



HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEETING

TUESDAY 13 MAY 2008 AT 6.00 PM

COMMITTEE ROOMS 1 & 2, HARROW CIVIC CENTRE

AGENDA

Members:

To be appointed at the Annual Council meeting	Leader	Harrow Council
To be appointed at the Annual Council meeting	Deputy Leader	Harrow Council
To be appointed at the Annual Council meeting	Leader of the Labour Group	Harrow Council
To be appointed at the Annual Council meeting	Deputy Leader of the Labour Group	Harrow Council
Dr Gillian Schiller	Chairman	Harrow Primary Care Trust
Dr Karim Murji	Metropolitan Police Authority	Metropolitan Police Authority
Howard Bluston	Chamber of Commerce	Business Sector Representative
Allan Conway	President, North West London Chamber of Commerce	Business Sector Representative
Malcolm Parr	Harrow in Business	Business Sector Representative
Neil Tornes	Kodak Limited	Business Sector Representative
Julie Browne		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Mike Coker		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Kris Fryer		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Janet Smith		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Professor Simon Jarvis	University of Westminster	Higher Education Representative
Raj Saujani	Stanmore College	Further Education Representative
Daniel Elkeles	Director of Operations, North West London Hospitals Trust	Acute Hospitals Trust
Michael Lockwood	Chief Executive	Harrow Council
Richard Walton	Borough Commander, Harrow Police	Metropolitan Police Service
Patrick Harty		Further Education Sector
Allen Pluck	Harrow In Business	Business Sector Representative
Julia Smith	Chief Executive, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service	Voluntary and Community Sector

Officers:

Mike Howes	Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service	Harrow Council
Trina Taylor	Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Partnership Service	Harrow Council
Tom Whiting	Interim Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement	Harrow Council

Contact: Miriam Wearing, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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AGENDA - PUBLIC

1. **Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman:**
To appoint a Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board for the year 2008/09.
2. **Apologies:**
To receive any apologies for absence.
3. **Minutes:** (Pages 1 - 8)
That the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 20 March 2008, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
4. **Matter arising:**
(if any)
5. **Local Government Improvement Programme - Visit to Harrow Council:**
(Pages 9 - 42)
To receive a report from the Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement.
6. **Functions and Governance of the Partnership:** (Pages 43 - 48)
To receive a report from the Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement.
7. **Local Area Agreement Quarterley Performance:** (Pages 49 - 52)
To receive a report from the Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement.
8. **Comprehensive Area Assessment and Impact on the Partnership:**
(Pages 53 - 56)
To receive a report from the Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement
9. **New Local Area Agreement Update:** (Pages 57 - 58)
To receive a report from the Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement.
10. **Any Other Urgent Business:**
11. **Date of Next Meeting:**
Future dates to be notified.

AGENDA - PRIVATE - NIL

***IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL OF THE ABOVE LISTED ITEMS WILL BE
CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC SESSION.***

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HARROW STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 March 2008

(1) Present:

Harrow Strategic Partnership Board Members:

Councillor David Ashton	Deputy Leader, Finance and Portfolio Co-ordination Portfolio Holder	Harrow Council
Councillor Bill Stephenson	Deputy Leader of the Labour Group	Harrow Council
Dr Gillian Schiller (Vice-Chairman)	Chairman	Harrow Primary Care Trust
Dr Karim Murji	Metropolitan Police Authority	Metropolitan Police Authority
Howard Bluston	Chamber of Commerce	Business Sector Representative
Neil Tornes	Kodak Limited	Business Sector Representative
Julie Browne		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Mike Coker		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Kris Fryer		Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
Raj Saujani	Stanmore College	Further Education Representative
Daniel Elkeles	Director of Operations, North West London Hospitals Trust	Acute Hospitals Trust
Michael Lockwood	Chief Executive	Harrow Council
Richard Walton	Borough Commander, Harrow Police	Metropolitan Police Service

(2) The following Harrow Council Officers attended:-

Mike Howes	Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service	Harrow Council
Paul Clark	Corporate Director, Children's Services	Harrow Council
Mark Gillett	Divisional Director, Commissioning and Partnerships, Children's and Adults	Harrow Council
Lesley McConnell	Interim Head of Service, Cultural Services	Harrow Council

Apologies were received from:-

Councillor Chris Mote (Leader, Strategic Overview, HSP, External Affairs and Property Portfolio Holder) (Harrow Council) (Chairman), Councillor Navin Shah (Leader of the Labour Group) (Harrow Council), Janet Smith (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative), Professor Simon Jarvis (University of Westminster) (Higher Education Representative), Patrick Harty (Further Education Sector), Julia Smith (Chief Executive, Harrow Association of Voluntary Service) (Voluntary and Community Sector) and Tom Whiting (Interim Divisional Director, Strategy and Improvement) (Harrow Council)

ACTION

132. Minutes:

AGREED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record. All to note

133. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

134. Championing Harrow:

Lesley McConnell (Interim Head of Service, Cultural Services) gave a briefing on Championing Harrow, the taskforce set up to engage Harrow residents, community organisations, and partners in the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Information from the London Development Agency was distributed together with updates on developments nationally, the West London Partnership, and the Harrow Task Force with its three delivery groups – Economic Development and Tourism; Sports Participation and Health; and the Cultural Olympiad.

The following was noted:

- information would be cascaded to the Board on the Legacy Trust Development as it became available;
- many issues were in the early stages. The Cultural Olympiad Development would commence upon the handover from the Beijing Olympics;
- there was ongoing discussion regarding a West London 2012 logo that was a recognisable version of the main brand for community use;
- the Task Force was keen to involve people from business, particularly in hospitality. It had been highly praised for the roll-out of cultural activities;
- it was hoped that Lord Coe would attend the “Under One Sky” event;
- it was unlikely that major participating countries would use Harrow venues but some of the High Commissions for the smaller countries

would be approached.

Support from the Harrow Strategic Partnership was sought in connection with the phase of community outreach work to broaden involvement in the overall Championing Harrow programme. In relation to this, advice was sought on the potential for the HSP and it was suggested that proposals be submitted for its consideration. It was noted that two of the National Indicators for the Local Area Agreement (NI 8 Adult participation in sport and NI 11 Engagement in the Arts) were relevant and the officer undertook to submit information on this.

LMcC

It was reported that the West London Conference recognised the opportunities for businesses in Harrow including training opportunities. The Sports Council recognised the opportunities arising from the Community Sports and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) and Howard Bluston undertook to report back on how youth and sports societies would be encouraged to take up the opportunities.

HB

In response to a question, it was noted that the "Under One Sky" event was being jointly managed with the Community Development Team.

LMcC

It was suggested and agreed that, in order for the HSP to focus on what it needed to do and when, it would be helpful for the HSP to receive information in the form of a grid with timescales.

Discussion arose as to whether there would be sufficient information to require the regular briefing report to the next meeting. It was agreed that the Group Manager, Sports and Cultural Services would report to the next meeting.

The Board viewed an Employment and Skills DVD developed by the West London Group to promote the opportunities available for careers. Each school in Harrow would receive a copy.

LMcC/ All to note

AGREED: That a report be submitted to the next meeting to update the Board on progress.

135. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

Mark Gillet (Divisional Director, Commissioning Partnerships) presented a report which outlined the requirements placed upon the local authority, PCT and partners to work together to deliver a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). A timetable setting out the key events to deliver the JSNA was received.

The JSNA would be a tool for the whole of Harrow with a core data set with mapping of current provision from conception to death. The intention was that the information would be electronically available, signposted to other information and published for a wide range of people.

The report had been submitted with a view to exploring how effective engagement could be undertaken with the Partners, how best to obtain the views of a range of businesses and voluntary organisations, and how to communicate with partnership Boards.

Discussion ensued on how the Board could best engage in the process. Councillor Bill Stephenson (Harrow Council) referred to the link with vitality profiles and a Local Intelligence Unit and suggested that a LIU could be the first step under the HSP. Subsequent to collection of the data, a report back on delivery of the identified needs by joint working could be made.

The Board was informed that the JSNA was a pivotal document as it would be the first major attempt for the Partnership to reflect on the targeting of resources in a 'joined up' way. Discussions on a LIU had great potential. The business community already had sophisticated techniques regarding monitoring of take-up.

Howard Bluston (Business Sector Representative) reported that Harrow in Business had already undertaken mapping work and could involve the business and voluntary sector to a greater extent. Input from the Police would be welcomed.

Richard Walton (Metropolitan Police Services) considered that the Safer Harrow initiative provided a useful model for this JSNA because it used intelligence and information from other agencies. The Joint Agency Tasking Force could also build on this model, particularly regarding analysis.

The officers undertook to investigate these ideas and to form linkages with neighbouring boroughs which would help identify any gaps and suggest how these be filled by assessment or catered for by adjacent authorities. Plans and strategies would flow from the data and would not necessarily be confined to Local Authority boundaries. The West London Alliance would inform the process.

MG/ All to
note

Mike Coker (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative) enquired as to how the voluntary sector could contribute to the process. Although most voluntary organisations held discrete sets of data they did not have the means to screen such data and to ensure there was no duplication with other organisations. Voluntary organisations had access to external funding for research and analysis. The Lottery Research Fund was unfortunately too late for this initiative.

The involvement of the voluntary sector was welcomed as the more information provided the more comprehensive the data would be. Voluntary organisation funding in relation to particular communities was useful.

Dr Gillian Schiller (In the Chair and Harrow Primary Care Trust Representative) made reference to the London Health Observatory quality kite marking. Officers were requested to advise Board members should the quality of information be poor in any areas. The Board should be advised of the date of the launch event with key stakeholders and partner agencies.

The Board was advised that the JNSA had to be achieved within existing resources. It was not known whether any funding would be made available in the future.

Kris Fryer (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative) enquired how the voluntary service activities that would feed into the JNSA would be mapped. She expressed concern at the tight timescale for mapping services and asked how the information would be gathered from the voluntary sector.

It was noted that some information was currently available but further work was required in other areas. The review of current information was swift but was labour intensive. Successfully updating information on a website was easier than when papers were used. Officers were requested to set up a meeting with interested HSP representatives to ensure that their areas were included in the mapping exercise.

MG/ All to
note

AGREED: That (1) That the JSNA guidance be noted;

MG/ All to
note

(2) the recommendations to deliver the JSNA requirements be approved;

(3) the process be supported and the HSP ensure strategic involvement;
and

(4) a progress report be submitted to each Board meeting with electronic updates circulated between meetings to keep members informed.

136. Current Local Area Agreement (LAA) Reward Process:

The Board received a report which proposed a mechanism by which potential reward grant earned from the current Local Area Agreement (LAA) should be distributed.

The Service Manager, Policy and Partnership Service, advised that the Board had agreed in 2005 to distribute half the reward grant to those bodies that had achieved the 'stretch' and the remaining half retained by the Partnership to fund future partnership activities. It was suggested that the Management Groups who best understood how performance had been achieved should recommend an allocation to the Board for consideration.

Councillor Bill Stephenson (Harrow Council) expressed concern that management groups could work in isolation and suggested that there should be a generic group for the purpose with a common framework and system for review that was specific to the HSP. A moderating process would enable the Board to be aware of any wide disparity as to how it was tasked.

The Chairman suggested that criteria could be set in respect of recently agreed targets.

The Corporate Director, Children's Services stated that the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership sought bids regarding the contribution made so there was a track record, for example the Somali Association on breastfeeding. A simple proforma could accompany the report with headings such as who, why and on what basis.

Mike Coker (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative) stated that, in addition to the identification of primary contributors, recognition should be made of secondary contributors in order to ensure that they were not

omitted and enabled recognition of their contribution.

