

CABINET MINUTES

13 JANUARY 2011

Chairman:	* Councillor Bill Stephenson	
Councillors:	* Bob Currie	* Graham Henson
	* Margaret Davine	* Thaya Idaikkadar
	* Keith Ferry	* Phillip O'Dell
	* Brian Gate	* Mrs Rekha Shah
	* Mitzi Green	
In attendance: (Councillors)	Susan Hall	Minute 125
	Jerry Miles	Minute 125 & 128
	Paul Osborn	Minute 128

* Denotes Member present

121. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following personal interests were declared:

Agenda Items 8 and 11 – Customer Contact Assess and Decide and Corporate Services

Councillor Paul Osborn, as a former Portfolio Holder, declared that he had previously been in receipt of hospitality from Capita. He would remain in the room to listen to the discussions on the reports.

Agenda Item 16 – Delegation of Authority to Process Individual Grant Agreements

During the course of the meeting, Councillor Brian Gate declared that he served on the Management Committee of the Citizens Advice Bureau, an organisation which received a grant from the Council. He would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and decision making on this item.

122. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2010, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

123. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were submitted.

124. Public Questions

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

1.

Questioner: David Ashton

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Will the Leader please clarify what information has been made available to opposition Councillors to review, understand and scrutinise the budget, and in particular whether the Impact Assessment schedules prepared by each Directorate have been made available, as was the case by the previous administration?

Answer: Thank you for the question. You will know that opposition Councillors get regular thorough and fair briefings from the Section 151 Officer and that she and her colleagues are always available to give information that opposition Members require.

The budget process this year has been very challenging. However, the process of setting the budget is very similar to that in previous years, despite the very late publication of the settlement. The Draft Revenue report to December 2010 Cabinet sets out the proposals which the administration will be taking forward together with other proposals when the budget process is finished. The impact assessment supporting these proposals and any future proposals will be made available to the opposition once they have been fully completed with full risk and equalities impact assessments.

Procedures being followed this year are exactly the same as the process was last year and I have checked with the officers that that is the case.

Supplemental Question: Is it not appropriate to clarify as much as possible to opposition Councillors, in the way it was done

previously, and I emphasise the fact that the December draft budget in 2009 was almost complete, unlike the draft budget which you presented?

Supplemental Answer: You will understand the very difficult circumstances of the budget this year. When we put our draft budget to Cabinet we were not aware of the settlement and there is so much the administration and officers need to understand.

I have instructed officers to provide as much information as was provided previously. I will try to do exactly the same as the previous administration was doing. If information is delayed, you will understand the very exceptional circumstances this year.

Last year was the first year, as a Member of the opposition, I received impact assessments before Christmas and have also previously received them at the end of January.

The Section 151 Officer will brief the opposition in the same way as in previous years and I have not given her any contrary directions, quite the contrary.

2.

Questioner: Mrs E M Kinnear

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Portfolio for Environment and Community Safety

Question: In reply to a Question put at Cabinet on 15 December 2010 you stated that an estimated 13000 Smartwater kits had (so far) been installed in Harrow households.

What is the likely date by which distribution/installation of the kits to all households in the Borough will be completed please?

Answer: Thank you. Although the product is available on request to all households, it was never expected when we signed up to the contract in February 2010 that every household would choose to take up the offer. Therefore, there is a projected timescale to finish to distribute Smartwater over the next two years.

Supplemental Question: I do not think that that the information is readily available to the public. We understand that the Smartwater kits can be installed by the Police and the SNTs only; that they are having brigading efforts in the Wards to get this done across the borough as soon as possible and it

would seem that there is a communication problem. So if the estimated timescale is two years as oppose to a shorter period of say one year, perhaps that could be advertised more widely?

Supplemental Answer: Yes, I fully take you suggestion on board. The SNTs are the delivery organisation, and the partners need to advertise widely.

3.

Questioner: Jeremy Zeid

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Given that Harrow received the third best grant settlement in London, the Council being £1 million better off than you initially thought, will you assure us that you will protect frontline services from any cuts you will be making?

Answer: It is true to say that the Council received a better settlement than many other London boroughs but, as an outer London borough, the Council has always had a lower grant and does not receive many of the grants which other London boroughs received. Basically, there was not so much grant to cut.

