we can be supported by these outside agency organisations. There are, in fact, two that we are talking to at the moment.

5.

Questioner: Councillor Margaret Davine

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: "Is it correct that residents who wish to make LOCATA bids by telephone have to use a premium phone number and if so what is the cost per minute?"

Answer: Harrow is one of 15 partners, who pay for the cost through an automated bidding system and clearly we will be looking at cost recovery. It is approximately 28 pence per minute, and I understand that bidding takes less than a minute to complete. The last time I went to a Post Office this was less than it cost to buy a stamp, to return a coupon by post that way.

Harrow Home Seekers can bid on line through our libraries and we know that already, some 81% of those people bidding choose to place their bids through this type of mechanism. Whilst 28 pence may not seem a lot, for some households, it is an issue. To ensure that vulnerable households are receiving proper assistance through the system, we have the Assisted Bidding List that also is free. The cost of 28 pence should be in no way an impediment to people bidding through the LOCATA scheme.

Supplemental Question: Would you not agree that it is wrong for us to use a revenue raising rate for the most vulnerable people? Why can they not just have a direct, normal, telephone rate?

Supplemental Answer: As I said, the vulnerable households who are most financially at risk can be assisted through our Assisted Bidding List, which is free. There should be no household bidding through LOCATA, who would find a financial impediment to doing so. We are there to make sure that we protect our most vulnerable residents and we would not seek to recover revenue if it hurt people's financial interests. I think 28 pence is not a huge amount of money for most people. The system takes all of a minute, I am told. I will ask our services to look into it, confirm the time it takes on the bidding to make sure that that is indeed correct. There is also access at libraries free of charge. We have the Assisted Bidding List to make sure that people who are the most vulnerable, who do need our assistance are helped. And that is why, one of our core priorities for the coming year is to protect and promote and support our most vulnerable members of society.

6.

Questioner: Councillor Margaret Davine

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance

Question: "Could Councillor Ashton provide a list of those Government Grants within both Adult Services and Children's Services which were still ring fenced during 2008 and 2009 and are due to be de-ring fenced in the coming financial year and tell us how the services concerned will be affected?"

Answer: I understand that there are no Adults or Children's Services grants being de-ring fenced from 2009/10.

There were certain Adults and Children's Services grants reclassified as Area Based Grant in 2008/09 and I have a little list, which I can forward to you.

The grant funding continues to be allocated to the relevant service areas and is being carried forward as ongoing commitments, so it is not being taken away, if that's the suggestion.

For 2009/10, the funding has been incorporated into departmental budgets at the same level as 2008/9 but varied by changes in the MTFs, so for Children's Services, this has resulted in an additional £439,000 of funding, primarily on extended schools and Adults Services remains at the same 2008-9 level.

Children's Services	2008/09 Grant Allocation £,000
School Development Grant	140
Extended Schools Start Up Costs	432
School Standards Fund Grants	774
Care Matters White Paper	128
Children's Social Care Workforce	90
Child Death Review Processes	35
Children's Fund	382
Connexions	1,879
Teenage Pregnancy	95
Positive Activities for Young people	133
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	457
Total	4,545

Adults & Housing	2008/09 Grant Allocation £,000
Adult Social Care Workforce	541
Carers	966
Learning & Disability Development Fund	157
Mental Capacity Act & Independent Mental Capacity	95
Mental Health	502
Preserved Rights	1,013
Supporting People Administration	147
Total	3,421

572. **Forward Plan 1 February - 31 May 2009:**

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 February – 31 May 2009.

573. **Progress on Scrutiny Projects:**

RESOLVED: To receive and note current progress of the scrutiny reports.

574. **Key Decision - Corporate Plan and Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12:**

(See Recommendations I and II and Minute 576).

575. **Key Decision - Harrow Council Corporate Plan 2009-12:**

(See Recommendation I).

576. **Key Decision - Revenue Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12:**

(See also Recommendation II).

Having recommended the Revenue Budget 2009-10 to 2011-12, the model Council Tax resolution, Housing Revenue Account for 2009-10 and Members' Allowances Scheme to Council for approval, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy at Appendix B to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance be approved;

(2) the planned investment in services and efficiency programme be noted;

(3) the voluntary severance scheme (outlined in paragraphs 31-36 of the Corporate Director of Finance's report) be approved and the Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Finance, Director of Legal and Governance Services and the Divisional Director of Human Resources be authorised to implement the severance scheme;

(4) an average increase in non-statutory fees and charges of 2% from 1 April 2009 be approved;

(5) in relation to schools, the budget and the proposed changes to the LMS formula be approved (Appendix E to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance);

(6) the reserves policy be noted (Appendix G to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance);

(7) the Medium Term Budget Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account (Appendix K to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance) be approved.