AGREED: That a proforma be compiled to identify contributors to a target, including why and on what basis, and to acknowledge those contributors who were not the lead organisation.

MH/ All to
note

137. Update on new Local Area Agreement:

The HSP Board noted the current draft list of Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators and the schedule for negotiation of targets. Members were informed that 34 of the proposed 38 indicators had been agreed by the Government Office for London (GOL) for inclusion in the new Local Area Agreement.

Before formal negotiations could commence with GOL the partnership needed to decide between NI 185 (CO2 reduction from local authority operations) and NI 186 (per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area) and between NI 152 (working age people on out of work benefits) and NI 153 (Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods)

With regard to NI 153, the officer view was that there were insufficient output areas that met the criteria. An outline agreement had been reached with GOL that NI 152 could be focussed on the worst performing neighbourhoods and the target adjusted accordingly. This view was supported by the Board.

MH/ All to
note

A paper was circulated on the advantages and disadvantages of NI 185 and NI 186 to enable a choice to be made. The officer view was in favour of NI 186 due to the wide spectrum of 'omitters' and the existing programmes to reduce their outputs. The largest Local Authority site, the Civic Centre complex, was unlikely to attract funding for energy measures in the next few years. The Board agreed to the inclusion of NI 186.

MH/ All to
note

The Corporate Director, Children's Services, raised some issues as follows:

- Reservations had been expressed that with regard to NI 69 (Children who have experienced bullying) it would be difficult to achieve a stretch as the survey data depended how the child felt on the day that the survey was conducted. There was more control in the core assessments for more vulnerable children.
- Concern had been expressed with regard to the management and monitoring the success of NI 115 (substance misuse by young people). It was a priority but one on which there was little control.
- NI 51 (effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services) was a high priority. The change in how the target would be monitored after the first year would result in an opportunity to renegotiate the targets in year 2.
- Colleagues from the PCT were concerned regarding the accuracy of data and minimal control with regard to NI 70 (hospital admissions)

caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people).

Whilst recognising the difficulty of obtaining good data, the Board were of the opinion that it was worth taking most of these indicators forward, with the exception of NI 69 which should be dropped. It was noted that the programme as a whole had a reasonable balance between aspiration and indicators where there was control. If agreement was not reached on the 'stretch', the items would not proceed.

138. Harrow Vitality Profiles - Options for the Way Forward:

AGREED: That consideration of the report be deferred to the next meeting. All to note

139. Dates for Future Meetings:

AGREED: That the next meeting be held on Tuesday 13 May at 6.00 pm. All to note

[Note: The Meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.05 pm]

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Local Government Improvement Programme

Visit to Harrow Council

3rd – 7th December 2007

Summary

Harrow Council and its partners are clearly ambitious for the borough and demonstrate a strong desire to progress further. A range of high performing, high quality and innovative services, activities and initiatives that improve the quality of people's lives in Harrow are being delivered, of which people are justifiably proud. Good progress is being made against the targets in the current Local Area Agreement.

It is widely acknowledged that the council was experiencing significant difficulties until relatively recently, including the prolonged absence of the former chief executive, other major capacity issues and a financial crisis. A clear improvement plan has been established by the new chief executive, through which the authority is focusing on the correct changes and improvements to deliver better outcomes for local people. Inevitably, given the necessarily internally-focused nature of many aspects of the improvement plan and the relatively short period of time since its inception, the external benefits in terms of the impact on service delivery and customer satisfaction have still to be secured. However, there is a clear sense of momentum in the organisation and much greater stability than before, with strong political leadership having been instrumental in achieving this. The chief executive has also played a crucial role - he is held in high regard and seen as having made a significant impact in a short period of time.

The good initial progress that has been made needs to be cemented by developing wider corporate leadership and establishing new-found energy and drive across the organisation, with directors having a crucial role to play in all of this. It is also essential that the key commitments the council has made regarding organisational improvement, such as increasing the level of reserves and delivering key savings targets, turn into a reality. The authority has an ambition to become recognised as one of the best London councils by 2012 but, in order to achieve this, it needs to focus on increasing customer satisfaction, which is currently significantly below the London average, and address the fact that it operates too much in silos. Incremental change will not deliver sufficient progress in either absolute or relative terms. Step change is required, with this necessitating concerted and sustained effort across the authority and a need to ensure the council doesn't get distracted from its main areas of focus. Integral to this is the need for the authority to make a conscious decision regarding what it is going to stop doing. In addition, performance management needs to operate in such a way as to drive performance improvement systematically.

The greater stability that has been established provides for a timely opportunity to re-visit the respective roles and relationships of officers and elected members in the authority. It is important that councillors move away from the approach they were forced to adopt during the recent difficult period and instead fulfil a more strategic role. However, this depends upon officers demonstrating they have the necessary capacity in order to give elected members the confidence to step back. It is important that all of the planned leadership, management and elected member training and development activities turn into a coherent reality. The authority experiences a relatively high level of 'Call-ins' and it is important that the contributory factors to this are identified and addressed. In addition, there would appear to be opportunities for the council to provide greater support to ward councillors.

The chief executive and senior politicians are making a conscious effort to ensure the council raises its profile and engages more effectively with key influencers and decision-makers in the region. They are also actively engaging staff and internal communications have clearly improved as a result. However, staff morale requires further attention and sickness absence levels in the authority are a cause for concern. The council is clearly committed to investing in staff and elected members and is looking to develop a series of work/life balance initiatives and a well-being programme, building on work that has already been undertaken developing a range of new staff benefits.

The time is right to consider the role and functioning of the Harrow Strategic Partnership. Many people see the need for a body to be established that is truly strategic and there is clearly growing support for the undertaking of a fundamental re-think of public service delivery in the borough, looking afresh at what is delivered by whom, where and how. Whilst securing universal buy-in to such an approach would be challenging, the context of changing demographics and a need to maximise the benefit gleaned from ever-tighter levels of resources warrants the matter being given careful consideration. It is also important that the council fully appreciates its partners and better recognises, and capitalises upon, what they have to offer in order to maximise benefit for the borough.

Recommendations

Following the peer review, we recommend that the council:

- Ensures it retains a clear focus on the key commitments it has made regarding organisational improvement, such as increasing the level of reserves and delivering key savings targets
- Establishes a programme of development activity for the Harrow Strategic Partnership, focusing on establishing a greater commitment to working together and enhancing the effectiveness of joint working
- Keeps under review the revised overview and scrutiny arrangements and the support provided to the function
- Establishes the means by which to identify, in a systematic way, the difficulties being experienced by ward councillors in a range of matters and develops appropriate responses to address them
- Undertakes a review of its relationship with the voluntary and community sector
- Ensures performance information is made as easy to understand and utilise as possible and that it is robust

Background

1. The visit to Harrow Council was part of the national Local Government Improvement Programme (LGIP) of peer reviews of local authorities, arranged by the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA). A peer review is designed to help an authority assess its current achievements and its capacity to improve.
2. The basis for the assessment is a specially constructed benchmark of the ideal, fully effective local authority. The benchmark focuses on four key organisational themes: leadership and governance, customer focus and community engagement, resource and performance management and organisation and people.
3. The peer review is not an inspection, rather it offers a supportive approach, undertaken by friends, albeit 'critical friends', and its intention is to help a council identify its current strengths as much as what it needs to improve. Peer review is part of an ongoing change process, whereby the recommendations from it can inform improvement planning.
4. Harrow Council, together with the Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP), commissioned a peer review that would look at both bodies. In doing so, they have helped to pilot a new approach to self assessment and peer review that the IDeA and the Local Government Association (LGA) hope to see form part of the new performance regime under comprehensive area assessment (CAA).
5. The members of the peer review team were:
 - Councillor Alan Jarrett, deputy leader of Medway Council
 - Councillor June Bridle, leader of the Labour group, Southampton City Council
 - Howard Davis, regional associate, Improvement and Development Agency
 - Sara Williams, assistant chief executive, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
 - Leila Ferguson, chief executive, West Berkshire Mencap
 - Jane Sullivan, programme manager, Building Capacity East
 - Chris Bowron, Improvement and Development Agency
6. The programme for the peer review was organised in advance and included a variety of activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a spectrum of internal and external stakeholders. Examples of activities the team undertook are:
 - Discussions with the political leadership and senior management of the council
 - Meetings with a range of elected members
 - Workshop activities with the management groups, executive and board of the HSP
 - Workshops with staff from different levels in the council
 - Meetings and telephone interviews with external partners

- Discussions with local residents
 - Visits to various facilities and establishments across the borough
7. The team was appreciative of the welcome and hospitality provided by the council and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions. The support provided to the team by Andrea Durn and several of her colleagues was very much appreciated.
 8. The feedback given to the council and partners on the final day reported on the key messages from the peer review. This report gives a more detailed written account of the findings of the review and is structured around the areas of the benchmark outlined above.

Context

9. Harrow has a population of 214,000 and is continuing to grow, with 4,000 new homes seen to be required over the next 10 years. The working age population totals 120,000 and, of these, 78 per cent are economically active. The average age of the population is two years older than for London as a whole. The majority of Harrow residents are from a minority ethnic background, with the borough being one of only nine council areas in the country where this is the case. Harrow is the most religiously diverse council area in England. Harrow is a key area in London for new business start up, with a trend towards small firm development and self employment. A key challenge for the borough is the development of suitable spaces for businesses as they expand.
10. The council has had a Conservative Administration since May 2006, with 37 Conservative councillors, 24 Labour councillors and 2 Liberal Democrat councillors. There are 21 wards in the borough, each with three elected members. The council's cabinet comprises 10 elected members. Since July 2007, the overview and scrutiny structure has comprised an overview and scrutiny committee and a performance and finance scrutiny sub-committee, with this representing a move away from service specific sub-committees.
11. A new chief executive commenced with the council in April 2007, with this following after the establishment of a new organisational structure in the February of that year. The structure comprises five directorates: community and environment services, adults and housing services, children's services, strategy and business support and finance. The council has nearly 7,000 employees, of whom 4,000 are based in schools.
12. The Harrow Strategic Partnership (HSP) comprises a board and an executive, with councillors from the two main parties being represented. The HSP is tasked with delivering the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the medium-term objectives in the sustainable community plan. Several management groups exist below board level: the children and young people's strategic partnership, safer Harrow, adult health and social care, community cohesion and sustainable development and enterprise. These, in turn, are underpinned by delivery sub groups. Two reference groups exist relating to older people and the voluntary and community sector, with their remit being to ensure the interests of these two key areas are represented in the decision-making process.

Ambition

- √ The council and its partners are clearly ambitious for the borough and demonstrate a desire to progress
 - √ The Administration is demonstrating strong political leadership and has established greater stability in the council
 - √ The chief executive is held in high regard and is seen as having made a significant impact in a short period of time
 - √ The council is keen to improve and is responding to the challenge of the 'place shaping' and community leadership agendas
 - √ The council and its partners have put community cohesion at the centre of their vision for the borough
- Changes to the Harrow Strategic Partnership need to be founded on a fundamental re-think of the purpose of such a body and an enhanced commitment to working together
 - Revisions to the Harrow Strategic Partnership and the move to a new Local Area Agreement need to combine with the development of a clear long term vision for the borough agreed by all partners
 - There is a need for wider corporate leadership in the council
 - The authority has made good initial progress since the arrival of the new chief executive but it needs to be cemented and it is important that key organisational improvement commitments are delivered
 - Further improvement requires new-found energy and drive across the organisation
 - It is important that the cohesion agenda has wide ownership and is mainstreamed
13. Harrow Council and its partners are clearly ambitious for the borough and demonstrate a strong desire to progress further. There is clearly a strong commitment to enhancing the quality of life for people living in Harrow. Despite the area already having the lowest levels of overall crime in London and there being good community cohesion, there was an impressive level of determination amongst people we met not only to ensure such successes were sustained but that they were built upon.
14. The council has many things that it can be proud of. These include a high performing benefits service, a ranking of 19th nationally for attainment of five or more GCSEs at A* - C grade, customer satisfaction with libraries and waste disposal exceeding the London average and a level of recycling and composting which, based on performance in the first quarter of this year, places it amongst the best in London. The benefits service is the first in the country to work with the Department of Work and Pensions in piloting voice risk analysis software aimed at identifying

possible fraud, with savings of £174,000 having been made in the period from May to September 2007.