However, the grant to Harrow entails a very severe cut and the Council will need to make total savings of £64m over the next four years, a third of our controllable budget. It means that other boroughs are a lot worse off than we are but they do start from a higher base.

The settlement was announced very late in the day and the detail is, and still is, very difficult to understand, even for local government finance experts. The figures about the settlement published by the government were also extremely misleading.

They included, for example, £2.6m funding that is actually going to the PCT in the first instance and was subject to a formal agreement between the Council and the PCT; so this money will probably not be available to sort many, if any, of the Council's existing activities. There was an assumption that in-year cuts were permanent in the base figure.

The government excluded significant amounts of grant that were stopping altogether and did not include any

allowance for inflation or pressures and there are still some grants that have not even been announced. The final picture is not yet in place.

The impact of the settlement has also been masked because there was so much movement between funding stream, formula grant, area based grant and specific grants, and the base position was not clear. It took officers several weeks to go through the details and understand the impact.

The briefing note which you refer to in the question was produced at an early stage and does not reflect the final picture that has emerged. In the draft revenue budget presented to Cabinet, the administration made a deliberately pessimistic estimate that it would need to save £19m in the next financial year. Assuming that the PCT funding is not available to support the Council, the settlement is worse than the position which we predicted in the December budget by about £400,000. Given the continued uncertainty, this could possibly worsen.

The administration is doing everything in its power to protect frontline services but the scale and the speed of the cuts is unprecedented. Under the Better Deal for Residents programme, the administration put forward a large number of innovative projects which are helping us to make significant savings, whilst protecting and indeed enhancing services. Likewise, we have made savings by working together with other Councils, saving money by sharing backroom services, economies of scale or through extra procurement leverage. We continue to look at every way possible to make savings without cutting the services to those most in need, for example, through procurement, income generation, management restructuring, and voluntary severance schemes. To give one example, we saved £500,000 on the provision of domiciliary care, working through West London Alliance and at the same time ensuring that every provider is of two star quality or above.

Supplemental Question: Library staff have lost their jobs and the libraries are now under threat, the roads are in a state of disrepair, the Youth Offending Team is being cut, and there will be charges for Special Needs Schools. It appears that the balances will be used. Could you explain just how frontline services are being protected as per your manifesto?

Supplemental Answer: The administration is having to prioritise. It is making sure that it targets services to the people who need them the most.

In libraries, the Council has saved a considerable amount of time and is providing a superb service. Opening times have been extended and the main library now opens on a Sunday. The administration is intent on making them into community hubs.

The administration is defending frontline services and, in many cases, enhancing services. An organisation cannot make £19m cuts without hurting and doing things which one would not want to do. The administration has been looking at alternatives and will continue to try and defend frontline services.

125. Councillor Questions

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

1.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Do you believe that openness and transparency improve the decision making processes of the Council, and will you therefore personally ensure that we will, with the utmost urgency, receive the budget Challenge Panel background papers we have continually requested?

Answer: Given the financial challenges faced by the Council, it is entirely appropriate for senior officers and Portfolio Holders to confidentially discuss ideas about how the Council can deliver improved services whilst meeting challenges.

What you have requested are draft documents, used in the early stages of these discussions and not considered to be suitable for release. They are confidential or incomplete and it would not be appropriate to release them.

Proposals which are taken forward are set out in the Draft Revenue Budget. I have instructed officers to make the template supporting these proposals available to the opposition once they have been fully completed with full risk and equality impact assessments. Procedures being followed this year and the information which is provided are exactly the same in the budget process last year, when the conservative administration was in power.

Supplemental Question: When exactly will the opposition get these papers that you have repeatedly promised and given that you have repeatedly broken that promise?

Supplemental Answer: As I indicated to you, I can remember well when I received the impact assessments as a Member of the opposition, the last day of January, so I do not intend taking any lessons from the opposition on this.

The problems with the budget this year are exceptional. The Council did not actually receive the settlement before the draft budget was put forward. The administration also need to ensure that the risk assessments and the equality impact assessments are complete when released. Officers are working hard to get the impact assessments out to you as quickly as possible.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question How are the additional costs of preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) – £263,000 over the next two years – being met?

