
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2009

Chairman: * Councillor David Ashton

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

* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillor Bill Stephenson also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 634 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I - Key Decision - Revised Housing Revenue Account Budget 2009-10 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009-10 to 2011-12

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced a report, which set out the revisions to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2009-10 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009-10 to 2011-12 approved by Council on 19 February 2009. The Government had announced in principal, reduction in rental increases for 2009-10 on 9 March 2009.

The Portfolio Holder outlined the background to the proposals before Members, as set out in the officer's report. He advised that this was good news for residents and that the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum would be consulted on the proposed reduction at their special meeting on 29 June 2009. Residents were, however, requested to continuing paying their bills correctly until the revised bills were issued.

Having approved the revised Medium Term Budget Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account, it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Housing Revenue Account for 2009/10, as attached at Appendix 1 to this recommendation, and the revised average rent increase of 3% effective from 6 April 2009, be approved.

Reason for Recommendation: To publish the revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and rents for 2009/10, in line with Government policy for rent setting.

(See also Minute 640).

APPENDIX 1**Housing Revenue Account 2009-10 to 2011-12**

	Budget 2009-10	Budget 2010-11	Budget 2011-12	Comments
Expenditure				
Employee Costs	1,928,850	1,918,280	1,958,590	Pay inflation assumed as 2%
Supplies & Services	444,830	464,830	444,830	Increase 2010-11 represents bi-annual tenant survey Inflation assumed at 16.7% 09-10 and 3% annually thereafter
Utility cost (Water & Gas)	626,250	645,040	664,390	
Estate & Sheltered Services	1,956,980	1,988,600	2,020,950	
Central Recharges	1,971,700	2,020,990	2,071,530	Inflation assumed at 2.5%
Operating Expenditure	6,928,610	7,037,740	7,160,290	
Contingency - general	200,000	200,000	200,000	Provision for unforeseen expenditure
Charges for Capital	6,917,220	7,104,390	6,971,940	Includes £123k HARP costs, CRI @ 5.45%, interest on balances @ average 2.1%
Contribution to Repairs Account	4,800,680	4,800,680	4,800,680	
RCCO	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	Annual contribution
Bad or Doubtful Debts	250,000	250,000	250,000	
HRA Subsidy	6,213,840	6,700,760	7,374,530	Based on amended final determination issued by CLG [payment redistributed to other parts of the country]
Total Expenditure	26,310,350	27,093,570	27,757,440	
Income				
Rent Income – Dwellings	-21,999,830	-23,168,180	-24,351,790	Average revised increase 2009-10, 3% in line with Government rent model
Rent Income – Non Dwellings	-869,840	-882,010	-894,490	Average increase of 2.5% for garages. Commercial premises reflect lease agreements

	Budget 2009-10	Budget 2010-11	Budget 2011-12	Comments
Service Charges - Tenants	-1,150,430	-1,184,940	-1,220,490	Average increase 2009-10 5.5% in line with Government rent model
Service Charges - Leaseholders	-424,350	-424,350	-424,350	Average rent increase 2009-10 10.6% reflecting leaseholder costs to be recovered
Facility Charges (Water & Gas)	-487,480	-499,490	-511,490	
Interest	-17,000	-17,000	-17,000	
Other Income	-8,010	-8,010	-8,010	
Transfer from General Fund	-83,000	-83,000	-83,000	Amenities shared by Council and non- Council residents.
Total Income	-25,039,940	-26,266,980	-27,510,620	
In Year Deficit / (Surplus)	1,270,410	826,590	246,820	
BALANCE carried forward	-3,799,870	-2,973,280	-2,726,460	
BALANCE Business Plan	-4,764,000	-5,319,000	-5,460,000	

PART II - MINUTES630. **Declarations of Interest:**

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

631. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

632. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

633. **Public Questions:**

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

1.

Questioner: Mr David House, Chairman of the Harrow Forum for People with a Learning Disability, Harrow Mencap

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

Question: "What is the difference between a day centre and the new neighbourhood resource centres"?

Answer: Day Centres, historically, have been places where service users do certain types of activities and we feel that the move to Neighbourhood Resource Centres is much richer. It is much more about making use of the personalisation and the personal budgets, helping people to take real advantage of those and providing more resources and assistance around improving the types of opportunities. This is to help equip people to start activities beyond the confines of a Day Centre.