15. The council is responding to the challenge of the 'place shaping' and community leadership agendas, with the leader and deputy leader chairing the HSP board and executive respectively and portfolio holders being involved in some of the management groups. Four new children's centres have been built with a further five due for completion by February 2008. Funding has been secured for a borough-wide sixth form collegiate, the council has enabled the development of the first state-aided Hindu school in the country, a £3million investment programme has been established for Harrow town centre and the Prince Edward playing fields have been re-developed, in conjunction with Barnet Football Club, to provide a community-based centre for sporting excellence. The council has worked with residents and a range of bodies, including the London Borough of Ealing, Network Rail and Transport for London, to establish a new rail bridge over one of the busiest traffic routes in the borough in order to cut congestion. A key commitment for delivery in the future is an extension of the provision of affordable pre-school, after school and school holiday childcare.
16. As part of its overall vision, the council is committed to becoming recognised as one of the best London councils by 2012. Signs of promising progress include the Annual Performance Assessment (APA) of services for children and young people judging overall effectiveness to have increased to 3 stars, with significant progress since the Joint Area Review having been seen. There is a clear sense of momentum in the organisation and much greater stability than before, with strong political leadership being instrumental in achieving this. The chief executive has also played a crucial role in this. He is held in high regard by people across the council and in partner organisations and is seen as having made a significant impact in a short period of time. The good initial progress that has been made needs to be cemented by developing wider corporate leadership and establishing new-found energy and drive across the organisation, with directors having a crucial role to play in all of this. It is also essential that the key commitments the council has made regarding organisational improvement, such as increasing the level of reserves and delivering key savings targets, turn into a reality. We recommend that the council ensures it retains a clear focus on these commitments in order to aid this.
17. The sustainable community plan was adopted in November 2006 by the HSP and in February 2007 by the council. It covers the period to 2020 and is based on a vision that: 'Harrow will be a place which offers the best of capital and country and is loved by its residents. Harrow will be a desirable place to live, learn, work and play'. This vision is broken down into a series of medium-term ambitions with four year achievement targets in order to aid continuous progress.
18. Harrow is a highly diverse borough with demographics that are set to continue changing and the council and its partners have therefore put community cohesion at the centre of their thinking. The council's own vision includes the borough being cosmopolitan, confident and cohesive whilst the sustainable community plan talks about celebrating what people in the borough have in common, capitalising on its diversity and Harrow being an example to the rest of London on how communities from different backgrounds can form a cohesive community. As a cautionary note, however, it is important that the council and its partners ensure the community cohesion agenda has wide ownership and is mainstreamed – it is important that it sits at the heart of everybody's thinking and activity and the danger of it being seen as the responsibility of the community cohesion management group or individual organisations or groups of staff is avoided.

19. Following the local government White Paper and related Bill, and with work currently taking place to establish a new LAA, the time is right to consider the role and functioning of the HSP and this has clearly been recognised in the commissioning of review activities around it. Discussions with a range of people involved in the HSP led us to conclude that changes to the HSP need to be founded on a fundamental re-think of the purpose of such a body. Many people clearly see the need for a body to be established that is truly strategic, fulfilling a role of channelling the resources of the area in such a way as to maximise the benefit they bring to the quality of life for people in the borough and ensure key priorities are fulfilled. Central to this would be the creation of a long-term vision for the borough that is agreed by all partners, building on the one that is already in place. For the HSP to be effective, structural change needs to be complemented by the right culture and we recommend that a programme of development activity is established focusing on establishing a greater commitment to working together and enhancing the effectiveness of joint working.

Prioritisation

- √ Good progress is being made against the targets in the current Local Area Agreement
 - √ A reduced number of priorities have been established by the council for 2008/09
 - √ There is a clear understanding of the services that require improvement and investment has been earmarked for them
 - √ The council is working on ensuring its flagship actions reflect the new priorities and budget and aims to ensure the priorities resonate with people
- Incremental change in the council's priority areas will not deliver sufficient progress in either absolute or relative terms - step change has to be delivered through concerted and sustained effort
 - Whilst the corporate priorities have been reduced in number they are very broad
 - It is important that the council rationalises the number of projects it is delivering and doesn't get distracted from its main areas of focus
 - The council's fundamental service reviews have identified significant savings but there is still too much reliance on an incremental rather than strategic approach to making savings
 - There is the need for the authority to make a conscious decision regarding what it is going to stop doing
20. Good progress is being made against the targets in the current Local Area Agreement. Examples include 442 homes in the borough signing up to being smoke-free in the first quarter of this year against a target of 250, the percentage of people aged 16 to 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET) being 4.1 per cent in the first quarter of the year against a target of five per cent and breastfeeding initiation rates of 67 per cent in the second quarter against a target of 64 per cent.
21. The council has established a reduced number of priorities for 2008/09, dropping the number from 11 to six. The six are as follows:
- Delivering cleaner streets and better environmental services and keeping crime low
 - Redeveloping the town centre
 - Improving the well-being of adults and children and the care of those who most need the council's help
 - Extending the community use of schools while making education even better

- Improving the way the council works for residents
 - Developing communities where people from different backgrounds get on well together
22. However, whilst the corporate priorities have been reduced in number they are very broad and the council will therefore need to ensure it is clear about which activities it is going to focus on. It will be aided in this through the work taking place at present to identify 'flagship actions' for 2008/09 which reflect the new priorities and budget. The 'flagship actions' are tangible activities that help to translate the vision and corporate priorities in a way that ensures they resonate with people. Examples of such actions from this year include:
- 'The wait for the plumber is over' – the introduction of time-specific appointments for housing repairs as part of the priority to increase customer satisfaction
 - 'Community pay back' – implementation, with the Probation Service, of a programme in which offenders undertake environmental improvement work as part of the priority of working with partners to reduce crime and the fear of crime
 - 'Four Aces' – opening four children's centres as part of the priority to expand participation opportunities for young people
23. The way the council, supported by Capital Ambition, is programming its fundamental reviews of services also reflects its attempts to prioritise. The authority is aiming to review all of its services over a period of three years and commenced this year with reviews of children's services, public realm activities and sports, leisure and libraries. These services were selected after consideration of performance and value for money data and have identified savings of around £3million for the 2008/09 budget.
24. Whilst such a level of savings is clearly significant there is still too much reliance on an incremental rather than strategic approach to making savings with many people in the organisation referring to their experiences of 'death by a thousand cuts' and 'salami-slicing' over recent years.
25. The council is also clear about which services it is prioritising for improvement and investment of around £2million has been earmarked for them in the 2008/09 budget. The priority areas include planning, with an aim of securing the lifting of the Planning Standards Authority designation in 2008/09, adult social care, and the well-being of older people in particular, housing and environmental services, specifically waste collection and cleanliness, and Access Harrow which is the council's contact centre and one-stop-shop. Fundamental service reviews are planned in adult social care, housing and planning.
26. The council needs to ensure its prioritisation activities achieve the desired outcome. Incremental change in the priority areas will not deliver sufficient progress in either absolute or relative terms. This is underlined by the fact that, although fifty-four per cent of key Best Value performance indicators improved last year, this only reflected the average progress made by comparator authorities. Therefore it is step change that is required, with this necessitating concerted and sustained effort and a need to ensure the council doesn't get distracted from its main areas of focus. Integral to this is the need for the authority, in order to underpin its other prioritisation activities, to make a conscious decision regarding what it is going to stop doing. The council improvement programme, introduced in June this year, contains the flagship actions, a nine step

improvement plan developed by the chief executive and the council's top 90 projects. This is a massive agenda which will pose a serious challenge to the council's capacity and may necessitate the authority rationalising the number of projects it is delivering.

Decision-making and scrutiny

- √ Decision-making in the council is informed by a range of data sources
- √ A new overview and scrutiny structure was introduced earlier this year and there are a number of supporting tools in place
- √ Efforts are being made to ensure elected members are kept informed of issues and all councillors have opportunities to put forward their views
- More effective forward planning is required in the council, with issues being considered sufficiently far in advance to enable options to be properly evaluated and decision-making to be fully effective
- Increasing the amount of pre-decision scrutiny could enhance opportunities for political debate and discussion
- There is a timely opportunity to re-visit the respective roles and relationships of officers and elected members
- The role of overview and scrutiny in respect of the Harrow Strategic Partnership is unclear
- The revised overview and scrutiny arrangements and support need to be kept under review

27. Decision-making in the council is informed by a range of data sources with, for example, the location of children's centres and extended school clusters having been informed through the mapping and analysis of key socio-economic data. Examples of data and information sources developed by the council include the report commissioned to identify the specific needs of the rapidly-growing Somali community in the borough and the 'Year Ahead Statement' which is a comprehensive source of information on performance, value for money, customer feedback, delivery against projects and the policy context which is produced in July each year to inform financial and service planning. Other examples include the information emanating from the Annual MORI quality of life survey, which is sponsored by the HSP, and the residents' panel comprising 1,200 local people. In addition, 'Vitality Profiles' are produced by the council which draw together and map statistics and information from a range of agencies concerning key social, economic, environmental, health, housing and crime considerations, such as the extent and spatial spread at Super Output Area level of anti social behaviour, council tax benefit payment, free school meals, car ownership, life expectancy and low birth weight.

28. The council's overview and scrutiny function has undertaken reviews in a number of areas, including water management and homecare provision. The former involved the setting up of a water management and drought planning challenge panel to consider issues around the demand and supply of water as a result of the summer drought in 2006, with the approach to the review

being cited as best practice at the 2007 INLOGOV conference. The work around homecare involved consideration of the council's proposals on changes in homecare charging and the findings of the review served to inform a change in charging levels and the use of direct payments.