Answer: The costs of the LDF outlined in the report to Cabinet in October 2010 are being met in Year One in two ways:
(provided by Cllr Ferry)

- Firstly, through the recycling of in-year savings proposed within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This releases £219,000 to cover the forecast Year One cost of the LDF of £282,000 and I will come back to these savings shortly.
- Secondly, the balance of the Year One cost is being met from the established project budget managed by the LDF team which has been rolled forward for next year. That was £63,000 which was originally in the budget.

The Year Two costs for the LDF are being met through the allocation of £44,000 from the Planning Delivery Grant received by the Council in respect of previous performance against planning application targets over recent years, along with the LDF project budget as Year One that is £63,000. The measures to achieve the

in-year £252,000 savings from the Planning Division in Year One comprise:

- the removal of market factor supplements to Planning and Building Control staff - £91,000;
- the deletion of two senior management posts which is now concluded and restructuring of the service, together with the removal of dedicated support to the Divisional Director of Planning – a saving of £106,000;
- the capture of a greater proportion of the costs of providing planning services from the beneficiaries of planning permissions by extending the scope and revising pre-application charges - that is an increase of income of £35,000;
- finally, the use of Section 106 receipts secured to enable monitoring of planning applications and the associated obligation to cover part of the costs of the Planning Enforcement Office – that is £20,000.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: Aside from improving housing and garage rent collections, what are you doing to recover all funds owed to the HRA, as you guaranteed would happen at Cabinet last June?

Answer: The administration certainly did not guarantee that it indicated that best endeavours would be made.

(provided by

Cllr

Stephenson)

The HRA, which the current administration has been left with by the previous over the last four years has been in a lamentable position with deficit budgets being propped up by reserves. This has meant, for example, that there has been little revenue available to carry out external decoration with the subsequent serious deterioration of all Council housing stock.

The administration is taking decisive steps to put this mismanagement right and all steps are outlined in the draft HRA, as put forward to December 2010 Cabinet.

Supplemental Question: I accept unreservedly we inherited four years' ago a complete disaster but the reality was, the steps taken were in place to put things right. Can you tell me therefore, what are you going to do to recover the monies specifically from freeholders?

Supplemental Answer: The administration is ceasing to make a £500,000 revenue contribution to capital. It is going to recover charges from leaseholders and tenants in a timely manner, reduce turnaround times for empty properties, a new returnable standard, finalise the tenant recharge policy, make accurate and timely Section 20 charges, and introduce new charges for community centres. In addition, the administration are introducing a new and transfer service change model and reviewing facility change to individual properties.

In addition, the Council has been exploring the potential to charge for services to freeholders. The legal position is currently being assessed in order to determine whether extensive consultation could take place with freeholders on this issue.

4.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Bob Currie, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Question: Do you think there has been sufficient consultation with tenants on your plans to raise housing rents by 7.46%?

Answer: The Council has always used Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLCF) as the main consultative vehicle to agree changes to the rent. On 5 January, changes to the rental strategy, agreed the previous year, was discussed. The residents in attendance decided that TLCF was not sufficiently representative of tenants across the borough and therefore they could not make this decision. A follow-up meeting has therefore been agreed with the Harrow Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Association (HFTRA) on 20 January and following that meeting, the Council will determine what further consultation, if any, is required.

Supplemental Question: Do you think there are too many freeholders on the TLCF, as it is a tenants' and leaseholders' forum?

Supplemental Answer: No, but I am actually setting up a Panel to review all resident engagement structures and the TLCF.

5.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Mrs Rekha Shah, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: Regarding Harrow Leisure Centre, can you provide us with the complaints figures for Q3 2010-11 (in interim form if final figures are not available), as they are key to making a rational decision on this issue? In addition, can you provide the figures for the other five indicators, as set out in para 2.8 of the report, for each quarter of 2010-11?

Answer: The draft Quarter 3 complaints figures show a drop from 127 in Q2 to 88 in Q3. Other statistics are as follows:

Visits:

Q1 - 274,221

Q2 - 186,556

Q3 - 205,147

Days lost:

Q1 - 0

Q2 - 0.5 (Loss of mains electricity for 6 hours)

Q3 - 0

Security Incidents:

Q1 - 0

Q2 - 0

Q3 - 1 Alarm incident Christmas Day

H&S contraventions

Q1 - 0

Q2 - 0

Q3 - 0

The Portfolio Holder agreed to provide the answer in writing.