Supplemental Question: What are the activities going on and is it going to cost the service users more money, including the carers and the taxpayer? I do not think there are that many more activities out in the community and I am just worried that people at the centres will be sitting in parks, not doing very much.

Supplemental Answer: I share your concern to make sure we get really good value for money. I do not want to be setting up institutions that just suck in money without any kind of benefit. We are keen to make sure that those services provided at the new Neighbourhood Resource Centres are helping people to take better advantage of opportunities. We are planning to offer IT courses, working with the college at North West London. We are looking at how people can get support to plan better use their personal budgets. There is going to be issues around particularly the Byron Centre, which is next door to the Leisure Centre, in relation to the use of leisure facilities. It is going to be looking at what people's needs are and helping them to use their personal budgets in a better way and to make more use of other resources throughout the Council. The centres these will be places where people will come and then be given assistance, guidance and support to make a better use of things that are on offer in the wider community. I want to make sure that people have as many opportunities to have a normal life as you and I, and to enjoy life as you and I do, in the community. The link with resource centres should be seen as helping equip people to do that.

2.

Questioner: Yvonne Lee

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

Question: "What safeguarding procedures exist for adults who were seen as vulnerable as children but do not meet the criteria for adult services?"

Answer: This is of real concern and it particularly comes in with the transition age between people who are children receiving care and support and then making that transition from 18 into the adult world. We are concerned as we have duties to children up to 18 but then the types of duties we have become much more focused and restricted. I have asked our Corporate Director of Adults and Housing to have a look at what happens in Harrow to make sure that there are not people falling through gaps that do need assistance and who are not covered at the moment. As you know, it is dependent on where they fit under the FACS criteria. If they do not fit that FACS criteria then unfortunately, they are not helped and so we want to make sure that people are not being missed that ought to be supported.

Supplemental Question: Could you also look at the numbers affected by this?

Supplemental Answer: I understand that it is part of a nationwide Mencap campaign on this issue. I think it is very helpful to have a prompt to make sure that we are getting things right. Clearly I do hope that we are and we will be reviewing things to make sure we are and perhaps we could report back to Cabinet, perhaps after the summer, just to give an update as this is an important issue.

[Note: In accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 16.4, the questioners each asked a supplemental question which was additionally answered].

634. **Councillor Questions:**

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

1.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

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

Question: "As Chairman of the Fairtrade Steering Group can you explain why the Teachers' Centre does not offer Fairtrade products such as coffee, and can he tell me what steps he has taken to ensure that Fairtrade products are on offer at all Council outlets?"

Answer: Well, we do offer Fair-trade Tea, Coffee, Cookies and Biscuits and so forth in the Staff Restaurant and also some of the products in the Hospitality Service, but we have trialled other Fair-trade products but they did not sell, resulting in waste. The same went for the Teachers' Centre Restaurant, which used to offer a variety of Fair-trade products (tea, coffee, snacks and so forth) but again, there was a lot of wastage as these products either were not being used or for that matter, purchased.

The specification for catering at the Neighbourhood Resource Centres, which crops up a little later, does require contractors to source tea and coffee from Fair-trade suppliers, in accordance with Council policy.

Supplemental Question: I would like to draw attention to the fact that several of us went to a governors' conference and Fair-Trade coffee was not on offer. I understand the catering was offered by the Teachers' Centre

Catering. Can we be assured that when we have conferences and similar events that Fair-trade products will be offered and could you advise what the position is on other Council outlets?

Supplemental Answer:

I think I responded to that but what I would add, out of interest, there are quite a lot of changes going on. Cadbury's Dairy Milk, I understand, is about to become a Fair-Trade product and Tate & Lyle Sugar are about to adopt on their own brand label, Fair-Trade. So I think, although we want to do our bit as well, it is almost going to happen automatically. As a Council, we are keen on the Fair-Trade concept, as you know, there is a Fair-Trade Committee – it has not gone as fast as I would have liked but we are pushing it on. Having said that, there has to be a balance and we are not going to have Fair-Trade products that nobody wants but we will try and encourage those that people find acceptable.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

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

Question: "Is it true that the caterers at the new Neighbourhood Resource Centres are being offered subsidies by the Council to provide their services?"

Answer: The provision of services for catering at the Neighbourhood Resource Centres is presently the subject of a tendering process and we hope to appoint a single provider to provide the catering in all three centres. Having said that, it is not simple catering because the expectation, a bit like the Healthy Living Café, the Red Café in Wealdstone, will be to encourage adults with learning disabilities, to be part of the delivery of that service and that will not be free cost for the Council. I hope you would agree, that will be a good cost to incur. We estimate that it will be about £15,000 a Neighbourhood Centre.