29. A new overview and scrutiny structure was introduced earlier this year, as outlined in the 'Context' section at the start of this report. The performance and finance sub-committee receives exception reports on council performance and delivery by the authority and its partners against LAA targets. The two main committees are supplemented by the setting up of challenge panels, working groups and light touch review activities on a task and finish basis. There are a number of tools in place to support effective overview and scrutiny, including a protocol defining working arrangements with the cabinet and setting out how the scrutiny programme will support the achievement of corporate priorities and the improvement programme. In addition, the leader, deputy leader and the chief executive meet quarterly with the chair and vice-chair of overview and scrutiny to review how things are functioning. A new guide for officers on scrutiny has also recently been produced. These are all positive steps but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the revised overview and scrutiny arrangements and we therefore recommend that they, and the support provided to the function, are kept under review. In addition, the role of overview and scrutiny in respect of the HSP is unclear and we suggest that this is considered as part of the fundamental re-think of the strategic partnership referred to earlier.
30. Efforts are being made by the council to ensure elected members are kept informed of issues, for example through the elected member bulletin, and all councillors have opportunities to put forward their views. Such opportunities include 'Councillors' Questions' which enables elected members to ask questions at cabinet meetings and question and answer sessions with the leader, chief executive and portfolio holders for overview and scrutiny members. Despite this, however, Opposition councillors clearly feel there is too little opportunity for political debate and discussion and this is a contributory factor in the relatively high level of 'Call-ins' in Harrow. Using 'Call-in' in such a way does little to aid the effective running of the authority and it is important that the contributory factors are identified and addressed. Increasing the amount of pre-decision scrutiny may represent one way in which the opportunities for political debate and discussion could be enhanced.
31. The increased stability that has been established in the authority, referred to under the 'Ambition' section earlier in this report, provides for a timely opportunity to re-visit the respective roles and relationships of officers and elected members in the authority. It is widely acknowledged that, during the period when the council was experiencing significant capacity issues, including the absence of the former chief executive, and the financial crisis facing the authority was at its greatest, elected members played a very 'hands-on' role. This is seen, in the circumstances, as having been necessary. Now that things are more settled, it is important that councillors adjust their approach in order to fulfil a more strategic role. This requires the establishment of a virtuous circle in which officers are able to operate in a way that provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate they have the necessary capacity which, in turn, gives elected members the confidence to step back. Ultimately, this is about establishing mutual understanding and greater trust. Integral to this is getting the basics right, such as reports for councillors being produced in a timely fashion which are concise and focused but also clearly outline all of the options for elected members to consider. Another area to be looked at is the effectiveness of forward planning, with issues needing to be considered sufficiently far in advance to enable options to be properly evaluated and decision-making to be fully effective. A consideration here is the need for

the cabinet and corporate strategic board to have sufficient opportunities to meet together informally to consider emerging challenges and issues for the organisation.

Customer focus

- √ The council's nine step improvement plan identifies the need to focus on increasing customer satisfaction and creating the right first impression
 - √ The council and its partners are fully conscious of the complexity of delivering services in such a highly diverse environment
 - √ The council has secured Level 4 of the Equalities Standard for local government
 - √ Access Harrow recently won the 'Call Centre of the Year' award and the one stop shop has high customer satisfaction ratings
 - √ The council recognises the need to invest in and enhance Access Harrow
- Overall customer satisfaction and satisfaction with complaint handling are significantly below the London average
 - Ensuring complaints are dealt with more effectively, combined with improvements to Access Harrow, are likely to have a positive impact on customer satisfaction
 - Greater understanding is needed of the impact of specific actions and communications on customer satisfaction
32. Harrow Council and its partners are fully conscious of the complexity of delivering services in an environment that is as diverse as theirs. A recurring theme in our conversations with people we met was the complex make-up of the borough, with there being a tremendous level of pride over it and a good level of awareness regarding the need to plan and deliver services and activities accordingly. Examples of the way the council reflects this diversity in the way it operates include having established a programme of equality impact assessments, with an intention of every service being assessed at least once every three years, and attaining Level 4 of the Equalities Standard for local government. In addition, the authority is one of the first in London to utilise Telecare technology to assist people to live independently. The system operates 24 hours a day providing early detection of accidents and falls and also involves the use of technology to reduce the risk of falls occurring in the first place. The council has also established a dedicated team to deal with all prospective direct payment clients and facilitate the 'In Total Control' self-directed care model.
33. Access Harrow was established in May 2006 and deals with enquiries relating to around 80 per cent of services. The one-stop-shop element of the facility has high customer satisfaction ratings, with 70 per cent of people questioned rating the level of service as 'good' or 'excellent'. The contact centre element of Access Harrow recently won the 'Call Centre of the Year' award at the 'Good Communications Awards'.
34. However, the authority recognises the need to focus on increasing customer satisfaction and creating the right first impression with these being reflected in the nine step improvement plan established by the chief executive. The importance being attached to these reflects the fact that

overall customer satisfaction and satisfaction with complaint handling are significantly below the London average. On the 2006 Best Value performance indicator for customer satisfaction the authority achieved 42 per cent against a London average of 54 per cent, whilst satisfaction with complaint handling scored 24 per cent compared to an average across the capital of 31 per cent. In addition, there is a recognition of the need to invest in and enhance Access Harrow, with the council seeking to reduce customer waiting times, extend the range of council services available through the facility to include the likes of concessionary fares and planning, review staffing levels and re-design the reception area. The authority is also looking to extend the means by which people can conduct transactions with the council on a self-service basis, with a combined aim of enhancing the service to customers whilst simultaneously reducing the demand on Access Harrow and delivering savings.

35. Delivering such improvements to Access Harrow, combined with ensuring complaints are dealt with more effectively and lessons are learnt from them, is likely to have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. However, it is important that people in the organisation understand it is their specific actions, combined with effective communications on the part of the council, which will do most to shape the levels of satisfaction people have. Improving customer satisfaction is not a responsibility of the 'corporate body' – it is the responsibility of each individual.

External communication and community empowerment

- √ A wide range of consultation and community engagement mechanisms are in place
 - √ The importance of strategic communications is understood at the top managerial and political level in the council and further investment is being made
 - √ The council has established a number of mechanisms to encourage participation by local people
 - √ Prosperity Action Teams represent an attempt to devolve decision-making
- There have been some significant gaps in consultation arrangements on certain projects
 - A more co-ordinated approach to consultation is required and people who participate need to receive feedback
 - Maximum benefit is not yet being gleaned from the Prosperity Action Teams
 - There would appear to be opportunities for the council to provide greater support to elected members in their role as ward councillors
 - There needs to be a corporate commitment to effective communications and a clear understanding of what the council is attempting to achieve through it
 - The Harrow Strategic Partnership needs to publicly demonstrate its value
36. The council has established a wide range of consultation and community engagement tools and a number of mechanisms to encourage participation by local people. Some of these, such as the residents' panel and MORI quality of life survey, were referred to earlier in this report. Others include 'Question Time' at formal meetings, such as Full Council and cabinet, which provides an opportunity for the public to raise issues, and 'Public Call-in' through which, with the support of at least 150 local people, members of the public can challenge an executive decision. Summits have been held for local individuals and organisations to input to the development of the LAA and sustainable community plan, a tenants' compact provides the opportunity for tenants and residents to better influence the services they receive and there was wide consultation on the reorganisation of sixth form education in the borough. Also, there are a range of opportunities for young people to input, such as the Harrow Youth Council, the annual youth conference and the grants determination panel through which young people are empowered to allocate to youth organisations, in the form of small grants, £200,000 from the New Opportunities Fund.
37. However, our activities identified the need for a more co-ordinated approach to consultation in order to maximise the value from it and avoid any risk of 'consultation fatigue'. It is especially important that people who participate in consultation receive feedback on the issues they have been asked about. This was a particular frustration amongst residents we met with who form part of the council's residents' panel and are often unclear as to what the outcomes have been from

their participation. In addition, we gleaned there have been some significant gaps in consultation arrangements on certain projects. The prime example is that of 'Wiseworks', a sheltered employment training facility dedicated to developing users' track record of achievement and confidence. In seeking to determine its future, the authority committed to consulting stakeholders but dissatisfaction with the way this was undertaken led to the executive decision on the facility being 'called-in' and the weaknesses of the consultation exercise being highlighted. We are unclear how widespread such problems are but it is important the council is confident decisions are being taken on the basis of sound consultation.

38. Prosperity Action Teams represent an attempt by the council to devolve decision-making. There are ten such teams across the borough, led by elected members and covering small groups of wards, with an aim of enabling the council to better respond to the needs of local people in their neighbourhood. A sum of £15,000 is available per ward, with attempts made to relate decisions on funding allocations to issues emerging through the activities of 'Safer Neighbourhoods Teams' and tenants and residents' associations. Much of what has been delivered so far has involved improvements being made to open spaces but it is clear from people we spoke to that maximum benefit is not yet being gleaned from this mechanism. At the heart of this matter lie two issues – the funding being for capital expenditure, with difficulties arising when projects are identified as having revenue implications, and some councillors experiencing difficulty in accessing their communities effectively and therefore not securing their engagement. This latter point highlights the need for the council to better support elected members and ensure they have the information and skills necessary to effectively engage across communities.
39. Looking more generally at the issue of elected members being able to fulfil a role as leaders of their local communities, there would appear to be opportunities for the council to provide greater support to ward councillors. In meeting with a number of backbench councillors, we identified a range of frustrations regarding the support they received from the council including poor IT provision, a lack of provision of facilities in which to hold surgeries, poor responsiveness from some officers when seeking to progress issues on behalf of constituents and inadequacies in training and development. We recommend that the council establishes the means by which to identify, in a systematic way, the difficulties being experienced by elected members in these and any other areas and develops appropriate responses to address them. In saying this, we acknowledge the council has already moved to develop a more comprehensive approach to elected member training and development.
40. The importance of strategic communications is understood at the top managerial and political level in the council, with the enhancing of council communications forming part of the chief executive's nine step improvement plan and investment already taking place. Examples of such investment include the frequency with which the council's magazine for local people, entitled 'Harrow People', is produced increasing from two times per year to six, a new website and the development of a new combined council tax booklet and A to Z of services. The council is in the process of appointing Westminster City Council's communications function to provide strategic direction and shape the development of the council's communications function. A series of campaigns have been planned to raise awareness of the council's objectives and activities and secure greater involvement in them, such as 'green and clean Harrow', 'safer streets', 'promoting well being' and 'active leisure'. Through all of these activities, the council is aiming to achieve the 'Gold Standard' of the Local Government Association's 'Reputation' campaign.
41. However, in order to succeed, there needs to be a corporate commitment to effective communications, which goes way beyond the senior levels of the organisation and is based upon

people having a clear understanding of what the council is attempting to achieve through its communications activity. As briefly outlined in the previous section of this report, the effectiveness of communications is a key determinant of the level of customer satisfaction with a council, thus people across the organisation need to appreciate the higher level impact of their approach and attitude towards communication.

42. In relation to the HSP, our discussions have revealed the need to ensure partners appropriately share the credit for key achievements when it comes to communicating about them. There was a view amongst certain partners that the council is very quick to claim credit for things in which others have been involved. Some people view the HSP itself as needing to be profiled but this isn't universal. Irrespective of whether this avenue is pursued or not, we would encourage a co-ordinated approach amongst partners to communicating what they are committing to delivering for local people, including the development of a common set of positive key messages, both regarding the priorities being worked to and the progress being achieved. Essentially this is about the partnership publicly demonstrating its value.

Delivering Through Partnerships

- √ A range of high performing, high quality and innovative services, activities and initiatives are being delivered by the council and its partners which improve the quality of people's lives
 - √ Harrow experiences low levels of crime overall and positive community cohesion
 - √ Private sector partnerships are being used by the council to boost capacity and service delivery
 - √ The Harrow Strategic Partnership management groups broadly function well
 - √ There is a shared commitment within the council and primary care trust to enhance joint working at senior levels
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- A fundamental review of the use of public sector resources in the borough would offer the prospect of enhanced partnership working and service delivery
 - Whilst there is much sharing of intelligence between partners, there are seen to be opportunities to enhance this and even establish a dedicated joint intelligence team
 - The council needs to fully appreciate its partners and better recognise what they have to offer for the benefit of the borough
 - The council needs to take a fresh look at its relationship with the voluntary and community sector in order to enhance trust, engagement and mutual benefit
 - There would be benefit in the council looking to increase its engagement and profile sub-regionally, regionally and beyond
43. A range of high performing, high quality and innovative services, activities and initiatives that improve the quality of people's lives in Harrow are being delivered by the council and its partners and of which people we spoke with are justifiably proud. Examples include the low levels of crime overall, good levels of community cohesion, the children's centres through which integrated services are delivered by a range of agencies, extended schools and the annual youth conference and youth achievement awards. Other examples include the 'Under One Sky' festival, the restoration work at Canon's Park and location there of one of the 'Safer Neighbourhoods Teams', the Alexandra Avenue clinic where social services and health work together to support children and their families, and the new £2.7million Beacon Centre at Rayners Lane - a community centre providing, amongst other things, sports facilities, IT, meeting rooms and courses delivered by Harrow College in such areas as catering, retail and business skills.
44. The 'Weeks of Action' are another example of successful partnership activity, with the council and a wide range of partners working intensively together in a specific area of the borough for a number of days to tackle such issues as graffiti, abandoned vehicles and anti social behaviour. The number of adoptions of children looked after has increased 100 per cent on last year following the

council's partnership with the Coram Foundation and the council and the primary care trust have pooled budgets to provide a joint community equipment service. Also, a mechanism to enable third party reporting of racial and religious hate crime has been established through the Harrow Multi-Agency Forum, enabling people to report such crime to voluntary community groups with a panel of partners, including the police, various council functions and Victim Support, meeting regularly to consider each case and how to respond. A performance indicator relating to third party reporting of crimes of this nature features in the LAA and indicators to measure levels of community tension are also being established.