6.

Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Rekha Shah, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services

Question: At November's meeting, a Council Motion relating to twinning and other issues was referred to your department for a report to be prepared on it. Can you update us on the progress of this report?

Answer: The Motion on twinning was only to explore the possibilities. Accordingly, officers will be conducting a review into the feasibility of creating links with a number of organisations around the world which could offer economic or cultural benefits to Harrow residents and businesses at no cost to the Council. This study will be presented for consideration to senior managers and Cabinet in due course and officers will be working with many schools and communities where such links exist and possibly link with and learn from.

Cllr Hall: The question was the progress of this report. Has it started/finished?

Cllr Shah: The administration has not started. It is not a priority.

7.

Questioner: Councillor Paul Osborn

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: Are you content with the processes for engaging with Councillors from all parties in the decision making process?

Answer: Any Leader who says he is content should not be a Leader, so the answer is 'No' of course. I am never content with anything. I always want things to be better but I do think our processes are working well and it seems to me there has been a vast improvement that most, and I emphasise most, of Scrutiny is working, for example, with the setting up of the Health Sub-Committee.

Another example I would commend is the Stakeholder Reference Group concept which has continued and developed in Children's Services. This not only involves excellent Councillor cross-party working, but also involves the unions and other stakeholders. So it is not only where they are working with Councillors but, actually engaging with partners as well.

I would also commend the way that Councillors from both parties work on Corporate Parenting. Councillors from all parties were engaged in the Let's Talk campaign and I welcome that.

On the other hand, there are examples where things are

not working as well as they might. It takes two to get together and work together and I can always think of ways of doing things better.

Supplemental Question: Are you aware that of the seven Committees that you are Chairman of, three of them have not met in your time as Leader, including the Communications Review Working Group, at a time when you have drastically changed the Communication Plan, reissued and re-launched Harrow People and are proposing to make significant cuts to the Communication budget?

How can you seriously say that you are engaging Councillors from other parties when almost half of the Committees that you chair with other Councillors from other parties on, have not yet met?

Supplemental Answer: With regard to the Communications Review Working Group, as you know, there have been significant changes and the Council has appointed an Interim Head of Communications. When the Communications Department has stabilised, the administration will certainly consider convening a meeting of the Communications Review Working Group.

126. Forward Plan January 2011 - April 2011

The Leader of the Council advised that agenda items 8 - Customer Contact Assess and Decide, 10 - London Borough Grants Scheme 2011/12, and 11 - Corporate Services on the Cabinet agenda were considered to be Key, but were not listed on the January 2011 Forward Plan. Cabinet would be taking decisions on the reports in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 January 2011 – 30 April 2011.

127. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

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

RESOLVED ITEMS

128. Budget

Due to the proximity of meetings, a reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12 January 2011 on the Question and Answer Session with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive was tabled at Cabinet to allow its consideration in conjunction with a presentation from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader welcomed the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet. In their presentation they stated:

Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- that due to the lack of clarity on the budget, the Q&A Session had been delayed from December 2010 to January 2011 and he thanked the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Corporate Director Finance for attending the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- it was important that Scrutiny was given an opportunity to challenge the Executive and act as a 'critical' friend, particularly at a time when difficult decisions lay ahead;
- it was acknowledged that Cabinet was well advanced in delivering the necessary savings. Scrutiny, as a 'critical' friend, was seeking clarity on the services that would be affected and areas where efficiencies were expected to be delivered;
- Scrutiny recognised that difficult decisions would be required and that many of these would be beyond the control of the Council;
- Scrutiny believes that the Council should be robust in its negotiations with its partners and ensure that it did not become a victim of cost shunting and inherit costs and joint projects were not jeopardized by reduced funding in areas which require partnership commitment. Reduced short term funding would have negative long term implications for the Council and its partners.

Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- Scrutiny had a key role to play in the challenge of the budget process and that it was disappointed with the information made available on the budget;
- it was critical that the budget was based on correct assumptions. Scrutiny considered the inflation figure over optimistic, as recent economic forecasts indicated that inflation was likely to be in the region of 4%;
- Scrutiny was seeking assurances that all the savings in the budget were accounted for, that proper impact assessments had been undertaken and the proposals would not impact disproportionately on particular communities, such as the elderly as pressures in costs as a result of an ageing population were likely to increase;
- Scrutiny wished to be involved in the issue over the need to bring Trading Standards service in-house, as indications were that significant savings could be achieved as a result.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for their presentation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, set out in the reference tabled at the meeting, be noted;
- (2) the presentation by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman be noted.

Reason for Decision: To ensure veracity of budget.

[Call-in does not apply to this decision.]

129. Key Decision - Customer Contact Assess and Decide

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services introduced the report, which set out the case for expansion of the services offered as part of Access Harrow. The Customer Contact Assess and Decide (CCAD) project was part of the Better Deal for Residents Programme and, subject to its approval, would be delivered jointly by the Council and its partner, Capita.

The Portfolio Holder added that the joining up and personalising of services was a key objective and the project would improve customer experience through the consolidation of customer facing staff in Access Harrow. This course of action would support the Council's objectives of improved customer satisfaction and greater efficiency by delivering cost savings.

The Assistant Chief Executive outlined some of the benefits of the project. He reported that the project would help personalise services and build-on the existing community spirit. It would also help improve performance and customer service and integrate various services into Access Harrow, such as Planning and Building Control, Registrars, Shared Services, Adult Social Care Helpline (with the exception of the Safeguarding Children service).

In addition, through system integration, the project would help resolve more calls at first point of contact, thereby increasing satisfaction levels. It was expected that channel migration would be completed by July 2011.

The Leader of the Council stated that Harrow's Call Centre was well regarded and that this was due to good leadership and effective systems.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the implementation of the Customer Contact Assess and Decide (CCAD) project be approved as set out in the Blueprint;
- (2) the Director Customer Services and Business Transformation, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, be authorised to take all actions necessary to implement the project.

Reason for Decision: To deliver improved customer service, operational efficiency and cost reductions.

130. Key Decision - Corporate Services

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director Finance, which set out the case for efficiency gains in the provision of Corporate Services through the enhanced use of SAP.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services outlined the aim of the Corporate Services programme which was to deliver a range of cashable and non-cashable benefits through building on the Council's significant investment in SAP. The core objectives were to improve delivery of corporate transactional processes; support employees' and managers' ability to self-serve HR management and improve financial monitoring and controls. The programme would allow for a better use of planning and forecasting tools and increase accuracy.

Cabinet was informed that whilst the programme would reduce staffing levels, every effort would be made to mitigate the impact on them.

The Leader of the Council moved that any decision ought to be taken in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the implementation of the Corporate Service Project, set out in the Blueprint, be approved;
- (2) the Corporate Director Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Business Transformation and Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services, be authorised to take all actions necessary to implement the project.

Reason for Decision: To deliver increased operational efficiency and cost reductions.

131. Key Decision - Collection Fund 2011/12

The Corporate Director Finance introduced a report, detailing the estimated financial position on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2011. She forecasted a surplus on the Fund which would contribute to a balanced budget next year.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an estimated surplus of £2,494,181 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2011 be noted, of which £1,977,885 was the Harrow share;
- (2) an amount of £1,977,885 be transferred to the General Fund in 2011/12.

Reason for Decision: The Council had a statutory obligation to make an estimate of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund by 15 January 2011. Approval of the recommendations set out was a major part of the annual budget review process. If the recommendations were not approved, statutory requirements would not be met.

132. Key Decision - London Borough Grants Scheme 2011/12

The Corporate Director Finance introduced a report, which set out the recommended level of the London Councils' Grants Committee budget for 2011/12.

She advised that the Committee had approved their proposals for expenditure in December 2010 but that two thirds of the constituent Councils had to agree the proposal before 1 February 2011 for it to be implemented. She recommended that Harrow support the proposals, which represented a £357k reduction in the borough's contribution, which would help Harrow ensure a balanced budget. If it were not supported, the previous year's contribution would apply. It was noted that Harrow's contribution would be £390k in 2011/12.