We are keen to attract 3rd sector providers to provide that service and at the same time, not just simply to provide hospitality but also to assist in the process for those with disabilities.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Tony Ferrari, Portfolio Holder for Major Contracts and Property (answered by Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane)

Question: "Can you assure me that the Churchill Place underground car park will open again under Council operation and, if so, when?"

Answer: I actually have the Churchill Place Car park on my Portfolio patch.

As Members will be aware, there have been some real problems with Churchill Place. Vandals have got into it, sprayed cars that have been left under there, all sorts of other activities have been going on, which has made it pretty much of a nightmare. Police have been called out on numerous occasions.

Officers have been working closely with the Police to see what can be done to upgrade the security provisions and to put more protection in to stop those people who should not be gaining access, from gaining access. At present, there are 9 vehicles in the location that are in the process of being removed and we anticipate that full temporary closure of the car park will happen from next Monday for approximately 28 days. We expect the car park to re-open towards the end of July/ the start of August. In that time of closure, we will be putting in upgrades to the security devices and so forth and to make sure that when it is back in use, the usage will be strictly controlled. Only those residents who

should have access, will have access.

Supplemental Question: Can you assure me about the charges that you will be making when you open it. Will they remain the same or are you intending to put them up?

Supplemental Answer: We will be looking at that. At the moment, I can not say one way or the other but we will be looking to make better use of it. Especially as it is close to the train station and only about a quarter of bays were being properly used, before the spate of break-ins occurred. This would suggest that we ought to be making better use of that resource, including making it a place that other people could rent over and above the residents, to recoup some of the money, just as if they were parking in the long stay car park at the station. Perhaps others who have business at the Council, might be interested in having access during the day to a secure location. I am sure that there are many people who might fall into that category and perhaps, already do. We would also want to make sure that we recoup some of that money back for the Housing Revenue Account.

Secondly, we are also, as you know, looking at the parking enforcement that is taking place on certain Council car parks and we want to make sure that this is part of that process.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

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

Question: "Harrow Council has recently suspended its 1.5% surcharge for those paying parking fines by credit card. Does the Council allow payment for other services by credit card, if so which ones, and is a surcharge made for such payments?"

Answer: The Council accepts credit cards in payment for most of its services, and up until last week, as you say, made a 1.5% charge for use of a credit card, including Council Tax. The figure mirrors the charges, so we just recover the cost. I would stress that customers obviously have plenty of choice, they can either come in and pay by cash, if they really want to, they can pay by cheque, they can pay by debit card, for which there is no charge. There's no charge for any of those three.

The computer system which is used for payments and particularly for credit cards, does not differentiate between the particular avenues to which the charge is made. So, for example, like a particular lever if you wish, both for PCNs and also, for that matter, for Council Tax. So, for the time being, that has been suspended pending the clarification of the legal position, on the credit card charge for PCNs in Camden. Pending our review of that, we are looking at the computer system to amend that, so we can differentiate it and only isolate the charge on PCNs, not other services.

[Note: In accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 17.3, Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane answered question 3. In accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 17.4, Councillor Stephenson asked supplemental questions in relation to questions 1 and 3 which were additionally answered].

635. **Forward Plan 1 June - 30 September 2009:**

The Chairman reported that the item 'Learning and Development Managed Service' had been deferred to July. The item 'IT Strategy and Delivery Model' had been deferred until the Autumn.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 June – 30 September 2009.

636. **Progress on Scrutiny Projects:**

The Chairman reported that the update report to July Cabinet would identify projects included in the scrutiny work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

Members noted that Scrutiny had recently won a prize, which would be presented at Council on 9 July 2009.

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

637. **Revenue and Capital Outturn 2008-09:**

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the Council's revenue and capital outturn position for 2008-09. She advised that the position at the end of 2008/09 was positive and that a £4.5million under spend had been delivered. This had enabled the Council to invest in projects and provided the opportunities to increase the level of reserves and to stabilise finances in preparation for the difficult economic times ahead.

Members commended the officers and their elected colleagues for their considerable effort and work to reach this stronger financial position.