45. Private sector partnerships are being used by the council to boost capacity and service delivery, with a key example being that of the Business Transformation Partnership with Capita. Three key initial systems-based projects have already been delivered - a new customer relationship management (CRM) system, enterprise resource planning (ERP) and management information systems (MIS). Such activities are focused on improving the council's financial management, performance management, procurement, human resources systems and contact with customers. Savings of over £1million were delivered in the last financial year, including £500,000 through improved procurement, with the programme as a whole having a target of delivering £45million in savings to the council over 10 years.
46. The council established a single contract with Kier in July 2007 to deliver all building and maintenance work for the next five years. This contract is worth £100million and has brought together 100 contracts that were previously individually let. AccordMP have been contracted to deliver public realm and infrastructure work, with the result being a 25 per cent reduction in recalls for defective work undertaken on behalf of the council. The authority has also utilised expertise from Capita, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and the Department of Health in the fundamental service reviews it has undertaken.
47. Despite all of these successes, our discussions with a range of people have led us to conclude that the council needs to fully appreciate its partners and better recognise, and capitalise upon, what they have to offer in order to maximise benefit for the borough. As examples, there was a view amongst some private sector partners that their expertise could be better tapped-into by the council, for example to inform service planning and future strategy. The council also needs to take a fresh look at its relationship with the voluntary and community sector in order to enhance trust, engagement and mutual benefit and we recommend that the authority undertakes a review in this area. Overview and scrutiny is due to shortly embark upon a review of the council's support for the sector, including the use, ownership and management of community premises. This could form a useful element of the overall review we are recommending is undertaken but, on the other hand, it has the potential to exacerbate the tensions that already exist depending on the remit of the review and the way it is undertaken. It is acknowledged that there have been difficulties in the relationship between the council and the primary care trust but a shared commitment has recently emerged to enhance joint working at senior levels, with work to bring this about due to commence shortly through support secured from the Department of Health.
48. The authority is engaging regionally and sub-regionally, being involved, for example, in the West London Alliance, the London Centre of Excellence, the London Scrutiny Network and London Authorities Mutual Limited, a local authority-owned insurance company which has saved the council £120,000 this year alone. The chief executive and senior politicians are making a conscious effort to ensure the council raises its profile and engages more effectively with key influencers and decision-makers in the capital. As an example, the chief executive is chair of the pan-London anti-social behaviour and respect group and the council is engaging closely with

Capital Ambition regarding its improvement agenda. In addition, at a national level, the council is represented on the Lifting the Burdens Task Force. We would encourage the authority to continue its efforts in this area because of the benefits to be gleaned from increased engagement and profile sub-regionally, regionally and beyond.

49. We highlighted under the 'Ambition' section of this report the recognition that exists of both the need and opportunity to consider the role and functioning of the HSP. Whilst this is a reflection of the fact that the partnership at board and executive level needs to function more effectively and meaningfully, the management groups that exist below these levels broadly function well. We were impressed with the willingness and ability of partners to talk openly in front of one another in these groupings when we met with them. Out of these discussions we gleaned that, whilst there is much sharing of intelligence between partners, there are also seen to be opportunities to enhance information sharing – potentially even the establishment of a dedicated joint intelligence team. Taking this concept and applying it more broadly, there is clearly growing support for the undertaking of a fundamental re-think of public service delivery in the borough, looking afresh at what is delivered by whom, where and how. Whilst securing universal buy-in to such an approach would be challenging, the context of changing demographics and a need to maximise the benefit gleaned from ever-tighter levels of resources, combined with the prospect it offers for enhanced partnership working and service delivery, warrants the matter being given careful consideration.

Performance management

- √ The council has responded to the corporate assessment regarding the need to enhance the role of elected members in performance management
 - √ Investment has been made in SAP and related applications
 - √ The authority has sought to integrate service and financial planning more effectively
 - √ An extensive performance management framework is in place in the authority
 - √ The need to further improve performance management in the council is recognised
- There is a need to ensure performance information is made easy to understand and utilise
 - The council needs to ensure performance information is robust and used to drive improvement systematically
 - Target setting needs to be realistic and rigorous – SMART
 - SAP needs to be fully rolled-out and training provided to ensure benefits are maximised

50. The council's corporate assessment reported that the authority had a clear performance management framework and we have seen through our activities how extensive the framework is. In developing the framework further since the arrival of the new chief executive, the authority has sought to integrate service and financial planning more effectively. In July of each year the authority produces the 'Year Ahead Statement', which was outlined earlier in this report under 'Decision-making and scrutiny'. This informs the drafting of a service improvement plan for each directorate, each of which is considered at a challenge panel chaired by the chief executive or deputy chief executive in November. These panels consider the extent to which directorate thinking on resource allocation and proposed projects reflects the corporate priorities and assess the targets being proposed for the year ahead. The plans are presented to cabinet in draft form in December and are finalised in February in line with the budget-setting process.

51. The council has established four improvement boards: adults and housing, children's services, community and environment and corporate finance, strategy and business support. These meet quarterly, chaired by the chief executive or deputy chief executive and involving cabinet members. They consider a range of information including performance indicators, value for money measures, spend against budget and risks. The four improvement boards are also tasked with ensuring targets are realistic. This is a crucial element of their role given the self assessment acknowledges that: "The setting of targets has proved a challenge across the council". Whilst targets need to be realistic they also need to be stretching in order to aid the achievement of the step change referred to earlier in this report under 'Prioritisation'.

52. Going forward, it is important that targets are also rigorous and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and timetabled), with all of this enabling the authority to be clear about what it is trying to achieve by when, ensure the resources that are required to deliver objectives are in place, effectively monitor progress, drive performance improvement and publicise and celebrate successful delivery.
53. The council produces a regular strategic performance report outlining progress against the authority's most important performance indicators. The council has plans to extend the scope of the strategic performance report to cover risks, value for money and progress on key projects in order to provide a more holistic picture. The report is presented to both cabinet and the performance and finance sub-committee and made available to staff and the general public. It can be seen from this, plus the elected member development activity around performance management which is currently being planned, that the authority has responded to the corporate assessment finding regarding the need to enhance the role of elected members in performance management.
54. As outlined in the previous section of this report, the council has invested, through the Business Transformation Partnership with Capita, in a range of management information systems to help enhance the running of the organisation. People are clearly proud of what has been achieved thus far in terms of putting the SAP system and its related applications in place yet at the same time they are acknowledging the programme hasn't been without its difficulties. The system now needs to be fully rolled-out and comprehensive training provided to ensure the benefits of the systems and the related investment are maximised.
55. Whilst there is an extensive performance management framework in place and efforts have been made to enhance the approach, the fact that performance management features in the chief executive's nine step improvement plan reflects the fact that the council recognises it needs to be more effective. Performance management needs to operate in such a way as to drive performance improvement systematically. What the council has managed in terms of reducing the turnaround time for void properties provides a good example of what can be achieved when performance management operates effectively. In 2005/06, the turnaround was higher than the London average of 45 days but by focusing on the issue and delivering the necessary change the second quarter of this year saw this reduced to 21 days – against a target of 29 days.
56. The performance management element of the improvement plan highlights, amongst other things, the need to provide a clearer oversight of delivery and improvement and to look at performance more holistically. During our review activities we considered a range of performance information, including the strategic performance report, and on the back of this we recommend that the authority ensures performance information is made as easy to understand and utilise as possible and that it is robust. When operating on the basis of exception reporting, it is vital for elected members and senior managers to be confident both in the data and information presented and the decisions made regarding what isn't reported.

Resource management

- √ The council has done much to stabilise its financial position and is enhancing its financial management
 - √ There is a commitment to building up the council's reserves to a more prudent and sustainable level
 - √ Value for money benchmarking has identified services with high unit costs which in turn has informed savings targets
 - √ A review of the council's assets is generating significant funding
- Significant financial savings are required going forward but the council is establishing a good track record
 - Whilst the council's use of resources judgement is unlikely to improve in the near future, the authority is committing to the correct actions but it has to ensure it delivers them
 - The authority needs to be "smart as well as strict" in making savings

57. The council has worked hard in recent times to stabilise its financial position and is continuously striving to enhance its financial management capacity after experiencing an extremely difficult period, including a budget overspend of £3million in 2005/06. Significant financial savings are required going forward, totalling £12million in 2008/09, but the council is establishing a good track record of delivering the targets it sets, with £19million of savings having been achieved in 2006/07 and the council being on track to deliver a further £16million of savings in the current year.

58. Whilst the council's 'use of resources' judgement is unlikely to improve in the near future, the authority is committing to the correct actions but it has to ensure it delivers them. At the time of the peer review, the overall use of resources score was two out of four, although this masks significant variations in the components comprising the score. With a score of one out of four for financial standing, the council is seeking to build up its level of reserves to a more prudent and sustainable level. Reserves currently total £1.3million and the council is seeking to increase them by £1million each year. In terms of value for money, the council is judged to be achieving a level of two out of four. The authority has engaged in detailed value for money benchmarking, resulting in the identification of services with high unit costs which in turn has informed savings targets. In eighty five per cent of value for money indicators, the council performs above the London average, with examples being education, housing, planning and cultural services. Average value for money is delivered in environmental services and social services.

59. Asset management in the authority is also judged to be three out of four. A review of the council's assets is generating significant funding, with surplus property sales in 2006/07 totalling £7.5million and a further £10million being targeted in the current year. Over the next three years the council is aiming to realise £50million from property disposals.

60. The authority is committed to undertaking a financial effectiveness review, funded by Capital Ambition and is looking to improve its performance on the closure of accounts. It has delivered its Gershon efficiency savings and, as indicated earlier in this report, the effectiveness of procurement is being improved, with Capita playing a key role in enabling this.

61. Staff that we met from all levels of the organisation have a clear understanding of the financial pressures facing the authority and they are clearly mindful of the need to make savings. However, as one person said to us, the authority needs to be “smart as well as strict” in making savings, with there being anecdotal evidence of customer service and the council’s reputation being negatively impacted upon by the rigid enforcement of measures to make savings within individual services rather than common sense being applied.