The Leader of the Council stated that it was unclear if Harrow organisations and residents benefited from the Scheme. With the adverse economic climate, careful consideration of the contributions to the Scheme would be required in future years.

RESOLVED: That the London Council's Grants Committee budget for 2011/12 be approved.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the London Councils' Grants Committee budget for 2011/12 was approved by 1 February 2011.

133. Key Decision - Planned Maintenance Procurement

The Corporate Director Adults and Housing introduced a report, which set out the proposals and reasons for the short term procurement of a planned maintenance contract to replace the current Major Works contract with Kier. He outlined the benefits of the proposal which would bring in a range of specialist contractors. The use of small contractors was likely to lead to greater engagement with local businesses. The proposal would also provide value for money.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts commended the proposal, which would provide value for money, ensure engagement with local contractors thereby increasing employment for local people.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holders for Housing and Property and Major Contracts be delegated authority to deliver the programme for 2011/12 using a hybrid procurement approach combining:

- (i) the London Housing Consortium (LHC) Frameworks;

- (ii) Housing Asset Management, Legal and Procurement staff resources to let elemental contracts, pending a full tendering process.

Reason for Decision: The existing contract with Kier expired in June 2011. To enter into a short term replacement contract pending consideration of the most appropriate long term solution.

134. Adult Social Performance Assessment 2009/10

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director Adults and Housing, which set out the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) judgement of Harrow's social care performance assessment.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing welcomed the report and congratulated the Corporate Director Adults and Housing and his staff for their achievements. Particular thanks also went to the former Portfolio Holder and the Divisional Director Community Care for their work in ensuring positive ratings.

The Portfolio Holder was proud that two outcomes for 2009/10 had been given an 'excellent' rating and Harrow had improved in four outcome areas, when compared to the previous year. Harrow was now recognised as the most improved Council in London and the third most improved nationally for Adults Social Care. Of significance was that the Inspectors were pleased to learn that the new administration was not going to change the Access to Care Criteria.

The Divisional Director Community Care was proud of Harrow's achievements and the progress made since 2001, which had culminated in Harrow being recognised as the third most improved Council nationally. Services had improved as a direct result of the feedback received from the users. The Divisional Director added that the annual assessment would be replaced by a more localised assessment system which would devolve responsibility for monitoring and improvement to local people and local authorities. However, the Directorate was not complacent and would continue to strive towards 'excellence' in all areas.

The Corporate Director Adults and Housing thanked the Portfolio Holder for her kind words and acknowledged the cross-party support received towards this accolade. He also thanked staff in the Chief Executive and Finance Directorates who had made a significant contribution to this achievement. He commended the outstanding work carried out by the Divisional Director Community Care.

The Chief Executive stated that the journey had been phenomenal and he thanked the former and the current Portfolio Holders for their work and support. Of particular significance was that users had recognised the improvements made and the resultant improvements in their quality of life and increased availability of choices. It was also pleasing that the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) had shortlisted the Council for its Management Team of the Year Award.

The Leader of the Council thanked the staff, Portfolio Holder and former Portfolio Holder for all their contributions in improving performance.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the outcome of the 2009/10 Adult Social Care Assessment and areas identified as improved and those requiring further development be noted;
- (2) the change in the performance ratings for next year be noted.

Reason for Decision: To note the significant improvement in the social care rating placing the Council as one of the most improved Councils nationally. To comply with the Care Quality Commission's request that the report was presented to the Executive by 31 January 2011.

[Call-In does not apply this decision.]

135. Key Decision - Future Operating Model for School Improvement

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges introduced a report, proposing an operating model for school improvement that would establish an improvement partnership driven and funded by schools with the Council as a key partner. Prior to the consideration of the report, the Portfolio Holder stated that he was proud of Harrow schools and of their professionalism towards the proposal. His visits to the schools had been pleasing and he acknowledged the positive work being carried out.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the proposal before Cabinet provided an innovative response towards minimising the impact of cuts and commended the report to Cabinet. He thanked the Corporate Director Children's Services and her staff for their work in this area.

An officer explained the responses to the consultation undertaken. The proposal had been supported by a large number of headteachers who had indicated their willingness to start developing concepts with the view to moving the model forward, following its approval by Cabinet.