Reason for Decision: To publish the final budget proposals and set the Council Tax and rents for 2009-10.

577. **Key Decision - Capital Programme 2009 - 10 to 2011 - 12:**
(See also Recommendation III).

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2009-10 to 2011-12. The cost of the Programme had been reflected in the budget. She advised that there would be increased scrutiny of projects over £250,000 the following year and that explicit approval of those projects by the Leader of the Council would be required.

The Chairman advised of an amendment to the recommendation and it was

RESOLVED: That the Capital Programme for 2009-10 to 2011-12 be approved and referred to Council for endorsement as part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council had an approved Capital Programme for 2009-10 to 2011-12.

578. **Key Decision - Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Strategy 2009-10:**
(See Recommendation IV).

579. **Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2008-09:**

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the Council's revenue and capital forecast position for 2008-09 at the end of December 2008. There had been significant improvement in the forecast since quarter 2, although an overspend of £300,000 was currently forecast. Officers were working hard to ensure that the Council came in on budget this year.

The Corporate Director of Finance sought approval to an additional virement of £200,000 from fee income to highways maintenance in the Community and Environment Directorate.

RESOLVED: That (1) the revenue and capital forecast outturn position for 2008-09 be noted and the Corporate Directors be requested to continue to deliver the management action plan (set out in paragraph 10 of the Corporate Director of Finance's report) to manage the pressures and to ensure that there were compensating savings to bring the budget back into balance;

(2) the virements (set out in paragraph 13 of the Corporate Director of Finance's report) and an additional virement of £200,000 from fee income to highways maintenance in the Community and Environment Directorate be approved;

(3) the amendments to the Capital Programme (as set out in Appendix 3 of the Corporate Director of Finance's report) be approved.

Reason for Decision: To present the forecast financial position as at 31 December 2008 and actions required to be taken.

580. **Key Decision - Tourism Strategy:**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced a report, which provided an introduction to the draft tourism strategy 2009-12. She advised that, in spite of the economic downturn, it was important that Harrow attracted visitors. She emphasised the considerable work being done to regenerate many parts of Harrow. She added that she hoped that the report would encourage Harrow residents to visit parts of their own borough.

RESOLVED: That the draft strategy be approved to go out to consultation.

Reason for Decision: To receive input and endorsement from the Council and partners.

581. **Key Decision - To agree arrangements for the transfer of responsibility for commissioning social care services for people with a learning disability from the NHS to the Council:**

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced a report, which set out details of the requirements and proposed arrangements governing the transfer of responsibility and funding from Harrow Primary Care Trust to Harrow Council for commissioning social care services for adults with a learning disability.

The Divisional Director of Commissioning and Partnerships stated that the proposals would increase the flexibility of the Council in dealing with vulnerable service users and was a welcome development. A number of areas were yet to be defined, particularly where they related to a statutory appeals process.

The Corporate Director of Adults and Housing advised that the Council and Primary Care Trust were working together constructively following the difficulties experienced approximately 18 months previous. He was confident that an agreement would be in place in April 2009.

RESOLVED: That (1) the progress made so far to achieve the transfer of responsibility and funding by the required date of 31 March 2009 be noted;

(2) the proposed arrangements governing the transfer of responsibility and funding from the Primary Care Trust to the Council be agreed;

(3) the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing be authorised to approve the legal agreement governing the transfer and agree the final sum to be transferred at the deadline of 31 March 2009.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to meet the Department of Health requirement that the agreed amount to transfer should be submitted to the Department of Health by 31 March 2009.

582. **Transfer of Council Grant Funding from Harrow Council for Racial Equality (HCRE) to Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS):**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced a report, which set out the background to the Council's decision to transfer council grant funding previously agreed for Harrow Council for Racial Equality (HCRE) to Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS), upon dissolution of HCRE. This would be an interim arrangement until a new body was set up. The report advised that he had requested that this matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

The Portfolio Holder reported that he had seen a letter to the Charity Commission earlier that week advising that the HCRE would be dissolving. He added that an interim body would be established, as recommended by the independent report, and that anyone who sat on the interim body would not be eligible to sit on the new body for a period of five years.

The Director of Community and Cultural Services advised that an Equalities Impact Assessment for this decision had been carried out and was attached to his report. This concluded that this decision would result in a differential impact on service users (race) but that there would be no direct or indirect adverse impact, as services would be continuing.

RESOLVED: That the Grants Advisory Panel's recommendation to transfer council grant funding previously agreed for HCRE to HAVS, upon dissolution of HCRE be approved.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that HCRE core functions could continue to be delivered under the interim management of HAVS.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services had referred this decision to Cabinet.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.40 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR DAVID ASHTON
Chairman