Change and project management

- √ A clear improvement plan has been established which focuses effort and attention
 - √ The council has secured external resources to aid improvement and build capacity
 - √ The authority and its partners have demonstrated a willingness to open themselves to external challenge
 - √ The council's recent management re-structure has been delivered more effectively than before
 - √ The authority is focusing on the correct changes and improvements to deliver better outcomes for local people but the benefits have still to be secured
- The nine step improvement plan needs to be understood as being about core ways of working – not an additional set of priorities
 - There is insufficient rigour in the authority around project and risk management
 - There is a recognition that the council doesn't deliver large scale change well
 - Changing organisational culture requires persistence and everybody to play their part
 - Levels of self awareness are growing but there needs to be greater acknowledgment of shortcomings

62. It is very positive that the authority and its partners in the HSP have, through innovatively commissioning the peer review of both bodies, demonstrated a willingness to open themselves to external challenge. The forward-thinking nature of this, which indicates a desire to ensure both the council and the HSP make progress in the right direction and are well placed to respond to future challenges, reflects well on everybody concerned. The way in which the council has accessed external funding for elements of the review is an example of the way it uses external resources to aid improvement and build capacity. Other examples include the two tranches of funding secured from Capital Ambition totalling nearly £600,000 to aid work in a variety of areas, including the financial effectiveness review and a management development programme.

63. A clear improvement plan, comprising nine key areas of activity, has been established by the new chief executive and this is serving to focus effort and attention in the organisation. The plan covers the following areas:

- Vision and priorities – developing a clearer long term vision and set of priorities to guide the allocation of resources and which lead to clear tangible actions
- Organisational structures – the introduction of a simpler, fit-for-purpose management structure, with statutory officers on the 'top table'

- Finance – increasing levels of financial effectiveness and ensuring the council lives within its means
- Investment in People – introducing a leadership and management development programme for officers and elected members
- Work/life balance – investing in the workforce through well-being initiatives
- Performance management – improving processes that provide clearer oversight of delivery and improvement, enhance the role of elected members and look at performance more holistically
- Organisational culture – developing a more positive and proactive culture that encourages innovation and calculated risk-taking
- Communications – improving communications both internally and externally
- First impressions – improving customer access and communication to increase levels of customer satisfaction

64. Our view is that, through this plan, the authority is focusing on the correct changes and improvements to deliver better outcomes for local people. As outlined at the start of this report, there is a clear sense of momentum in the organisation and good initial progress has been made. Inevitably, given the internally-focused nature of many of the nine steps outlined above and the relatively short period of time since the plan was developed, the external benefits in terms of the impact on service delivery and customer satisfaction have still to be secured. Going forward, the nine step improvement plan needs to be understood by people in the organisation as being about core ways of working. Many people we spoke to referred to the nine steps as though they were an additional set of projects rather than being about the way the 'day job' is done.

65. There is a recognition in the organisation that the council doesn't deliver large scale change well. However, there are signs of progress with the recent management re-structure being seen by those concerned as having been delivered more effectively than the previous middle management review. Levels of self awareness in the organisation are growing, partly as a result of the CPA judgement serving to highlight a range of issues and an overall level of performance that people had perhaps previously been unwilling to face up to. However, there needs to be a greater acknowledgment of shortcomings, with some people we met, no doubt with the best of intentions, coming across as wishing to present the council in the best possible light and being unwilling to recognise weaknesses in the organisation, thus limiting, to a certain extent, the learning to be gleaned from the peer review. The chief executive is clearly keen to encourage greater openness within the organisation, along with managed risk taking. He has a determination to provide people with opportunities, encourage upward communication of thoughts and ideas, ensure there is no blame culture and celebrate success. However, changing organisational culture is not easy. It requires persistence and for everybody to play their part.

66. Whilst the authority has been working hard to enhance its project management and risk management capacity, there is still insufficient rigour in the authority in these disciplines and there would appear to be an acknowledgement of such in the organisation. The experience the council recently had in its efforts to deploy a third wheelie bin for people living in the borough perhaps provides the best example of this. Whilst a project management methodology has been

developed it will be early 2008 before it is rolled out through a training programme financially supported by Capital Ambition. The authority recognises the need to ensure that, once people are suitably trained, all of the projects in the council improvement programme are being managed using the methodology. It is also important that the monitoring of these projects is focused and risk-based. In terms of risk management, whilst risk registers and action plans to mitigate them are in place at corporate and directorate level and are kept under regular review, and risks are expected to be identified at the service level and reflected in service plans. However, reports on key decisions do not routinely assess risk and there would appear to be a way to go before risk management can be classed as embedded.

Organisation and managing people

- √ The revised directorate structure is seen to be more coherent
 - √ The council is clearly committed to investing in staff and elected members
 - √ The chief executive and senior politicians are actively engaging staff
 - √ The 'Individual Performance Appraisal and Development' process is seen as a good concept and have been well received by staff
- There is a widely held view that the council operates too much in silos
 - People are assuming there will be further structural change
 - Sickness absence levels in the authority are a cause for concern
 - The planned leadership, management and elected member training activities need to turn into a coherent reality
 - Budget limitations and work pressures are limiting training and development for staff
 - Internal communications have improved, but a mechanism for conveying ideas and feedback up through the organisation is needed and success needs to be better celebrated
67. The move to include all of the statutory posts, including the monitoring officer and Section 151 officer, on the corporate strategic board means the council is confident it now has adequate representation on this key body. The new directorate structure that has been put in place is seen by people in the organisation to be more coherent than before. Despite this and the recent management structure changes, which reduced the council's management costs by ten per cent or £2million, there is a widely held view that the council still operates too much in silos. This, combined with the fact that the management structure is confusing to people from outside the organisation, including ourselves and key partners, and the stated intention of the new chief executive to keep the new management structure under review, all means people are assuming there will be further structural change and they are envisaging that it will happen fairly soon. This is creating a set of expectations of the chief executive and causing a degree of uncertainty in the organisation and there would thus be benefit in the situation being clarified.
68. Internal communications have improved in the council, including efforts by the leader, deputy leader and chief executive to actively engage staff through the forums being held for them twice a year. There are regular managers' conferences and the three senior-most tiers of managers meet together every six weeks. In addition, the chief executive has launched a regular newsletter and is holding frequent lunch meetings with groups of around 20 staff from across the organisation in order to hear their views and ideas directly. Despite this and the existence of the staff achievement awards, the need exists for success to be better celebrated and for a mechanism to be put in place that systematically enables people to convey their ideas and feedback up through

the organisation, with the self assessment acknowledging that: "Staff engagement and morale require further attention". The council also needs to be aware that, during our discussions with staff, it became apparent that those working outside of the civic centre do not always receive the chief executive's newsletter and there are issues around the accessibility of the content.

69. The individual performance appraisal and development (IPAD) process, which takes place twice each year, involves managers and their members of staff reviewing performance, target setting and looking at support needs. Staff we spoke to view it positively and indicated that they find the dialogue constructive and helpful. It is important that maximum benefit is derived from this mechanism in terms of addressing the engagement and morale issues highlighted above. Monitoring of the scheme takes place through the improvement boards and the strategic performance report. Sickness absence levels in the authority are a cause for concern, with an average of more than 10 days per employee in both 2005/06 and 2006/07 meaning it is firmly established in the bottom quartile in London. Again, the IPAD process has a key role to play in helping to address this.
70. Whilst the council is clearly committed to investing in staff and elected members, it needs to be aware that training and development opportunities for staff are being limited by work pressures and budget limitations. Inevitably, given the financial position of the authority, resources dedicated to training and development are tight but it is the inconsistent approach across the different directorates regarding the allocation of funding that is causing the tensions, reflected in a sense of 'them and us'. Examples of the investment the council is making in staff and councillors include a leadership programme being developed for cabinet members, an elected member development programme commissioned from Roffey Park, at the heart of which will sit individually tailored personal development plans, and a series of joint workshops to be delivered by the Leadership Centre for Local Government for the cabinet and corporate strategic board aimed at enhancing the way they work together. A management development programme is also being established, supported by the Leadership Centre and Capital Ambition, which will look to build on training activity previously delivered through the 'Harrow Rules' training programme. It is important that all of these leadership, management and elected member training activities, which are currently still at the planning stage, turn into a coherent reality, especially given the fact that several different providers are involved.
71. The authority has plans for 11 managers to attend the 'future leaders' programme' delivered by the IDeA and it has traditionally supported around 50 staff each year in undertaking a Certificate or Diploma in Management Studies. Through the Learning4 Programme, up to 300 employees embark each year upon gaining an NVQ level 2. The 'Borough Beat' scheme sees the council staff release staff to be trained in and fulfil the role of special constables in a scheme that has now been rolled out across the Metropolitan Police area. The council is looking to extend further the valuing of its people by developing a series of work/life balance initiatives and a well-being programme. This will build on work that has already been undertaken developing a range of new staff benefits, including making childcare vouchers available. We would encourage the authority to ensure such initiatives and benefits are made relevant to as wide a range of staff as possible. With the strategy and business support directorate already having secured Investors in People (IIP) accreditation, the authority has an ambition to secure corporate accreditation in 2008/09.

Chris Bowron
IDeA
January 2008

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Harrow Strategic Partnership Board

13th May 2008

Functions and Governance of the Partnership

Background

1. This paper proposes revised governance arrangements for the Partnership that reflect the changing nature of the new Local Area Agreement, the closer partnership working developing in Harrow and demanded by the new Comprehensive Area Assessment and the outcomes of the Peer review of the Partnership undertaken at the end of last year.
2. The new Local Area Agreement (LAA), that will be signed in June 2008, and its associated financial arrangements prompted a review of the governance of Harrow Strategic Partnership. In addition, the feedback from the IDeA Peer Review of the Council and the Partnership encouraged that a radical review of the functions and scope of the Partnership – rather than just its structures - should be undertaken. In undertaking this work, the opportunity has been taken to look at other partnership relationships, to examine how the best use can be made of these arrangements to the mutual benefits of the participants, and further discussions have been held with the IDeA Review Co-ordinator.

New LAA

3. The new LAA will comprise 35 indicators drawn from the 198 National Indicator Set and a further 16 (17 from 2009) education related targets. All of these will have negotiated stretch targets and are expected to contribute to the level of reward grant earned by the Partnership. The detail of the reward regime has yet to be announced but early indications are that an average of £2.2m will be available to each authority. This means that the range of activity that attracts reward funding is very much broader than the current LAA with its 12 stretch targets and more Council and Partner service areas will be involved in delivering these targets. Performance management arrangements will need to be correspondingly enhanced.
4. The new LAA does not bring with it any pump-priming funding but, instead, 39 existing and previously ring-fenced funding streams will be rolled up into the Area Based Grant to be spent entirely at local discretion. The sums involved are £8.366m in 2008/09, £12.731m in 2009/10 and £12.492m in 2010/11. The Council has the final say on how Area Based Grant should be used but the Partnership, being responsible for achieving the LAA targets, will need to influence that decision.

Role for the Partnership

5. The Peer Review called for a fundamental rethink of the role and purpose of the Partnership. It is perhaps fair to characterise the formal meetings of the HSP Board and Executive as being dominated by the LAA. While this is clearly an important issue, it tends to

drive out discussion of other matters of common interest and the Partnership is less effective as a vehicle for strategic leadership in the Borough than it could be. Structural and governance proposals should therefore utilise the potential of partnerships to meet individual partners' and multi-partner strategic objectives, provide better value for money and streamline service delivery.

6. The CAA will include an Annual Area Risk Assessment, probably looking at the following key questions:

- Do the organisations in the borough promote effective working across partners to make better use of the available resources?
- Do partners work together to maximise the use of their assets for the benefit of local communities?
- Is there a clear vision and strong leadership to enable partnerships to make better use of available resources?
- How well does the partnership understand and assess the needs of its communities, now and in the future?
- Does it use this understanding to inform its local priorities?
- Does the partnership organise itself and ensure it has the capacity to deliver these priorities?
- Has it secure and effective arrangements to identify and manage the risks to achieving successful outcomes?
- Are improved outcomes likely to be achieved?
- Is data shared, and managed and used jointly?