RESOLVED: That (1) the revenue and capital outturn position for 2008-09 be noted;

(2) the forecast position for general balances be noted and the additional contribution of £1.250m be approved;

(3) the recommendation on the application of the revenue underspend remaining on the Directorates' revenue outturn of £3.250m be approved;

(4) the liabilities be noted and the contributions to various provisions and earmarked reserves, as set out in paragraph 16 of the report of the Corporate Director of Finance, be approved;

(5) the timetable for audit committee meetings and external audit review be noted;

(6) the carry forward on Capital Projects, as set out in appendix 3 to the report of the Corporate Director of Finance, be approved;

(7) the position on debt outstanding be noted and decisions on the write offs, as set out in paragraph 17 of the report of the Corporate Director of Finance, be delegated to the Leader of the Council;

(8) any further decisions required in relation to the outturn for 2008-09, particularly carry forward requests and contributions to provisions and reserves, be delegated to the Leader of the Council.

Reason for Decision: To confirm the financial position as at 31 March 2009.

638. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2008-09:**

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced a report, which set out the summary of Treasury Management activities for 2008-09. The report was positive and outlined the favourable position in relation to lending, borrowing and investment activities. The report also set out how the Council had performed against prudential indicators and the changes to the accounting regulations.

RESOLVED: That the outturn position for Treasury Management activities for 2008-09 be noted.

Reason for Decision: To promote effective financial management, comply with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003 and other relevant guidance and to keep Cabinet Members informed of Treasury Management activities and performance.

639. **Key Decision - Future Partnership Governance Arrangements for Adult Health and Social Care in Harrow:**

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced a report, which set out the findings from the recent consultation about the future partnership governance arrangements for adult health and social care in Harrow. He drew attention to the structure of the Board, which was set out in the report.

The Divisional Director of Commissioning and Partnerships reported that the new arrangements placed users and carers at the heart of the governance arrangements

and placed a pre-eminence on safeguarding. He added that the proposals separated executive decision making from the partnership arrangements.

The Corporate Director of Adults and Housing advised that the report had been considered by the Harrow Chief Executives' Group and had been fully supported. The Primary Care Trust Board would also be considering it shortly and he expected that the proposals would be agreed.

RESOLVED: That (1) the proposal to replace the Adult Health and Social Care Management Group with Adult Health and Well-being Partnership be agreed;

(2) the proposal to establish an Adult Joint Commissioning Board be agreed;

(3) the proposed terms of reference for both bodies, as set out at Appendices 4 and 5 to the report of the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing, be agreed;

(4) responsibility for decisions about the structure of the delivery groups supporting the work of the Partnership be delegated to the Adult Health and Well-being Partnership;

(5) the intention to strengthen the role of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board be noted and to clarify the reporting lines, consistent with the structure at Appendix 3 to the report of the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing.

Reason for Decision: To improve the current partnership governance arrangements for adult health and social care in Harrow in order to provide direction for this service taking into account local needs, national direction and the Harrow Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement priorities.

640. **Key Decision - Revised Housing Revenue Account Budget 2009-10 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2009-10 to 2011-12:**
(See also Recommendation I).

Further to Recommendation I, having agreed that Council be requested to approve the Housing Revenue Account for 2009-10 and to agree to the revised average rent increase of 3% effective from 6 April 2009, it was

RESOLVED: That the revised Medium Term Budget Strategy for the Housing Revenue Account, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services, be approved.

Reason for Decision: To publish the revised Housing Revenue Account budget and rents for 2009-10, in line with Government policy for rent setting.

641. **Key Decision - Building Schools for the Future:**
The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development introduced a report, which provided Cabinet with proposals to secure the funding to support Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in Harrow and an outline governance structure. She advised that BSF was the Government's secondary school investment programme that aimed to transform secondary education by the rebuild or refurbishment of every secondary school. She emphasised that the report detailed the indicative funding should Harrow enter into the programme and that no money would be spent until entry.

The Director of Schools and Children's Development reported that the revenue and outturn report included the £400,000 set aside for BSF. Much of the resource required related to officer time. She added that the four schools identified for the first wave of the programme, should Harrow enter, were enthusiastic and willing to commit school capital and revenue funding to support the project.

The Chairman proposed an amendment, which was supported by Cabinet, to Annex B to the officer report, in that in terms of the Strategic Project Board, the Portfolio Holder for Major Contracts and Property be included at the pre-contract and finalisation stage.