The Corporate Director Children's Services stated that the Council was in a unique position to set up a learning partnership and that it was blessed with exceptional schools which allowed for the model to be implemented. Harrow would also be seen as leading on this initiative.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership be the future operating model for school improvement service;
- (2) the development of the Harrow Schools' Improvement Partnership model be operational by September 2011;

- (3) the detailed work and decisions required be delegated to the Corporate Director Children's Services, in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Colleges, and following consultation with the Children Services Transformation Programme Stakeholder Reference Group.

Reason for Decision: To support the future improvement of Harrow's schools by maintaining a relationship between the Council and its schools; building on existing good practice in Harrow where schools were key partners in the delivery of school improvement; providing a framework for the Council to fulfill its statutory functions; and enabling significant efficiencies to be made that contribute to the Council's Budget Strategy.

136. Key Decision - Sports and Leisure Facilities Management Contract Extension

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced a report, which sought agreement to an extension of the current contract for the provision of sport and leisure in the borough until March 2011. The Portfolio Holder stated that the contract would be for a period of two years, subject to negotiations being finalised. She added that the proposed extension provided best value and she commended the report to Cabinet.

The Leader moved that any decision ought to be taken in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Community and Cultural Services and Property and Major Contracts, be authorised to agree an extension of the current contract for the provision of Leisure Facility Management for two years from March 2011, as permitted by the current contract, subject to the finalising of negotiations on costs within the contract and improved performance measures.

Reason for Decision: To meet the requirements of the Best Value legislation to review service procurement arrangements regularly. To ensure continuation of leisure service delivery to the Council whilst it reviewed longer term options for the service.

137. Key Decision - Delegation of Authority to Process Individual Grant Agreements

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced a report, which sought to delegate authority in relation to individual grant agreements, following consideration of the matter by the Grants Advisory Panel.

The Leader of the Council stated that due to the current adverse economic climate there was a need to ensure that all Council budgets were used effectively and that a review of the support offered to the Voluntary and Community Sector was underway. It was noted that the report outlined the interim process for delivering a grant funding application process for 2011/12 to be conducted whilst allowing for consultation on the review to be undertaken.

The Leader moved that any decision ought to be taken in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Director Community and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, be authorised to process individual grant agreements, subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report and Option D referred to therein.

Reason for Decision: The extension of current grant agreements (not taking into account any one-off top-up funding received in 2010/11 and to be calculated using each organisations base grant) for one additional month enabled the Council to undertake and implement a review of its support to the voluntary and community sector and deliver a grants programme or 2011/12.

138. Key Decision - Harrow Green Grid

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise introduced the report, which sought agreement to consult on the emerging draft Green Grid for Harrow, part of the London Wide Green Grid. The Green Grid would form a key part of the future spatial vision within the Harrow Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder added that the residents of Harrow had access to a wide range of formal and informal public spaces and woodland. In some cases these spaces were physically or visually linked by roads, footpaths, bridleways or other corridors, such as rivers and culverts. Despite this informal network, the use and awareness of green spaces across the borough, including its management and accessibility to residents and visitors, was variable. The proposal would help move away from this situation and help facilitate a network of interlinked multi-purpose open spaces with good connections to the areas where people lived and worked. Moreover, alongside the promotion of regeneration and growth, it would celebrate the range of amenities provided across the borough by placing the green spaces as part of a Green Grid.

RESOLVED: That the draft Harrow Green Grid be approved for public consultation.

Reason for Decision: To enable consultation to proceed with interested parties on the outline Green Grid. To support its continued development to enable the more effective management of the green infrastructure across the borough.

139. Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
19	Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services – Information Report	Information under paragraph 3 on the grounds that it related to the financial and business affairs of companies and that, in the opinion of the proper officer, it was not in the public interest for it to be disclosed at the date hereof.

140. Procurement of Temporary Agency Worker Services

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the report was admitted late to the agenda to update Members on the decision made by the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham regarding the Temporary Agency Worker Service and the implications for Harrow.

Cabinet received a confidential information report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which set out the progress made with the procurement of Temporary Agency Worker services jointly being undertaken with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To note the position and implications for the Council.

[Call-in does not apply to this decision.]

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.48 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR BILL STEPHENSON
Chairman