To be able to deal effectively with these questions, the Partnership needs to have a wider agenda and to be better connected to the priorities of its constituent organisations, particularly those in the public sector. It needs to be a vehicle for brokering supportive joint working on issues that cross organisational boundaries in much the same way as several of the management groups successfully operate.

Other drivers for change

7. There has been criticism that the membership of the partnership is not representative of the Borough and its residents. The Board and the Executive are largely composed of representatives of constituent organisations who are chosen for their role or knowledge rather than their gender, age or ethnicity. The make up of both the Board and the Executive currently does not reflect the demographic profile of the borough.

8. There is also a likelihood that the new LAA will include a stretch target measuring whether there is an environment in which the third sector is thriving. A more open, transparent and participatory partnership structure could contribute to creating such an environment.

Proposals

9. The challenge is to create a more representative and transparent structure which is also capable of addressing a more complex and demanding agenda. The recommended way forward involves expanding the membership of the Partnership body which would have oversight of issues such as the refresh of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the development and delivery of the LAA. The proposal is represented in a structure chart on page 4 of this paper.

10. At the same time, it is proposed to create a Local Public Service Board (LPSB). This would be a non-statutory body that could be characterised as the “Group Board” for Harrow’s public services, each of which continues to operate independently. It would exist within the Partnership family and be accountable to the Harrow Strategic Partnership. The LPSB would be responsible for developing a shared agenda for Harrow, deliver joint outcomes and transformational change. The Board would address issues including

Synergy

- Joint data, intelligence, forecasting and performance management
- Buildings and estates – co-location, management and maintenance
- Procurement
- Shared Services
- Communications, consultation and engagement
- Border resolution – both between organisations in Harrow and between Harrow and neighbours
- The Sustainable Communities Act

Business Planning

- Financial Planning
- External Funding
- Support for the voluntary and community sector
- Comprehensive Area Assessment

Major Projects

- Local Development Framework
- Delivering the Local Area Agreement
- Delivering the Sustainable Community Plan
- Recommending to the Council how to allocate Area Based Grant
- Other significant partnership delivery projects such as drugs strategy and community development strategy.

Specimen work programmes for the LPSB are attached.

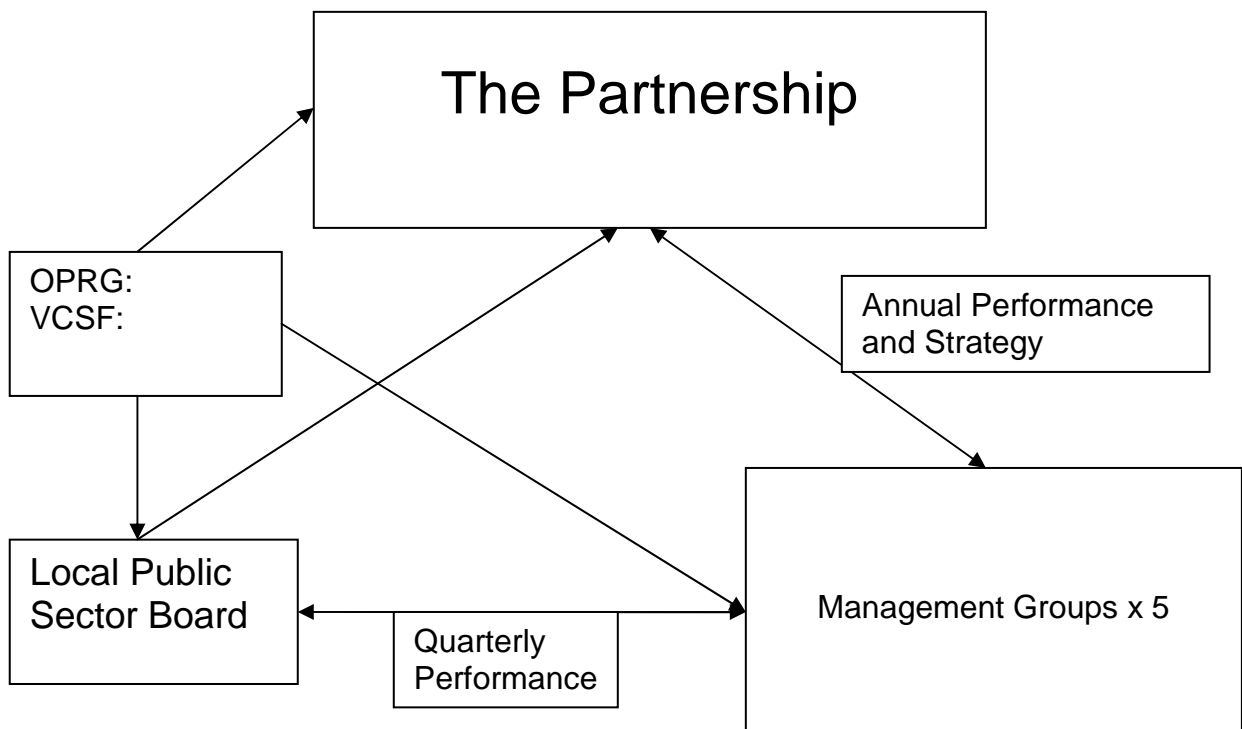
11. The LPSB would comprise the Chief Executives or lead officers of the main public service organisations including the Council, the PCT, the Police, the Fire Service, Further and Higher Education interests, the Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus and the Voluntary and Community Sector via their main Umbrella Group. It would meet perhaps every 6 to 8 weeks, at least in the first year. It is expected that where the Board decides that there is merit in pursuing an initiative, a task and finish cross-organisational group would be formed to research and recommend a course of action.

12. Overseeing the work of the Local Public Service Board would be the Partnership itself. This would have the key role of encouraging community leadership, supporting new initiatives and helping to ensure the effective delivery of services. It would renew the Sustainable Community Plan and sign off the Local Area Agreement including changes made at the annual refresh. It would also consider how relevant national policy initiatives should be taken forward locally. The Partnership would meet two or three times a year in public to receive reports from the thematic management groups on progress against the LAA and the Sustainable Community Plan but would also hold more participatory and engaging events. These would include a

Summit on at least an annual basis. The proposed membership of the Partnership is set out in the appendix to this paper.

13. The existing Management Groups would continue to be the drivers for the delivery of the new LAA and of the medium term ambitions in the Sustainable Community Plan. However, it might be timely for the Management Groups themselves to review their structure and membership to ensure that they are representative and equipped to tackle the new LAA and the wider emerging partnership agenda. In any event, they should be augmented by the relevant Councillor portfolio holders or their portfolio assistants attending regularly where this does not already happen. It would be sensible for Management Groups also to take responsibility for monitoring progress for relevant indicators from the new National Indicator Set which are progressed through partnership action, even where these are not formally part of the new LAA. Similarly, the existing Reference Groups would also continue to ensure that the Partnership had direct access to the views of their particular constituencies.

14. Revised governance arrangements for the Partnership need to be put into place as soon as possible and need to include a detailed constitution. If the arrangements outlines in this report are approved, a detailed constitution and terms of reference will be developed in time for the next meeting of the Board.



Existing Partnership Board Membership

Leader of the Council*
Deputy Leader of the Council*
Leader of the main Minority Group*
Deputy Leader of the main Minority Group*
Chair Harrow PCT
Member of the MPA
Representative of Harrow Chamber of
Commerce
Representative of North West London
Chamber of Commerce
Representative of Harrow in Business Board
Representative of Kodak Limited
Voluntary and Community Sector
Representatives x 4
Representative of University of Westminster
Representative of Stanmore College
Representative of North West London
Hospital Trust
Chief Executive, Harrow Council
Borough Commander, Harrow Police
Further Education Representative
Chief Executive, Harrow in Business
Chief Executive, Harrow PCT
Chief Executive, Harrow Association of
Voluntary Service

23 Members

* Places allocated in line with proportionality
rules

Proposed Partnership Membership 2008/09

Leader of the Council*
Partnership portfolio holder*
Leader of the Opposition*
Deputy Leader of the Opposition*
Chair, Harrow PCT
Member of the MPA
Representative x2, Chamber of Commerce
Representative, Harrow in Business
Representative, Kodak Limited
Representative x4, Voluntary and
Community Sector
Representative University of Westminster
Representative x2, Further Education
Representative of Harrow Primary School
Head Teachers
Representative of Harrow High School Head
Teachers
Chair Older People's Reference Group
Representative, Learning and Skills Council
Representative, Job Centre Plus
Representative, North West London
Hospital Trust
Representative, Central and North West
London Mental Health Trust
Representative of the Harrow RSL Group
Representative, London Probation Board
Chief Executive, Harrow Council
Borough Commander, Harrow Police
Borough Commander, London Fire Service
Chief Executive, Harrow PCT
Chief Executive, HAVS
Chief Executive, HCRE
Representative of the LINK
Representative x2, Harrow Youth
Parliament
Representative x2, Harrow Interfaith Forum
Representative, Harrow Federation of
Tenants and Residents Associations
Representative x5, Management Groups
Representative, Government Office for
London

44 Members

Draft Specimen Work Programme for the LPSB in 2008/09

May

Joint intelligence unit
Joining up consultation arrangements
Comprehensive Area Assessment – how it works and what it means
A co-ordinated approach to equalities
Public Health Report – partnership response

July

Local Development Framework – implications of results of consultation on strategic options
Implementation of the LAA
Community Development opportunities for cross working
Year Ahead Statement
Third Sector Review and support from partners
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Place Survey

September

Proposals for the Civic Centre site and other co-location opportunities
Sustainable Communities Act – ideas for changing delivery bodies
Draft Refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy
Area Based Grant and the LAA

November

Partners' budgets – implications, pooling and aligning
External funding opportunities
Town Centre plans
LAA performance to date
Partner contributions to community tension indicators
Comprehensive Area Assessment – risk assessment

January

Shared Services - back office functions and procurement
LAA Refresh
West London Alliance – potential for wider partnerships
Partners' priorities for next year
Place Shaping – vision and actions
Annual strategic crime assessment



13 May 2008

Local Area Agreement Quarterly Performance Update

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update the HSP Board on the 2nd year performance of the reward indicators in the existing local area agreement. The report highlights which stretched indicators are at risk of not achieving their targets and what action, based on quarter three performance was requested by the HSP Executive on the 15 April 08.

The HSP Board is requested to:

- A. Note the 2nd year performance of the Local Area Agreement reward targets.

Background

1. It is important that the LAA indicators, in particular the stretched indicators, are regularly monitored by the HSP to ensure targets are being met.
2. The HSP Executive's role is to challenge under performance, identify indicators that are at risk of not achieving their targets and hold the relevant management group chair to account.
3. The HSP Executive on the 15th April 2008 requested the chair of the Community Cohesion Management Group and the Safer Harrow Management Group to co-ordinate an action plan for the indicators listed as red and report back to the next Executive on how the performance will be rectified. The annual results for 2007/08 were not available at this time.

LAA Stretch Target Performance Update

During 2007/2008 the indicator "reduction in the number of non-residential burglary in the borough" has dropped from being excellent to intervention.

This increase in non residential burglary is consistent with the experiences of North West London boroughs over the last 3 – 4 months. The police are continuing to investigate each offence in detail to ensure any links and hotspots are identified and resources have been allocated to identify clusters and known offenders.

The results from the 2007 Quality of Life Survey highlighted a drop in the number of people who volunteered, both socially excluded adults and other adults.