RESOLVED: That (1) the indicative funding for the BSF Programme in Harrow be agreed, which would only be required once formal entry into the programme was confirmed;

(2) the proposed governance structure for the BSF programme be agreed 'in principle';

(3) responsibility to agree the final Readiness to Deliver submission to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in accordance with timescales to be confirmed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families be delegated to the Leader of the

Council and the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development, in consultation with the Director of Schools and Children's Development.

Reason for Decision: To confirm commitment to BSF in Harrow and to enable the completion of the Readiness to Deliver submission in line with the Partnerships for Schools and Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Guidance.

642. **Place Shaping Directorate - Prospectus 2009/10:**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced a report, which set out the initial prospectus for the new Place Shaping Directorate. The prospectus was a statement of intent and she drew attention to page 108 of the report which detailed how the Directorate would support the community strategic vision. She added that place shaping activity would ensure co-ordination across all projects.

The Corporate Director of Place Shaping advised that the prospectus had been developed in consultation with key partners. Staff from across the Council would be involved in place shaping activities, which would aim to maximise the Council's potential.

RESOLVED: That the Place Shaping Directorate prospectus 2009/10 be endorsed.

Reason for Decision: The Place Shaping Strategic prospectus had been compiled to provide an overview of the drivers for, and the Council's response to, the Place Shaping Agenda.

The Community Strategy set out the Local Area Agreement vision for the future of Harrow. Place Shaping activities had a key role in shaping that future. This document was intended to provide a platform for future discussion and in particular coordination of activities across both the public and private sectors, which would ensure that Harrow remained a great place to live, to work in, to learn in, do business in and to visit.

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

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced a report, which sought adoption of the Tourism Strategy 2009-12 following the consultation exercise conducted on the draft strategy from 16 February to 31 March 2009. The report detailed the Council's assets in terms of tourism and she added that the Council hoped to encourage people to visit Harrow and to spend money. The strategy encouraged growth and investment.

The Corporate Director of Place Shaping advised that the strategy included objectives in relation to skills, reducing carbon emissions and partnership working.

RESOLVED: That the Tourism Strategy 2009-2012, attached at Appendix A to the report of the Corporate Director of Place Shaping, be adopted.

Reason for Decision: The tourism strategy played a significant role in the Council's economic development remit and also played a key role in maximising the benefit of the Olympic Games for the benefit of the local economy.

644. **Key Decision - Local Development Scheme - Revision:**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced a report, which stated that in January 2009 the Council had submitted its revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) to Government Office for London (GOL) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) for formal approval. GOL and the GLA had raised concerns in relation to the long timetable proposed for preparing the Harrow Core Strategy. Following a series of protracted discussions with both GOL and the GLA, and in response to their concerns, the Council had further amended its LDS to substantially bring forward delivery of the Harrow Core Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder advised that she was confident that the Core Strategy would be submitted to the inspectorate by March 2010. The strategy would give stability and a steer to the Council's partners.

RESOLVED: That the draft revised Local Development Scheme be approved for resubmission to the Secretary of State and the Greater London Authority.

Reason for Decision: The Council was required, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to maintain an up-to-date Local Development Scheme, the purpose of which was to keep the public informed as to the Local Development Framework documents the Council was intending to prepare and when, and at what stage the public could get involved in that process. Without gaining the formal approval

of the GLA and GOL for a revised LDS, the Council would not be able to meet this requirement. To overcome the objections of GOL and the GLA, amendments to the revised LDS had been made to bring forward delivery of the LDF and, in particular, the Core Strategy.

645. **Member Development - Future Operating Arrangements:**

The Chairman advised that this item had been deferred in order to enable more detailed consideration of the proposals and to gain feedback from the Charter mark assessment the following week.

646. **Any Other Urgent Business - Membership of Cabinet Bodies:**

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, this item was admitted late to the agenda to enable Cabinet to consider proposed changes in membership to one of its Panels and the Harrow Admissions Forum as a matter of urgency. This would enable the changes to be implemented prior to the next meetings of the bodies concerned.

RESOLVED: That (1) Councillor Raj Ray be appointed as second reserve to the Education Admissions and Awards Advisory Panel;

(2) the appointments to the Harrow Admissions Forum be revised so that only two Members, Councillors Anjana Patel and Bill Stephenson, be appointed.

Reason for Decision: To enable the changes in membership to be implemented prior to the next meetings of the bodies concerned.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.23 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR DAVID ASHTON
Chairman