"The proportion of adults who say that people from different backgrounds get on well in their neighbourhood" continues to be at risk of not achieving its 3 year target. A small sub group was formed which consisted of representatives from the HSP Board and the head of the council's communications team to discuss what actions were required to improve the community cohesion targets and what if any additional pump priming money was required. The group concluded that a programme of community events in the four worst performing wards together with a publicity campaign should be undertaken at a total cost of £50,000.

The place shaping survey will be introduced as the new mechanism to measure our final year of performance in September 2009 for the community cohesion and volunteering targets. This will provide us with a small amount of additional time to help improve this

indicator; however the impact of a new survey on the comparability of our results is currently uncertain. This will be further explored with GOL over the next month.

Over the last two years fixed term exclusions in Harrow has increased rather than decrease to a total of 1400 in 06/07. It was proposed by the lead from the Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership to undertake a three pronged approach to achieve the reduction required to deliver the stretched target. In September 2007 the Board agreed to allocate an additional amount of £85,000 for improving fixed term exclusions in Harrow. The actual result for 2007/08 demonstrates an increase from 1400 to 1560. These figures are for 2006/07 and therefore will not have had any impact from the additional pump priming money. A review of our performance on fixed term exclusions will need to be undertaken in September when the 07/08 results will be available.

One of the annual stretched targets results is currently unavailable, "Rates of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 weeks".

Stretched Indicators		2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual	Score
1	Number of residential burglary where victim is over 75 years	190	251	Excellent
2	Reduction in the number of non-residential burglary in the borough	754	651	Intervention
3	Proportion of adults saying they are in fear of being a victim of crime	35.67%	34.45%	Excellent
4	% of residents who consider suite of ASB as a 'fairly' or 'very big' problem	44.56%	33.1%	Excellent
5	Breastfeeding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 weeks Breastfeeding initiation rates 	36%	TBC	
		66%	TBC	Excellent
6	Exclusions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of permanent exclusions Reduction of fixed term exclusions 	41	43 (06/07)	Okay
		1020	1560 (06/07)	Intervention
	Improved attendance at 25% worst performing schools			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Schools Secondary Schools 	6.1%	6.8% (06/07)	Intervention
		6.3%	7.7% (06/07)	Intervention
7	Average points score per pupil at level 2 at age 16	381	399.7	Excellent
8	% of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET	5%	2.6%	Excellent
9	Smoking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of homes in Harrow that sign up to be smoke free Number of 4-week smoking quitters who attended the NHS smoking service per 100,000 population 	1000	1004	Excellent
		1260	Not available till 6 th June	Poor (Q3 results show this indicator as performing poorly)
10	Proportion of adults who say that people from different backgrounds get on well in their neighbourhood	57%	51%	Poor

11	Number of adults volunteering in Harrow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of socially excluded adult volunteers in Harrow • Number of adult volunteers in Harrow 	11,345	10,493	Intervention
12	Number of businesses, (new and existing) supported through the Harrow Mentoring package including mentoring, consultancy, diagnostics and case studies	23,224	20,923	Excellent
		83	104	

Tom Whiting
Interim Director of Strategy and Improvement
Harrow Council

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Harrow Strategic Partnership Board

13 May 2008

Comprehensive Area Assessment and Impact on the Partnership

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and identify current implications of the CAA on upcoming operations of the Harrow Strategic Partnership.

The HSP Board is requested to:

1. Take note of the report and CAA timeframes
2. Consider the implications of the CAA on the future development and management of the partnership

Introduction

The CAA will assess local area prospects and the quality of life for people living in the area. It will put the experience of people at the centre of the local assessment framework and focus on the needs of those who are vulnerable. It will recognise the importance of effective local partnership working, the enhanced role of Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements and the importance of councils in leading and shaping the communities they service.

The focus of the CAA will be on the outcomes across councils, health bodies, police authorities, fire and rescue authorities and others responsible for local public services, which are increasingly expected to work in partnership. This will mean that other public sector performance frameworks will be developed alongside, and will inform, the CAA.

The information that will be used by the CAA will be based on the new national indicator set and views of residents. The LAA will be the starting point for this but it will also be necessary to demonstrate the delivery of the remaining partnership outcomes in the national indicator set and provide a constructive and forward looking approach to risks associated with delivering these.

The CAA will use an area risk assessment, organisational assessments and performance information. The CAA will be expected to inform the partnership's plan for improvement by focusing the partnership on overcoming progress barriers.

The final CAA methodology is due to be published early in 2009 with the first set of results in October 2009. It is important that with the commencement of the new LAA in June 2008, the performance management processes are set and embedded during 2008 before the start of CAA next year.

Key to successful implementation will be the agreement of partner/agency organisations to their roles and responsibilities in providing performance data to be collated by Harrow Council.

1. Area Risk Assessment

The area risk assessment is likely to address the following key questions:

- How well does the partnership understand and assess the needs of its communities now and in the future?
- Does it use this understanding to inform its priorities?
- Does the partnership organise itself and ensure it has the capacity to deliver these priorities?
- Has it secure and effective arrangements to identify and manage the risks to achieving successful outcomes?
- Are improved outcomes likely to be achieved?

The partnership will need to demonstrate and provide document evidence of how the partnership is managing its activities and the likely progress towards achieving local goals. This can be achieved through the management of the Sustainable Community Plan, completed LAA delivery plans, LAA performance management information and other documentation as they are produced by the bodies to manage their activities. The partnership will need to secure effective arrangements to identify and manage the risks to achieving successful outcomes.

The governance arrangements of the partnership will need to develop in a way to ensure it has the capacity to deliver its priorities.

2. Revised Performance Framework Approach for the new Local Area Agreement

Currently each management group has a scorecard that consists of the LAA indicators they are accountable for and some additional measures that are important to the group e.g. Every Child Matters priorities.

The HSP Executive on the 15th April agreed that each management group's current scorecard will be updated to reflect the relevant 35 LAA indicators by the 1st July 08 and the scorecards will be developed and updated by nominated council super users of the Council's management information system. The super users have yet to be identified and allocated for all management groups by the Council. The overall owner of each scorecard will be the chair of the management group.

The introduction of the new 198 national indicator set includes a number of partnership indicators which sit outside of the 35 LAA indicators. To enable these indicators to be actively monitored by the delivery partners, and feed into the

comprehensive area assessment, these additional indicators will also be included as part of the respective management groups scorecard.

Each quarter an overarching LAA scorecard will be presented to the partnership to ensure any cross cutting indicators are reported on across the partnership. The LAA scorecard will be managed by the Policy and Partnership Team.

CAA Timeframe

June 2008	New LAA's signed
July 2008	Detailed CAA methodology consultation document published
Summer 08	Second round of action learning
October 2008	Places Survey runs
Late 08/09	CAA framework finalised and published
January/February 09	Final set of CPA results released
March 2009	First set of Place Survey results received
April 2009	CAA launched
October/November 09	First round of CAA results

Performance Framework 2008/9

HSP Strategic Scorecards

LAA (LAA PIs only)

Harrow Strategic Partnership

Safer Harrow

Children & Young People

Adult Health & Social Care

Sustainable Dev & enterprise management

Community Cohesion

LAA / NIS /
Local partnership PIs

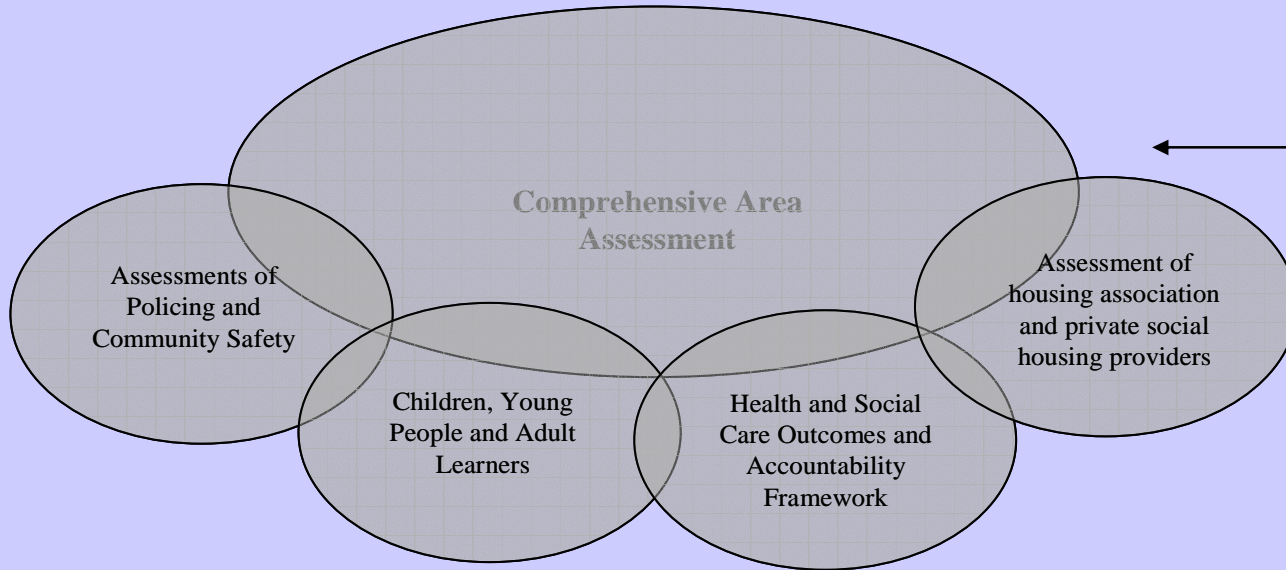
LAA / NIS /
Local partnership PIs

LAA / NIS /
Local partnership PIs

LAA / NIS /
Local partnership PIs

LAA / NIS /
Local partnership PIs

56



NIS
Full set of
NIS

Inter-relationships between performance frameworks

Harrow Strategic Partnership Board

13th May 2008

New Local Area Agreement Update

The HSP Board is asked to:

1. Note and endorse the list of agreed LAA targets
2. Agree to delegate authority to representatives from the lead organisations of the outstanding indicators to agree the final targets

Background

1. The HSP Board on the 20th March endorsed the final list of 36 indicators to be taken onto the next step of negotiating targets with GOL.
2. At the end of February Government released the final definitions for 138 of the 198 national indicators. The remaining definitions were released on the 1st April, which has delayed our ability to assess baselines and targets for 12 of the 36 LAA indicators.
3. The final handbook definitions identified 13 indicators from the 198, which will not be introduced until 2009/10 to allow further work on the indicators methodology. Two of these 13 are included in Harrow's LAA list of 36 indicators, NI 32 and NI 57. This means that targets for these two indicators will not be negotiated with GOL until the first annual refresh of the agreement.
4. Each indicator has been allocated a lead officer and organisation that are responsible for developing baselines and targets. If baselines are unknown at this stage due to the indicator being new, we are proposing to negotiate development of baselines in year 1 of the agreement against which we can then set targets for the following two years accordingly.
5. The first submission of our proposed targets and baselines were sent to GOL on the 7th April. Since this time we have undertaken discussion with GOL, the lead officers and supporting performance leads.
6. **Two** out of the 36 indicator targets have now been agreed by GOL and the indicator leads
7. **Thirty** still remain outstanding and will need to be agreed by 30th May 08.
8. Baselines will be established for 4 indicators in 2008/09 and targets agreed at the first annual refresh.

9. If targets have not been agreed for the outstanding indicators by the 30th May we will push for government to accept that these indicators will be signed on the basis that the targets will be resolved after sign off to avoid being pressured into agreeing unrealistic targets.

10. There is the possibility that agreement will not be reached on a small number of indicators throughout the negotiations. If this is the case we will carry these indicators over into our local section of the agreement. We may then be required to go back to our previous short list of indicators to bring our list of measures up to 35.

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